

## GLORY TO GOD AND PEACE ON EARTH

While visiting Bethlehem earlier this year with my wife, Ruth, we were shown the rolling fields where impoverished shepherds heard the angels proclaim this astounding news:

*“To you is born this day in the city of David  
a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord!”*

We stood in the shadow of the towering wall that separates Palestine from Israel, and I thought of the God of all Creation choosing to live in our midst – completely vulnerable, as only an infant can be. Looking up to the open skies above our walled-in world, I was struck by the majesty and mystery of that angelic anthem:

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom God favours!”*

From the Shepherds’ Fields, then and now, comes the theme of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, organized by the World Council of Churches, being planned for 2011: “Glory to God and Peace on Earth”. We believe that, as in the angels’ song, these two sentiments represent a spiritual harmony. The revelation of God’s glory inspires us to seek peace in the world around us. In entering Christ’s service we commit ourselves to a spirituality of resistance, challenging the spiral of violence that threatens our planet. Because God is One, and infinitely gracious, we are called to establish communities of wholeness, justice and peace. My wish for you this Christmas is that you may hear the hymn of the angels afresh, and embrace with renewed energy the vision it heralds. May the knowledge of God’s glory fill our hearts and minds, souls and spirits. May the sure and certain hope of this season transform our lives, our homes, our societies, our world.

And may the blessing of the Triune God be with us all, today and always,

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia  
General Secretary, World Council of Churches



**Coming in 2011:**

## **INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL PEACE CONVOCATION**

At the 2006 WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil the WCC member churches called for an international ecumenical peace convocation to be held May 4-11, 2011, as the culmination of the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) initiative.

While the convocation will be the “harvest festival” of the DOV it will also be a planting season for fresh peacemaking initiatives within the church. Through the work of the DOV, which began in 2001, many churches and groups have engaged passionately in creating alternatives to violence. They have struggled with the structural and cultural roots of violence and through the development of growing networks and action groups have engaged in overcoming violence and peacemaking and called on the church to do the same.

The member churches of the WCC invite churches around the world to create an **Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace** which will be brought to the convocation as a compelling expression of our common calling to be instruments of God’s peace wherever we live.

The WCC general secretary and member churches invite you to join us in glorifying God through being part of this movement.

For more information about the convocation please visit:  
**[overcomingviolence.org](http://overcomingviolence.org)**

