



**World Council
of Churches**

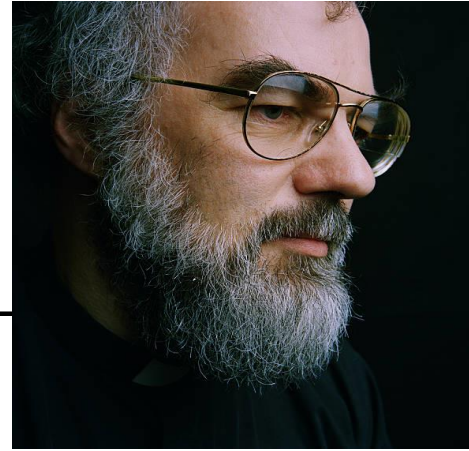
The World Council of Churches

Global ecumenism for today's Church





World Council of Churches



Rowan Williams

Living in Jesus' company, I have to live in a community that is more than just the gathering of those who happen to agree with me, because I need also to be surprised and challenged by the Jesus each of you will have experienced.



**World Council
of Churches**

Founded in 1948





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The WCC brings together churches, denominations and church fellowships...., representing over **580 million Christians** and including most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as many United and Independent churches. While the bulk of the WCC's founding churches were European and North American, today most member churches are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific. Now there are **352 member churches.**



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BASIS:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



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The primary **purpose** of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.



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Important to note:

- The Roman Catholic church, though not a full member of the WCC, works in partnership.
- A permanent Joint Working Group - jointly prepares **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** eg.
- Full members of some Commissions
- Had the largest delegation at the 2022 Assembly in Karlsruhe.



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An ecumenism across the world ... A global community

Christianity is not a Western religion...

Christians live out our faith in *very different* contexts

The Middle East, Africa, the Pacific, Latin America,
North America, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe

**How can each local church be a place where we
make this global community a living part of our life?**



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An ecumenism through time... an apostolic community

Christianity has common roots and heritage through many centuries..

The saints of the past are part of our communion and their wisdom and traditions are our inheritance.

How can each local church be a place where this communion through time is a living reality for us?



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Unity and Mission

Learning from a diverse global community

Sharing what we have in common

Working at resolving our differences – where
these threaten our unity

Receiving the gifts of each other's traditions



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Faith and Order





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BEM

1982

**BAPTISM, EUCHARIST
AND
MINISTRY**

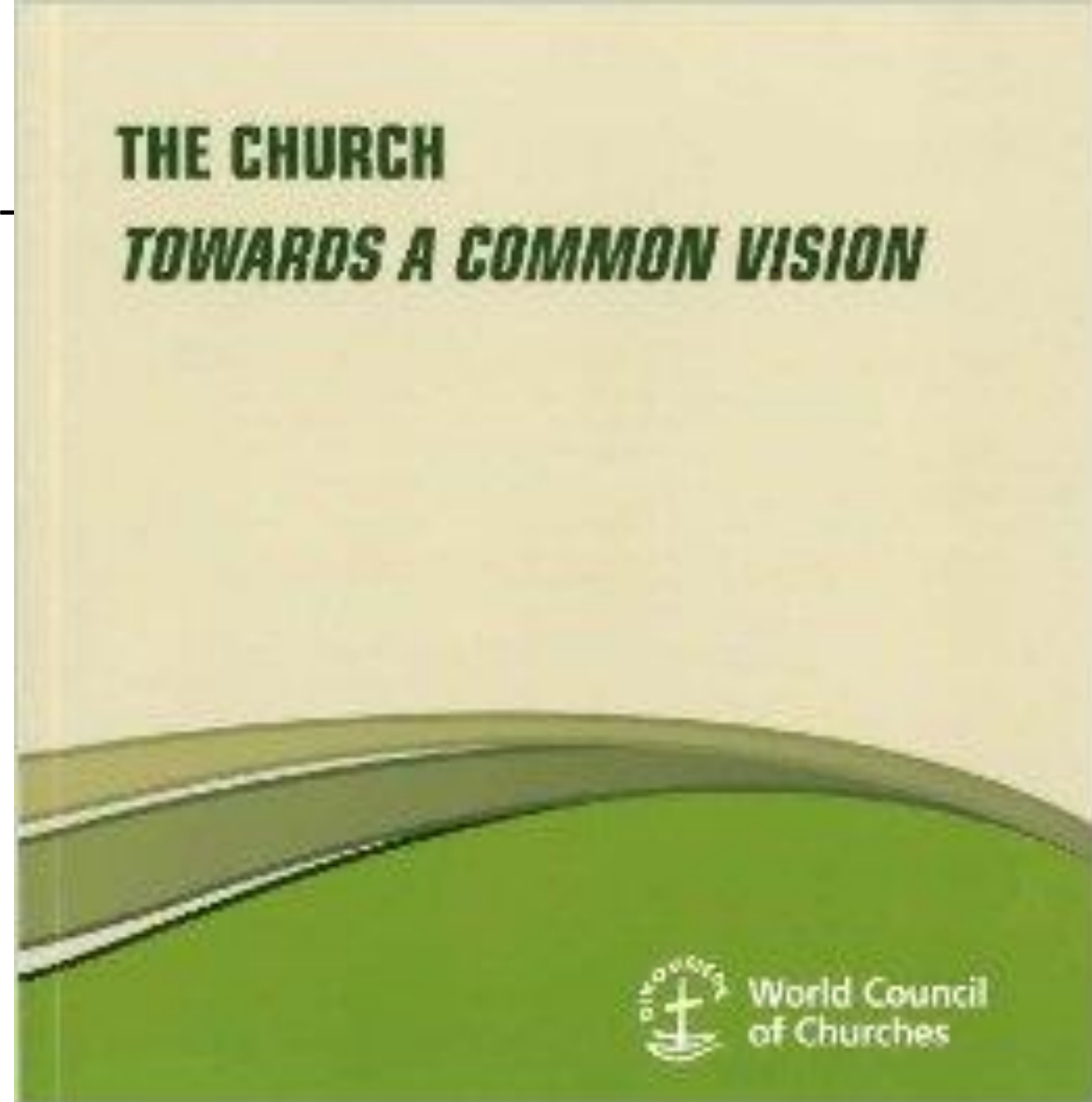




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TCTCV

2013





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- What are the essential things for a church to be a church? What makes something church rather than anything else?
 - What scriptural passages are most important in understanding what the Church is and what it is for?
- What do you think your own local church, or your own tradition, has to offer the whole Church?
- In what ways do you think that your church might be transformed and renewed through receiving the gifts treasured by other churches?





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Bringing
transformation....

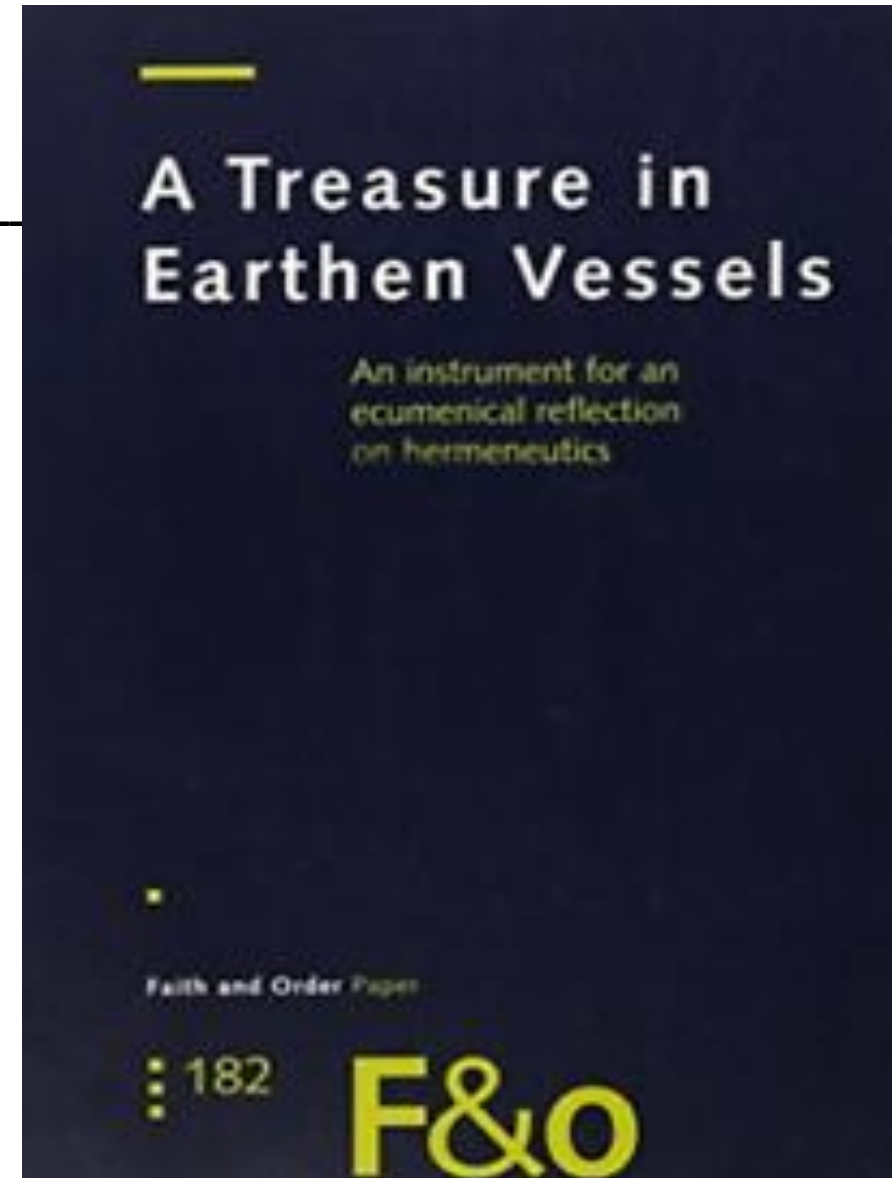
‘While the past
cannot be changed, what is
remembered and how it is
remembered can be transformed.’





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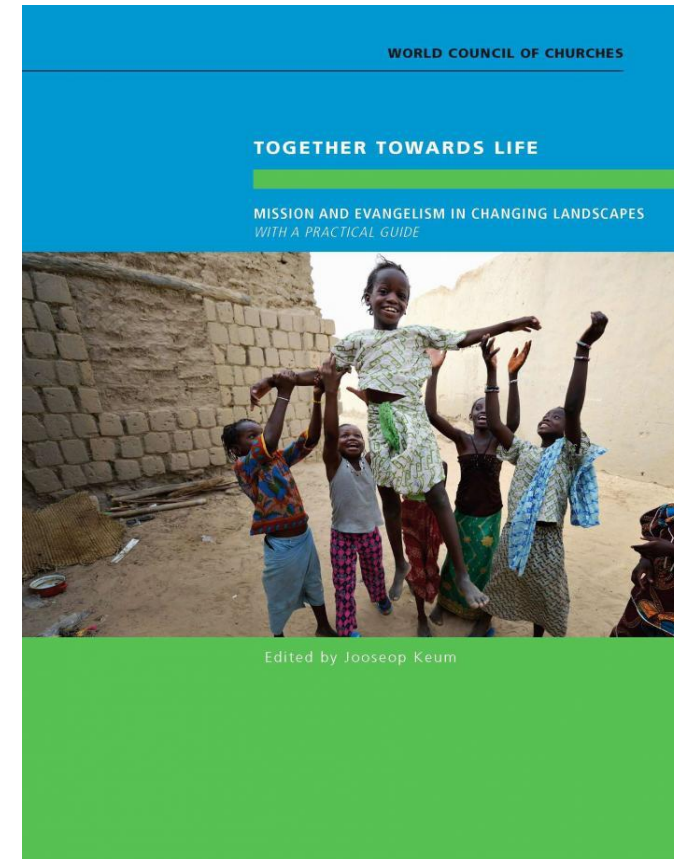
**Finding a new shared
language:
Tradition
and traditions**





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Reframing mission: from the margins





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Justice and peace

Seeking understanding together

Speaking with a common voice

Campaigning and advocacy with one another

Common action for justice



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Justice and peace

Ecumenical Accompaniment programme

Thursdays in Black

Season of creation

Public statements

Working with Act Alliance, UN and other humanitarian agencies



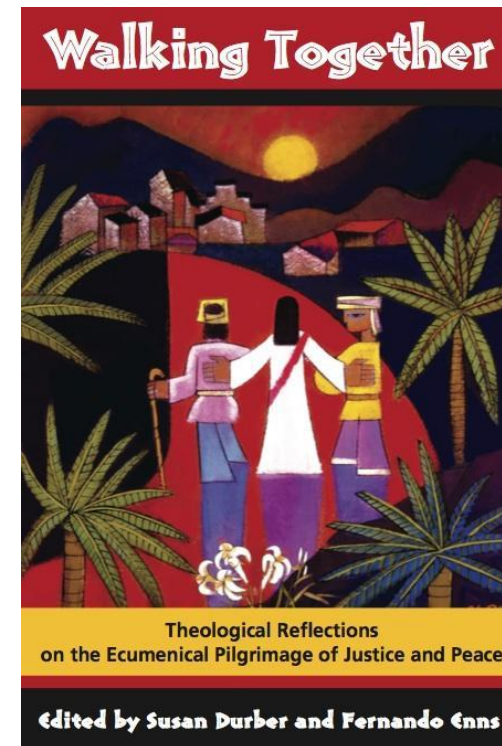
Deepening and strengthening the fellowship

- A pilgrimage approach... walking *with* each other

Leaving the conference room and the assembly hall to meet each other in the midst of daily realities.

Listening to one another

- ‘Pilgrim visits’ ...
 - *Celebrating the gifts*
 - *Visiting the wounds*
 - *Transforming injustice*



Bangladesh







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Armenia

Since 301





Indigenous people in North America





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Some key directions:

**Decolonising
ecumenism**





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Some key directions:

**Decolonising
ecumenism**





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Some key directions:

Collective for anti-racist ecumenism



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Some key directions:

**Creation
and climate**





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Some key directions:

Peace and reconciliation:

Korean peninsula, Columbia,

Palestine/Israel, Ukraine

WCC Assembly in 1948 – “War is contrary to the will of God”





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Some key directions:

**Disability: listening, inclusion,
theology**

The Gift of Being:

Called to Be a Church of All and for All





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Some key directions:

Interfaith





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**Relationship
at the centre**





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Relationship at the centre





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Relationship at the centre





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Relationship at the centre





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Praying together:

**Week of prayer for Christian unity
Resources for every day
Worship at big assemblies...**



New Delhi – 1961... Unity statement

- *We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.*
- It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work.'

Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity

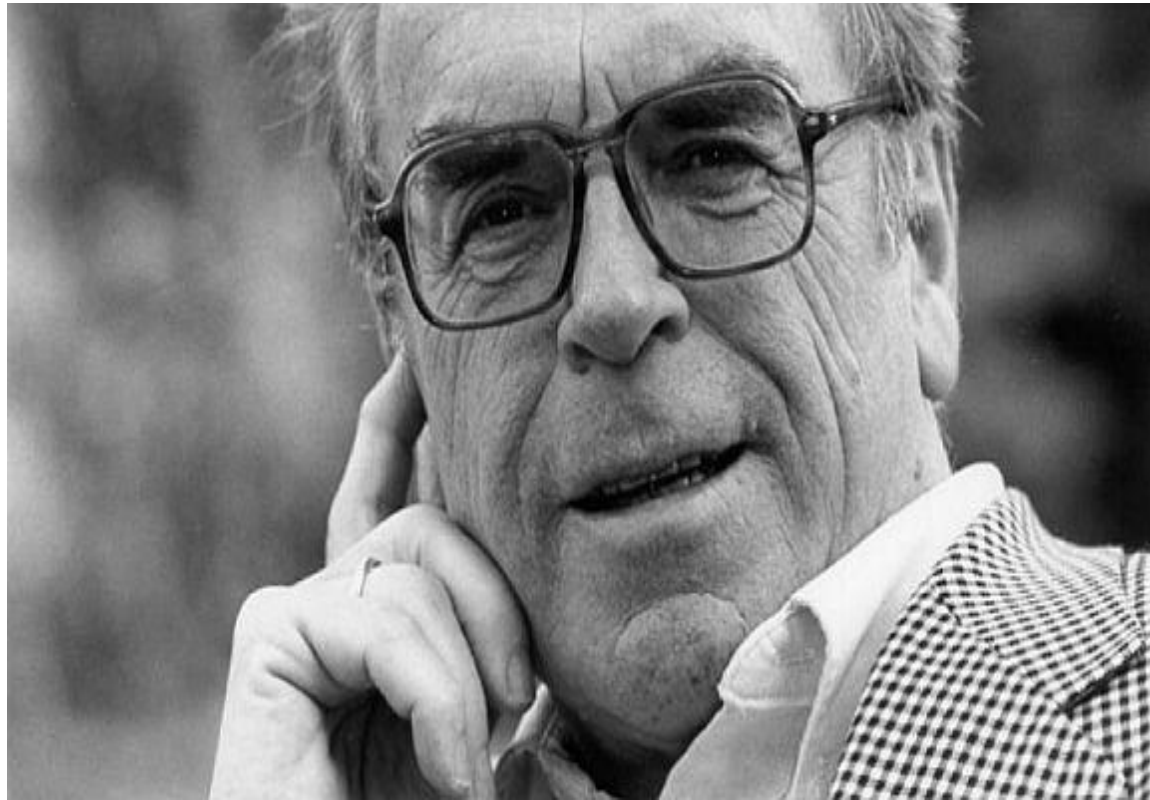




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The work of unity needs to be inspired anew by the love we have seen in Jesus Christ. It needs to begin with the love of the heart, the love that responds to Christ who said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34). The love of Christ is the spiritual source of the ecumenical movement. It moves us to walk together, compels us to pray together, and urges us to respond to Christ’s invitation to be of one spirit and one mind. The quality of the relationships between us and our churches will inspire our journey and our common work towards that full visible communion for which Christ prayed (John 17:20-23).

‘Reconciled diversity is the sleeping pill of the ecumenical movement....’ Jurgen Moltmann





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Opportunities to be involved:

- Do you belong to a member church? The WCC regularly asks for nominations....
- Young people – stewarding, youth membership of commissions or working groups, study at Bossey, theological study events alongside conferences...
- The Ecumenical Review
- A weekly news service and regular press releases
- Thursdays in Black
- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



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What could it mean locally and regionally?:

- Sharing news of WCC programmes, using resources, praying together...
- Using WCC study texts in theological education and local groups
- Using the 'pilgrim' model in local ecumenism
- Finding the global church on your doorstep...
- Praying together – 'the space in between'...
- Shared advocacy and action...



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How might 'all in each in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ' (or those who follow Jesus) make the *global nature of our faith* a living part of their life together?

What issues of faith and unity might it help you for the WCC to work on and take steps forward?

What would you want to see the WCC being and doing?

How might the model of 'Pilgrim visits' have an impact in your context and work?

"Celebrating the gifts, Visiting the wounds, Transforming injustice"