



World Council of Churches

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General Secretariat

Geneva, May 5, 2015

Greetings to Pax Christi International - 70th Anniversary Celebration

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We send this greeting on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of Pax Christi International. It is a privilege to send these good wishes to Bethlehem where peacemakers of Pax Christi from around the world are gathered to celebrate. Bethlehem is a common home of hope and of work for both Pax Christi and the World Council of Churches.

We greet you with a sense of gratitude, of confidence and of hope. We are grateful for the gift of the long association between the World Council of Churches and Pax Christi and its members in different places of ministry around the world. The founding of these two ecumenical associations shortly after World War Two reflects to this day the need for greater peace and unity among Christians and in our world. Pax Christi's witness to peace and reconciliation is borne by a network of 115 member organizations in over 50 countries. WCC and its 349 member churches are your neighbors in many of those same countries. It is a mark of the kind of collaboration we have that our respective presence in countries where the other is not present has, on occasion, allowed common advocacy messages and goals to be shared more widely. We are also grateful that, as organizations with members whose ministries are national or more local, our ministries are shaped by commitment to people in local communities suffering the effects of war and violent conflict.

We are grateful for the many opportunities to serve the cause of peace with which God has blessed Pax Christi. It has been a deep satisfaction for us and our member churches to share some of those opportunities. In the Cold War in Europe, which divided a war-torn continent again, Pax Christi was able to work in ways that served the causes of reconciliation and cooperation, as matters of faith, building relationships and pathways to peace which always informed and often complemented initiatives of the members of the World Council of Churches.

We greet you with confidence borne of the collaboration and cooperation which we have shared in recent years. The World Council of Churches and Pax Christi International have long been involved in local organizing and international advocacy to defend human rights in conflict areas and to reduce and eventually eliminate armaments that by no means comply with international humanitarian law. Our common work on nuclear weapons, where we share small successes, for the Arms Trade Treaty, anti-personnel landmines and cluster bombs, where solid advances have been made, and now the new challenge of stopping killer robots, are cases in point.

The confidence we share is rooted, perhaps, in the thorny, parched soil of Palestine where you meet today. We have been inspired by the work of your members there and around the world. We take heart to stand together ecumenically with you and with the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant communities there. Our common purpose is manifest in many ways. We would like to mention Pax Christi's active participation in the WCC Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, especially the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel and the unity of purpose it demonstrates each year. We commend you for your faithfulness in pursuing the nonviolent transformation of conflict and the long pursuit of justice in the Middle East, and other regions.

Finally, we commend you in hope on this 70th anniversary. Hope for the ways your Catholic movement for peace and reconciliation will surely continue and work in an ecumenical spirit. Hope in your message and method of non-violence. Hope in our ongoing joint endeavors -- that for the good of those who struggle we may continue to walk the way of peace together. Hope that members of the international community may gain a sense of the motivation and the contribution of Christians uniting for peace from our cooperation. Shared hope and assurance as we together follow the One born in Bethlehem, whose name we bear, the Saviour, the Prince of Peace.

Wishing you God's blessings,



Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary