

Is Another World Possible?

These are the concluding remarks of His Holiness Aram I at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches on 23rd February 2006, Porte Alegre, Brazil.

“God, in your grace, transform the world”.

With these words, in this Assembly, we prayed and hoped, we reflected and acted.

As we prepare to return to our churches and regions, we say: thank you Latin America, thank you Brazil; thank you for what you gave to the world community and to the ecumenical movement. We want to ensure the people and the churches of Latin America that we will take with us your concerns and struggle, your suffering and hope.

“Is another world possible?” In the course of the Assembly, we asked this crucial question to ourselves and to one another.

We grappled with this pertinent question in the perspective of socioeconomic injustice and in relation to Christian identity and religious plurality. We tackled it in the context of overcoming violence. We wrestled with it in conjunction with the unity of church. We also endeavoured to identify the challenges and spell out the implications of this burning question.

As Christians, we believe that the transformation of the world was already made a reality in the incarnation of the Son of God. It is both a gift of God and a calling. The church, as transformed community, is sent to the world to participate in God’s continuous transformation of the world in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe, therefore, that another world is possible.

- Another world is possible when the churches articulate concretely their faithfulness to the Gospel imperatives; by destroying all “walls of separation” (Eph. 2:14) and becoming the sign and anticipation of the unity of humankind in the midst of fragmentation and polarization; by becoming a beacon of hope in a world of hopelessness and uncertainty; by becoming the voice of the voiceless, empowering the powerless, and reflecting in their life and witness Jesus Christ as the light and the life of the world.

- Another world is possible when religions engage with each other in frank dialogue and close collaboration; when they accept and respect each other as integral part of one humanity in one world; when they reject all expressions of exclusiveness and fundamentalism, and enhance tolerance and mutual trust by building communities of reconciled diversities; when they promote non-violence and common moral values to sustain and govern the life of societies.

- Another world is possible, when nations combat injustice, poverty and racism in all their forms; when they invest in education rather than armaments; on human rights rather than national security; on socio economic development rather than consumption and corruption; in multilateral preventive policies rather than unilateral military intervention; when they develop a global governance undergirded by ethical principles and human rights; when they work together for a just and comprehensive peace based on justice.

Transformation of the world calls for repentance and forgiveness; it calls for reconciliation based on truth and justice.

The 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches as an event now comes to its end in Porto Alegre. The 9th Assembly as a process starts in the life of churches, in the WCC and the ecumenical movement.

We are called to discern the message and the challenge of the Assembly and take them to our churches, to our societies and to the world.

Let us, therefore, with renewed faith and vision, go to the world and recommit ourselves to work together for a world which is outlined in the Gospel, for a world that God has recreated and reconciled to Him in Jesus Christ.

“God, in your grace, transform the world.”