



9 September 2015

Take the noise of your songs away from me! I won't listen to the music of your harps. But let justice flow like a river, and let goodness flow like a never-ending stream. —Amos 5:23-24 (NCV)

Dear sisters and brothers,

As a Communion of churches from around the world we are joined together through our faith in Christ and are committed to act in the name of God to bring justice flowing like a river to all. As such we have made repeated calls “to respect, defend and advance the dignity of every person.” The current refugee crisis in Europe is the latest challenge to us as a worldwide family to raise our voices and act to aid those in need—and call on those in power to do the same.

At our Executive Committee meeting in Lebanon this past May, we heard from our sisters and brothers in the Middle East as they have struggled through great upheavals to fulfill the Gospel mandate to “love your neighbour.” Even as hundreds of thousands of refugees have poured across the Syrian-Lebanese border, our sisters and brothers have acted to assist them. They continue to do so, noting in a recent update:

What do we say about the people running away leaving homes and all they had behind, seeking safety and hope for the future in other countries? Criminal smugglers give promises, attracting thousands of Syrians despite facing the sea danger where many do not make it. Where can we find hope? How can we help? It is now the question with no ready-made answer.

And yet the church in Lebanon “keeps trying its utmost to provide what is possible.” Likewise our sisters and brothers in Hungary have worked—and are working—to offer hospitality to the stranger, whether they are settling in the country or passing through, thanking fellow citizens “for acting with patience and understanding towards their fellow human beings in a difficult situation.”

Joining with our sisters and brothers in the region as a Communion committed to justice we must speak out with a common voice to urge governments to take responsibility for these children, women and men who are fleeing wars they did not cause, terror they did not create and unjust systems of which they are the victims. As we affirmed at our 2010 Uniting General Council: “We urge governments and churches to see people neither as a threat nor as a commodity, but as human beings with dignity.”

Our calls for action must come with constant prayer and a profound recognition of our responsibility as God's people committed to do as much as we possibly can to transform the world for justice, reconciliation and peace. Welcoming and assisting those in need is necessary, but so is campaigning for peace and justice around the world.

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Please contact your governmental leaders. Implore them to open your country's borders to welcome more refugees. Urge them to halt the sale of weapons to the combatants and instead commit resources to assist these victims of violence and bring about a just and swift peace.

Please also pray for and send messages and support to those of our Communion on the frontlines of this situation, most especially the churches cited above, but also to our sisters and brothers in Italy.

As we affirmed in the Accra Confession: "We believe in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. We live under the promise that Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in fullness (John 10:10). Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit we open ourselves to the reality of our world."

The world is broken, riven with sin, driven by greed and consumed with fear. We must stand against this and instead proclaim our faith and hope in Jesus Christ together as a family and in solidarity with the children of God in their pain and despair.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CF', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the left and bottom.

Chris Ferguson
General Secretary