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Marianne Brekken: Rapport fra møte i KVs Assembly Planning Committee 3.-10. desember 2019 i Karlsruhe

Program for og innledninger på møte i Nordisk Faith and Order, Oslo 23.-24.01.20:

Sturla Stålsett Countering closures: Churches' call to openness in times of polarization and fragmentation

Odair P. Mateus Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity
Faith and Order Today

Berit Hagen Agøy Rapport fra møte i PJP Reference Group, Fiji 16.-23. februar 2020

Berit Hagen Agøy Rapport fra WCC Ecumenical Consultation on Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, Amman, 25.-26. februar 2020

Nytt fra den verdensvide kirke – Kirkenes verdensråd (KV)

Sammendrag

Kirkenes verdensråds (KV) sentralkomitémøte, som skulle vært i mars, er utsatt til 18.-25. august på grunn av Corona-smittefare ved et så stort internasjonalt arrangement. Det betyr at avskjeden for Olav Fykse Tveit også flyttes til august. Sentralkomiteens lederskap har bestemt at KVs visegeneralsekretær Ioan Sauca vil fungere som generalsekretær fra 1. april fram til eksekutivkomitéen møtes i juni og kan stadfeste dette. Ny generalsekretær velges når sentralkomiteen møtes i august. [Mer informasjon om utsettelsen av sentralkomitémøtet](#)

Utsettelsen av møtet innebærer også at oppnevningen av delegater til **generalforsamlingen utsettes**, og at vi ikke får oppdateringer om generalforsamlingen nå i mars. Vi regner imidlertid med at KV holder oss løpende orientert om planene fram mot Karlsruhe.



Beate Fagerli, som koordinerer planleggingen, ble nylig intervjuet av KV. [Intervju med Beate Fagerli](#)

Marianne Brekken er medlem av Assembly Planning Committee, og hennes rapport fra siste planleggingsmøte er vedlagt.

Referansegruppa for Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace møttes på Fiji i 16-23. januar. Berit Hagen Agøys rapport er vedlagt.

KV inviterte til et rådslag 25.-26. februar i Amman om den kritiske **situasjonen i Israel og Palestina**. Hensikten var å reetablere KVs Palestine and Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF). Berit Hagen Agøys rapport er vedlagt.

Et vellykket **nordisk Faith & Order-møte** ble holdt i Oslo 23.-24. januar. Norges Kristne Råd og Mellomkirkelig råd var vertskap. Direktøren for Faith & Order, Odair Pedroso Mateus, deltok på møtet, bl.a. med en refleksjon over tema til KVs generalforsamling, Vedlagt er innledningene Sturla Stålsett og Odair Pedroso Mateus holdt under møtet.



Bønnekampanje for Korea

Den norske kirke fulgte opp KVs oppfordring til medlemskirkene om å delta i en global bønnekampanje for fred i Korea fram til august. [Oppslag på kirken.no om Korea](#)



KVs generalsekretær Olav Fykse Tveit deltok på den **internasjonale klimakonferansen i Bergen** om religion og bærekraft, som MKR/KISP var med på å arrangere. Hans foredrag kan leses [her](#).

I den forbindelse lagde *Dagen* en 30 min. podkast med Olav Fykse Tveit hvor han forteller om kirkens klimaengasjement og samfunnsoppdrag på en glimrende måte.

[Last ned podkasten Tore og Tarjei](#) for eksempel via Spotify.

KVs ledsagerprogram, EAPPI, er stadig under angrep fra israelske myndigheter og settlerorganisasjoner. Dette ble fanget opp av avisen Norge I DAG 07.02, som ukritisk brakte falske beskyldninger videre. Olav Fykse Tveit svarte bl.a. på Facebook at hele saken bygger på usannheter. Det alvorlige er at noen tror på slikt og sprer det videre.

[Norge IDAG](#)

Kirkenes Verdensråd er anmeldt for spionasje, ulovlig innreise og trusler



Tilbake til Oslo: Kirkenes Verdensråd og Leder av EAPPI har blitt anmeldt for spionasje. Foto: TTS

Organisasjonens Legal Forum for a Zionist and Democratic Israel og DMU Projects har levert en anmeldelse til politiet i Jerusalem av Kirkenes Verdensråd. De anklager KV for å ha involvert seg i flere ulovlige aktiviteter, og for å handle mot staten Israel.

Tarjei Press Service

Forslag til vedtak

Mellomkirkelig råd tar saken og følgende rapporter til orientering:

Rapport fra møte i KVs Assembly Planning Committee 3.-10. desember 2019 i Karlsruhe.

Rapport fra møte i PJP Reference Group, Fiji, 16.-23. februar 2020.

Rapport fra WCC Ecumenical Consultation on Peace in Palestine Israel, Amman, 25.-26. februar 2022.

**Rapport fra møte i Assembly Planning Committee,
Karlsruhe, 2.-9. desember 2019
v/Marianne H. Brekken**

Assembly Planning Committee (APC) møttes til sitt tredje møte i planleggingen av den kommende generalforsamlingen i Kirkenes verdensråd som holdes i Karlsruhe 8.-16. september 2021 med temaet *Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity*.

Det formelle formålet med generalforsamlingen er å gjennomgå programmer og bestemme den overordnede politikken til KV, samt å velge presidenter og sentralkomité som fungerer som styringsorgan frem til neste Assembly. Samtidig er generalforsamlingen mye mer: Det er den store møteplassen for den verdensvide kirke og er et bilde på hvordan kirkene forstår samtiden, og hvordan kirkene responderer på det som rører seg i kirkene og i verden. Planleggingen av generalforsamlingen handler derfor både om hvordan en får gjort de nødvendige beslutninger på en best mulig måte, men vel så mye om hvordan helheten i bønnelivet, panelsamtaler og seminarer skal være. En generalforsamling på denne størrelsen krever også mye logistikk for å få mat, transport og forflytting av mennesker til å foregå på en god måte.

Det tredje møtet i Assembly Planning Committee (APC) ble holdt i Karlsruhe. Møtet fant sted midt i byen slik at komiteen fikk besøke konferansesenteret og den lokale vertskomiteen som er sammensatt bredt økumenisk. Den daglige planleggingen skjer av ansatte både i Genève og på det lokale Assembly-kontoret i Karlsruhe, og planleggingen skjer under Beate Fagerlis ledelse.

Antall deltagere på forsamlingen er økt noe fra det siste anslag i januar, til 800 delegater, pluss en kombinasjon av rådgivere, samarbeidspartnere, forvaltere, frivillige, studenter, og ansatte. Man estimerer et totalt antall på i underkant av 3500 registrerte deltakere. I tillegg estimerer KV-ansatte og vertskirkene minst 5000 besøkende, flest fra Sentral-Europa.

Som tidligere rapportert, har KVs sentralkomité, som møtes i mars 2020, myndighet til å bestemme 20 % av delegatene fra de ekstra navnene som er gitt av medlemskirker for å sikre balanse mellom alder, kjønn, mennesker med funksjonshemninger, urfolk og ortodokse. APC kom med ulike råd til hvordan sentralkomiteen best burde arbeide for å nå disse målsetningene.

Det vil bli avholdt fire Pre-Assemblies – for ungdom, kvinner og menn, EDAN og urfolk. For Karlsruhe vil også studieprogrammet *Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI)* finne sted før generalforsamlingen. APC ble enige om å anbefale at den globale økumeniske ungdomskonferansen avholdes før Assembly, nemlig 4.-7. september 2021. Det foreslås at rundt 500 ungdommer fra Stewards-programmet, delegater, medlemskirker, økumeniske partnere, lokale unge mennesker osv. vil ta del i denne økumeniske ungdomssamlingen. Pre-assembly for unge vil bli integrert og bli en del av dette arrangementet. Det vil være naturlig at Den norske kirke diskuterer hvordan vi kan engasjere unge i en slik global hendelse.

Hovedoppgavene for dette møtet i APC innebar å gi sentralkomiteen detaljerte råd på tidsplan, programinnhold, godkjenne forsamlingssymbolet (logo) og gi retningslinjer for business-sesjonene.

APC gav anbefalinger på hvilke tema som bør dekkes i de økumeniske samtalene under forsamlingen. – Dette er et av de viktigste stedene for å diskutere hva arbeidet til KV skal være de neste åtte årene. De økumeniske samtalene utvikles av KV i samarbeid med partnere. Registrerte delegater, representanter og observatører til forsamlingen kan registrere seg med en økumenisk samtale som vil finne sted i fire økter over fire dager.

På generalforsamlingen har APC tidligere anbefalt at man finner flere måter å bringe ulike stemmer og erfaringer frem på. En generalforsamling med mer enn 800 delegater og nærmere 1500 med talerett i Business trenger flere steder hvor deltakere kan få bringe frem erfaringer. Det vil derfor bli arbeidet med hvordan man bedre kan hente inn impulser fra de ulike programelementene. Et slikt sted vil være den nye programposten Home groups - eller hjemmegrupper. Alle delegater vil tilhøre en slik gruppe som møtes hver dag for å diskutere bibeltekstene og tematisk fokus for dagen. De samme gruppene vil møtes hver dag under samlingen og på tvers av kirkesamfunn, geografiske og kulturelle linjer.

En annen stor del av programmet er "Brunnen", som er tysk for "brønnen", spesielt en brønn midt i en landsby hvor folk kommer for å hente vann, kilden til liv. Brunnen vil inneholde workshops, utstillinger og aktiviteter, hvorav noen vil bli tildelt forskjellige steder og forskjellige tider. Vi håper mange KV-partnere og medlemskirker søker om å tilby noe for Brunnen. En søknadsprosess lanseres, og mer informasjon om Brunnen vil være klar i løpet av våren 2020.

APC ble også enige om bibeltekstene for hver dag. Hovedteksten vil alltid være en evangeliehistorie som viser Jesu kjærlighet på en eller annen måte, og som gjenspeiler forsamlingstemaet om «Kristi kjærlighet beveger verden mot forsoning og enhet». Det har nå gått ut forespørsel til musikere om å komponere musikk som passer til temaet. Frist for levering er 31. mars.

Eksekutivkomiteen til KV har bedt om et ekstra møte i Assembly Planning Committee, siden det er et langt gap mellom desember 2019 og september 2021. Dette møtet vil finne sted i september 2020, sannsynligvis på Kreta.

Marianne H. Brekken

Countering closures: Churches' call to openness in times of polarization and fragmentation

Nordic Faith and Order meeting January (23rd –) 24th 2020

v/Sturla J. Stålsett, Dr. theol. Professor of Diaconal Studies, Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Oslo

Although this will not be a sermon, I would like to start by sharing a word from the Scripture with you. It is the story recounted in the Gospel of John, chapter 20, where we find the disciples closed in behind locked doors, fearful of some defined 'others', named simply, 'the Jews':

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

New International Version (NIV)

Remember this scene: Jesus the resurrected one finds his friends behind locked doors out of fear. But by breathing on them, he equips them with the Holy Spirit, thus encouraging them not to have fear, and literally in-spiring them with the calling and courage to break open the locked doors and engage in a new service of reconciliation.

In my remarks here today, I will address what I see as some core challenges in our time in the light of the main themes of the coming 2021 General Assembly of the World Council of Churches: «Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity» and «Churches responding to populism and polarization.» I will focus on tendencies of closure. By that, I refer to what I see as dominant trends towards fencing in, turning inwards and keeping to oneself, to ourselves, instead of opening up to the other, particularly the suffering other, and to each other in mutual sharing. In short, inclinations to lock oneself in behind closed doors for fear of others. I see such tendencies of closure as a driving force in populist identity politics leading to polarization and fragmentation.

Discerning these signs of the times, then, I would like to invite us to discover what might be the calling of Christ to us as a worldwide community today. Such a Christian discernment is in its most profound sense, a spiritual exercise. It is only in and through the Holy Spirit that we may disclose what is at stake for the churches in these closures, and receive the inspiration and courage to counter them in the love of Christ. So, since we in this particular fellowship of 'Faith and Order' may afford ourselves the joy and luxury of really drawing explicitly of the ecumenical resources of doctrine and theological reflection, I invite us to reflect on these disturbing trends christologically and pneumatologically. That is, to view them in the light of faith in God in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. This might even lead us to revisit a familiar *querelle des anciens*, namely the *filioque*. The Spirit proceeds from the Son, too as we heard: "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Signs of the Times: Identity Politics, Polarization and Fragmentation

So what are signs of our times?

This has been quite an extraordinary week in Norwegian politics. As you will have heard, one of the parties in the Government, the right wing Progress Party decided to leave after six years as part of the ruling coalition.¹ The reasons, they claimed, was the party's disagreement with the decision to bring home to Norway a sick child, his younger sister, and his mother from the Al-Hol camp in Syria. Since this little boy was born on IS-occupied territory and the mother is suspected and will be charged for participation in and support of a terror organization, the Progress Party claims that the Government is sacrificing the security of Norway by bringing her to the country. So even though the children clearly are in need of attention and care, they should not have been brought back to Norway as long as this could not be done without their mother, according to this party. In other words, we have arguably seen the first exit from Government on what may be seen as anti-humanitarian grounds: Humanitarian concern for a child should not override presumed security concerns related to the child's parent.² The first post-exit polls for the Progress Party are favorable.

¹ <https://www.thelocal.no/20200124/here-is-norways-new-minority-government>.

² "The anti-immigration Progress Party, a coalition partner to Solberg's Conservatives, argued that the risk of allowing a person linked to Isis into Norway outweighs the country's humanitarian duty to help the child, effectively accusing Solberg of not making Norway's security her first priority."

It certainly is not just in Norway that care of, or perhaps even cult of, oneself and fear of the other, even if she is a single mother with a sick child, seems to rule the political agenda. Each of our Nordic countries shows similar dynamics, to be sure. Furthermore, we need not but mention in passing the dramatic political developments related to Brexit and the turbulent presidency of Donald J. Trump, with impeachment in process. Farther away, in November, I visited the impressive nation of Myanmar, where Buddhist nationalism feeds anti-Islamic sentiments that have caused unspeakable suffering for the Rohingya minority. More than a million of them have had to flee the country after the violent attacks from government troops and other militias, particularly from 2015 on. Yesterday, the international court of justice (ICJ) in Haag ruled against Myanmar, demanding that it take measures to protect the Rohingyas from further discrimination and violence.³ It is sad to have to note that speaking personally with the State Counsellor and Nobel Laureate Aung Sang Suu Kyi about the matter in November, she chose to approach the Rohingya issues with a stereotypical discourse about the illegitimacy of many migrants, so common globally nowadays. Even in the multi-ethnic country of Myanmar, identity politics rules the scene, with disastrous results for a particular minority chosen as a scapegoat.

We see similar developments if we move to neighboring India, with Modi's Hindu-nationalism. To Russia, where Mr. Putin's alliance with the Russian Orthodox church echoes President Erdogan's mobilization of a particular blend of Islam and Turkish nationalism. Or to Brazil with the 'Trump of the tropics', Mr. Bolsonaro, he too advancing violent far-right populism with the support of significant parts of the Evangelical community.

Why and how has identity politics become such a distinctive feature of our day? Moreover, what does it mean for churches and other religious communities? In his 2018 book *Identity. Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition* Francis Fukuyama of Stanford University, analyses what he sees as two versions of identity politics, on the opposite spectrums of the political scale. Fukuyama shows the similarity and difference between the two versions, by referring to a concept present already in classic Greek philosophers, namely

<https://www.thelocal.no/20200116/how-norways-help-for-child-of-isis-mother-could-topple-government>

³ See: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/world/asia/myanmar-rohingya-genocide.html>.

thymos, which is the “part of the soul that craves recognition of dignity.”⁴ The basic premise is: Humans desire recognition.⁵ We wish to be well regarded, even admired, by our peers. So the instance within us, so to speak, that seeks such recognition, is *thymos*. As the Greek philosophers’ reflection on this concept in light of common human experience develops, a distinction emerges, that Fukuyama sees corresponding to the two different versions of identity politics in our day. First, you have the basic desire, expressed as a political demand, to be regarded as *equal* to any other human being. This is the *isothymia*. On the other hand, you have the *megalothymia*, which makes a claim and expectation of being regarded as *bigger or better* than other humans.

The first version corresponds, according to Fukuyama, to the struggles of different social, ethnic or cultural groups for equality in rights and opportunities in modern day politics. From women’s rights and the civil rights movements, through the struggles against apartheid, as well as against the discrimination of LGBT+ persons, and the stigmatization and exclusion of indigenous or ethnic groups such as the Roma, to the affirmative action by and for people with disabilities. These are by no means small struggles, mainly on behalf of particular interests. As we can see, they have been and continue to be decisive efforts for realizing in an ever more comprehensive spectrum of human life the aspiration and founding principles agreed upon in the Human Rights Declaration of 1948.

Although in this sense they belong to universal struggles for common concerns to all humans, they have in them a tendency towards fragmentation. That they may become difficult to handle, as they represent – precisely – so diverse groups, interests, and aims, is one challenge. However, it is perhaps not the primary problem, at least not according to Fukuyama. A focus on newer and more narrowly defined marginalized groups, he claims, “diverts attention from older and larger groups whose serious problems have been ignored.”⁶ Here he mentions the white American working class, by many considered to be one of President Trump’s most important constituencies, as a case in point.

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity : The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*(London: Profile books, 2018). , p. xiii.

⁵ See also Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition : The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*(Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press, 1995)..

⁶ Fukuyama, *Identity*, p. 116.

The problem is that such groups, seeing themselves ignored or forgotten by the protagonists of the identity politics 'of the left,' may easily become staunch supporters of an 'identity politics of the right.' Their main driving force, however, is not *isothymia*, the desire to be recognized as equal in dignity to the other. It is instead *megalothymia*, the desire to be considered, or to see oneself as, *better* than others, polarization being the inevitable result. Now, as is well known, these right-wing identities are mostly linked up with nation, race – or religion. White supremacy is but one of its ugly faces. Anti-immigration mood, anti-Semitism in both old and new versions, as well as islamophobia, and more general xenophobia, are others.

Such trends are boosted by a renewed emphasis on what are presented as national customs, traditions, and values. And for this use, religion and church become very convenient, not to say, crucial. Religion becomes hijacked in an increasingly militant, and sometimes violent, populist identity politics, that responds to diversity and pluralism with supremacy and dualist antagonism leading to dehumanizing othering: It is us against them.

I think it is difficult *not* to see the recent political developments in the world, in the U.S., in Europe, and here in Norway, culminating in a Government exit on anti-humanitarian grounds this week, as framed within such dynamics of closure. You may want to disagree or moderate the picture. If so, I hope you are right, and would gladly be convinced. I do find the tendency to turn inwards in self-sufficiency and imagined supremacy, to build new fences and walls, to issue new insults, suspicions and threats against the other quite overwhelming, and gaining strength by the day. If, however, this reading of the sign of the times is right, it gives us, as churches, a difficult task indeed: To counter such closures with an invitation, with transparency, and communication. Communication here may refer to both the act of creating understanding and building community, fellowship, across differences.

This, as we know very well in the ecumenical movement, leads us to the Spirit. Or, hopefully, it leads the Holy Spirit to us.

Closures as Disclosure

Discernment of the sign of the times is a spiritual exercise, I said. God the Spirit may reveal what is hidden to us. Not, of course, that we have any privileged access to understanding what is going on at the political or social level. Nevertheless, the light of faith provided by Christ's Spirit may help us to sort out what to make of it all, and what to do. What to regret. What to

repent. What to fight for. And not least – what to hope for, in times like this.

So, what is disclosed through these closures?

We see, not surprisingly from a Lutheran perspective perhaps, a world ever more *incurvatus in se*, enclosed in itself. Many of the political leaders around the globe simply seem to be totally thrilled by their own egos. They are in love with themselves, and make no effort to hide it, flexing their muscles and arms and boasting shamelessly of their invincibility. In populism, strong leaders claim to represent the people directly, according to a leading expert in the field, Jan-Werner Müller.⁷ Such political leaders claim their unique, organic union with not just any people or all people, but the only genuine people. That is a people who fight against the elites, and some particular out-group, that is conceived as threatening. Populism seeks purity and clear-cut divisions: Friends and foes, patriots and traitors, comrades in arms and enemies. It is us against them.

We may also, in these developments, detect a disappointment with commercially-driven globalization. The global free market did not deliver what was promised. Many feel left behind, even cheated, by neoliberal assurances of ‘trickle-down effects’ and ‘the tide raising all boats.’ So many people look for someone to blame, as well as for someone to lead them out. Resentment feeds hatred and brutalization. Ours is an ‘age of anger.’⁸ Having lost faith in the invisible hand of the market, many among us salute the visible fist of the strong man. This is, moreover, not just something happening to the extremists out there, be they jihadists, white supremacists, or other violent groups. One of the most dangerous tendencies of our time, as I see it, is the gradual and almost unnoticed process of accepting views, expressions, and politics formerly considered morally and politically unacceptable. This is what I call a ‘stealth normalization’ of extreme attitudes, often even cloaked in the language of ‘our values’.⁹

In all of this, we are left with an ambiguity of what has been called the ‘return of religion’ to the public sphere.¹⁰ Religion has regained focus and interest. Secularization was neither

⁷ Jan-Werner Müller, *What Is Populism?*(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)..

⁸ Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger : A History of the Present*(London: Penguin books, 2018)..

⁹ <https://www.dagbladet.no/kultur/ekstreme-holdninger-pakkes-inn-som-norske-verdier/71558550>

¹⁰ Judith Butler, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*(New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

inevitable nor total. However, the return of or to religion is as much about fear, as it is about faith. Fearing the faith of others has been one noteworthy reaction to migration and globalization.¹¹ Furthermore, as I have already addressed, mobilizing one's faith resources as a defence or even a spiritual weapon against others is a crucial feature of identity politics around the globe.¹²

So what to do? Let's go back to the locked room of the disciples. This is where we are. We are visited by Jesus, the crucified and risen One, and receive the Holy Spirit. Our first reaction could be one of repentance. How could we let the fear of others rule our minds and hearts, and direct our actions? The text we read should be a chilling reminder of our complicity as Christian churches with violent othering. These days we remember the Soviet liberation of the concentration camp Auschwitz, 75 years ago. It was, of course, much too late. More than 1,1 million Jewish lives were taken in that camp alone. When our text from John, chapter 20 has been read in churches up through the centuries, the fear of 'τῶν Ἰουδαίων', the Jews, has more often than not been without further explanation.¹³ The listeners soon forgot the disciples were themselves, of course, Jews – as was their risen Lord and Master. As Christians, we should acknowledge and repent our participation in brutal processes of othering and scapegoating to this day, anti-Semitism being one of their many forms.

This is also why I see the link between Christology and Pneumatology so important in this text, and in our times of closures, of polarization and fragmentation. Jesus, visiting the scared disciples behind locked doors, shows them 'his hands and side,' that is, his wounds. He reminds them of his violent suffering and death, his participation in the victimhood of those being 'othered', brutally brought through torture to the certain death by the alliance of autocratic rulers claiming to uphold security, and the angry mob of the people, shouting 'crucify.' It is only on a foundation of solidarity with the victims of this world that we may break open doors, proclaim peace, and embark on the new joyful mission of reconciliation in

¹¹ Sturla J. Stålsett, "Fearing the Faith of Others? Government, Religion, and Integration in Norway " in *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, ed. Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith(Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹² Marzouki, Nadia, Duncan McDonnell, and Olivier Roy. *Saving the People : How Populists Hijack Religion*. London: Hurst, 2016.

¹³ As we have seen, the NIV translation seeks to modify this by translating 'the Jewish leaders'. Literally, the Greek text reads simply 'the Jews'.

the Holy Spirit. It is only in this remembrance of suffering, the 'dangerous memory' that political theologian Johannes B. Metz once called it¹⁴, having in mind the crucifixion as well as the Holocaust, the Rohingya as well as the children in camps in Syria, that there may be a new beginning.

Breaking open locked doors, countering closures, is the work of the Spirit. From the ultimate closure, the darkness of the grave of the Chosen One to the contemporary camps of concentration and exclusion, the Spirit of God transcends our limited capacities and works to transform our hearts and minds, thus overcoming the forces of death. It is not by accident that Christian belief in the resurrection and new life is confessed in the third article of faith. 'We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of life,' τὸ ζῳοποιόν. (Cf. Apg 2,32f; Rom 1,4, 1 Tim 3,16, 1 Pet 3,18, Rom 8,11). Without the intimate relationship to the remembrance of God's own suffering in Christ, such hope in the resurrection and new life may become superficial and escapist in the face of the real and brutal realities of our world. That is why, in fact, the *filioque* may be seen to have even political importance in times of populism and polarization. The work of the Spirit is also the work of communication. It is, as we recall from the famous passage about the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts Chapter 2, the overcoming of the confusing and conflictual linguistic and cultural diversity. This predicament was seen, according to the myth about the Tower of Babel, as God's punishment on humanity for its *hubris*, its thirst for power, for invincibility, for becoming God. The Spirit is *spiritus communicans*. The act of translation and communication opens up new spaces for community. In this context I probably do not have to remind us of the immense importance of the concept of communion, communion, and *koinonia* in the ecumenical movement, and in particular, within the framework of Faith and Order.¹⁵ I once, in 1993, had the inspirational joy of participating, as a young theologian, in the Faith and Order meeting in Santiago de Compostela where the depths of the *koinonia* in the Spirit created new insights and energies, through such speakers as Zizioula and Pannenberg. So, in our times of fragmentation, cores insights of ecumenical practice and reflection, seeking *koinonia*, communion, as 'unity in reconciled diversity' takes on new urgency. Taking us back to Fukuyama's concern about the two versions of identity

¹⁴ Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*(London: Burns & Oates, 1980).

¹⁵ Best, Thomas F. and Günther Gassmann, ed. *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia. Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order*, Faith and Order Paper No. 166. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994

politics, corresponding to the need for recognition, the *thymia*, such a view of human community, may help us to distinguish between the kind of differences that should be overcome, and the differences that we should celebrate, as part of our God-given uniqueness and dignity.

This is no small task. It requires a particular skill, one that the marvellous philosopher of hermeneutics – that is, of translation, communication, and hence community-building – Paul Ricoeur, once called to 'differentiate between differences:'

(B)y failing to differentiate among differences, Ricoeur wrote, [the ideology of difference)] destroys the critical spirit which rests on shared common rules of discussion and on the participation of communities of argumentation recruited on bases other than the historical constitution of different group affiliations. The paradox is indeed that the praise of difference ends up reinforcing the internal identities of the groups themselves.¹⁶

Our praise of difference in Spirit, is a difference in unity. Trinitarian reflection has always resisted letting go of either unity or uniqueness. True communion is possible, we confess, in God, in humanity, and in creation, when we transcend our separateness without losing ourselves in some idealized collective. This, I believe, is central to our Christian mission of countering closures. Amid this task I hope we may at times share the experience of the disciples, back in that room behind the closed doors: to be overjoyed and truly inspired when we see the Lord.

¹⁶ Ricoeur, Paul. *Critique and Conviction. Conversations with Francois Azouvis and Marc De Launay*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.



Christian Council of Norway

CHURCHES TOGETHER

PROGRAM:

Thursday 23rd

- 12.00 Lunch
- 13.00 **Welcome and introduction**
Erhard Hermansen, General Secretary, Christian Council of Norway
- 13.30 **Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity**
Odair Pedroso Mateus, Director of the Faith and Order commission
- 14.15 Reflections and response
«What unity? Reflections about the need for an ecumenical paradigm shift»
*Stephanie Dietrich, professor, Faculty of Theology,
Diaconia and Leadership VID Specialized University*

Karin Wiborn, General Secretary, Christian Council of Sweden
- 14.45 Coffe Break
- 15.15 **Discussion**
Moderator Sven Thore Kloster, Senior advicor, Church of Norway
- 16.15 **Faith and order today and in the future – An update.**
Odair Pedroso Mateus, Director of the Faith and Order commission
- 17.00 Break
- 18.00 **Reception and dinner hosted by Oslo bishop Kari Veiteberg, Oslo Diocese Office**
- 20.00 **Evening Prayer**
Reflections by bishop Kari Veiteberg

Friday 24th

- 08.45 **Morning prayer, Kirkens Hus**
*Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh,
Rector, The United Methodist Seminary, Norway*
- 09.00 **«Churches responding to populism and polarisation»**

Countering closures: Churches' call to openness in times of polarisation and fragmentation
*Sturla Stålsett, Professor Diaconal Studies, Religion and Society,
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society*



Christian Council of Norway

CHURCHES TOGETHER

- 09.45 **Do not fear – a process in Church of Norway**
Steinar Ims, senior advisor, Church of Norway
- Unity in diversity – churches involved in inclusion of cultural diversity. A Danish perspective**
Birger Nygaard, General secretary, Council on International Relations, Church of Denmark
- 10.15 **Disussion**
Moderator Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh, Rector, The United Methodist Seminary
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.15 **Update from the countries**
- Evaluation and future activities of the Nordic Faith and Order network**
- 12.15 **Closing prayer**
Lemma Desta, Project leader, Christian Council of Norway
- 12.30 Lunch

Countering closures: Churches' call to openness in times of polarization and fragmentation

Nordic Faith and Order meeting January (23rd –) 24th 2020

v/Sturla J. Stålsett, Dr. theol. Professor of Diaconal Studies, Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Oslo

Although this will not be a sermon, I would like to start by sharing a word from the Scripture with you. It is the story recounted in the Gospel of John, chapter 20, where we find the disciples closed in behind locked doors, fearful of some defined 'others', named simply, 'the Jews':

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

New International Version (NIV)

Remember this scene: Jesus the resurrected one finds his friends behind locked doors out of fear. But by breathing on them, he equips them with the Holy Spirit, thus encouraging them not to have fear, and literally in-spiring them with the calling and courage to break open the locked doors and engage in a new service of reconciliation.

In my remarks here today, I will address what I see as some core challenges in our time in the light of the main themes of the coming 2021 General Assembly of the World Council of Churches: «Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity» and «Churches responding to populism and polarization.» I will focus on tendencies of closure. By that, I refer to what I see as dominant trends towards fencing in, turning inwards and keeping to oneself, to ourselves, instead of opening up to the other, particularly the suffering other, and to each other in mutual sharing. In short, inclinations to lock oneself in behind closed doors for fear of others. I see such tendencies of closure as a driving force in populist identity politics leading to polarization and fragmentation.

Discerning these signs of the times, then, I would like to invite us to discover what might be the calling of Christ to us as a worldwide community today. Such a Christian discernment is in its most profound sense, a spiritual exercise. It is only in and through the Holy Spirit that we may disclose what is at stake for the churches in these closures, and receive the inspiration and courage to counter them in the love of Christ. So, since we in this particular fellowship of 'Faith and Order' may afford ourselves the joy and luxury of really drawing explicitly of the ecumenical resources of doctrine and theological reflection, I invite us to reflect on these disturbing trends christologically and pneumatologically. That is, to view them in the light of faith in God in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. This might even lead us to revisit a familiar *querelle des anciens*, namely the *filioque*. The Spirit proceeds from the Son, too as we heard: "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Signs of the Times: Identity Politics, Polarization and Fragmentation

So what are signs of our times?

This has been quite an extraordinary week in Norwegian politics. As you will have heard, one of the parties in the Government, the right wing Progress Party decided to leave after six years as part of the ruling coalition.¹ The reasons, they claimed, was the party's disagreement with the decision to bring home to Norway a sick child, his younger sister, and his mother from the Al-Hol camp in Syria. Since this little boy was born on IS-occupied territory and the mother is suspected and will be charged for participation in and support of a terror organization, the Progress Party claims that the Government is sacrificing the security of Norway by bringing her to the country. So even though the children clearly are in need of attention and care, they should not have been brought back to Norway as long as this could not be done without their mother, according to this party. In other words, we have arguably seen the first exit from Government on what may be seen as anti-humanitarian grounds: Humanitarian concern for a child should not override presumed security concerns related to the child's parent.² The first post-exit polls for the Progress Party are favorable.

¹ <https://www.thelocal.no/20200124/here-is-norways-new-minority-government>.

² "The anti-immigration Progress Party, a coalition partner to Solberg's Conservatives, argued that the risk of allowing a person linked to Isis into Norway outweighs the country's humanitarian duty to help the child, effectively accusing Solberg of not making Norway's security her first priority."

It certainly is not just in Norway that care of, or perhaps even cult of, oneself and fear of the other, even if she is a single mother with a sick child, seems to rule the political agenda. Each of our Nordic countries shows similar dynamics, to be sure. Furthermore, we need not but mention in passing the dramatic political developments related to Brexit and the turbulent presidency of Donald J. Trump, with impeachment in process. Farther away, in November, I visited the impressive nation of Myanmar, where Buddhist nationalism feeds anti-Islamic sentiments that have caused unspeakable suffering for the Rohingya minority. More than a million of them have had to flee the country after the violent attacks from government troops and other militias, particularly from 2015 on. Yesterday, the international court of justice (ICJ) in Haag ruled against Myanmar, demanding that it take measures to protect the Rohingyas from further discrimination and violence.³ It is sad to have to note that speaking personally with the State Counsellor and Nobel Laureate Aung Sang Suu Kyi about the matter in November, she chose to approach the Rohingya issues with a stereotypical discourse about the illegitimacy of many migrants, so common globally nowadays. Even in the multi-ethnic country of Myanmar, identity politics rules the scene, with disastrous results for a particular minority chosen as a scapegoat.

We see similar developments if we move to neighboring India, with Modi's Hindu-nationalism. To Russia, where Mr. Putin's alliance with the Russian Orthodox church echoes President Erdogan's mobilization of a particular blend of Islam and Turkish nationalism. Or to Brazil with the 'Trump of the tropics', Mr. Bolsonaro, he too advancing violent far-right populism with the support of significant parts of the Evangelical community.

Why and how has identity politics become such a distinctive feature of our day? Moreover, what does it mean for churches and other religious communities? In his 2018 book *Identity. Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition* Francis Fukuyama of Stanford University, analyses what he sees as two versions of identity politics, on the opposite spectrums of the political scale. Fukuyama shows the similarity and difference between the two versions, by referring to a concept present already in classic Greek philosophers, namely

<https://www.thelocal.no/20200116/how-norways-help-for-child-of-isis-mother-could-topple-government>

³ See: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/world/asia/myanmar-rohingya-genocide.html>.

thymos, which is the “part of the soul that craves recognition of dignity.”⁴ The basic premise is: Humans desire recognition.⁵ We wish to be well regarded, even admired, by our peers. So the instance within us, so to speak, that seeks such recognition, is *thymos*. As the Greek philosophers’ reflection on this concept in light of common human experience develops, a distinction emerges, that Fukuyama sees corresponding to the two different versions of identity politics in our day. First, you have the basic desire, expressed as a political demand, to be regarded as *equal* to any other human being. This is the *isothymia*. On the other hand, you have the *megalothymia*, which makes a claim and expectation of being regarded as *bigger or better* than other humans.

The first version corresponds, according to Fukuyama, to the struggles of different social, ethnic or cultural groups for equality in rights and opportunities in modern day politics. From women’s rights and the civil rights movements, through the struggles against apartheid, as well as against the discrimination of LGBT+ persons, and the stigmatization and exclusion of indigenous or ethnic groups such as the Roma, to the affirmative action by and for people with disabilities. These are by no means small struggles, mainly on behalf of particular interests. As we can see, they have been and continue to be decisive efforts for realizing in an ever more comprehensive spectrum of human life the aspiration and founding principles agreed upon in the Human Rights Declaration of 1948.

Although in this sense they belong to universal struggles for common concerns to all humans, they have in them a tendency towards fragmentation. That they may become difficult to handle, as they represent – precisely – so diverse groups, interests, and aims, is one challenge. However, it is perhaps not the primary problem, at least not according to Fukuyama. A focus on newer and more narrowly defined marginalized groups, he claims, “diverts attention from older and larger groups whose serious problems have been ignored.”⁶ Here he mentions the white American working class, by many considered to be one of President Trump’s most important constituencies, as a case in point.

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity : The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*(London: Profile books, 2018). , p. xiii.

⁵ See also Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition : The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*(Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press, 1995)..

⁶ Fukuyama, *Identity*, p. 116.

The problem is that such groups, seeing themselves ignored or forgotten by the protagonists of the identity politics 'of the left,' may easily become staunch supporters of an 'identity politics of the right.' Their main driving force, however, is not *isothymia*, the desire to be recognized as equal in dignity to the other. It is instead *megalothymia*, the desire to be considered, or to see oneself as, *better* than others, polarization being the inevitable result. Now, as is well known, these right-wing identities are mostly linked up with nation, race – or religion. White supremacy is but one of its ugly faces. Anti-immigration mood, anti-Semitism in both old and new versions, as well as islamophobia, and more general xenophobia, are others.

Such trends are boosted by a renewed emphasis on what are presented as national customs, traditions, and values. And for this use, religion and church become very convenient, not to say, crucial. Religion becomes hijacked in an increasingly militant, and sometimes violent, populist identity politics, that responds to diversity and pluralism with supremacy and dualist antagonism leading to dehumanizing othering: It is us against them.

I think it is difficult *not* to see the recent political developments in the world, in the U.S., in Europe, and here in Norway, culminating in a Government exit on anti-humanitarian grounds this week, as framed within such dynamics of closure. You may want to disagree or moderate the picture. If so, I hope you are right, and would gladly be convinced. I do find the tendency to turn inwards in self-sufficiency and imagined supremacy, to build new fences and walls, to issue new insults, suspicions and threats against the other quite overwhelming, and gaining strength by the day. If, however, this reading of the sign of the times is right, it gives us, as churches, a difficult task indeed: To counter such closures with an invitation, with transparency, and communication. Communication here may refer to both the act of creating understanding and building community, fellowship, across differences.

This, as we know very well in the ecumenical movement, leads us to the Spirit. Or, hopefully, it leads the Holy Spirit to us.

Closures as Disclosure

Discernment of the sign of the times is a spiritual exercise, I said. God the Spirit may reveal what is hidden to us. Not, of course, that we have any privileged access to understanding what is going on at the political or social level. Nevertheless, the light of faith provided by Christ's Spirit may help us to sort out what to make of it all, and what to do. What to regret. What to

repent. What to fight for. And not least – what to hope for, in times like this.

So, what is disclosed through these closures?

We see, not surprisingly from a Lutheran perspective perhaps, a world ever more *incurvatus in se*, enclosed in itself. Many of the political leaders around the globe simply seem to be totally thrilled by their own egos. They are in love with themselves, and make no effort to hide it, flexing their muscles and arms and boasting shamelessly of their invincibility. In populism, strong leaders claim to represent the people directly, according to a leading expert in the field, Jan-Werner Müller.⁷ Such political leaders claim their unique, organic union with not just any people or all people, but the only genuine people. That is a people who fight against the elites, and some particular out-group, that is conceived as threatening. Populism seeks purity and clear-cut divisions: Friends and foes, patriots and traitors, comrades in arms and enemies. It is us against them.

We may also, in these developments, detect a disappointment with commercially-driven globalization. The global free market did not deliver what was promised. Many feel left behind, even cheated, by neoliberal assurances of ‘trickle-down effects’ and ‘the tide raising all boats.’ So many people look for someone to blame, as well as for someone to lead them out. Resentment feeds hatred and brutalization. Ours is an ‘age of anger.’⁸ Having lost faith in the invisible hand of the market, many among us salute the visible fist of the strong man. This is, moreover, not just something happening to the extremists out there, be they jihadists, white supremacists, or other violent groups. One of the most dangerous tendencies of our time, as I see it, is the gradual and almost unnoticed process of accepting views, expressions, and politics formerly considered morally and politically unacceptable. This is what I call a ‘stealth normalization’ of extreme attitudes, often even cloaked in the language of ‘our values’.⁹

In all of this, we are left with an ambiguity of what has been called the ‘return of religion’ to the public sphere.¹⁰ Religion has regained focus and interest. Secularization was neither

⁷ Jan-Werner Müller, *What Is Populism?*(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)..

⁸ Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger : A History of the Present*(London: Penguin books, 2018)..

⁹ <https://www.dagbladet.no/kultur/ekstreme-holdninger-pakkes-inn-som-norske-verdier/71558550>

¹⁰ Judith Butler, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*(New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

inevitable nor total. However, the return of or to religion is as much about fear, as it is about faith. Fearing the faith of others has been one noteworthy reaction to migration and globalization.¹¹ Furthermore, as I have already addressed, mobilizing one's faith resources as a defence or even a spiritual weapon against others is a crucial feature of identity politics around the globe.¹²

So what to do? Let's go back to the locked room of the disciples. This is where we are. We are visited by Jesus, the crucified and risen One, and receive the Holy Spirit. Our first reaction could be one of repentance. How could we let the fear of others rule our minds and hearts, and direct our actions? The text we read should be a chilling reminder of our complicity as Christian churches with violent othering. These days we remember the Soviet liberation of the concentration camp Auschwitz, 75 years ago. It was, of course, much too late. More than 1,1 million Jewish lives were taken in that camp alone. When our text from John, chapter 20 has been read in churches up through the centuries, the fear of 'τῶν Ἰουδαίων', the Jews, has more often than not been without further explanation.¹³ The listeners soon forgot the disciples were themselves, of course, Jews – as was their risen Lord and Master. As Christians, we should acknowledge and repent our participation in brutal processes of othering and scapegoating to this day, anti-Semitism being one of their many forms.

This is also why I see the link between Christology and Pneumatology so important in this text, and in our times of closures, of polarization and fragmentation. Jesus, visiting the scared disciples behind locked doors, shows them 'his hands and side,' that is, his wounds. He reminds them of his violent suffering and death, his participation in the victimhood of those being 'othered', brutally brought through torture to the certain death by the alliance of autocratic rulers claiming to uphold security, and the angry mob of the people, shouting 'crucify.' It is only on a foundation of solidarity with the victims of this world that we may break open doors, proclaim peace, and embark on the new joyful mission of reconciliation in

¹¹ Sturla J. Stålsett, "Fearing the Faith of Others? Government, Religion, and Integration in Norway " in *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, ed. Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith(Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹² Marzouki, Nadia, Duncan McDonnell, and Olivier Roy. *Saving the People : How Populists Hijack Religion*. London: Hurst, 2016.

¹³ As we have seen, the NIV translation seeks to modify this by translating 'the Jewish leaders'. Literally, the Greek text reads simply 'the Jews'.

the Holy Spirit. It is only in this remembrance of suffering, the 'dangerous memory' that political theologian Johannes B. Metz once called it¹⁴, having in mind the crucifixion as well as the Holocaust, the Rohingya as well as the children in camps in Syria, that there may be a new beginning.

Breaking open locked doors, countering closures, is the work of the Spirit. From the ultimate closure, the darkness of the grave of the Chosen One to the contemporary camps of concentration and exclusion, the Spirit of God transcends our limited capacities and works to transform our hearts and minds, thus overcoming the forces of death. It is not by accident that Christian belief in the resurrection and new life is confessed in the third article of faith. 'We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of life,' τὸ ζῳοποιόν. (Cf. Apg 2,32f; Rom 1,4, 1 Tim 3,16, 1 Pet 3,18, Rom 8,11). Without the intimate relationship to the remembrance of God's own suffering in Christ, such hope in the resurrection and new life may become superficial and escapist in the face of the real and brutal realities of our world. That is why, in fact, the *filioque* may be seen to have even political importance in times of populism and polarization. The work of the Spirit is also the work of communication. It is, as we recall from the famous passage about the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts Chapter 2, the overcoming of the confusing and conflictual linguistic and cultural diversity. This predicament was seen, according to the myth about the Tower of Babel, as God's punishment on humanity for its *hubris*, its thirst for power, for invincibility, for becoming God. The Spirit is *spiritus communicans*. The act of translation and communication opens up new spaces for community. In this context I probably do not have to remind us of the immense importance of the concept of communion, communion, and *koinonia* in the ecumenical movement, and in particular, within the framework of Faith and Order.¹⁵ I once, in 1993, had the inspirational joy of participating, as a young theologian, in the Faith and Order meeting in Santiago de Compostela where the depths of the *koinonia* in the Spirit created new insights and energies, through such speakers as Zizioula and Pannenberg. So, in our times of fragmentation, cores insights of ecumenical practice and reflection, seeking *koinonia*, communion, as 'unity in reconciled diversity' takes on new urgency. Taking us back to Fukuyama's concern about the two versions of identity

¹⁴ Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*(London: Burns & Oates, 1980).

¹⁵ Best, Thomas F. and Günther Gassmann, ed. *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia. Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order*, Faith and Order Paper No. 166. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994

politics, corresponding to the need for recognition, the *thymia*, such a view of human community, may help us to distinguish between the kind of differences that should be overcome, and the differences that we should celebrate, as part of our God-given uniqueness and dignity.

This is no small task. It requires a particular skill, one that the marvellous philosopher of hermeneutics – that is, of translation, communication, and hence community-building – Paul Ricoeur, once called to 'differentiate between differences:'

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Our praise of difference in Spirit, is a difference in unity. Trinitarian reflection has always resisted letting go of either unity or uniqueness. True communion is possible, we confess, in God, in humanity, and in creation, when we transcend our separateness without losing ourselves in some idealized collective. This, I believe, is central to our Christian mission of countering closures. Amid this task I hope we may at times share the experience of the disciples, back in that room behind the closed doors: to be overjoyed and truly inspired when we see the Lord.

¹⁶ Ricoeur, Paul. *Critique and Conviction. Conversations with Francois Azouvis and Marc De Launay*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.

Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity

1. The 11th assembly of the World Council of Churches will be held in Karlsruhe, Germany, September 8 to 16 2021. For nine days, and for the first time in Europe since Uppsala 1968, a couple of thousand people - churches delegates, partners, guests, visitors – will gather from all over the world for prayer and biblical reflection, presentations on themes, sharing in groups, large-groups conversations, exhibitions, regional meetings, confessional meetings, workshops, pilgrimages, and, last but not least, institutional business. The assembly intends to serve and strengthen both the search for Christian unity and for human unity in reconciliation with creation. Is it possible to make sense of and love such a massive, complex event? If yes, how?

2. The assembly's theme – Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity – points at the same time to the core of Christian faith and to Christian (and non-Christian) engagement for reconciliation and unity in the world. It is about Christological faith responsive in mission and faith in God's mission. The theme will hopefully hold together and shape that massive range of activities and events mentioned above by playing a cohesive role. Its different elements will inspire the meditation, discussions, activities and decisions in different days: "Christ's love" on Thursday, September 9; "moves the world" on Monday; "reconciliation" on Tuesday; and "unity" on Wednesday.

3. The most elementary work on the theme will take place in daily morning prayer and Bible reflection (45 minutes) based on Gospel stories about Jesus compassion. This important choice will contribute to protect the notion of Christ's love from two contemporary temptations: a hermetic or sectarian theological *soliloquium* and a romantic, individualistic relationship with "Christ's love". After daily prayer, biblical reflections and theme plenaries, the participants will be able to gather in "home groups" at the end of the morning in order to make sense and deepen their reflection on the ways in which the gospel narratives may shed light on the elements of the assembly theme. This is ideally the basis for the assembly's ecumenical discernment (ecumenical conversations), deliberations (committees, plenaries) and decisions that will take place mainly in the afternoon.

Formatert: Skrift: Kursiv

4. The WCC General Secretary, who contributed to the definition of the assembly theme, has been exploring the theme in different circumstances. In a lecture on love and the ecumenical future of the churches, given in 2019 at the Loyola University, Los Angeles, USA, Tveit asks: “What is it that the churches want to say now? What is it that the world needs now?” and he answers: “Well, I believe that the life-saving yet also profoundly theological answer is Love!”

In a section on Christ’s love, Tveit looks at ways in which questions of justice, reconciliation, unity and love are connected “at the heart of our faith in Jesus Christ”. He offers two answers based on 2 Corinthians 5. The first is Paul’s notion of “new creation”, that “all this is from God”. The second is the reference to Christ’s love for us and for all that changes our relationship to God and to others. God has reconciled the world to Godself. “This is an attitude that we are called to show to the world.” The world, notes Tveit, “is not moving in love towards reconciliation and unity”.

Through this theme, the WCC goes back to its traditional “focus on Christology”. Jesus Christ is a confession. It affects “all we say and do related to God”, the triune God. This holds for our search for unity: “To be one as followers of Jesus is to reflect the relationships between Jesus and the Father to whom his prayer is directed.” The ecumenical movement is called to be a movement of love: love for all and, particularly, “for those suffering, occupied, colonized, excluded, non-privileged, marginalized, discriminated against”; it is also called to be a movement of mutual accountability: “Willingness to share but also to learn from others and their contributions must be articulated through constructive criticism that also includes proper self-criticism.” There are strong powers undermining the notion of “one humanity”, Tveit notes. “There needs to be”, he concludes, “somebody and something that represents a counter-sign and counter-weight of unity, justice, and peace and that expresses nonpartisan, universal love.” That’s our calling.

5. I have facilitated a process of reflection on the assembly theme involving a group of WCC staff in Geneva. The result was a commentary on the theme. The introduction focuses on the connection between God-Church-World or God-World-Church and the vision of the unity of Church as inseparable from the unity of humanity seen as primary loci of ecumenical talk.

The commentary starts by the term “world”, by looking at “the world which Christ’s love moves”. This section lists some contemporary global trends seen as challenges to the proclamation of and witness to divine love manifest in the Incarnation. Some of them are: the environmental, moral and spiritual realities presupposed by the hypothesis of the Anthropocene as a new geological age defined by human irreversible intervention in the planet; the decline of the notion of progress as the utopian horizon of modernity; the fourth (or third) industrial revolution (with its major impact on human labour) and one of its corollaries, trans-humanism; the transformations in human relations brought about by the new communication technologies; the present decline of internationalism, multi-lateralism and attempts at global governance; the rise of illiberal democracies.

The following section argues that “Christ’s love as first of all Jesus’ Compassion”. Paul’s theology, the ultimate source of the assembly theme, should be approached in light of the Jesus’ narratives of compassion. The synoptic gospels use very seldom the term *agape*. Jesus’ acts of love are often described by the (less romantic) notion of compassion, which comes close to mercy, solidarity.

The final sections of the commentary address Christ’s love as God’s love, the movement of Christ’s love (kenosis), and finally focus on the terms “reconciliation and “unity”. The conclusion shows how the theme may work in “a day in the life of the assembly”.

6. Last year the WCC appointed a group of theologians to produce a theological contribution to the theme of the assembly and to produce a short statement on “unity”. The group met for the first time in December. An initial outline was agreed upon. The members of the group are producing different pieces of that text.

Odair Pedroso Mateus

Faith and Order Today

1. Moral Discernment in the Churches

After the publication of *Moral Discernment in the Churches* and much discussion about it, the Faith and Order Study Group in charge of this matter moved its focus first to authority in the Church in relation to moral issues and second to cases of churches or traditions that have revised past moral teaching in faithfulness to permanent principles.

These two pieces of work have led to the designing of a tool meant to help churches to understand disagreement within and between themselves. This tool will be published as part of a report that a) affirms much common ground among churches on moral principles; b) reviews examples of change in moral discernment and teaching; and 3) calls for a sound dialogue on disagreements.

Two publications will come out of this study: a volume with papers on authority and moral discernment in different traditions; and a volume with papers on cases of “change” in moral discernment in different churches, followed by a final report.

2. Ecumenical Theology for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Following the call that the WCC 2013 Assembly addressed to the churches to grow in fellowship by joining in a “Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace” in response to challenges to mission and service, the Commission on Faith and Order decided to establish a Study Group to contribute in a “Faith and Order” way to that calling.

This new locus was the opportunity for Faith and Order to experiment with a new method and a new format of texts. Methodologically, this meant basically that the ecumenicity of the theological work moved from the subject (which is no longer a classical inherited divisive issue) to the “pluri”-traditional way of addressing contemporary issues of mission and service. In terms of format, this means short texts on specific issues calling for common witness as growth in fellowship.

This ecumenical theological experiment has yielded in a trilogy. *Come and See: A Theological Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* was published in 2019. Two other texts already approved by the Commission in China last June will be published in the coming months: *Love and Witness* is about “proclaiming the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ in a religiously plural world”; *Cultivate and Care* proposes “an ecumenical theology of justice for and within Creation”.

3. Towards a Common Understanding of the Church

During the past four years, the Faith and Order Study Group on Ecclesiology has addressed two questions: 1) What is the ecumenical meaning of the responses to the convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision (TCTCV)* for the growth in fellowship of the churches in the WCC and in their relations with the Roman Catholic Church? 2) Which are the ecumenical challenges raised by “new ways of being church” in the different regions of the world to the search for a common understanding of the Church embodied in *TCTCV*?

The small group in charge of the first question analysed seventy-five responses to *TCTCV*. In the course of its work, the group identified sixteen areas of controversial issues. Their core themes are the well-known ones: The members of the group wrote short papers on each of them, both summarising the main references to them in the responses and their ecumenical meaning. Based on those theme papers on controversial issues, the group is now drafting an encouraging message to the churches on their growth in fellowship.

An even smaller group is in charge of the second question, about the search for a common understanding of the Church and current developments in world Christianity. Small workshops and consultations were held in Arusha (Tanzania), Pasadena (USA), and Vitória (Brazil). The conclusions of this work will certainly inform and shape the Faith and Order focus on ecclesiology after the 2021 WCC assembly.

The Study Group on ecclesiology is preparing the publication of a selection of responses to *TCTCV*; a volume with the papers on remaining controversial topics, written by Commissioners; and a message to the churches in the importance of the search for a common vision of the Church.

4. Nicea2025

The proposal for a Sixth Faith and Order World Conference, on occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council, has met with encouraging support among Catholics and Orthodox. It was embraced by the Faith Commission in its last meeting, in Nanjing, China, June 2019. A small group met recently in Geneva and drafted a text to be used by the WCC Central Committee next March as the basis for a decision on holding or not the world conference in 2025. It would have to be a missionary, ecumenical, practical World Conference, with a programme and anticipated results that would justify its financial and environmental cost.

Rapport fra møte i WCC Reference Group – Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, Fiji 16.-23. januar 2020

“We intend to move together. Challenged by our experiences in Busan, we challenge all people of good will to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions. This Assembly calls you to join us in pilgrimage. May the churches be communities of healing and compassion, and may we see the Good News so that justice will grow and God’s deep peace rest on the world.”

Message of the 10th Assembly 2013



Referansegruppa

Kirkenes verdensråds (KV) sentralkomite oppnevnte i 2014 en referansegruppe som skulle følge arbeidet med «Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace» (PJP) og gi anbefalinger til KVs styrende organer, via generalsekretæren, om hvorledes dette arbeidet kunne videreutvikles. Mandatet gjelder fram til generalforsamlingen i Karlsruhe i 2021. Referansegruppa er representert i Assembly Planning Group, og vi skal gi innspill til utformingen og innholdet i generalforsamlingen. Vi skal også foreslå og komme med konkrete ideer til hvorledes PJP kan videreføres i medlemskirkene etter generalforsamlingen

Det finnes også en teologisk studiegruppe som særlig jobber med det teologiske grunnlaget for PJP. Sammen med Faith and Order har de gitt ut det meget gode dokumentet *Come and See*, som er en teologisk refleksjon over PJP. Nå har disse to gruppene smeltet sammen til én gruppe med om lag 25 medlemmer. Gruppa består av representanter fra medlemskirker (hvorav noen er medlemmer av sentralkomiteen), andre økumeniske organisasjoner, «special ministries» og andre partnere. Den romersk-katolske kirke er med sammen med en jøde, en muslim og en hindu. På møtene deltar også KV’s moderator og/eller generalsekretær/assisterende generalsekretær samt andre fra staben og lokale ressurspersoner, slik at vi pleier å være i overkant av 30 på møtene. Den norske kirke er representert ved Berit Hagen Agøy.

Referansegruppa møtes en uke hvert år, og vi skal besøke alle KV’s regioner. Hvert år har også et tematisk fokus.

2015: Europa: Genève	Climate Justice and the UNFCCC COP 21
2016: Midtøsten: Israel og Palestina	Peace building in the context of religion and violence
2017: Afrika: Nigeria	Peace building in the context of religion and violence
2018: Latin-Amerika: Colombia	Ecumenical Diakonia and Sustainable Development
2019: Asia: Thailand	Rasism
2020: Stillehavet, Filji	Caring for People, Water and Earth
2020: Nord Amerika, Canada	Oppsummering, «Harvesting»
2021: Generalforsamlingen	

Fra 2018 av har vi i forkant av møtet i referansegruppa delt oss i team på 4-6 personer som har besøkt ulike land eller områder innenfor regionen. I fjor hadde vi team i Myanmar,

Bangladesh, Pakistan og India - før vi møttes i Thailand. I år dro alle teamene til ulike områder på Fiji.

Møtet på Fiji

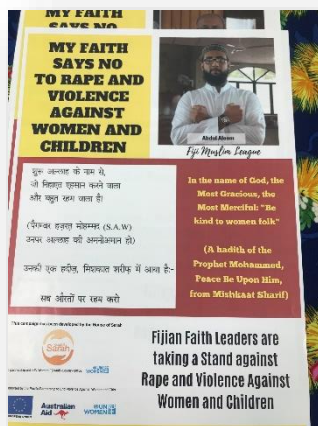
Pacific Council of Churches var vertskap for møtet i Suva på Fiji i januar. Etter seks års refleksjon og møter i seks ulike regioner i verden, hadde vi forkant av Fiji-møtet identifisert fire globale tema som synes å være aktuelle alle steder:

- Truth and Trauma
- Land and Displacement
- Gender Justice
- Racial Justice

Disse fire vil være hovedtema under generalforsamlingen. Klima er ikke nevnt spesifikt, fordi klima er gjennomgående og har stor relevans for alle de fire temaene. Vi jobber nå med å skrive et om lag 40 siders dokument, *The Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace - Towards a Theology of Companionship*, til sentralkomiteen og generalforsamlingen. Dokumentet oppsummerer erfaringer fra PJP-referansegruppa og team-besøkene og inneholder en teologisk refleksjon over de fire temaene. Dokumentet reflekterer også over *The Arusha Call to Discipleship* sin relevans for PJP.

Vi fikk en god orientering fra Pacific Council of Churches og lokale kirker om situasjonen på Fiji og andre Stillehavsøyer. Orkanen som raste mens vi var der, var en påminning om klimaendringene og hvor sårbare øyene i Stillehavet er. Enkelte av øyene er i ferd med å bli helt oversvømt. En interessant problemstilling ble reist: hvilke rettigheter til asyl i andre land har mennesker hvis hele staten deres forsvinner i havet? Vi fikk et innblikk i forholdet mellom urbefolkningen og resten av befolkningen på Fiji som består av et mylder av folkeslag, med ulike kulturer og religioner, som har kommet til øyene opp gjennom århundrene. Fortsatt merkes arven etter britisk kolonitid, ikke minst i kirkene. Vi fikk inntrykk av at relasjonene mellom ulike grupper og religioner på Fiji stort sett er gode, konfliktene handler om jord, naturressurser og klimaendringer.

Vi deltok også på lanseringen av KVs fastekampanje «Seven Weeks of Water», og vi plantet trær i parken utenfor kontoret til kirkerådet i Suva, som nå åpnet for lokalbefolkningen. Fruktrær for mat og skyggetrær for hvile.



I forkant av selve møtet dro fire team til ulike deler av Fiji for å besøke lokale kirker, grasrotorganisasjoner og vanlige folk. De fire teamene på Fiji studerte hvert sitt tema. Jeg ledet et team som var i Suva, og som fokuserte på «Gender Justice» i tillegg til interreligiøs dialog og inkludering av mennesker med nedsatt funksjonsevne.

Vi besøkte kirkelige og sekulære organisasjoner som arbeidet med kjønnsroller, kjønnsbasert vold og likestilling. Stillehavsøyene er svært patriarkalske og tradisjonelle samfunn, og andelen kvinner som har opplevd vold fordi de er kvinner, er skremmende høy, 70 %.

I fjor høst fikk man mange av de religiøse lederne med på en felleskampanje hvor de tar avstand fra vold mot kvinner og avkrefter enhver religiøs legitimering av vold. Jeg viser til mitt vedlagte innlegg i Dagen som utdyper dette.

Referansegruppa kom med en rekke anbefalinger til KVs generalsekretæren som han tar videre til sentralkomiteen. Det vises til vedlagte rapport fra møtet.

Relevans for MKR

Deltakelsen i PJP-referansegruppa og teambesøkene kjennes som noe av det mest meningsfulle jeg får være med på. Det er et privilegium å få reise til alle verdensdeler sammen med en gjeng svært kunnskapsrike og engasjerte kirkefolk fra hele verden og få møte lokale kirker og organisasjoner. På en måte kommer vi «bakveien» inn i samfunnet og får møte folk som kjemper for fred og rettferdighet i sine lokalsamfunn, samtidig som vi har møtt kirkeledere, organisasjonsledere og representanter for myndigheter. Vi har reist til steder der det ikke er fred og rettferdighet, oppsøkt konflikter og urettferdighet. Det er trossstyrkende og inspirerende å overalt møte kristne og andre troende som kjemper for det som er sant og godt. Vi møter Guds verdensvide kirke, kraftfull og håpefull, slik den skal være.

PJP er direkte relevant for:

- Forståelsen av kirkens oppdrag og oppfølging av Kallet fra Arusha
- Forberedelse til generalforsamlingen i 2021
- Fornyelse av pilegrimsarbeid i Norge, MKR har et nært samarbeid med pilegrimsprest Einar Vegge i Nidaros
- Nidaros' pilegrimssamarbeid med ELCJHL (reise i november 2020)
- MKRs arbeid med dokumentet *Besøk fra Den norske kirke til kirker i andre land – en veiledning*
- MKRs arbeid med solidaritetsbesøk (*Plan for besøk fra Den norske kirke 2020-2021*)
- Teologisk og politisk arbeid med de fire temaene

Vedlegg:

Berit Hagen Agøy: *Leder kvinnediskriminering til vold?* Dagen 07.02.2020

Narrative report Meeting of the Reference Group for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and Theological Study Group, 19-23 January, 2020, Suva, Fiji
Dagen, I Fokus 07.02.20

Berit Hagen Agøy

Dagen, I Fokus 07.02.20

Berit Hagen Agøy

Leder kvinnediskriminering til vold?

«Roten til seksualisert vold, finnes først og fremst i teologien i våre kirker som nedvurderer kvinner. Kvinneforakt og oppfatningen av kvinner som mindreverdige, er ikke noe spesielt for Afrika. Noen teologer har redusert kvinner til rollen som mødre, i tjeneste for menn. Det er en klar sammenheng mellom et kvinnesyn, støttet av falske teologer, som nedvurderer og forakter kvinner, og seksualisert vold som kvinner utsettes for både i fredstid og i konflikter.».

Jeg ble minnet om talen, fredsprisvinner og lege Dennis Mukwege hold under generalforsamlingen til Det lutherske verdensforbund i Namibia i 2017, da jeg nylig besøkte Fiji. På Stillehavsøyene opplever ca. 70 % av kvinnene fysisk og psykisk vold i løpet av livet. Det globale gjennomsnittet er 35 %, noe som gjør kjønnsbasert vold til den mest utbredte form for vold.

Kirkens Verdensråd har identifisert «Gender Justice» og kjønnsbasert vold blant de største utfordringene i vår tid. Som ledd i KVs «Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace», dro en gruppe pilgrim�er p a bes ok til kirker og organisasjoner p a Fiji. Da vi spurte om hvorfor vold mot kvinner er s a utbredt i denne del av verden, fikk vi til svar; «det kom med misjon erene». De forkynte at kvinner skulle v are lydige og underordne seg sine ektemenn. Mannen er kvinnens hode, og en god kone tilpasser seg derfor mannens  nsker og behov. En slik bibelfortolkning forsterket tradisjonelle patriarkalske strukturer i  ysamfunnene og bidro til   svekke respekten for kvinner. Det ble mer akseptert   bruke vold for   oppdra» kona, det angikk det ingen utenfor familien.

Dette er en forenkling, men sp orsm alet blir likevel st aende: er det en sammenheng mellom teologisk legitimering av kj onnsdiskriminering og vold mot kvinner? Tabuer brytes n ar kirkene p a Fiji n a setter kj onnsbasert vold p a dagsorden. Kvinneroller, men ogs a usunn maskulinitet, diskuteres i menigheter og i media. Kirkeledere stod nylig fram offentlig, sammen med andre religi ose ledere, og tok klar avstand fra vold mot kvinner.

Nulltoleranse for vold mot kvinner, er lett   enes om i det  kumeniske fellesskapet. Det er stort engasjement i mange kirker mot kj onnsbasert vold. Om en derimot begynner   stille sp orsm al ved den teologiske legitimeringen av kj onnsdiskriminering (som sjelden kalles det - men «kvinner og menns ulike roller og oppgaver»), blir det straks mer krevende. Mange kirker arbeider for likestilling, mens andre ikke vil forholde seg til dette begrepet eller h ore snakk om kvinners rettigheter. Rokker en ved l aren om kj onn og familie, begynner maktstrukturer   bevege seg. Det blir for utfordrende for enkelte av kirkens menn (og noen kvinner).

Kampen for kvinners rettigheter opplever n a en «back-clash». I urolige tider tenderer vi til   vende tilbake til tradisjonelle kj onnsroller. Det ser vi flere steder i verden, uavhengig av religion og kultur. Noen kirker har g att tilbake p a   tillate ordinasjon av kvinner, og i Russland har en endret loven slik at det er lov   sl a sin kone s a lenge hun ikke blir alvorlig skadet. Kj onnsbasert vold  ker p a verdensbasis.

Hva om Dr. Mukwege har rett? Hva om det stemmer at vi ikke blir kvitt volden mot kvinner, så lenge vi aksepterer at kvinner kan diskrimineres fordi de ses på som mindreverdige og underordnet menn? Hva skjer når menn gis definisjonsmakten til å fortolke Skriften og til å bestemme kvinners handlingsrom? Så lenge forholdet mellom kjønnene reguleres ut fra at det ene kjønn har makt over det andre, planter vi ikke da spirer til maktmisbruk?



**World Council
of Churches**



**Meeting of the Reference Group for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace
and Theological Study Group
19-23 January, 2020, Suva, Fiji**

Narrative Report

I. Introduction

The Reference Group of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and the Theological Study Group (RGJJP-TSG) met at the Pacific Theological College (PTC), Suva, Fiji, 19-22 January, with the theme of “Caring for People, Water, and Earth.” The meeting was hosted by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) in cooperation with the WCC member churches in the region.

Prior to the meeting in Suva, four pilgrim team visits took place in various parts of Fiji on 16-19 January. The team visits were focusing on

- climate-induced displacement,
- Indigenous land rights and extractive industries,
- gender justice, people with disabilities, interfaith dialogue,
- climate change, ecological justice, ocean health, and care for creation.

Each pilgrim team visit (PTV) explored the theme of “Caring for People, Water, and Earth” in various contexts in Fiji. The PTVs took place in the midst of the Cyclone Tino as the country was hit by its second cyclone in three weeks. It was a taste of what it means to live in the climate crisis.

We appreciate the excellent hosting by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC). The pilgrim team visits and the meeting offered first-hand opportunities to learn about the current situation in the Pacific Islands and to pray with sisters and brothers in the Pacific region. In particular, we have witnessed the deep strength and resilience of the communities of Fiji rooted in their faith and their indigenous wisdom. They showed us a profound and courageous commitment in celebrating the quality of life and valuing human beings and creation over the consumption of commodity goods and resisting the combined threats of the climate crisis, extractive industries, and other negative effects of economic globalization.

Members of RGJJP-TSG continued their theological reflection to develop the four theological themes:

- land and displacement,
- truth and trauma,
- gender justice, and
- racial justice.

They assessed the lessons learned from the Pacific with special emphasis on transformative discipleship as promoted by the Arusha Call. They were also enriched by prayerful reflections of the

PCC general secretary Rev. James Bhagwan on truth, an interfaith prayer led by representatives from different faith traditions on peace, and of the PTC principal Dr Upolu Luma Va'ai on what it means to be made of the "dirt" (vanua).

As part of our pilgrimage, members of the 2020 RGPJP-TSG meeting planted native food and shade trees on 18 January during the event "Trees for Peace and Justice," hosted by the Pacific Conference of Churches and the Ministry of Forestry, Fijian government to cut our carbon emissions.

The meeting of RGPJP-TSG in Fiji also included the pre-launch of the WCC's Ecumenical Water Network "Seven Weeks for Water" Lenten campaign, on 21 January.

II. Voyaging to the island of hope

The co-moderators Ms Jennifer Martin and Rev. Prof. Dr Fernando Enns thanked the representatives of the local churches, ecumenical organisations and leadership, and students of the Pacific Theological College (PTC) for hosting the meeting and welcomed together with them the members of the RGPJP-TSG. The president of the Fiji Council of Churches, Rev. Dr Tevita Banivanua and the president of the Methodist Church in Fiji, Rev. Dr Epineri Vakadewavosa, greeted the group.

Rev. James Bhagwan, the general secretary of the PCC, presented a brief, but comprehensive and clear political, economic, social, and religious analysis of the Pacific region, making use of the theme of the last PCC assembly: "Singing the Lord's song in strange lands and times." The present context is marked by intensified exploitation of the resources of the region by foreign companies that are supported by powerful countries. The subsequent destruction of ecosystems adds to the already severe consequences of the climate crisis. Rev. James Bhagwan referred to the analysis of economic globalisation and the post-colonial realities explaining the reasons why to confront blatant injustice with the hope of change that the Pacific churches had shared with the worldwide fellowship in the "Island of Hope" document. The pilgrimage of justice and peace in the context of the Pacific is a "voyage of canoes" to the "island of hope".

Rev. Dr Meleana Puloka, Pacific president of the WCC, added that it is important to think of a fleet of canoes together on the way. Each canoe has a captain, but there is also a captain of the fleet who makes sure that the people on the canoes are keeping an eye on each other and are ready to share so that there is no shortage of water and food on the way. This is yet another expression of the communal culture of the Pacific islanders.

Mr Aisake Casimira, Director of the Institute for Mission and Research, started his presentation with a more critical question: what if the island of hope has already disappeared when we are approaching it under the impact of climate change, mining, and other threats to life? For some in the Pacific, it is already five past 12 on the crises clock. They will have to be relocated, leaving their land of origin (vanua) and the graves of their ancestors behind. The mat—a symbol for the social and spiritual fabric of communities—is disintegrating. Healing and reconciliation require the re-weaving of the ecological and social mat, repairing and even replacing some of the threads as required in response to the changing context. Spiritual life is one of the threads.

Reflecting on the 2020 thematic theme of the PJP "Caring for People, Water and Earth," Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, WCC Deputy General Secretary, concentrated on the Arusha call. The PJP is about hearing and witnessing. It leads us to transformative discipleship in the face of injustice and ecological destruction. Transformative discipleship and what it means for the PJP needs to inform the next steps of the journey of the PJP RG in 2020 and 2021.

III. Pilgrim Team Visits to Fiji, Pacific

During their visit to various communities in Fiji, delegation members met with indigenous communities, local church leaders, victims of human rights violations and conflict, and champions of transforming injustices. Each pilgrim team visit expressed solidarity with those who reside in coastal areas, relying on natural resources for their livelihoods and well-being, and forced to survive the tidal waves of injustice.

1) Pilgrim Team Visit- Climate Change and Displacement: Vanua Levu

A pilgrim team visit took place to Vanua Levu, formerly known as Sandalwood Island, which is the second largest island of Fiji hosted by the Pacific Council of Churches, Methodist Church in Fiji, and Kiribati Uniting Church. The team focused on the issues of climate change, displacement, and relocation, visiting the village of Vunidogoloa which presents a case of an entire village being labelled as the first climate-induced relocation undertaken by the Fiji government. Unfortunately, the group could not visit Naviavia due to the cyclone Tino.

2) Pilgrim Team Visit- Indigenous Land Rights and Extractive Industries: Vatua, Tailevu, and Namosi

A pilgrim team visit led the group to various villages in Fiji hosted by the Pacific Council of Churches and Catholic Bishops Conference of the Pacific. The team focused on the issue of indigenous land rights, extractive industries, and gender justice, visiting communities of Votua, Tailevu, and Namosi in Fiji.

3) Pilgrim Team Visit- Gender Justice, People with Disabilities, and Interfaith Dialogue: Suva and Tailevu

A pilgrim team visit to Suva and Tailevu was hosted by the Pacific Council of Churches, Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, Methodist Church in Fiji, and Samoan Churches. The team focused on gender justice and migration, including visits to Fiji women's Crisis Centre, Anglican Church House of Sarah, Methodist Church in Fiji Gender Equality Unit, Transcend Oceania, Pacific Disability Forum, and an interfaith temple. The team highlighted the witness of the church and her role in transforming injustices.

4) Pilgrim Team Visit- Climate, Ecological Justice, Ocean Health, and Care for Creation: Navua and Korova

A pilgrim team visit took place to Navua and Korova in Fiji, hosted by the Pacific Council of Churches, Solomon Islands, and Anglican Church. The team was focusing on climate and environmental justice and youth engagement. The team visited villages of Navua, flooded due to sea-level rise and Korova, a village in mangrove. This team met a group of Young Ecumenists involved in mangrove seedling planting to offset PTV carbon emission and have a conversation with youth and children on climate justice. They also met with Nobel Prize Laureate Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Holland.

All team visits learned to appreciate and cherish the communal culture and the rites of welcoming and parting with a Kava ceremony. The interconnectedness of people with land, water and ocean (vanua) is at the heart of peoples' spirituality and their resistance against injustice and the already visible consequences of the climate crisis. They observe the changes and know exactly what is happening. The village of Vunidogoloa is only the first of 400 villages that are up for relocation on Fiji.

A critical spiritual dimension of relocation is the loss of the vanua and the graves of the ancestors that are to be left behind. Seabed mining, gravel extraction and other mining activities add to the threats of the climate crisis. Rivers and coastal zones are silted by mud. Fish and crabs are retreating; reefs are dying. There were no dolphins to be seen at the Moon Reef that has been known for the more than thousands dolphins that would come there to sleep.

IV. Recommendations from the Pilgrim Team Visits

- 1) Recognising that the Pacific Conference of Churches and its members will need to expand and elaborate their accompaniment and pastoral care to growing numbers of communities who need to relocate as a consequence of climate change, we call upon the ecumenical family to offer prayers, attention, and support to the region.
- 2) Recommends that the WCC should follow-up on Caritas and the Pacific Council of Churches on the documentation of the experiences of the affected communities, and support actions of political advocacy to the Fijian government.
- 3) Recommends that the RGPJP-TSG supports the Central Committee members from the Pacific Region, through the PGPJP-TSG's presentation at the March 2020 Central Committee meeting, as the Pacific Region members seek to elevate their regional concerns in the deliberations of the Central Committee.
- 4) Recommends that the PJP Theological Study Group should deepen the contextual theological reflection on climate change, displacement, and relocation.
- 5) As observed as a result of the testimony of women that were met on PTVs, the RGPJP-TSG recommends that there is a need for more theological studies by WCC member churches and their theological institutions on the possible connections between some church's acceptance of gender-based discrimination and violence against women.
- 6) Recommends that the WCC together with other ecumenical bodies should make the consequences of climate change in the Pacific more visible and intensify the Pacific Conference of Churches' advocacy role towards the UN.

V. Theological Reflection on the identified Four Themes (Land & Displacement, Truth & Trauma, Gender Justice, Racial Justice)

The experience of the Pilgrim Team Visits to Fiji confirmed the centrality of the four themes identified at earlier "stations" of the PJP-RG. The members of RGPJP-TSG added new insights into the working document (Doc. 5: The Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace – Towards a Theology of Companionship) inspired by the pilgrim team visits to the communities in the Pacific. The updating of new learnings is an ongoing process and helps to deepen our common understanding and theological reflection on the expressions of injustice.

VI. Affirmations and Appreciations of the RGPJP-TSG

The RGPJP-TSG expressed the following affirmations and appreciations:

1. Expressed appreciation to the Pilgrim Teams, the WCC staff involved in coordinating the PTVs, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the churches, and the communities visited in Fiji.
2. Affirmed that while the Pilgrim Team Visits have focused on specific local contexts and experiences, the injustices and suffering experienced by the people and communities must take into account the broader context of global ecological, economic, social, racial, and gender injustices as underlying root causes throughout the life and work of the WCC. Solidarity, accompaniment, analysis, advocacy, and redress must be addressed with attention to and concern for local and global realities.
3. Affirmed the decision of the WCC executive committee to carry forward the four themes of the PJP (land and displacement; truth and trauma; gender justice; and racial justice) into future programmatic work.
4. Appreciated the important collaboration between the RGPJP-TSG and the Assembly Planning Committee through the RGPJP representative to the Assembly Planning Committee, and affirms the commitment of the RGPJP-TSG to continue to provide input into assembly planning processes.

VII. Decisions for the Work of the RGPJP

The RGPJP made the following decisions for their own workplan:

1. The RGPJP decided, as part of the exercise of mutual accountability, that:
 - a. Each participant in PTV of the RGPJP-TSG, shares a report indicating the impact of the PTVs on a personal, church, WCC, and/or ecumenical level ahead of the 2021 meeting as part of the harvesting process; and
 - b. The RGPJP leadership team will determine how to use this information to help enrich learnings about the PJP as a whole.
2. That the 2021 meeting of the RGPJP-TSG will include space on the meeting agenda for each member to report on PJP activities in their regions, denominations, churches, areas, and/or organisations. These experiences will form part of the harvesting of learnings and evaluating the impact of the PJP.
3. The RGPJP-TSG decided to establish a Pilgrim Team Visit (PTV) Support Group of the RGPJP-TSG to work with relevant WCC staff to:
 - a. Further develop the methodology of PTVs; and
 - b. Produce resource materials for use by churches, including the methodology, guidelines, and protocols for follow-up, and reporting; and
 - c. Determine processes for mutual accountability, including follow up with local communities visited.
4. The RGPJP-TSG decided to establish a sub-group to support the WCC staff in the planning for the March 2020 Central Committee PJP Plenary.

5. In order to provide PJP input to the Assembly Planning Committee and to further the RGPJP representative on the APC, the RGPJP-TSG:
 - a. Will establish a sub-group of the RGPJP-TSG to assist David Emmanuel Goatley who represents the RGPJP in the Assembly Planning Committee. The members of this sub-group will comprise of the RGPJP-TSG leadership team, plus Berit Hagen Agøy, Guido Dotti, David Emmanuel Goatley, Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel, Adele Halliday, and Kevork Kosbakian;
 - b. That the focus of this sub-group's work be specifically in relation to requested input on the *Brunnen*, ecumenical conversations, plenaries, workshops, and the programme committee.

6. With regards to the PJP public exhibition in Karlsruhe during the WCC Assembly as proposed by the Communication Team, the RGPJP-TSG:
 - a. Affirms the proposal; and
 - b. Will establish a sub-group to work with the WCC Communications Team, and the members of this sub-group would be: Brandi Friesen, Ramy Farouk Mahrous Sarofim Hanna, and Jennifer Martin.

7. With regards to the invitation of the North German churches to participate in a pre-assembly consultation in Hamburg in 2021, the RGPJP-TSG:
 - a. Expresses thanks and appreciation for the generous invitation; and
 - b. Will explore the concept and have conversations about the implementation of the pre-assembly event (including conversation about finances) as well as the participation of people who have been involved in the PJP; and
 - c. The principal contact person for the RGPJP-TSG shall be Co-Moderator Fernando Enns.

VIII. Recommendations to the WCC General Secretary

The RGPJP-TSG also made the following recommendations to the WCC General Secretary:

1. Recommended to the WCC General Secretary that:
 - a. At all times, the four themes of the PJP (land and displacement, truth and trauma, gender justice, and racial justice) be present in an intersectional way in the programmatic life and work of the WCC; and
 - b. There be a renewed emphasis on specific long-term and multi-level programming to overcoming gender-based violence—including violence against women—and that this becomes a priority in any next phases of the PJP and in future WCC programmes; and
 - c. There is a development of a long-term and in-depth programme to combat racism, xenophobia, and related injustices; and
 - d. A priority be given to climate justice, land, and gender justice in the theological reflection, advocacy, and programmes on economic justice and economies of life because without a change in the current global economic system and ideology, we cannot survive as peoples or planet; and

- e. All of the above-named work be done recognising the interconnectedness of the root causes of suffering and injustice, and that these be attended to locally and globally.

2. The RGPJP-TSG recommended that the rights of indigenous peoples and that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) be a priority for advocacy at all levels on the programmatic work on climate justice, social justice, gender justice, racial justice, and land rights.

3. Recommended that the WCC develop specific action plans with appropriate partners related to the impact of rising sea level, the disappearance of state lands in part or in whole and preservation of state exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

4. The RGPJP-TSG recommended that Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada be the location of the North American Harvesting event from March 11-20, 2021 and that the RGPJP leadership team, in consultation with the Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., will guide proposals for planning processes.

5. With reference to “Towards a Theology of Companionship” (Doc. 5), the RGPJP-TSG
 - a. Receives with thanks the recommendation of the WCC Executive Committee regarding this document; and
 - b. Affirms the importance of a solid document reflecting deeply on the four themes of the PJP (land and displacement, truth and trauma, gender justice, and racial justice) and their implications, theology, and witness at the core of the PJP; and
 - c. Requests that the Moderator of the TSG and Susan Durber present an edited version of this document to the RGPJP-TSG by early-February 2020, so that the RGPJP-TSG can review it, and then this document can be made available for the March 2020 meeting of the WCC Central Committee; and
 - d. Recognises that this document is growing and evolving, and that further additions and inputs will be made after the next meeting of the WCC Central Committee in 2020, and after the 2021 North American Harvesting event; and
 - e. Commends the document for use as a background and key resource for the planning and discussions in both the ecumenical conversations and the plenaries at the September 2021 WCC Assembly; and
 - f. Requests that the sub-group of RGPJP-TSG in assistance of Assembly Planning Committee would further explore ways to share this document.

6. Recommended to the WCC and the Pacific Conference of Churches to strengthen the leadership skills and to promote young women in their churches.

7. Based on conversations with women and young people on PTVs, the RGPJP-TSG recommends that the WCC further explores the following:
 - a. the growing eco-grief experienced heavily by young people around the world; and
 - b. the intersection of climate change and reproductive rights.

IX. Observations

In reviewing the objectives of the 2020 RGPJP-TSG meeting, the group affirmed that we have effectively addressed the 11 objectives with the following observations:

- The group did not reflect deeply on the threat of nuclear weapons and testing per objective 1, noting that this work was being taken up by the CCIA,
- That objective 4 needs further work, and
- Considers, if, in objective 7, Document 5 satisfies the objective, or is this a task yet to be completed.

Rapport fra WCC Ecumenical Consultation on Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, Amman, 25.-26.02.2020

v/Berit Hagen Agøy

Bakgrunn

Kirkenes verdensråd (KV) har et omfattende engasjement i Israel og Palestina:

- Medlemskirker
- EAPPI - ledsagerprogrammet
- Jerusalem Inter Church Center (JIC)
- Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF)
- World Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel

KV samarbeider selvsagt med andre kirker og internasjonale kirkelige organisasjoner, som for eksempel ACT og LVF, og en lang rekke lokale organisasjoner (for eksempel Kairos Palestine).

KV har lokalt ansatte knyttet til JIC-senteret i Jerusalem og til EAPPI-programmet.

Møtet i Amman 25.-26. februar, samlet omlag 25 deltakere, de fleste fra KVs medlemskirker og partnere i regionen og en håndfull internasjonale partnere fra Europa, Sør-Afrika og USA. Møtet var kalt sammen på kort varsel, så en del som burde vært der, var forhindret. Møtet var initiert av generalsekretær Olav Fykse Tveit som selv deltok under hele møtet. Hensikten med å møtes var:

1. Oppdatere hverandre om situasjonen i Israel og Palestina og om internasjonalt solidaritetsarbeid
2. Revitalisere Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) med klart mandat og ny struktur

Situasjonen for palestinerne: «Nå handler det om troens integritet»

Når jeg drar fra møter med palestinere, sitter jeg alltid igjen med følelsen av at nå kan det vel ikke bli verre. Og så er det enda verre neste gang vi møtes. De kristne palestinerne opplever forholdene som dramatiske; de skvises bort fra sitt land, og livsviljen og framtidshåpet svinner. Hverdagslivet under okkupasjonen er ekstremt vanskelig. De unge som kan, drar til utlandet - og vender trolig ikke tilbake.

Det ristes på hodet over Trumps og Netanyahus fredsplan, for som det ble sagt: «Denne planen har vært under implementering i mange år alt». Israelske bosetninger og tilhørende infrastruktur (veier, vann, elektrisitet) skjærer det palestinske landet opp i adskilte småbiter og undergraver muligheten for å utvikle en bærekraftig palestinsk stat. En kan få en følelse av at planen er å skvise og dehumanisere palestinerne så mye at de bare forsvinner.

To-statsløsningen tror få på, og en-statsløsningen som nå utvikler seg i retning av en et apartheid-lignende samfunn med adskilte boområder og differensierte rettigheter ut fra gruppetilhørighet, fører mot en katastrofe. Ikke bare for palestinerne, men også for det israelske samfunnet som gir slipp på demokratiets fundament; rettstaten og like borgerrettigheter.

Jeg merket fortvilelsen over det internasjonale samfunnets passivitet når det gjelder å fastholde forpliktelsen til internasjonal rett overfor Israel. En lukker øynene for åpenbare brudd på folkeretten og menneskerettighetene. Det offentlige rommet for demokratisk debatt og legitim politisk opposisjon i Israel innskrenkes, bl.a. gjennom lovgivning som forbyr demonstrasjoner og ikke-voldelige virkemidler som økonomisk boikott. Meningsmotstandere blir forsøkt brakt til taushet ved å stemple dem som antisemitter, rasister og jødehatere. Dette er en strategi israelerne bruker hjemme - og deres støttespillere følger opp internasjonalt.

Møtedeltakerne fra USA og Europa hadde veldig like erfaringer med hvordan «Israelsvenner» og enkelte jødiske organisasjoner, forsøker å kneble og svarte oss, ikke ved å komme med saklig motargumentasjon, men ved å stille spørsmål ved vår integritet. Det er kort vei fra å komme med en kritisk ytring om dagens israelske politikk, til å få merkelappen «antisemitt» klistret på seg. Det gjorde inntrykk på meg da en av palestinerne i møtet gav klart uttrykk for at dette må vi tåle - sammen. Prisen for å snakke sant om okkupasjonen, enten du gjør det i Israel og Palestina eller andre steder i verden, er en personlig belastning, der en opplever «mobbing» og usle motangrep. Men det må ikke få oss til å tie, tvert imot. Vi må avsløre den organiserte motstanden mot kritikere av israelsk politikk.

Møtet skjedde samtidig som kommuneadvokaten i Oslo konkluderte med at Oslo kommunes vedtak om å ikke handle med israelske bosettere på Vestbredden, er lovlig. Det samsvarer med internasjonal rett om økonomisk samhandling med en okkupasjonsmakt. Jeg merket meg at vår statsminister og en representant for regjeringspartiet KrF, var raskt ute med å advare mot Oslo kommunes vedtak og omtale det som «boikott av Israel». Et slikt vedtak kunne føre til antisemittisme og gjøre situasjonen for jøder - også i Norge - vanskelig. Denne reaksjonen føyer seg inn i et internasjonalt handlingsmønster, regissert av israelske myndigheter og deres støttespillere.

På møtet i Amman ble det snakket mye om at det som tidligere ble omtalt som brudd på internasjonal lov, og derfor ble reagert på, nå aksepteres som «normalt». Språket villeder. Tidligere var for eksempel «ulovlige bosetninger» *alle* bosetningene i de palestinske områdene, nå er de bosetninger som israelske myndigheter ikke har godkjent. De andre omtales som «lovlig bosetninger» - men noe slikt finnes ikke i den internasjonale rettsorden.

Norge er forpliktet på Genèvekonvensjonene, men vår statsminister argumenterer mot å følge dem når det gjelder handel med Israel. Granavold-erklæringen oppfordrer til økt økonomisk samkvem med Israel (og handelen har økt betydelig), men samtidig vil regjeringen bruke økonomiske sanksjoner mot regimer med vedvarende menneskerettighetsbrudd. Når Oslo kommune vil gjøre dette siste, får de kritikk. Dette henger ikke sammen, og våre israelske trossøsken reagerer, og med rette, skarpt på en slik unnvikelse fra forpliktelsen på internasjonal rett. Trumps «fredsplan» er et grelt eksempel på forakt for den internasjonale rettsorden og spilleregler.

Ingen vinner i lengden på en slik utvikling, selv om Netanyahu og hans støttespillere kan profitere på kort sikt. Det er lett å forstå hvorfor enkelte palestinere nå tar til orde for BDS (boikott, desinvesteringer og sanksjoner) mot Israel. Det er ingen fredsløsning i sikte, palestinerne var utelatt fra forhandlingene om Trumps plan. Det internasjonale samfunnet ser ut til å ha gjemt eller akseptert uretten mot palestinerne. Hva annet står igjen enn å presse Israel til å snu gjennom økonomiske virkemidler? Mobiliseringen mot BDS er et tegn på at dette virkemiddelet kan være kraftfullt.

De kristne palestinerne utfordret oss til å ta et kraftig oppgjør med alle former for teologi og bibelbruk som (bevisst eller ubevisst) bidrar til å legitimere dagens israelske politikk. Forholdene er nå blitt så kritiske at den verdensvide kirke må reagere, slik de gjorde mot de kirkene som i sin tid støttet apartheideologien og begrunnet den teologisk. «Nå handler det om den kristne tros integritet».

Forholdet til jødene og kirkas anti-judaistiske arv er vel kjent for oss i Europa. Det gjør at vi trår litt varsomt og vegrer oss mot å snakke om apartheid og boikott. De utfordringene vi har i Norge med dialogen med jødene, kjente mange andre seg igjen i. Det var interessant å merke at deltakerne fra USA og Sør-Afrika - og mange palestinere - ikke kjente til de europeiske kirkenes kompliserte relasjon til jødene, ei heller den nære historien vår om sviket mot jødene. Selvsagt visste de om holocaust, men tenkte på det som fortid, og ikke som oss (i hvert fall de godt voksne) at tragedien under naziregimet fortsatt er levende minner og åpne sår for mange jøder som lever i dag. Den gamle antisemittismen forsvant ikke med holocaust, men ligger som en understrøm i europeisk kulturhistorie - og popper nå opp igjen flere steder.

Vi hadde en god samtale om dette, og den var svært nyttig fordi vi forsto bedre hvorfor kritikken av Israel og virkemiddelbruk må utformes forskjellig i ulike kontekster. Sørafrikanske kristne kan gjenkjenne apartheid i Israel, og de kan snakke om positive erfaringer med boikott. For tyske kirkefolk forholder dette seg veldig annerledes.

Oppfølging i MKR:

- Solidaritet koster, men det styrker kirkens - og troens - troverdighet
- Vi må utfordre kristen-sionismen og destruktiv «israelsvenn-teologi» i Norge. Hvordan?
- Vi må arbeide med å avklare begrepet «antisemittisme» - helst i dialog med jødene og HL-senteret
- Vi må utfordre - enda tydeligere - norske myndigheters praktiske politikk til å respektere internasjonal lov - også når det gjelder Israel. Bør vi be om et nytt møte med KrF?

Nytt Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF)

PIEF ble opprettet av KV som et økumenisk møtested for å samordne og styrke dert globale solidaritets- og «advocacy»-arbeidet for en rettfærdig fred i Palestina og Israel. PIEF har bl.a. arbeidet med Kirkeuka, og en del av PIEF-medlemmene var engasjert i utarbeidelsen av Kairos-dokumentet.

For å gjøre en lang historie kort: de senere årene har PIEF vært preget av usikkerhet i forhold til mandatet og relasjonen til KVs styrende organer. Enkelte ønsket et forum som var mer selvstendig, og det var tendenser til (eller frykt for) at PIEF hadde en egen (åpen eller skjult) agenda. Dette kom til uttrykk når det gjaldt eierskap til Kairos-dokumentet og ulike syn på BDS. Det har også vært en del uro om materiellet til Kirkeuka.

Fra KVs ledelse ønsket en derfor å klargjøre mandatet og tydeliggjøre at PIEF ikke kan gå lenger enn KVs offisielle politikk. På bakken i Palestina opplevde enkelte at KV ikke var tydelig nok/gikk langt nok i kritikk og virkemidler i Israel-Palestina konflikten.

Generalsekretæren grep inn og la ned det gamle PIEF for et par år siden, med den hensikt å gi et nytt forum en tydeligere plattform. Dette ville Olav Fykse Tveit få gjort før han slutter, og derfor inviterte han til møtet i Amman. Han holdt en meget god innledning ved møtestart, og det er tydelig at han nyter bred tillit hos alle parter.

Etter et par svært intense og lange dager, med mye hardt arbeid, ble vi enige om en vei videre. PIEF skal gjenoppstå og med en ny struktur som ivaretar relasjonen til KVs styrende organer. Det var enighet om at PIEF ikke har mandat til å uttale seg i kraft av seg selv, men at gode ideer og forslag til kampanjer o.l. tas videre til rette instanser, enten det er i KVs struktur eller gjennom andre organisasjoner som deltar i PIEF. For eksempel kan folk knyttet til LVF, delta i PIEF og ta saker videre i LVF-strukturen. En deltaker fra Den norske kirke kan la seg inspirere og ta med ideer som er relevante for oss å følge opp, til Den norske kirke.

PIEF skal ikke ha faste medlemmer, men deltakere, og være åpent og fleksibelt nok til at forumet kan bli et bredt økumenisk møtested. Det skal være åpent for alle som deler KVs grunnleggende syn på Israel/Palestina-konflikten. Det siste innebærer at også israelske grupper og for eksempel messianske jøder er velkommen til å delta i forumet, dersom de kjenner seg hjemme i det økumeniske fellesskapets arbeid for en rettferdig fred. Meningsmotstandere vil kunne inviteres som gjester og innledere.

KVs generalsekretær vil nedsette en referansegruppe som skal arbeide med alle KVs programmer i Israel og Palestina, i tråd med strategier vedtatt av sentral - og eksekutivkomiteen. PIEF vil være en av mange oppgaver for denne referansegruppa. Noen av medlemmene fra referansegruppa vil, sammen med andre fra forumet, utgjøre en «PIEF Core Group». Slik sikres tilstrekkelige bånd mellom PIEF og KVs styrende organer.

Jeg går ikke nærmere inn på detaljene i struktur og mandat, her holder det å nevne at møtet ble svært vellykket, og at det var en svært god stemning på slutten. Vi var glade over at vi hadde kommet fram til en løsning som alle var tilfreds med. Ikke bare generalsekretæren, men også mange andre møtedeltakere, bidro til konstruktive samtaler og samlende løsninger.

Møtet hadde ikke mandat til å fatte endelige beslutninger. Forslagene tas videre i KVs struktur for formelle vedtak, og saken må drøftes med partnerne som er aktuelle deltakere i det nye forumet. Når forumet møtes, vil det bli utarbeidet en mer konkret handlingsplan.

Oppfølging i MKR:

- Vi følger med på etableringen av et nytt PIEF og bør satse på å delta i forumet.
- Vi informerer aktuelle norske samarbeidspartnere om planen om et nytt PIEF.