

We are called to work on a peace built on trust, not power



WCC president for Europe, Archbishop emeritus Dr Anders Wejryd. Photo: Peter Williams/WCC

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Security built on the assumption that the power to destroy serves the purpose of peace is unsafe security, states World Council of Churches (WCC) president for Europe and Archbishop emeritus Dr Anders Wejryd, adding that trust is necessary for a real peace.

Archbishop emeritus Dr Anders Wejryd was one of the keynote speakers at the 30th Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt Hiei near Kyoto, Japan, held from 3 to 4 August. More than 800 participants took part in this interreligious gathering of prayer for peace in the world under the theme “Now is the time to overcome separation and hatred and cooperate for world peace”.

Countries and individuals are deceived by unsafe security, said Wejryd. “Security, which builds on the assumption that the power to destroy serves the purpose of stability, prosperity and peace, is unsafe security and hence no real security.”

The suffering of people in Japan and neighboring countries during and after the war as well as what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki is slowly but gradually becoming forgotten. “If the world is not acting soon to limit and outlaw nuclear weapons, we are possibly in for a new catastrophe”, warned the archbishop, adding that nuclear weapons are indiscriminate, disproportional and threaten the basis of our sheer existence.

The action by a large number of UN member states to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons is an encouraging sign - on 7 July 2017, a treaty was produced having a sufficient majority of the member states behind it. In the preamble religious leaders are specifically mentioned as having been instrumental in getting this going. Now it has to become ratified, and most of the work is still to be done.

“Regardless of which religion we live with - relations, interdependence and friendship are prerequisites for trust. And trust is necessary for real peace. To have faith is related to having trust.”

We have to do our utmost to convince our peoples that openness and relations between nations is the only viable future, said Wejryd. “Religious leaders have so often lent themselves to nationalist and belligerent words and deeds. The only true and lasting nationalism of our time, though, is internationalism, trust, further development and respect of international law. What side and whose side we as religious leaders and followers are on, makes a difference!”

We are living in a time when humankind is making a profound and decisive impact on the ecosystems of the earth, and we are equipped with instruments, which can wipe out our civilizations. “We are immensely powerful and therefore immensely frightening to and dangerous for ourselves. Sometimes power paralyzes more than powerlessness. Let us not be paralyzed. We are created to take responsibility to serve life! We are called upon to work for real peace and security built on trust and love, if we are not to be deceived by unsafe security”, said Wejryd.

Among 20 other keynote speakers, Wejryd addressed the gathering during the second session of the 30th Anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on 4 August, called *Issues around nuclear energy and how to achieve the total abolition of nuclear weapons*.

[WCC news release \(8 July 2017\): Banning nuclear weapons, 122 governments take leadership where nuclear powers have failed](#)

[On Hiroshima-Nagasaki anniversary, new treaty to ban nuclear weapons kindles hope](#)

[WCC work on nuclear arms control](#)

[Archbishop em. Anders Wejryd, WCC president for Europe](#)