

## Glimpses from “Olavsfestdagene” in Trondheim 2018 with NCA Seminars

by Per Nordmark

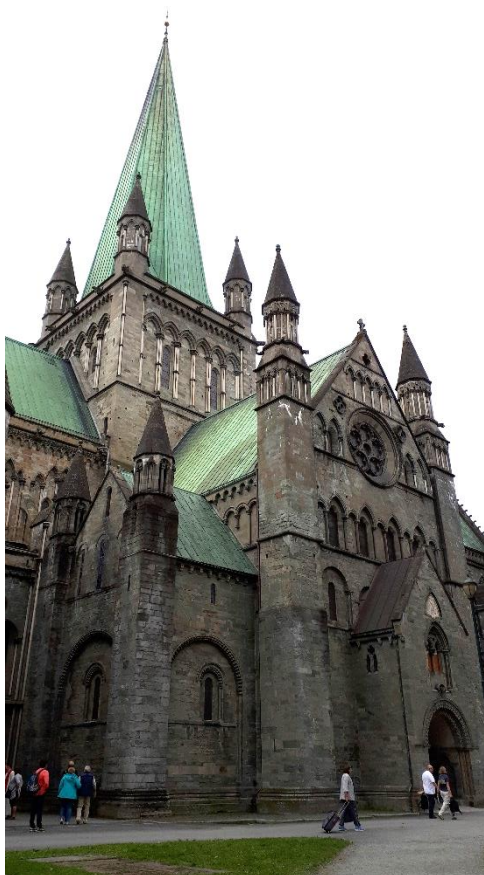


*Stiklestad, the location where King Olav Haraldson: St Olav, fell on the battlefield in 1030 A.D.*



From the historic play «Spelet om Heilag Olav» at Stiklestad 2018. The play is presenting the historical background with the confrontation between traditional Nordic religion and Christianity, where also fighting over power is part of it. The confrontation lead to the battle at Stiklestad where King Olav Haraldson was killed.





*The Cathedral Nidarosdomen, built from around 1070 A.D. over the first grave of St Olav.*

This is the major cathedral in Norway, an important holy place where pilgrims have come from far through the centuries. These days pilgrims still come, and for the last few decades in increasing numbers.

### **“When water disappears” A seminar by Norwegian Church Aid**

On the background of last winter’s dramatic situation on water supply in Cape Town, South Africa, NCA arranged a seminar on the serious consequences of climate change. Climate change is already dramatically affecting a huge amount of people around the world, and mostly the poorest.

Three religious’ actors with the acting General Secretary of NCA gave their views and recommendations for needs and ways to act, to prevent further climate change.

The speakers were: **Bishop Geoff Davis** from South Africa, **Farhan Shah** at Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo working on modern Islamic Philosophy and Theology, **Bishop Herborg Finnset**, Diocese of Nidaros, and **Lisa Sivertsen**, acting General Secretary, Norwegian Church Aid.

They all focused on the urgency of stopping the global warming. They further all stated that it is important that representatives for religions speak this out clearly. It was stated that both within Islam and Christianity the holiness of God’s creations should be more focussed. And focus has to be change from “Utilise” to “Care for”.



*Bishop Geoff Davis speaks at the NCA seminar on*

*“Når vann blir borte”/ When water disappears*





After the seminar a short symbolic pilgrimage “Klimapilgrim”/ “Climate Pilgrim” was arranged from the premises of the seminar to Nidarosdomen.

*From the pilgrimage, here at the Pir stretching out over River Nidelven. Reflections and prayers by Bishop Geoff Davis and Bishop Herborg Finnset (both in front).*

*Key personnel in the seminar outside the West Front of the cathedral after the pilgrimage.*



## Norwegian Church Aid at Olavsfestdagene

Within the program of Olavsfestdagene in Trondheim Norwegian Church Aid invite for reflection and inspiration through seminars, a photo-exhibition and a container for experiences.

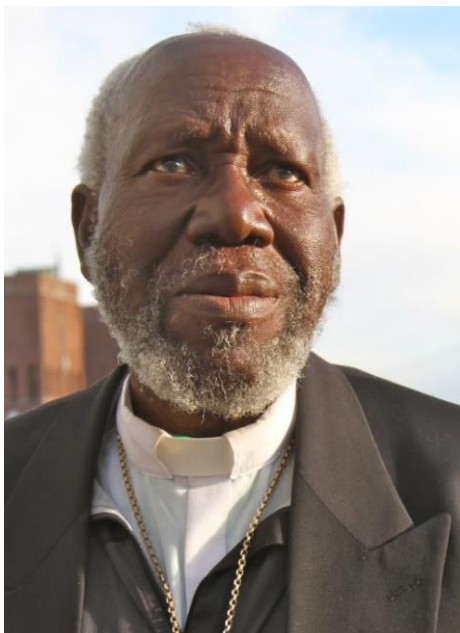
NCA have activities in 25 countries.

Focus is mainly on providing water for people in need

Assist when people have been suffering under sexual violence

Working for narrowing the gaps between rich and poor.

The seminars were conducted in cooperation with Trondheim Library.



## The Church as a Body

### A seminar by NCA

In South Sudan war has been the normal situation for several decades. In the middle of the war are the churches.

Through contact with people at grass root level, - and at the same time with the elite, the church is promoting the message of peace.

How important is the church in a country where there are few others who speak out for the people?

Can the church in Norway, and internationally, learn something from this?

*Bishop Paride Taban (82) was an inspiration for this seminar, however unfortunately unable to participate himself.*

Participants in the seminar panel:

- ✓ Mr John Ashworth who have been working with churches in Sudan and South Sudan for 35 years, lately mostly with peace and reconciliation.
- ✓ Rev. Francis Mkandawire from Malawi, representing a partner of NCA.
- ✓ Bishop Kari Veiteberg, Diocese of Oslo, Norway.
- ✓ Ingrid Næss-Holm, adviser on policy and society, NCA

The introduction to the seminar was a short film presenting Bishop Paride Taban, including when he read out his 28 wise words.



**John Ashworth** started by passing the regards to everybody from Bishop Paride Taban, and his apologies for not being able to be present himself.

Then he gave a short presentation of the bishop:

He grew up in a village with a sawmill, where all kind of people lived peacefully together. This stuck with him all his life. And Ashworth summarized: "He don't only preach it, he is peace and reconciliation".

*Francis Mkandawire and John Ashworth at the seminar*

Ashworth; about the ongoing peace process in South Sudan: The Church have creditability and moral authority. The church never escaped during the war and have been involved in most of the peace processes during the last 50 years. People still trust the church, believe it is neutral and honest. To establish peace, we know it is a long process, not a quick fix as thought in USA and Europe. It is a need to work with the people and strengthen them. Peace is not to come tomorrow, but it will come!

*The seminar at Trondheim Library*

**Kari Veiteberg:** Politics is how we distribute our resources. As a Norwegian I am challenged! "The Earth is crying back to me!"»



If politics is about distribution, the church is as important as ever!

"Can we look at the global church as a body? We sing Gloria around the world, and we share the bread!"»

**Ingrid Næss-Holm:** NCA is the humanitarian branch of the church. NCA is part of a larger body and is known by politicians as a professional actor.

The young people are important, as also bishops and imams are important, - they have access to political and administrative leaders. The combination is therefore important!  
There is also something called forsakenness, - we should start with ourselves!

**Francis Mkandawire:** In Malawi people are generally very poor, and the differences between poor and rich are great. The HIV-epidemy and the exploitation of natural resources have been, and are great challenges. The church is the most trusted body in Malawi and must stand up for the poor.

For most people there is no one who help you, and people are used to rely on God. God is the only source of hope. In Europe one has so many back-ups, and God seems less important.

In the church in Malawi a bottom-up system is used. Village advocacy committees is established to identify and report from village level. And then the church can report to government, using the church structures. This is very effective.



*John Ashworth receive a solar lamp, as Ingrid Næss-Holm, Kari Veiteberg and Francis Mkandawire are watching*