



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 791 6111 Fax: +41 22 791 0361
Email: infowcc@wcc-coe.org www.oikoumene.org

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6285
Direct e-mail: dcb@wcc-coe.org

Geneva, 16 September 2011

Kaiserswerther Generalkonferenz
Landhausstrasse 10
10717 Berlin
Germany

Respected General Secretary Dr. Christine-Ruth Mueller,
Respected Pastor Christof Naef, President of the Kaiserswerth General Conference
Honored members of Kaiserswerth leadership,
Dear brothers and sisters participating in the 150th anniversary of the Kaiserswerth
General Conference,

It is a great honor for me as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches to greet you all in this anniversary of Kaiserswerth General Conference! You represent a diaconal alliance of over 100 deaconess motherhouses and diaconal communities from four continents, which are committed to providing diaconal support, based on the Gospel values of love, community and solidarity, for people in need, living in different cultural and social contexts.

One hundred seventy five years ago, your mission started in the small town of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine when Pastor Theodor Fliedner and his wife Friederike, motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, tried to respond to the grave social needs of their time and context. They mobilized a small but committed number of people to take care of the orphans, to help ex-convicts find their way back to normal life, and to nurse the sick. The first small house grew rapidly, "like a seed sown on good ground" (Mt. 13:23), into a network of motherhouses. This is because the foundation of Kaiserswerth remained the Gospel but also because the founders and their successors knew to give a special space to women in the diaconal work and to focus on their education. In this way, the Gospel and human knowledge, spiritual commitment and professional skills were all combined in a proper way for the good of all those who were in need.

Being one of the oldest diaconal associations worldwide, Kaiserswerth possesses rich experience in the fields of education and pious community life and spiritual deepening structures in various cultures, regions and countries. Your impressive experience and knowledge in diaconal work, as well as the dynamic combination between diakonia and spirituality, is a model for the ecumenical diaconal work of our churches. Diakonia, Martyria and Leitourgia needs to remain the three ways of acting, witnessing and worshipping for all who hope and work that all "will be one" (John 17:21).

Your general conference will be focused on the future of your network. We all live in a world that changes rapidly and challenges us with new and unexpected problems. Based on your values and experience mentioned above, I am sure that the members of your General Conference will know how to answer the challenges you are facing and will discern the proper solutions for the good of your noble mission.

I wish you a successful General Conference!

Yours in our common Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olav Fykse Tveit". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary