

## Patriarch Matthias: “Peace is the message of every day”



Patriarch Matthias at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. © Peter Williams/WCC

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**Patriarch Abune Matthias of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church offered a special greeting at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva on 10 February, commending the success of global ecumenical work while acknowledging the grave crises tearing the world apart.**

Patriarch Matthias is in the midst of a four-day visit to Geneva, during which he spoke with students and staff at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, met with World Council of Churches (WCC) senior leadership, and toured the Orthodox Centre in Switzerland.

In his remarks, he brought greetings on behalf of more than 50 million members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. He also commended the WCC for remaining dedicated to its founding principle of forging unity between and among the worldwide Christian community.

The WCC's work is more vital now than ever, said Patriarch Matthias. “Compared to that historic time of the creation of the WCC, today Christianity is under assault, challenge and confrontation throughout the world,” he said. “Let it be clear, therefore, that the principle and objectives articulated when the WCC was established have relevance and meaning today more than ever.”

Much has been achieved to date, yet much more remains to be done, he said. “And may I stress that in all the activities and successes of the past, you, the staff of the organization and your predecessors, have played key roles – and must in the future continue to do so—not only by carrying out the normal functions expected of you, but also by devising creative and innovative ways of meeting the intricate challenges of each member church worldwide.”

He cited the injustice, war, strife, poverty, and narrow nationalism tearing the world apart or tearing it down.

“Hence the WCC has been calling not only member churches and ecumenical councils but also governments, world leaders, and social movements to stand together in the fight against devastation – responding to manmade and natural disasters, ensuring peace, justice and dignity of all, and making our earth a safer place to live.”

No human philosophy, high technology or weapons can bring peace and reconciliation better than the word of God, he continued. The WCC’s pilgrimage of justice and peace continues to guide people in their mission of teaching and mobilizing churches and individuals to stand for peace and justice.

“In our church, peace is the message of every day,” he said. “We have faithfully followed the call of the WCC for interreligious dialogue to be integrated as an important part of our ecumenical responsibility.”

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, established in the first century, now has more than 50 million members; 35,000 parish churches; 1,500 ancient monasteries (including those in Jerusalem); 50 archbishops and bishops; 400,000 ordained clergy, and 20,000 classical and ecclesiastical schools.

[Read full speech by Patriarch Matthias](#)

[Web streaming of speech by Patriarch Matthias](#)

[Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church](#)