MESSAGE
WCC Uppsala Assembly, 1968

The excitement of new scientific discoveries, the protest of student revolts, the shock of assassinations, the clash of wars: these mark the year 1968. In this climate the Uppsala Assembly met first of all to listen.

We heard the cry of those who long for peace; of the hungry and exploited who demand bread and justice; of the victims of discrimination who claim human dignity; and of the increasing millions who seek for the meaning of life.

God hears these cries and judges us. He also speaks the liberating Word. We hear him say – I go before you. Now that Christ carries away your sinful past, the Spirit frees you to live for others. Anticipate my Kingdom in joyful worship and daring acts. The Lord says, “I make all things new.”

We ask you, trusting in God’s renewing power, to join in these anticipations of God’s Kingdom, showing now something of the newness which Christ will complete.

1. All men have become neighbours to one another. Torn by our diversities and tensions, we do not yet know how to live together. But God makes new. Christ wants his Church to foreshadow a renewed human community.

   Therefore, we Christians will manifest our unity in Christ by entering into full fellowship with those of other races, classes, age, religious and political convictions, in the place where we live. Especially we shall seek to overcome racism wherever it appears.

2. Scientific discoveries and the revolutionary movements of our time open new potentialities and perils for men. Man is lost because he does not know who he is. But God makes new. The biblical message is that man is God’s trustee for creation, that in Christ the <new man> appears and demands decision.

   Therefore, with our fellow-men we accept our trusteeship over creation, guarding, developing and sharing its resources. As Christians we proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior. God can transform us into Christ’s new humanity.

3. The ever widening gap between the rich and the poor, fostered by armament expenditure, is the crucial point of decision today. But God makes new. He has made us see that Christians who in their acts deny dignity to their fellow men deny Jesus Christ, in spite of all that they profess to believe.

   Therefore, with people of all convictions, we Christians want to ensure human rights in a just world community. We shall work for disarmament and for trade agreements fair to all. We are ready to tax ourselves in furtherance of a system of world taxation.

4. These commitments demand the worship, discipline and mutual correction of a world-wide community. In the World Council of churches, and its regional, national and local counterparts, only the beginning of this community has been given to us. But God makes new. The ecumenical movement must become bolder, and more representative. Our churches must acknowledge that this movement binds us to renewal.

   Therefore, we re-affirm our covenant to support and correct one another. Present plans for church union call for decision, and we seek fuller communion with those churches which are not yet in full fellowship with
us. We know that we never live the fullness of what we profess and we long for God to take over. Yet we rejoice that already we can anticipate in worship the time when God renews ourselves, all men, all things.

A Prayer

God, our Father, you can make all things new. We commit ourselves to you: help us.
- to live for others since your love includes all men,
- to seek those truths which we have not yet seen,
- to obey your commands which we have heard but not yet obeyed,
- to trust each other in the fellowship which you have given to us;
and may we renewed by your Spirit through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.