



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Department for External Church Relations

Patriarch Kirill congratulates the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of World Council of Churches, and members of the WCC Central Committee on the 70th anniversary of WCC

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent a message of greetings to the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and members of the Central Committee who had assembled to hold a regular session dedicated to the 70th anniversary of establishment of the World Council of Church. The session is taking place in Geneva on 15-22 June 2018.

The Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit

General Secretary

World Council of Churches

Reverend Dr. Tveit,

Distinguished members of the WCC Central Committee:

I cordially congratulate you on the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches, a major international organization and unique platform for dialogue between Christians of various confessions. For the years of its work, the World Council of Churches has done much to develop inter-confessional dialogue, to promote justice in society and peace among nations.

The entry of the Russian Orthodox Church in the WCC in 1961 helped to open for it new opportunities for participating together with other Local Orthodox Churches in the dialogue, bearing witness to the apostolic and patristic understanding of the Church of God, her sacraments, liturgical traditions and pastoral work. In the situation of the Cold War, of our special concern were joint efforts in overcoming the confrontation between East and West and struggling for peace and justice in international relations.

We remember with gratitude the solidarity that our brothers and sister shared with us in the desire to overcome the restrictions of religious freedom as a consequence of the state policy formed by the ideology of militant atheism.

Today's challenges are no less serious than those of the 20th century were. In the situation of continued secularization of society, we have encountered a profound spiritual and moral crisis caused by a deviation from the faith and traditional Christian values. The world going through social and economic hardships has again found itself on the brink of a global war. It is my deep conviction that it is possible to solve accumulated problems only through the strengthening of our spiritual traditions and return to the values which have been brought to the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our attention and support is especially needed by Christians in the Middle East and North Africa, where there is a real threat of the complete disappearance of Christian communities in the region.

The Russian Orthodox Church has undertaken numerous efforts to help solve these problems, and we hope for an active cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

The World Council of Churches is conducting dialogue with state and public leaders all over the world, advocating the principles of justice and human dignity. We are grateful for the firm position expressed by the WCC General Secretary in his appeal to the Ukrainian authorities on behalf of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church subjected today to discrimination and persecution.

I wish you and all your co-workers good health, God's help and success in the field of inter-Christian cooperation.

Respectfully,

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia