

Christmas Message 2014

from the World Council of Churches general secretary

Dear friends and companions on the journey:

I greet you in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! May the blessing of this season of advent – of expectation – be realized in your homes and your communities, and particularly in the lives of those who have to leave their homes in times like this.

This is a time when we are all called to look forward to more abundant expressions of the loving purposes of God:



"The Magi" by He Qi
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Please see www.heqiart.com

"Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." (*Isaiah 60: 1*)

This is a confession of the great hope that God will guide all people out of the darkness, and lead us toward the fulfilment of God's promise:

"Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (*Isaiah 60: 3*)

The early Christian author Tertullian associated these "kings" of Hebrew prophecy with the Magi of Matthew's gospel, wise scholars who followed the light in their desire to accompany Jesus:

"In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.'" (*Matthew 2: 1-2*)

Thinking the reigning king was a reliable source of direction, the Magi made their way to the royal court before recognizing that the light had been drawing them elsewhere. They told King Herod of their errand before seeing that his concerns were very different from their own. The way to the light may be another than we see ourselves.

And so, after they had found Jesus, the continuing pilgrimage of the Magi took them homeward “by another way” – not by Herod’s highway but along a path of proclamation and praise, of peace and justice.

In this season of Christmas and Epiphany, of the Dedication and Baptism of Jesus, we rejoice in that good news which drew shepherds from nearby fields and Magi from a great distance: the good news that continues to shine its glorious light over the whole world.

However great the darkness of our time, God is our light. We pray:

Lead us by your light, Lord God! Guide us as we undertake this pilgrimage of justice and peace.

Thanks be to God,

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General secretary, World Council of Churches

[Click here for a sound recording of the WCC general secretary reading this message.](#)

WCC Christmas video 2014

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, by the end of 2013 the WCC had 345 member churches representing more than 500 million Christians from Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other traditions in over 140 countries. The WCC works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

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