

Paris, 11 September 2021

Dear sisters and dear brothers in Christ, dear friends,

It is an honor and a true privilege for me to be able to address you as the General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance on this great day of the opening ceremony of the Foundation Martin Luther King and its amazing church building. The prayers of millions are with us today.

Our tribute to God today started with the song “Amazing Grace”, somehow the national anthem of the WEA around the globe. It perhaps describes FMLK better than some may be aware of. It witnesses to God’s grace on a very personal level, an individual being amazed about God’s grace. But the individual who wrote this song, was a former slave trader, Newton, who came to faith in Jesus Christ, repented for his sins, changed and turned into a major abolitionist campaigner. What amazed him was that God gave him a second chance to serve society at large.

On this September 11th, 2021, the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center Twin Towers in New York, the Pentagon building, and flight UA 93, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech echoes stronger than ever.

“Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. I have decided to love. If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we are moving against wrong when we do it. He who hates does not know God, but he who has love has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.”

As we all can see, our worship is protected by the French police and army and I thank every man and woman assuring our security (Applause). And there is a place for the State going after terrorists.

But we open the Foundation Martin Luther King to be another kind of counterattack to 9/11, a counterattack of God's love, a counterattack of fraternity and freedom!

As Christians, as Protestants, as evangelical believers, we carry a universal message of unity and hope to a world in which anger, rejection, and lack of mutual understanding lead people to death and war. Yet the message we bring is believable only if we have learned to display this unity amongst ourselves.

Jesus left us a new commandment that shines brighter today than it did yesterday—an order that isn't subject to interpretation: the command to truly love one another.

John 13:34–35: “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Jesus plainly reminds us here that our credibility in the eyes of the world is directly linked to us already having learned to demonstrate his love between us, being united as one heart, practicing his love with each other!

1 John 4:19–21: “We love each other because he loved us first. If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?”

Today, as we gather together at the table of brotherhood described by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the spirit of Holy Communion and love established for us by Christ, we must realize that before we can demonstrate the love of the Savior to the nations through humanitarian aid and social services, it is essential that these nations have the chance to see this same love at work among us. May they see in us one heart and one spirit in unity, in accordance with Jesus' command for his people.

Today we dedicate not just a building but, I pray,
a lighthouse of love,
a cathedral of meaning,
radiating what this Church, from its founding, has always stood for: a representation of
Christ's love in a world in desperate need of the hope that He provides.

For His Glory,



Dr. Thomas Schirmacher
Secretary General, World Evangelical Alliance