



## SCRIPTURE FOR TODAY

“You call me Teacher and Lord - and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.” - John 13:13-15



World Council of Churches  
10th Assembly  
30 October to 8 November 2013  
Susan, Republic of Korea

## In Seas of Conflict, “We’re Part of the Problem”

Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee gave a stirring challenge to the church to fulfill its God-ordained mandate to be advocates for peace in the midst of a violent, troubled and unjust world.

Speaking at yesterday’s Peace Plenary in the Auditorium, Gbowee – a peace activist, social worker and women’s rights advocate from Liberia – said: “What I see today breaks my heart. Churches have either been co-opted by governments and so do not function in the way they should; or they have become bystanders: silent.

“And who is the church? We are the church. And for each and every one of us who stands by in the face of injustices, in the face

of conflict, and refuses to take a stand – we might as well just be part of those who shoot people because we’re part of the problem.”

Gbowee led a nonviolent movement of Christian and Muslim women that played a crucial role in ending civil war in her native country in 2003. Yesterday’s Peace Plenary built on earlier plenaries on justice, mission, unity and Asia; and challenged participants to help make real God’s vision for peace in our world.

The Most Rev. Dr Thabo Makgoba, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town and head of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, moderated the session. “We want to acknowledge the

sea of injustices,” he said. “We want to say we worship the God of hope; the God who even within the sea of those injustices still calls each of us to be a peacemaker.”

Inviting Gbowee and Dr Chang Yoon Jae to the stage, he said together they would be wrestling with “some of their longings for peace in our time in this world.”

In a moving moment to symbolise our personal duty to be peacemakers, the lights in the Auditorium were switched off and Dr Yoon Jae lit a candle and led participants in a rendition of gospel favorite *This Little Light of Mine*.

Yoon Jae – a professor of theology at Ewha Women’s University

in Seoul and a member of the Presbyterian Church in Korea – said he dreamed of a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

“East Asia is the only place in the world where nuclear bombs have actually been dropped,” he said. “And since the WCC Assembly in New Delhi in 1961, the number of states that have nuclear weapons has more than doubled.

“I believe that in order to stop the dangerous light outside of us, we have to start a light inside us. In order to turn off the dangerous light outside, we have to turn on the light of peace and life inside us.”

by Chine Mbubaegbu



## “Alternative Tourism” to Palestine

The Alternative Tourism Group – Study Center (ATG) specializes in offering tours to the Holy Land that reflect the teachings of Jesus Christ in the land where He walked.

In fact, Rami Kassis, ATG executive director, believes a pilgrimage is more meaningful when pilgrims travel on foot. He also pairs tourists with a Palestinian guide who accompanies them as they visit socio-cultural centers, engage in Palestinian theological discourses, and stay with families.

When visiting other countries or even other communities, Kassis urged people to take their tours while looking through a lens of justice.

“There is a need to support justice tourism because it promotes peace and justice; profiles a true image of Palestine; enhances awareness of political realities; and ensures sustainable, economic, social and cultural development,” he said.

Kassis presented his views in a discussion initiated by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) in Madang Hall yesterday.

EAPPI, a World Council of Churches program, brings internationals to the West Bank to experience life under occupation. Ecumenical Accompaniers provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor and report human rights abuses and support Palestinians and Israelis working together for peace.

by Ismael T. Fisco Jr.



## Fighting Casteism – With Cartoons

The Rev. Sunil Raj Philip is drawing “cartoons with a flavor of theological flair” for those who come to his booth in Madang Hall.

The charge? Your time.

Philip, a priest with the Church of South India, uses the one-on-one time he has drawing participants’ caricatures to discuss with them the struggles of Dalits in India.

Dalits, formerly known as Untouchables, are at the lowest tier of India’s caste system. They face political and social discrimination. Dalits who have converted to Christianity or Islam are especially targeted.

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) has launched a campaign against casteism, explaining that no one can serve both Christ and caste. This campaign is also supported by the WCC. Some churches in India are 100 percent Dalit, while some are a mix of Dalits and the dominant caste. Sometimes, “the cries of Dalits are not heard much by the leadership of the church,” Philip said.

In addition to ending casteism in the church, the NCCI’s Commission on Dalits is working to reduce discrimination against Dalit students, who often face such difficult circumstances that they drop out of school. “We expect international support for Dalit Christians,” Philip said, urging the Christian community around the world to stand in solidarity with Dalits and the NCCI.

by Bethany Daily

# Pilgrimage for Water Justice



“Water is life, and water is for life. If we need to sustain life, we have to address the issue of water,” said Dinesh Suna, coordinator of the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN).

The EWN, which was born from the previous assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Porto Alegre in 2006, is a network of churches and Christian organizations that promotes people’s access to water worldwide. Primarily, it works to provide an ecumenical platform for churches to exchange ideas and strengthen each other in creating awareness on water issues.

“One cannot live without water, and so nobody should be denied access to water. It is a basic right.

“Because of our continuous lobbying and collective efforts, the United Nations has recognized water and sanitation as human rights. But the biggest challenge now is to make that recognition of the UN as a reality.

“Even then, 780 million people still have no access to water. Also, there are 2.5 billion people who do not have access to sanitation. We have to focus our efforts on how we can bridge this gap,” Suna said.

Suna called upon the churches to continue to advocate for water and sanitation: “The churches should lobby for the governments to implement this law. The recognition is not enough; it should be implemented. The WCC and all faith communities should continue our pilgrimage for water justice.”

This year marks the International Year of Water Cooperation, while March 22 is recognized as International Water Day.

by Ismael T. Fisco Jr.



# Celebrating Women in Ministry

NEED TO  
KNOW 



## Departure Information

### Departure by Plane:

There will be shuttles to the airport from the hotels on 9 and 10 November. You will find a departure schedule at your hotel. Because of traffic and international check-in, you should plan to leave the hotel four hours before your departure time.

If you are leaving before 9 November or after 10 November, ask your hotel for information about the Airport Limousine Bus and make your own arrangements.

Visit Raptim Travel at the information desk in Madang Hall if you would like to double check your return flight.

### Departure by Train:

If you leave by train, please take a taxi to the train station. You should leave for the station 1.5 hours before your train departs.

**Goodbye Sale at WCC Bookstore**  
In anticipation of the bookstore closing today, there is a sale on all items -- 30 to 50% off.

## Friday, 8 November, revised schedule

8:30 Morning Prayer (Worship Hall)  
9:15 Business Plenary (Business Hall)  
10:45 Break  
11:15 Closing Plenary (Business Hall)  
14:15 Sending Prayer (Worship Hall)  
16:15 Central Committee (Business Hall)

“All of us are serving our Lord in special ways that will make a difference in people’s lives and in the world,” the Rev. Cynthia Walton-Leavitt said with tears in her eyes.

She was looking at the faces of scores of women in ministry that line the walls of the International Association of Women Ministers (IAWM) booth in Madang Hall.

Throughout the assembly, female church leaders have been stopping by to have their photo taken and pinned proudly on the wall.

“We’re celebrating women in ministry,” said Walton-Leavitt, who leads a Presbyterian

church in Oneonta, New York, USA. “I have gotten to know these women a little bit and have heard their stories.

“Their lives are so precious and we’re here to celebrate them by recognizing them with their photos, which we’re giving to them as a gift at the end of the assembly.”

But do you have to wear a clerical collar to be featured on the wall? No, said Walton-Leavitt.

“We interpret ministry broadly. It’s not only women who have ‘Rev.’ before their names. It includes women who have not been ordained but serve in other capacities. It includes both women who are heads of na-

tional councils of churches and women who serve the poor with very little recognition or thanks. This booth is to celebrate the diversity of those women and the diversity of ministries.”

The IAWM was started in 1919 in St Louis, Missouri, US, by Rev. Madeleine Southard. The group is international and interdenominational, with the aim of supporting and connecting women ministers across the globe.

Treasurer Rev. Dr Carol Brown from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, US, joined the association in 1976 when she felt isolated and lonely as one of few women church leaders in her congregation at that time. The needs

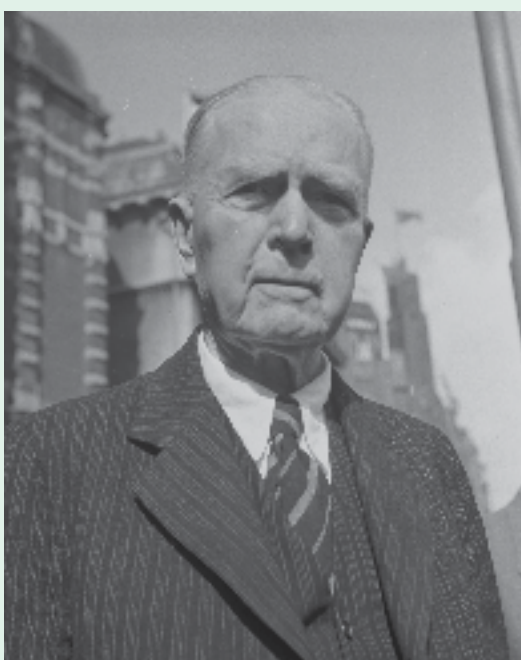
the association deals with are very different today than they were then.

“Although there are a lot more women in ministry, there are still very few women who are senior pastors in larger churches. So, women still need support and encouragement to do so. There are some very capable women out there who won’t ever have the opportunity to be in the pulpit where they can preach, grow and be recognized.”

[www.womenministers.org](http://www.womenministers.org)

by Chine Mbubaegbu

## WCC IN HISTORY



## John R. Mott’s Words of Sending

“Edinburgh 1910” is remembered as a seminal moment. One of the World Missionary Conference’s eight preparatory commissions addressed the topic “Cooperation and the promotion of unity,” and the Continuation Committee led to the creation of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the journal International Review of Mission (IRM).

John R. Mott, the young conference chair, would be elected nearly four decades later as the first honorary president of the WCC. His closing remarks in Edinburgh were often quoted: “The end of the Conference is the beginning of the Conquest. The end of the Planning is the beginning of the Doing.”

Today we may debate the propriety of “Conquest” as a category for mission, but we have accomplished a good deal of Planning in Busan – now, we are called to do .

by Theodore Gill

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# “Experiencing Christ In a Different Way”



Caught in the rush of Madang Hall yesterday, Marian Ceena Varghese suddenly found herself drawn to the exhibit hosting a traditional Korean tea ceremony, or darye.

Translated as “day tea rite,” or “etiquette for tea,” the darye has been observed among Koreans for more than 1,000 years.

Stepping into the colorfully set booth, Varghese, a youth delegate with the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, was willing to immerse herself in that ancient culture.

“To me, it was amazing to see the serenity and calmness of that ceremony, to experience that culture,” she said.

That experience, she said, reflects her larger feelings about participating in the World Council of Churches (WCC) Assembly. “This week, I have seen so much cultural diversity but, at the same time, we have a common faith in Christ that brings together different cultures. Not only that, but I have been able to experience Christ in a different way.”

As the assembly closes, Varghese said she believes the thousands of participants here will return home and truly make a difference in the lives of their countries and their communities.

“I believe we have been coming up with statements here that will actually – God willing -- make a difference in the public issues. We as Christians need to make our statements heard by the government. And I feel like we are all in this together.”

Another participant from the Malankara Orthodox

Syrian Church, Dr. Saramma Varghese, said the assembly brought a feeling of celebration to her heart.

“To me, it has been a very happy experience to meet people from different churches and from different parts of the world.” After attending the WCC’s International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica in 2011, she decided she would attend her first assembly.

“I feel it’s an honor to be able to talk, here, with some

of the best theologians in the world.”

Standing in Madang Hall, the women drew into conversation another delegate from the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Lijin Raju. “I have learned that the WCC isn’t just another organization that suggests how to uphold Christian principles. The people within WCC carry the action out. I believe the WCC is out there working hard for justice and peace in a Christian manner.”

by Susan Kim

## WHO ATTENDED THE WCC 10<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY?



**There were 2,663 registered participants. They represented 141 countries.**

The WCC 10th Assembly elected the Central Committee yesterday. The 150-person Central Committee is:

13%	Africa	39%	women
31%	Asia	61%	men
1%	Caribbean	5%	Indigenous Peoples
31%	Europe	2%	persons with disabilities
3%	Latin America	68%	ordained
3%	Middle East	32%	laypeople
14%	North America		
3%	Pacific		



# Peacemaking Must Come From Within the Church



Halima Ibrahim speaks about women peacemakers.

The church must empower women who are working for peace, said women religious leaders at a workshop yesterday.

Male and female religious leaders alike should use the pulpit as a platform to speak against domestic violence and violence against women, they agreed. The pulpit should also be a place from which women peace workers are supported, added Leymah Gbowee.

Gbowee is a Liberian peacemaker who was awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for her work in leading a nonviolent movement of Muslim and Christian women that played a pivotal role in ending Liberia's civil war in 2003.

The church is sometimes silent or even complicit in situations of domestic violence. Women who tell their religious leaders about domestic violence they experience are sometimes told that it's the price they must pay

to keep their marriage intact. "What can be done about this?" asked one workshop participant.

"Until we take up women's issues, we will continue to be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal, as the Bible says," Gbowee said. It's important for the church to recognize and confront problems within, she said, adding that problems in society mirror problems in the church.

"It's easier to mobilize against rape 'out there,' domestic violence 'out there,' corruption 'out there,' Gbowee said. "We can't be peacemakers if we don't deal with issues 'in here.'"

Peacemaking should come from within the church, or the church risks being a hypocrite, and the work of peace making cannot be delegated solely to men, Gbowee said, adding that men must empower women.

"Empowerment is giving up some of your power to someone

who is powerless," she said.

Women are better equipped as peacemakers than men in many ways, said Halima Ibrahim, a Muslim peacemaker in Somalia, which faced two decades of violent conflict.

In many societies, women are the ones who wake up every day in difficult situations and face a full day of work, she said. They are also more tuned in to what is happening on a grassroots level.

But women need access to education — which brings self-esteem — to be more effective as peacemakers and leaders, she said.

Men must be convinced to truly work with women for peace.

"We live in one world," Ibrahim said. "If we destroy this world, we don't have another one."

by Bethany Daily

# "The Whole World is a Mission Field"

We must adopt a broader sense of religious responsibility in order to truly serve the world as God's people, said Kook Il Han, speaking at the World Council of Churches (WCC) 10th Assembly in Busan.

"In the present era, the whole world is a mission field...and all the churches of the world are called to participate in mission," said Han, professor of missiology at Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (PCTS).

"All churches of the world are to cooperate in Christ, the head of the church beyond national and ethnic boundaries."

The Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) is in partnership with 35 denominations and six mission organizations worldwide, he said.

It is also important to carry out mission in partnership with local governments, he pointed out.

When PCK began its work in Vietnam, it first established a partnership with the commissariat of the Vietnamese government and various mission organizations.

"It was difficult at first to find contents for mission as the country was restrictive toward mission, but having found the local needs, over a thousand homes have been built," he said.

More than ever, he said, the Korean church as a whole has become global in its perspective. "Wherever the 7 million overseas Koreans live, there are bound to be Korean churches," he said. They play an important role of bridgehead for the 21st century world mission of the Korean church."

Han and his PCTS colleagues said they were pleased to have a forum at the WCC Assembly.

"It is required that other gifts and resources from the church traditions and experiences in each region be found and world mission be carried out with mutual respect," he said.

"The Korean church aims for mission approaches that are more effective and centered on local churches through partnerships with them."

by Susan Kim



## "Image from the Floor"



Young people shout "education not for sale," as a "flash mob" gathers in the hallway of BEXCO. Most were from the World Student Christian Federation and the Ecumenical Asia-Pacific Students and Youth Network.

## "Ear to the Floor"

**Niklas Eklov** @NiklasEklov [Follow](#)

Fabian of Costa Rica, born deaf shared his faith and journey for Peace through words and signs. I cried. #WCC #wccse @wcc2013

**Hung Ngoc Pham** @hungngocpham [Follow](#)

Next best thing to being in Busan: Korean take-out while watching the @wcc2013 live stream. #WCC pic.twitter.com/IXwwQnyRig

madang

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# MADANG MOMENTS

Snapshots from Around the Assembly

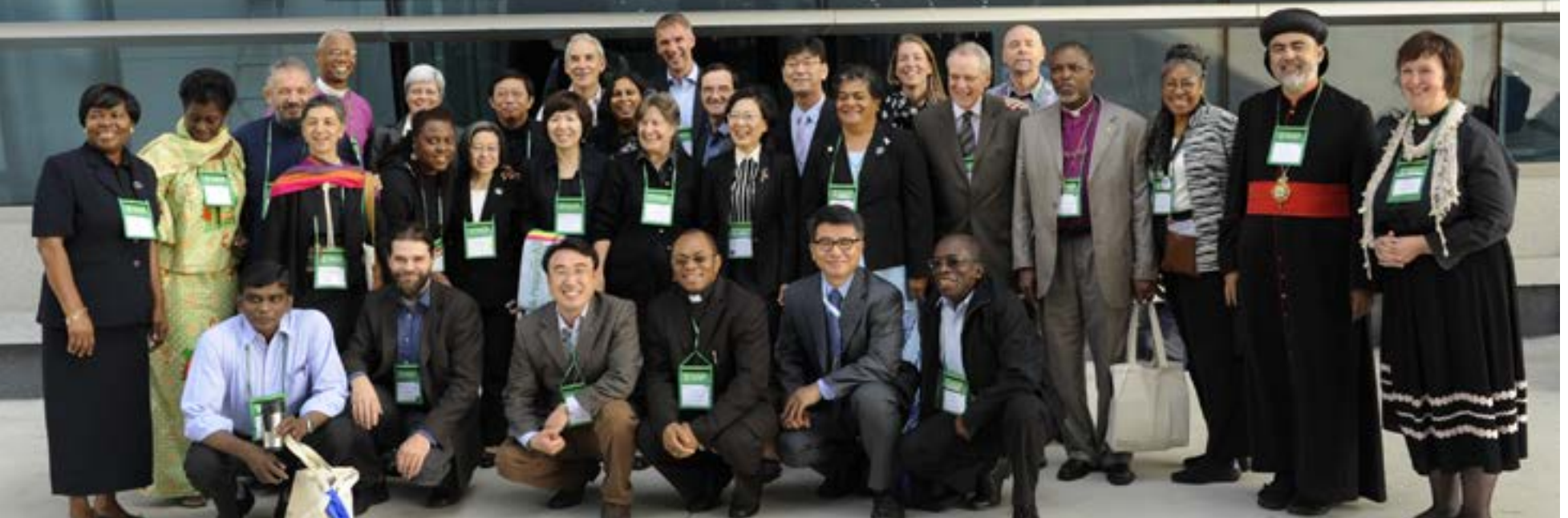
The Most Rev. Dr Thabo Makgoba, head of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, moderates yesterday's Peace Plenary in the Auditorium, while young participants hold up signs for peace in different languages.



The assembly's Bible study facilitators gathered together.



The assembly web team check their updates wearing traditional Korean outfits.





Leymah Gbowee, a peace activist, social worker and Nobel Peace Laureate from Liberia, attended the assembly and challenged the church to work for peace.



Erva Nittyvuopio from Finland at the Madang workshop on indigenous and non-indigenous reconciliation processes in the Nordic countries.



Joycia Thorat from Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) lights candles pointing out where ACT Alliance works in India.

World Council of Churches officials at the reporting plenary.

