A Message to the 2nd Gathering on Human Fraternity – For World Peace and Living Together held 4th February 2021 in Abu Dhabi

I greet this gathering of all G_d's people in the Name of the Creator of all things seen and unseen. The Guide and Inspiration for universal justice, peace, and goodness. I bless you with G_d's promise of eternal blessing.

1. I affirm this second global anniversary and celebrate the Document on Human Fraternity For World Peace and Living Together. I commend His Holiness Pope Francis and The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb for their sterling work and thought to generate this Document for discussion.

2. Therefore, I note with deep appreciation the Document's commencement as "... the transcendental value ... of safeguarding Creation, the entire universe, supporting all persons especially the poorest and those most in need". I therefore echo the words of the founder of the early Methodist movement, John Wesley, "If your heart be with my heart, give me your hand(s), my Brother(s)."

3. This greeting to the "whole inhabited" world of his time written during the Second Industrial Revolution are words that I invoke to rethink our "lives together" as people of faith in this so-called 4th Industrial Revolution and amidst the global crisis of a COVID 19 pandemic. The Document of human Fraternity recognizes, "among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and a prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and materialistic values in place of supreme and transcendental principles."

4. I extend to this gathering the simple sentences which Mr. Wesley shared with his followers amid faith uncertainty in the burgeoning 2nd Industrial Revolution" which can be summarized in modern English as **DO NO HARM; DO GOOD; STAY IN LOVE WITH YOUR GOD.** The ecumenical spirit must emphasize a principles faith relationship as a value of belief and practical development of G_d's love, mercy, and justice. The People called Methodist understood that G_d's Spirit creates and recreates compassion and love while challenging us to the transcendental principle of not to harm.

5. **FIRST DO NO HARM**

Mr. Wesley frequently wrote, challenging the Church and society regarding his time's poor and diseased social conditions. He understood that poverty was not a product of human fate but the result of unjust policies.
I agree with the Document that "major political crises of injustice and lack of equitable distribution of natural resources which only a rich minority benefit from, to the detriment of the majority of the peoples on the earth have generated and continue to generate, vast numbers of poor, infirm and deceased persons." This is no benign matter nor has it been historically benign. It is appropriate in COVID 19 to ask just how "vaccine nationalism" affects the poorer nations of the world. Is this a perchance happening? Certainly not. When BIG Pharma rewards the world through individuals that bankroll research, the moneyed classes benefit and not the poorest nations and people. So, the question arises how, if at all, belief in a Supreme Being affects the protection of life and improvement of health and wellbeing if the technology is not expressly used for doing good and not expressly harming humanity. The question is, will religious and faith communities participate in and advance technology and science by 2050?

6. **DO GOOD OF EVERY POSSIBLE SORT AND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO ALL**

There are several sacred texts in the Hebrew and Christian Bible that point to just outcomes in human relations and an improved human condition by "doing good to others as you would have them do to you and "turning the other cheek." On a broad, structural, and global level, the Document appropriately indicates that "Religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility, and extremism, not must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings which have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion." The texts of Judaeo-Christian faith, as expressed in the person of Jesus, the Healer, and the Early, primitive Church, emphasize the values of peace, doing good to one another, and the households of faith.

7. **STAY IN LOVE WITH G_D**

This sentence is a more modern translation of the traditional "attends to all the Ordinances of G_d. The Document emphasizes the need for Dialogue, mutual understanding, and the promotion of a culture of tolerance. Surely we cannot promote such values when we meet in our "small corners," and do not share space to understand spiritual, human, cultural, and spiritual values. Our sacred text says, "where two or three are gathered, in My Name, there I am"! Are we bold enough to test G_d's love for us and our love for G_d by dialoguing with one another as though we are God's agents even in different faith emphases? I want to vouch that where we take seriously that we are G_d's people, we will not have to fear for security and the destruction of our respective worship places. It is a challenge staying in love with G_d and welcoming religious and cultural diversity.

8. **CONCLUSION**

I express the World Methodist Council's support for the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. The Document is an instrument of Dialogue. It may reap the benefit of overcoming phobias and cultural differences by allowing a broad cross-and-inter Cultural Dialogue section. The rich diversity of African cultures cries out for inclusion
in the Document. Other minority community dialogues, by its admission, that requires recognition are:

- A Recognition of the Rights of Women on its own;
- Recognition and Protection of the Rights of the Child; and
- Protection of the Rights of The Older Person. Those who are living with Disabilities and Marginalised.

I thank the organizers for the invitation and opportunity to bring greetings and to address the gathering.

Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams

The General Secretary, World Methodist Council