

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

INSiGHT

JANUARY 2024



CWM ASSEMBLY 2024
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA, 12-19 JUNE 2024

INSiGHT Contents

FOREWORD

- 4 Towards Assembly 2024

VIEWPOINTS Towards Assembly 2024

- 8 Rise to Life: Together in Transformation
- 14 About CWM Assembly Logo & Themes
- 15 About the Local Hosts
- 16 CWM 2024 Assembly: Programmes

AT A GLANCE

CWM News

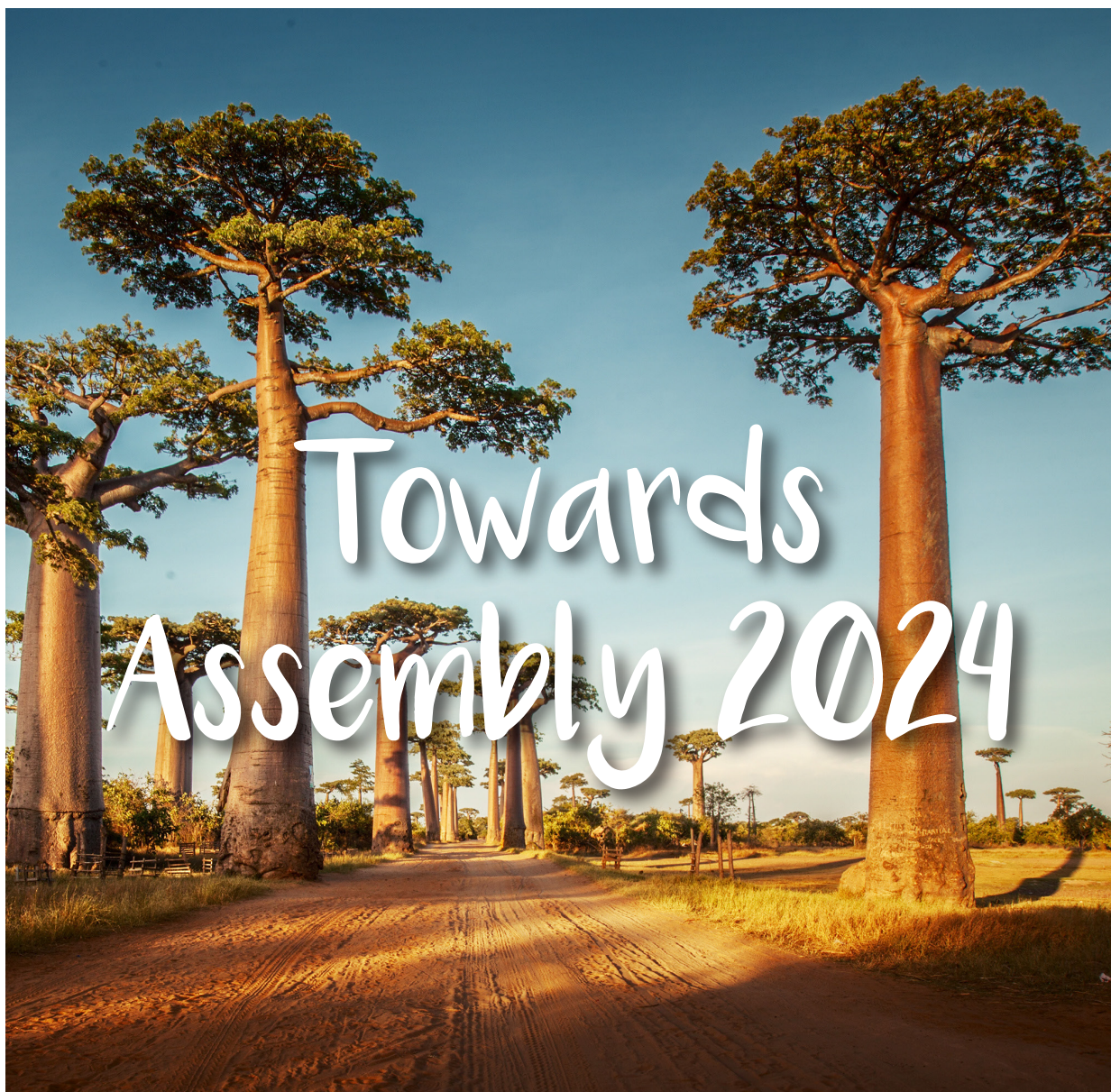
- 20 Face-to-Face 2023: Young Peacemakers Explore What Challenges Inclusivity
- 21 Gender and Spirituality: Regaining Voices for Gender Justice
- 22 “Indecent and Indignant” in Bogota: Taking a Hard Look at Mission
- 24 Webinar Traces Roots of Christian Zionism—and its Damaging Outcomes Today
- 26 Youth Work and Pray Against Racism: “We Affirm That We are all Equally Loved”
- 28 General Secretary’s Christmas Message 2023: A Call for Embracing an Inward Jubilee
- 30 Amidst the Gloom, Love Without Limits: CWM Staff Greet the New Year
- 32 CWM Communications Workshop 2024: Honing Life-Flourishing Messages
- 33 Applications Open for 2024 Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics and Management (GEM)
- 34 CWM Partner-in-Mission (PIM) Opportunity in Partnership with the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC)
- 35 Applications Open for Training in Mission (TIM) 2024
- 36 Sundays with CWM 2024 Now Available

Member Church News

- 38 Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Waitangi Day 2024 Message: Pursuing Unity Amidst Division
- 40 “A Gospel for Workers” Unfolds the Story of Korea’s Urban Industrial Mission
- 42 UCCSA Releases Statement on Germany’s Questionable Alliances, Reiterates Namibia’s Resolute Stand for Justice

Ecumenical News

- 44 Dr Setri Nyomi Elected Interim General Secretary of World Communion of Reformed Churches
- 45 Strengthening Community, Building Structures



The quadrennial Assembly of the Council for World Mission will take place in Durban, South Africa, from 12-19 June, under the theme “Rise to Life: Together in Transformation.” The 2020 Assembly was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the eight-year gap, I hope this Assembly will be a great time of fellowship, worship, study, networking, ‘reading of the signs of the time’ and discerning together the mission of God.

Empire divides and rules, but mission unites and reconciles. Indeed, our world is currently filled with life-threatening forces which are trying to steal and destroy life and peace from the face of the earth. We are witnessing numerous forms of destruction including pandemics, military conflicts, climate crises, and social, political, and economic inequalities.

Such crises create divisions and destabilise communities resulting in the domination and subjugation of the poor and oppressed. These are

some of the many problems that challenge our mission of reconciliation through the building of life-flourishing communities in contexts.

Despite these gloomy circumstances, the people of faith still believe in reconciliation instead of division, justice instead of inequality and transformation instead of status quo. As we are approaching our Assembly 2024, how can we spread this news that the power of God’s love is far superior to the power of empire and its allure of riches? How can we witness to God’s life-affirming mission through our Assembly?

To begin with, we must have the courage to witness to the hope found in Christ, even in the face of a hopeless world. Our faith in the Cross of Christ, which defeated the forces of death and destruction through the resurrection of life, is the source of our hope for transformation.



We firmly believe that the gospel holds the potential to bring about transformation in the world, metamorphosing personalities, values, social classes, and societies. The gospel of the kingdom of God challenges the world that nurtures hopelessness. Celebrating life in a post-pandemic world means writing eschatological hope into the pages of history.

As a matter of fact, there are numerous stories of hope among our member churches and ecumenical partners. The Council for World Mission's (CWM) ethos as a "community of churches in mission" has always clearly manifested itself in our communities by their displays of solidarity and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As disciples, our mission is to spread the message of hope that "God's Kingdom is coming, and it is already among us". We aim to achieve this by fostering a high-quality community within CWM, serving as a foretaste of the Reign of God.

Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment, while *chronos* refers to sequential time. *Kairos* is the time of divine intervention in the life of God's people and history. The root of the "crisis" is *kairos*. God will meet and answer us in our deepest crisis. In Chinese, a crisis (危機) is also an opportunity (機會). Therefore, we need to make the 2024 Assembly a *kairos* moment so that we can transform the current crisis into an opportunity of mission to "Rise to Life" together!

Through the 2024 Assembly, CWM will strive to foster life-flourishing communities where people can find spaces of belonging and new hope in their life together.

The 2024 Assembly is scheduled to take place in Africa. As such, it is important for the Assembly to address the current issues and opportunities facing African churches and communities, including both potential threats and promising opportunities.



The assembly will promote the contribution of the African mission thinking and action, especially “the shift of the centre of gravity of world Christianity” to Africa and Black Theology of Liberation to shaping mission theology and practice into the future. The spirit of African rhythms, music, and art will pervade the environment in which the Assembly is held, and in the times of our worship together.

May this Assembly be an opportunity for us to rise to life as a community of churches together towards a transformative mission of God.



Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum
General Secretary
Council for World Mission

Viewpoints

Rise to Life: Together in Transformation



Before there can be rising to life, there needs to be recognition of the death from which we hope to rise. Before we can think of rising to life or being together in transformation, I have to ask you to smell with me, the stench of death.

Conflict and Warfare

The end of the Cold War in 1989-90 kindled hope that a new era of peace, harmony and prosperity was dawning. Many countries appeared to be gradually moving towards greater social justice and inclusion. Today you will look in vain for any of that sense of progress and hopefulness. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2021 might be remembered as the moment when the world entered a new age of division and conflict. It was a shock for Europeans to witness scenes reminiscent of the First World War, only with

even more destructive weaponry being deployed. Meanwhile less-noticed wars in such countries as Yemen, South Sudan, eastern Congo and Ethiopia have taken no less a toll in loss of life and human suffering.

It is impressive that many European countries have been hospitable to refugees from the war in Ukraine these last two years, with many families opening their homes to accommodate those who have been tragically displaced from their homeland. Nevertheless, it is hard to miss the contrast between this generous hospitality and the prevailing attitudes to those who have fled no less tragic situations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and other countries where the prevailing racial identity is black or brown. An unintended effect of the current conflict has been to reveal the casual racism underlying the assumption



Photo Credit: magdalena-kula-machee-PSIY3E-pa3U-ineplash

that there is no need to be much concerned when the victims of war have a black or brown skin.

At the same time, institutional racism has been exposed and condemned in the police forces of countries like France, the USA, and the UK, with the Black Lives Matter movement highlighting the targeting, sometimes fatally, of young men simply on account of their black skin.

Inequality

Another place where the stench of death meets us is the operation of the global economy. Since the then World Alliance of Reformed Churches issued the Accra Confession in 2004, there has been a compelling case that the neoliberal global economic system is enriching the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and the weak. The neoliberal global financial system has continued to entrench itself, defended by military might and promoted through its capture of media outlets and political processes worldwide.

As a result, this fundamental imbalance and fatal flaw in the functioning of the global economy is worsening year after year. It has become clear that the human community has failed to break what the economist Thomas Piketty calls the patrimonial spiral of wealth accumulation.

The rich have become ever richer, and the process is now accelerating. In 2021, for example, the ultra-rich captured almost two-thirds of all the world's new wealth. Their share of national income² in the UK has almost doubled since 1980, while in the US, it is higher than it was in 1820. In a report issued during the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, in January 2017, Oxfam pointed out that the world's eight richest individuals have as much wealth as the 3.6bn people who make up the poorest half of the world. Inequality within the human community is becoming not only obscene but manifestly unsustainable.

Earth in Jeopardy

Coming to the earth itself, here too the smell of death meets us. Climate change and environmental degradation literally mean death for many species of life on earth. These forces also spell death for many in the human community. Climate scientist Bill McGuire has advised that, "The coming decade is very likely the most critical in human history."³ On his estimation, there is now no way for the world to avoid being hard hit by climate change. The fork in the road is between one way that leads to a "calamitous and unsustainable future," and another that leads to "a world in which rapidly falling emissions have slowed the rate of heating and large-scale adaptation has led to much greater resilience."⁴



Photo Credit: chris-gallagher-4zxp5vImvnt-unsplash

In the short term, the wealthy can protect themselves from the worst effects of climate change. Those who take the primary impact are the poor and vulnerable. As Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, reported: “Climate change will have devastating consequences for people in poverty. Even under the best-case scenario, hundreds of millions will face food insecurity, forced migration, disease, and death.”⁵ There is need to reckon with the hard reality that, as Naomi Klein puts it, “climate change isn’t just about things getting hotter and wetter: under our current economic and political model, it’s about things getting meaner and uglier.”⁶

As McGuire remarks: “Our climate is being destroyed by unadulterated, free-market capitalism – an ideology that simply cannot be sustained on a small planet with limited resources. It is a system that has no interest in the greater good and that rewards inordinate capital and the few that have it, rather than the majority who don’t.”⁷

Though an ethic of caring for the earth is built into many religious traditions, it has too often receded into the background during the modern industrial age. This is certainly the case with Christianity which, through its close alliance with the European Enlightenment, was complicit in the exploitation of the earth’s resources that drove the colonial system.

As Pope Francis suggests, Christians need an “ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ becomes evident in their relationship to the world around them.”⁸ If such a conversion can take place, then churches can draw on their missionary heritage to embark on a new missionary journey – one in which the future of the earth itself is at stake.³

Failure of Politics

The climate crisis has exposed the inadequacy of existing political systems to meet the unprecedented challenge that it presents. In most contexts, the political cycle is short. Often the horizon on which politicians are focussed is no further ahead than the next election. All energy is absorbed by manoeuvres aimed to secure short-term political advantage. This very much plays against any serious action on climate change, which requires short-term sacrifice in order to secure a sustainable future in the long term. The problem, however, is by no means confined to failure to seriously address climate change.

“Something has gone wrong with our politics,” remarked Pope Francis, “it is out of ideas.”⁹

Rising to Life

As we survey our contemporary reality, it seems that the stench of death meets us on all sides. No wonder



Photo Credit: il-an-lim-ycW4YxhrWHM-unsplash

we are reaching for the language of resurrection and transformation. But in the Church this is our language. At the heart of our faith is a death and resurrection. We proclaim an Easter message that tells us that when it looks like it is all over, there is still hope. For God is a God of life; and death is overcome by resurrection. If ever there was a time when this message was needed, it must be now! If ever there was a time when the world was crying out for transformation, it must be now!

But before we rush to proclaim it, we must pause to remember that we have not always lived up to it. In fact, churches and mission agencies have often been complicit in the life-denying activities that have created the stench of death that we are now smelling. We know that the missionary movement was too cosy with the Western colonialism that gave rise to the neoliberal economic system that is now choking the life out of us. We know that our churches have been happy enough to benefit from the exploitation of the earth's resources that has created the climate crisis that spells death for so many of the most vulnerable. As Christians, we do not arrive at this moment with clean hands or a pure heart. If we are going to talk about transformation, we need to begin with our own repentance.

Transformation Starts with Us

Our crisis is a crisis of the human person. We talk about climate crisis but what is behind the climate crisis? Of course, it is human action. It is human

behaviour that has caused the crisis and it is because of human folly that we fail to address it. The same thing with the global economic crisis – what has caused it if not human greed and avarice? It might seem like an impossible dream to imagine there could be a different kind of human person. But this is what we are talking about when we speak in terms of rising to life. As the apostle Paul put it, “If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17). This newness, this transformation, was it ever more needed?

How can we discover our true human identity and vocation? How can we discover what our life was meant to be? How can we discover fullness of life? Such fundamentally religious questions have not gone away.⁴

The WCC mission affirmation *Together towards Life* prompted us to think of our calling in new ways. Rather than thinking of mission in terms of institutions or strategies, it proposed that, “Life in the Holy Spirit is the essence of mission, the core of why we do what we do and how we live our lives. Spirituality gives the deepest meaning to our lives and motivates our actions. It is a sacred gift from the Creator, the energy for affirming and caring for life.”¹⁰ In this perspective, mission is not so much a project as a way of being, a way of living. In a world crying out for authenticity, people of faith are challenged to demonstrate their identity and vocation in the way they live.



Together in Transformation

We need to be together in transformation. One thing we have discovered through our involvement in mission is that it is the relational quality of human life that enables us to flourish.

The missionary and ecumenical leader John Taylor observed that, "The word *allelous*—one another—rings through the pages of the New Testament like a peal of bells."¹¹ This led him to suggest that, "Every opening of one's whole self towards another, every taking upon oneself the burden and the gift of another, contributes a little to that quiet tide which is flowing back and forth, carrying us with it into the very being of God, sweeping us back with God into the life of the world."¹²

Today, many would agree that our world is in need of mission in the sense that the human community's mode of operation needs to become very different from the way things are now. Therefore, there is a need for

agents of change – "missionaries." This is not any narrowly conceived mission for it is as wide as the presence of God and as broad as the purposes of God. We operate from a Christian perspective, and we make no apology for taking our bearings from Jesus Christ and the transformation that he promises. But let us also be open to the adventure of discerning the action of the Spirit of God who constantly takes us by surprise. Far from promoting an exclusive, intolerant or bigoted approach to others, this missionary orientation forms people who are open, curious and eager to make common cause in resisting the forces that make for death and embracing those that make for life.

Not Words but Power

"Thanks be to God," wrote the apostle Paul, "who always puts us on display in Christ and through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of him in every place." (2 Cor 2:14) We have been talking a lot about the stench of death – we are almost overpowered by it.

Our calling is to bring a different smell into the life of the world – the fragrance of Christ.

For our talk of rising to life, our talk of transformation is not just some fond imagination or impossible dream. No, it springs from something that has actually happened, something that we believe makes all the difference to our human prospects. When Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus, he prayed that they would know, “the immeasurable greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his vast strength.” (Eph. 1:19)

What kind of power is he talking about?⁵

He explains it: “God demonstrated this power in the Messiah by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens...” (Eph. 1:20) Through Christ death is defeated by the power of resurrection life.

When we read further in the Letter to the Ephesians, we discover that this is not only a matter of a new imagination but of a whole new way of life. There is a new life to be lived where life replaces death, and light replaces darkness. Our calling is to live out that new life – not only to talk to the world about transformation but to show the world what it looks like. For, “the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Cor. 4:20)

Let us then... **rise to life and be together in transformation.**

1. Bill McGuire, *Hothouse Earth: An Inhabitant's Guide*, London: Icon Books, 2022, 155.
2. Ibid.
3. *Climate Change and Poverty: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, New York: United Nations, 2019, 1.
4. Naomi Klein, “Let Them Drown: The Violence of Othering in a Warming World,” *London Review of Books* 38/11 (2 June 2016), 11-14, at 14
5. McGuire, *Hothouse Earth*, 161..
6. Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Rome: Vatican Press, 24 May 2015, §217.
7. Pope Francis, cit. Paul Vallely, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 29.
8. *Together towards Life*, §3.
9. David Wood, *Poet, Priest and Prophet*: Bishop John V. Taylor, London: CTBI, 2002, 204.
10. Ibid, 210.

Keynote address by Prof. Kenneth R. Ross at the CWM Member Churches General Secretaries' Conference in Singapore, 2023



Prof. Kenneth R. Ross

About CWM Assembly Logo & Themes



The Assembly logo embodies the theme “Rise to Life: Together in Transformation”. The baobab tree at the centre is an iconic “tree of life” of the African continent. It also symbolizes the creation at the heart of mission and spirituality reconnecting humanity to creation.

Around this symbolic tree, people from diverse backgrounds join hands, signifying just and inclusive communities that are called to rise together towards life-flourishing communities.

The traditional Zulu patterns at the bottom symbolize the vibrant and diverse cultures in South Africa.

The background of the logo is a rising sun, representing rising to life and Africa as a continent of the fullness of hope and the centre of gravity of world Christianity.

The theme of the Council for World Mission Assembly 2024 is:

Rise to Life: Together in Transformation

The main theme will be accompanied by three sub-themes:

Transforming Power
Revisioning Mission
Building Life-Flourishing Communities

“God of life, we acknowledge the significance of this Assembly in highlighting the invaluable contributions of African mission thinking and action. Guide us as we explore the themes of the Assembly and seek to rise together towards life-flourishing communities.”

About the Local Hosts



United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)

UCCSA is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic church denomination united across seven southern African countries – Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Malawi. It was formed on October 3, 1967, when Congregational Union of South Africa, the Bantu Congregational Church and the London Missionary Society united. Born out of unity and for unity, their ethos is undergirded by the spirit of ubuntu and “ban aba tshipa tshwaraganeng” (the children of the meerkats look out/care for each other).



NECTAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA)

UPCSA was formed and constituted in 1999 as the outcome of the union between the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (RPCSA) and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA). The UPCSA is committed to promoting the initiatives and theologies from the South towards the establishment of life-flourishing communities and for a just and peaceful socioeconomic order.



The Assembly will be held at the Raddison Blu Hotel in Durban, South Africa.

CWM 2024 Assembly Programmes

As CWM gears up for the main Assembly in Durban, South Africa between 12-19 June 2024, we give you a quick rundown of the programmes to expect and the schedules of the various events. All information is correct at the time of printing.

CWM 2024 ASSEMBLY

Date: 12 – 19 June 2024

Venue: Durban, South Africa

The CWM Assembly 2024 will take on an extra layer of significance as it is the first time in eight years that a physical gathering amongst member churches, staff and ecumenical partners is possible since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic upended the plans of a 2020 meeting.

The Assembly will be a gathering of minds in CWM as well as a testament of the diversity present in global missiological work. The 32 member churches across six regions, each represented by four delegates as well as ecumenical partners will come together to discuss and share insights in current world trends and collectively fashion a Christian response. The Assembly will also see addresses from the CWM General Secretary, thematic presentations, story-sharing from the regions, the election of CWM Board members as well as the induction of new member churches.

The six-day programme will include the following key elements:

- An opening public worship ceremony
- An exposure day – delegates will engage with stories and sites of significance to the local context.
- The General Secretary's address
- A keynote address on the Assembly theme and three other addresses on the Sub-Themes
- Daily Bible studies
- Workshops and exhibitions
- A public Sunday Worship Service and local missional exposure
- Cultural expressions and Africa Night
- Greetings from guests – hosting church, ecumenical guests
- Elections of new Moderator, Treasurer, Board of Directors and Trustees for CWM and its subsidiaries.
- Commissioning of leadership
- Closing worship

Regional Pre-Assembly



Regional Pre-Assembly

As a lead-up to the CWM Assembly in June, each region's member churches will be holding a pre-Assembly to facilitate mutual sharing and gain collective discernment and insight on emerging issues facing their respective regions.

Each pre-Assembly will feature various tracks including keynote addresses, plenary discussions on Assembly sub-themes, and contextual Bible studies to better come to grips with the unique challenges of every region and to plan, forge, and mount a unified, concerted response to them.

Regional Pre-Assembly

Africa

8 – 12 February 2024
Durban, South Africa

Europe

19 – 23 February 2024
Wales, United Kingdom

Pacific

29 February – 4 March 2024
Nadi, Fiji

East Asia

4 – 8 March 2024
Bangkok, Thailand

Caribbean

11 – 15 March 2024
Kingston, Jamaica

South Asia

18 – 22 March 2024
Chennai, India



Women Pre-Assembly

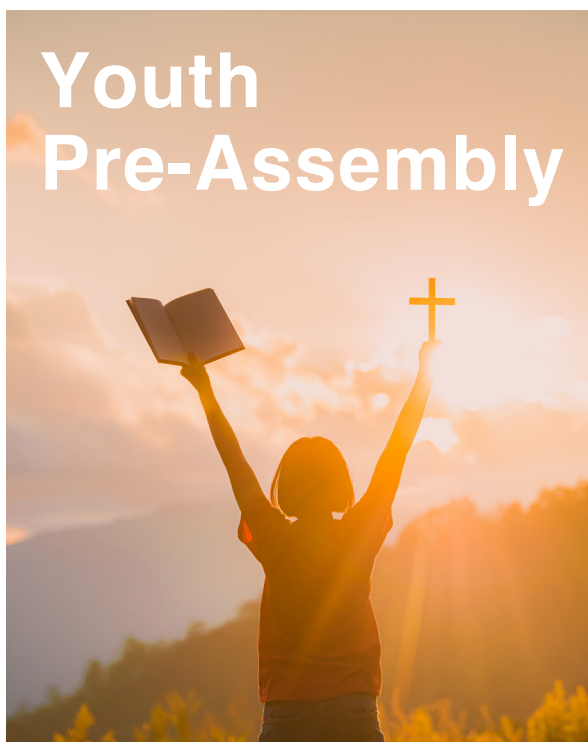
Alongside the first two days of the CWM Assembly, women from each region's member churches will be holding their own pre-Assembly to meet and shared their missiological experiences and on nascent gender-unique issues and challenges.

The Women Pre-Assembly will also feature various tracks such as exploring the main Assembly theme, the crafting of the Women Statement for Assembly, and the presentation of Women Theme Expressions.

Women Pre-Assembly

12 – 13 June

Durban, South Africa



Youth Pre-Assembly

Running concurrently with the Women Pre-Assembly is the Youth Pre-Assembly. The Youth Pre-Assembly is a platform for the younger members to come together and recognize their work in world missions while commiserating in shared testimonies and experiences.

The Youth Pre-Assembly will feature various tracks such as exploring the main Assembly theme, the crafting of the Youth Statement for Assembly and the presentation of Youth Thematic Expressions according to region.

Youth Pre-Assembly

12 – 13 June

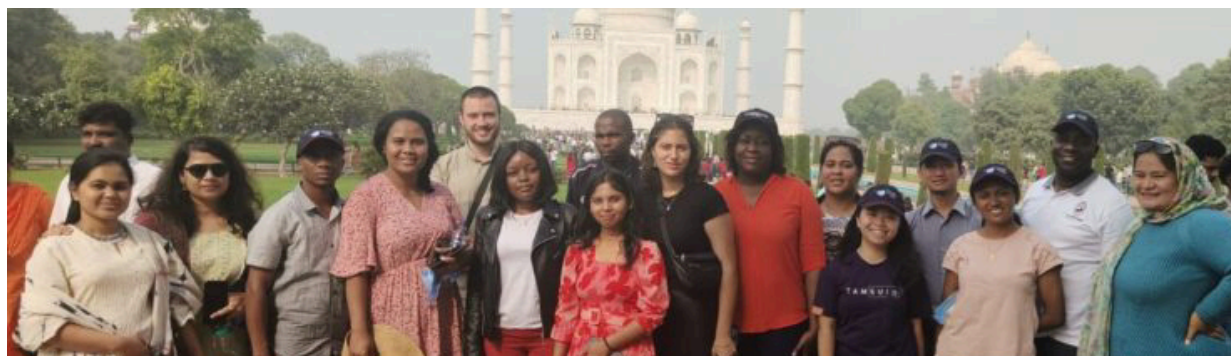
Durban, South Africa

At A Glance

CWM News

Face-to-Face 2023:

Young Peacemakers Explore What Challenges Inclusivity



With peacemaking more important than ever, the Face-to-Face programme by the Council for World Mission (CWM) helps young people become leaders in breaking the chains of conflict, reached a better understanding of each other's world views, and strengthen their framework of faith.

India: Where social structures and religion mesh

Twelve unordained ecumenical participants—from Taiwan, Zambia, Samoa, Tonga, England, Madagascar, Myanmar, and Botswana—came together for the six-week Face-to-Face programme from 27 October to 25 November 2023 to immerse themselves in the religious diversity that is India.

They examined the roles of religion not as a dividing tool, but as an active player that contributes to building peace for life-flourishing communities.

India presents the unique environment of a post-colonial society characterized by religious pluralism. Missional and theological work in India is challenged by the inequalities rooted in the caste system and other forms of socio-economic oppression.

Participants reported that this made for an intriguing training ground for Christian activism.

"In India, religion has been used to both reinforce societal status quo and for the legitimization of exploitative poverty and the immoral accumulation of wealth. Resistance and activism against these systems of exploitation are also continually stymied as religious resources have been galvanized to quell the voices of dissent," explained Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, CWM's Mission Secretary for Education and Empowerment.

Putting your ears to the ground

In India, 80% of the populace is Hindu, 14% Muslim, and 2.3% identify as Christian. The Face-to-Face experience meant immersion into inter-religious conversations and engagements that articulated informed Christian responses and effective ministries geared towards liberating the oppressed and exploited.

During the programme, the participants had numerous informal conversations with members of a range of communities and families. Family and temple visits offered times for questioning and dialogue, encounters with local hospitality, and participation in various spiritual practices.

Participants said they were able to learn how to break down walls that dehumanize foreign cultures and peoples, and create a new perspective that actively seeks unity among disparate communities.

Participants kept a daily log of their experiences, where they were encouraged, through their notes, to reach a personal conclusion on how to effectively relate to people with different worldviews, cultures, and life experiences. They asked themselves: "How might evangelism be reimagined as shared good news between different religions?"

Ireen Phiri, a participant from the United Church of Zambia, had this answer: "Ecumenism and interfaith relations can greatly help to create an inclusive church or society. Inclusiveness can be a powerful evangelism tool for those people who do not belong to any religion."

Gender and spirituality: Regaining Voices for Gender Justice



The Council for World Mission Gender and Spirituality programme, held 26-29 November 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia, drew 29 participants from all five CWM member churches in Africa.

The program is designed to educate, equip, and empower grassroots advocates to introduce alternative missiological thinking into local societies as a panacea for entrenched gender injustices.

Deep conversation and dialogue rigorously interrogated and challenged the role of religious and theological narratives that sustain and further gender injustice.

Participants learned how to move away from the usual rhetoric of “lending voices to the voiceless” toward helping those who have been silenced regain their voices.

The chains of religion

In many of Africa’s Indigenous religious traditions, women and men have to contend not just with vastly different roles and societal expectations, but also how these roles manifest as chains that define their experience and expressions of their spirituality.

These chains were forged via the reading of religious texts with a bias towards suppression and oppression, rampant socio-community stratification,

objectification of humanity, and damages to the family economy.

The results are gender-based violence, child marriages, femicide, rape, human trafficking, genital mutilation, estate disputes, economic imbalances, and inequality in gender-based decision-making.

Amplifying wise voices

As part of an immersive experience, participants came alongside a congregation of more than 200 as they attended a candle-lighting service at the United Church of Zambia to raise awareness and take a stand against gender-based violence. Every candle lit during the service represented a spark of hope, strength, and a prayer for healing for all those affected by such acts.

The programme also coincided with a “16 Days of Activism” march held in the same city where Rev. Dr Sindiso Jele, CWM’s Mission Secretary for Social Justice and the Africa Region was the guest speaker.

“Everyone has a voice,” reminded Jele in his address to the gathered public during the march.

“There are voices and wisdom in the margins,” stressed Jele. “The concept of the Kingdom is innately hierarchical and patriarchal; there is a need to move from ‘Kingdom’ to ‘Kin-ship’.”

“Indecent and Indignant” in Bogota: Taking a Hard Look at Mission



T From 29 November to 3 December 2023, the Discernment and Radical Engagement (DARE) forum delivered difficult questions and discerning answers in Bogota, Colombia.

The regional forum, delivered in Spanish and Portuguese, was titled, “Indecentes e Indignadas: teologías, pedagogías y praxis de la liberación en América Latina” (Indecent and Indignant: Theologies, Pedagogies and Praxes of Liberation in Latin America).

The forum drew 36 multi-disciplinary scholars and activists in various fields from 11 Latin American countries who, as a collective, took a hard look at how mission, with imperial roots that led to the marginalisation of many Indigenous peoples, can be decolonised and the oppressed and exploited liberated.

The forum also gave a voice to testimonies that illustrate the burgeoning counter-imperial





consciousness and point towards the God of life who calls on us to take on life-flourishing missions.

Ecumenical partners also attended the forum, which featured three keynote addresses. The event included panelists from across Latin America with topics including “Religion and the Left,” “Interculturality and Decoloniality,” “Religion and Gender,” and “Education for Liberation.”

Three keynote highlights

Delivering her keynote on 30 November, Lilia Solano, Colombian deputy minister for Dialogue, Equality & Human Rights, called for a political theology of liberation while acknowledging the loss of Costa Rican theologian Franz Hinkelammert, and Argentine-Mexican theologian Enrique Dussel, both of whom passed away in 2023.

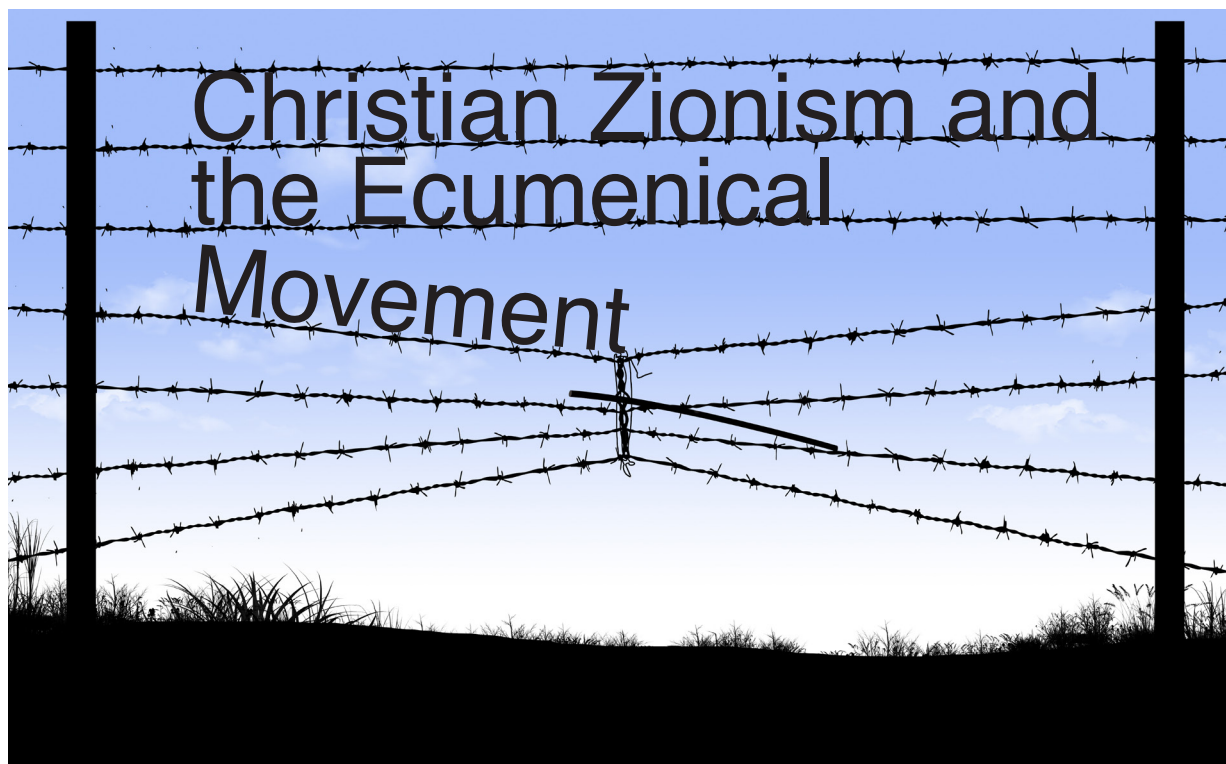
Solano pointed out that Hinkelammert and Dussel both interpreted Paul the Apostle as the root of biblical critical thinking. Stressing the urgency of liberation for Colombia, Palestine, and other countries, she reflected that liberation theology is the first step towards thinking and acting on the process of liberation in a biblical way.

Professor of ancient history and Biblical studies in the Universidad Catolica Argentina, Pablo Andinach reflected on the importance of the Exodus story as a symbol and historical project for the oppressed.

Besides its message of God’s salvation, the story also illustrates the challenges surrounding the colonization of the land as well as the plights of the oppressed.

Francirosy Campos Barbosa, professor of anthropology at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, raised the topic of Islamophobia, particularly since the start of the Israel/Hamas conflict on 7 October 2023.

Webinar Traces Roots of Christian Zionism—and its Damaging Outcomes Today



T More than 340 people attend a webinar, entitled “Christian Zionism and the Ecumenical Movement,” on 5 December. Hosted by the Transformative Ecumenism Movement, the webinar discussed the role of Christian Zionism in sustaining violence in Gaza and its impact on the ecumenical movement.

Dr Deenabandhu Manchala who facilitates the transformative ecumenism study process, moderated the discussion, and opened with describing the uniqueness of the discussion.

“There is something distinct about having a view of Christian Zionism against the backdrop of the genocidal violence, a view to identify the serious moral and spiritual challenges it poses to Christians, churches, and in fact to all people of faith,” he said. “It is also about discerning

opportunities for new meanings and expressions of ecumenical vocation.”

Manchala expressed hope that the present violence will cease one day. “But as long as these ideological apparatuses are not dismantled, more vicious and virulent forms of violence will thrive and destroy more lives and dehumanize more people,” he said.

Redefining Christian Zionism

Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb, a Palestinian Christian and writer, and founder and president of Dar al-Kalima University, opened his remarks with reflections on how to define Christian Zionism.

“I think there is an urgent need to redefine Christian Zionism because, for so long, we have been focusing exclusively on the evangelical brand of Christian Zionism, and I think that is misleading because

Christian Zionism comes in many shapes and manifestations,” he said. “It is deeply rooted in evangelical circles and in mainline churches but also in liberal theology—which only very few people recognize.”

There also exists a cultural—and less Christian—brand of Zionism among secular people, Raheb noted. “Christian Zionism has its roots definitely in Europe in the Middle Ages, and branched out to North America but today it is also widespread in the Global South,” he said, “in my newest book, I came to redefine Christian Zionism as a Christian lobby that supports the Jewish settler colonialism of Palestinian land using biblical constructs.”

Ultimately, this kind of Zionism aims to eliminate the native people, Raheb said. “This is actually what we are seeing today in Gaza, very clearly,” he said. “In settler colonialism, the natives become, in this ideology, aliens at home while the settlers are cast as natives and Palestinians as the foreigners.”

Complex dynamics

Dr Atalia Omer, professor of religion, conflict, and peace studies, offered a history of how Christian Zionism predates Jewish Zionism.

“Zionism is a political movement that emerged in Europe,” she said. “But it’s very important to note that, while Zionism is modern, Zion is really central, and the concept of Zion and the place of Zion is also embedded in the Jewish imagination.”

She cited policy implications such as the relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. “This is a compulsive move that is very much in the background of what is unfolding today,” she said. “The global war on terror is also participating in the consolidation of those dynamics.”

She also touched upon the complex intersections between anti-black racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and white supremacy. “This is ethnocentric, chauvinistic articulation of identity,” she said. “This is just to highlight anti-semitism and Zionism have a long history of co-existing with each other.”

Raheb and Omer received questions from the online audience, and Manchala thanked them for highlighting the urgency of honest discussion.

“Most of us are critical of Zionism and are looking for ways through which we can counter Zionism, Christian Zionism, and similar ideologies of exclusion and violence in different places around the world,” he

concluded. “I think you certainly have highlighted the urgency and necessity of churches and Christian organizations to give up their attitudes of apathy and silence as well as complicity with violence and injustice, and to live out their faith by seeking justice and human dignity in all situations of violence and violation of the vulnerable.”



Dr Atalia Omer



Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb



Dr Deenabandhu Manchala

Youth Work and Pray Against Racism: We Affirm that We are All Equally Loved



TIn a workshop on 8-11 December 2023 in London, 18 young people from Africa, Caribbean, Europe, and South Asia gathered to challenge racial supremacy, collaborate for equality, and pray for a path toward life-flourishing communities.

The workshop, organized by the CWM Discipleship, Spiritualities, and Dialogue programme, upended the traditional training model that encompasses knowledge being transferred from the “knowing” to the “unknowing”—the very premise from which racial supremacy often stems.

Offered a space in which everyone was free to speak, share, and collaborate, the young people focused on ways to bring what they learned back to their local communities.

Participants began with a comprehensive introduction to the church and racism, then discussed how colonisation and slavery created an opening for empire to sow racism and other injustices.

The young people challenged and interrogated perceptions of racism and racial supremacy, some of which are allowed in theological spaces. They also visited sites in East London linked to colonisation and slavery.

They shared their personal accounts of day-to-day racism in society, and applied their real-life experiences during in-depth discussions on structural racism in church as well as church worship practices and readings of biblical texts that could contribute to racism.



African participants offered a presentation on the Boksburg Declaration penned during a CWM Church and Racism workshop held in Africa in April 2023. The declaration, drafted by the African youths, decried the presence of racism being a stumbling roadblock to building life-flourishing societies in Africa.

The presentation of the declaration sparked a lively discussion and in closing, a prayer (shared below) was crafted by the participants in response.

From the Hearts of the Young #not yet uhuru

*We have looked...
We have listened...
We have felt...*

Make us ready to respond.

*We recognise and name the evils of racism, prejudice,
And all forms of discrimination
Which say some of your people are worth more than others -
Deserving of special and unearned privileges -
While others are misused,
Mistreated
And left behind.*

*We see the ways this has played out in different contexts
All around the globe -
The ways it continues to plague our world
And distort our relationships.*

*We affirm that you - the One Creator God -
Created all humankind out of your love;
We affirm that we are all equally loved
And equally valued -
Regardless of colour, shade, caste, or creed,
Regardless of gender, geography, language, or class,
Or any of the other divisions we imagine
Or create.*

*We long for life-flourishing communities -
In our individual contexts -
And around the globe.
Societies which embody equality, equity and freedom -
Where all your people have access to wealth, education,
resources*

*And all that is needed for abundant life;
Where all voices are sought out, listened to, and heard,
And wisdom flows freely - from everyone to everyone,
Crossing all boundaries
For the wellbeing of all.*

*God of justice,
We are young people.
We are living in the midst of a brokenness
We did not create -
Legacies of slavery, colonialism, and inherited unjust structures.
Yet we believe in the God-gifted talent we each embody -
The particular insights you afford -
So that we can be a force for transformation
Today.*

*As we look
As we listen
As we feel...
Move us to act -
Believing that the way things are
Are not the way they have to be.
Believing that change is possible -
Despite any obstacles that might be put in our way.*

*And when the road to your justice seems too long -
#not yet uhuru -
Remind us that any journey starts with just one step.
Help us to seek out
And create
The spaces in which we can encourage -
And be encouraged -
Along the way.*

*Transforming God,
We are young - and the future is ours to shape;
Empower us - each one, and together -
To speak with wisdom,
To act with confidence
For Church and world to better live out your ways.*

*Keep us looking
- and make us see
Keep us listening
- and make us hear
Keep us feeling and moving
- and praying
Until justice is complete.
Because it is not yet #uhuru.*

Amen

General Secretary's Christmas Message 2023:

A Call for Embracing an Inward Jubilee



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Warmest greetings from the Council for World Mission!

Advent is a season filled with the spirit of joy and the warmth of gatherings leading up to Christmas. It is the time that we commemorate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and celebrate together in unity with families, relatives, and communities.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." It is the message that the Angel of the Lord proclaimed to the shepherds in Luke 2:10-11.

However, today, the same land of the town of David is filled with pain, suffering and chaos.

The ongoing Hamas-Israeli conflict has killed more than 5,500 children in Gaza, reminding us of the decree of Herod to kill all the children under two years

in Bethlehem. According to the UN report, every day, 180 women in Gaza are giving birth without water, painkillers, anaesthesia for Caesarean sections, electricity for incubators or medical supplies. It reminds us of the deplorable condition that Mother Mary had to go through to give birth to Jesus on a cold winter night with no shelter.

As we navigate the complexities of the reality in Gaza and across the world at this time of Christmas, one cannot ignore the striking parallels between the time of Jesus' birth and the ongoing conflict.

The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem called upon the congregations to focus on the spiritual meaning of Christmas instead of extravagant celebrations with expensive decorations.

What does it mean to focus on the spiritual meaning of Christmas in today's context? How can we celebrate the Christmas more solemnly? How can we make this Christmas an "Inward Jubilee" instead of an outward expression of celebration?



This reminds me of what Athanasius of Alexandria said about the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. For him, the Lord did not come to make a display and dazzle the beholders. He came to heal and put himself at the disposal of those who needed him.

Christmas as an “Inward Jubilee”:

- It is not a mere absence of celebration. Rather, it is an intentional pause—a moment of collective reflection on the profound challenges faced by our brothers and sisters in Palestine.
- It is not a call to dampen our spirits. Rather, it is a deliberate choice to redirect our focus towards a deeper understanding of the world around us. It is an invitation to embrace a form of celebration that is rooted in empathy, compassion, and a commitment to addressing the plight of the mothers and children in Palestine.
- It is not a call for total silence during the season. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that our celebrations can be meaningful acts of solidarity and compassion.

The hymn that we often sing during the season of Christmas, “Silent Night” is not a mere Christmas lullaby. It goes over 200 years back into history to the time of the Great European War, with endless suffering and countless deaths during that time.

The hymn was a six-stanza poem written in German

by Father Josephus Mohr in 1816 and composed by Franz Xaver Gruber in 1818 amidst a dark time for Europe, especially in Austria, where Father Mohr came from. Amidst the great suffering and hardship, the “Silent Night” was, indeed, an expression of the deepest longing for lasting peace and comfort resonating in their minds with the words, “Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.”

This year, as we prepare to celebrate the Christmas season, let our celebrations be filled with a spiritual solemnity that reflects the realities of our world. Let us try to remember the suffering community in Palestine and across the world.

Let us celebrate this Christmas as an inward Jubilee.

Wishing you all a meaningful Christmas.

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum

General Secretary, Council for World Mission

Amidst the Gloom, Love Without Limits: CWM Staff Greet the New Year



The Council for World Mission (CWM) welcomed the new year with a Staff Communion Worship Service held 8 January in the CWM Singapore Office. The service was attended by both local and overseas staff, the latter participating virtually.

Rev. Julie Sim, Mission Secretary – Mission Programme and Partnership, East and South Asia, opened the service and, together with Rev. Dileep Kumar Kandula, Mission Secretary – General Secretariat, served the Holy Communion elements to the local staff. The Communion Service allowed the staff to not only remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross but also renew their commitment to CWM's missional work to foster life-flourishing communities globally.

CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum delivered a sermon that referred to the apostle Paul's writings in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 which read, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed;

perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." (NIV)

Even though 2023 ended with notes of gloom amid a myriad of global conflicts and bloodshed, Rev. Dr Keum's message encouraged all staff members to continue to take heart in the life-giving, life-transforming work of Christ and to live as a people of resurrection—raised up, undaunted, and undefeated as described in the words of Paul.

Christ's Resurrective Hope

"Jesus' resurrection opened up a horizon of hope to all who trust in Him," said Rev. Dr Keum who reminded the staff members present that even though Christians throughout the world continue to face adversity and grapple with death, death itself does not have the last word.



To underline his point that earthly death and supernatural resurrection are inextricably linked, Rev. Dr Keum shared his experience with a friend. He illustrated how the man was struggling with detaching himself from the loss of his child.

“He tried every means to overcome the pain of losing his son but failed. As humans, it is impossible for us to detach ourselves from suffering on our own,” explained Rev. Dr Keum, “because we are not gods.” He added that, to fully confront loss, pain, and suffering that exist in this world would require one to rely on a supernatural God and to understand His promise of a resurrected life upon which man can draw hope, hope that comes from none other than the living Christ.

“The belief in a resurrective hope is not illusory but one that is grounded in reality upon which the New Testament bears witness,” declared Rev. Dr Keum. As witnesses to such a biblical hope, Rev. Dr Keum exhorted CWM’s staff members to go into the world and proclaim it and wrest it from the powers of empire that seek to impugn it.

“In this way, we Christians can bring a passionate sense of urgency to the moral challenges of our time,” surmised Rev. Dr Keum.

In closing, he called for staff members to continue to love without limit, that the work of CWM is to bring forth hope-filled possibilities to peoples and regions bereft of it.

“The calling of Jesus’ first disciples was set in the context of the forces of Empire that tempted Him against the principles of obedience and faithfulness to God. Jesus, having resisted these temptations, presented Himself to the community as one not given to the scandal of seduction. His command to follow Him is both a statement of rejection of the status quo and the creation of an alternative love for His sake,” preached Rev. Dr Keum, “therefore, in the new year ahead, let us strive to love each other and share God’s love to the world.”

The service was closed by Rev. Dileep as he pronounced God’s benediction over all CWM staff.

CWM Communications Workshop 2024: Honing Life-Flourishing Messages



The Council for World Mission (CWM) held a Communications Workshop in Kuala Lumpur from 17-20 January, gathering more than 30 delegates from CWM member churches around the world.

Elder Lim Kar Hor, general secretary of Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia (GPM), the local co-host of the workshop, greeted the participants. “Welcome to this beautiful country, ‘Salam Sejahtera’ (a warm welcome in Bahasa Malaysia),” said Elder Lim as he conveyed his heartfelt appreciation to the delegates for their presence.

The workshop provided space to gather the lay of the land in the current missiological landscape, facilitate exchanges of ideas that will invigorate planned content, and foster a spirit of camaraderie between CWM and her member churches.

During the four-day event, participants had the opportunities to share their unique work experiences, learn from each other, and develop new communication plans that will help them better connect with their communities and achieve their mission goals.

In his welcome address, CWM General Secretary, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum said, “Social media has proved itself to be a powerful force in shaping discourse and influencing opinions; it is a phenomenon that the last pandemic not only necessitated but also accelerated.”

Rev. Dr Keum described how social media can be instrumental in helping churches proclaim the gospel in a multi-directional fashion, breaking down geographical barriers that have challenged missional work in eras past.

“Jesus, as the incarnate Lord, spoke and continues to speak directly to us, enabling spontaneous communication between God and us. Likewise, the church should also aim to achieve that by leveraging on modern communication technology to reach out directly to the peoples of the world,” continued Rev. Dr Keum.

Participants were presented with the results of the CWM Media Survey held last year that showcased key findings on the characteristics of each region’s media landscape and a reflection of the opportunities and challenges that member churches may face. Participants also engaged in discussions on pressing topics such as church communication in public spaces, decolonialization, and social justice in the digital space.

To foster mutual dialogue, discussion, and ideation, participants were split into regional groups to develop a two-year regional communication action plan that dovetails with the 2023-25 CWM Communications Strategy. The workshop also saw participants coming together to draft and finalise a CWM Communication Statement that will be presented at the CWM Assembly in Durban in June.

Applications open for 2024

Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics and Management (GEM)



As a church leader or a young person, how can you help your church strengthen its voice on global economics? How can you help churches augment and clarify their ethical and theological outlook on global and local financial and economic policies, business practices, and perspectives?

By applying for the Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics and Management (GEM School) for an Economy of Life programme!

Twenty young people (ages 30 or under), who are current or upcoming church leaders and activists, will be selected to attend the programme that will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 19-30 August 2024.

Students can expect to be equipped with the tools and languages to effectively advocate for urgent transformations in the global financial and economic sector.

Jointly initiated by Council for World Mission (CWM), World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and World Methodist Council, the GEM School responds to recommendations formulated for them in the São Paulo Statement: International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life and in the document *An Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture*.

Participants who meet the criteria will also undergo further selection in view of achieving a balanced regional, gender, and denominational representation.

Interested participants should log on to <https://www.cwmission.org/applications-open-for-2024-ecumenical-school-on-governance-economics-and-management-gem/> to download the relevant application forms.

Deadline for all applications is 1 March 2024. Selected participants will be informed by 31 March 2024.

CWM Partner-in-Mission (PIM) Opportunity in Partnership with the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC)

CWM PIM, in partnership with the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC), is looking for native English-speaking candidates to serve as English teachers in Hong Kong.

Successful candidates will be offered a 2-year teaching position that will see them being involved closely in enhancing local English language pedagogy and the exposure of the language to students ages between 6-12 (primary) and 12-19 (secondary).

Candidates must be native English speakers or possess native-speaker English proficiency, holders of a Bachelor's Degree in English and possess a recognized teaching qualification.

Applicants with experience in teaching English as a second/foreign language in a primary/secondary school preferred.

The teaching positions are set to commence from 15 August 2024.

The positions are open to applicants from CWM member churches and ecumenical partners.

Interested applicants are to send their applications to Sherrin Chong, Coordinator for Partners in Mission, via email at partnerinmission@cwmission.org



**COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION
PARTNERS IN MISSION PROGRAMME**
Enabling Life-Flourishing Communities

SHORT-TERM MISSION OPPORTUNITY NATIVE-SPEAKING ENGLISH TEACHERS

The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC)

Duration: 2 years

Location: Hong Kong

Start Date: 15 August 2024

Mission Opportunities

The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC) is seeking to engage mission partners in the area of education - to enhance the teaching of English language and to increase the students' exposure to the language.

- Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in Primary School*
- Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in Secondary School**

*For students aged between 6 and 12 years old.
** For students aged between 12 and 19 years old.

Qualifications

- Applicant should be a native-speaker of English or possesses native-speaker English competence
- Bachelor's Degree in English
- Recognized teachers training qualification
- Preference will be given to applicants with experience in teaching English as a second/foreign language in a primary or secondary school

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE WRITE TO:**

Sherrin Chong

Coordinator for Partners in Mission

Email:

partnerinmission@cwmission.org

Eligible to applicants from member churches and ecumenical partners of Council for World Mission

Applications Open for Training in Mission (TIM) 2024



CWM is accepting applications from Member Churches for the Training in Mission – Diploma in Mission Studies 2024 Programme (TIM). TIM will be held from mid-May to late-November, commencing online, before gathering in the Philippines and concluding in Jamaica. Participants will commence online studies before travelling to the Philippines in May. We expect TIM participants to be ready to depart their home country by the last week of June 2024.

The Training in Mission Programme – Diploma in Mission Studies promotes leadership and service to the church and God's mission, by providing opportunity for a group of young adults to learn about mission in theory and in practice through classes, exposure visits, projects and hands-on work in various contexts for five months.

Training in Mission Programme – Diploma in Mission Studies is open for all interested applicants ages 20 to 29 at the start of the Programme, who are single and not ordained ministers. He or she must be an active member of a CWM member church, as well as commit to serve the church upon return. Applicants must be proficient in English, as this is the main language of communication.

The Training in Mission is now transformed into Diploma in Mission Studies where qualified participants will receive the Diploma Mission Studies at the end of the Programme.

Graduates will possess qualification which recognizes applied leadership skills in mission and

education to enhance employment opportunities or to work in a voluntary capacity. CWM's member churches will benefit by having qualified individuals with the knowledge and skills to successfully lead areas of responsibility in a wide range of Christian mission roles.

In line with this, CWM requests that member churches nominate a maximum of four (4) young people: two (2) males and two (2) females, to this very important Programme. All applications must be endorsed by the General Secretary and/or Moderator of the sending church, following the Church's internal selection process.

CWM will select up to 12 participants for the Programme. Selection will be based on application forms that are duly completed, in particular the essay section. Additional considerations will also be made in terms of gender balance and regional representation in the Programme.

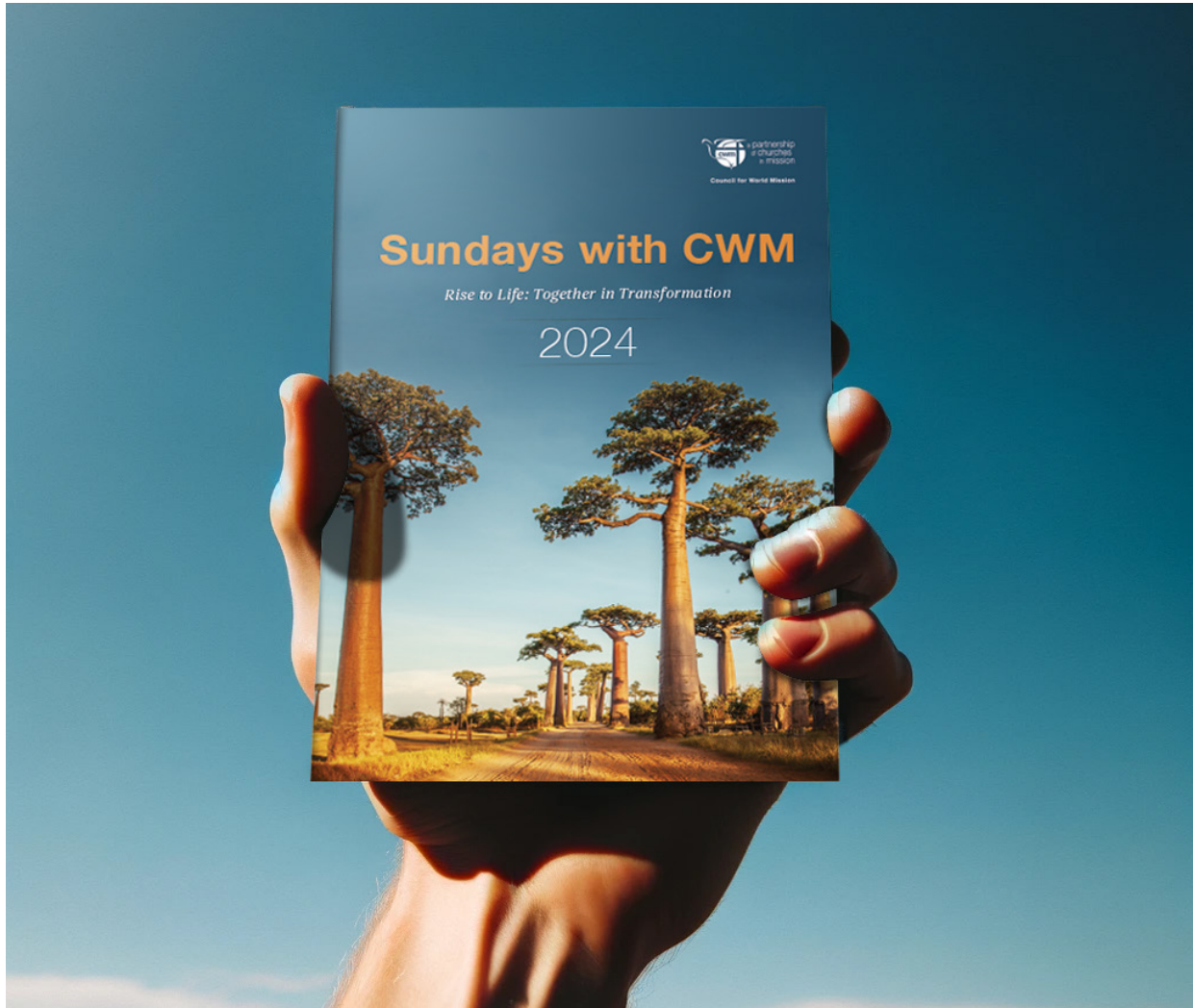
Please note that CWM will cover neither the cost of the passport nor the processing of each participant's visa requirements.

The deadline for submission of all new applications is on 1 March 2024.

For more information, please email empowerment@cwmission.org.

Sundays with CWM 2024

Now Available



The Council for World Mission (CWM) has released the 2024 edition of "Sundays with CWM," a collection of weekly devotionals.

As a nod to the CWM Assembly theme of 2024, the booklet is titled, "Rise to Life: Together in Transformation," a theme that runs through the collective call for global change, growth, and renewal.

"I am pleased to present to you the Sundays with CWM 2024, intended to assist you as a resource to use during your personal, family, or congregational gatherings to worship God," CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum said. "May this devotional booklet be a companion on your journey of faith, inspiring you to rise to life, together in transformation."

Sundays with CWM 2024 aims to be a weekly touchstone, guiding readers through reflections, prayers, and narratives that resonate with the CWM Assembly theme.

Each passage has been thoughtfully curated, aiming to inspire, challenge, and reinvigorate our connection with God and with each other.

Download:
<https://www.cwmission.org/download/sundays-with-cwm-2023-2>

At A Glance

Member Church News

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Waitangi Day 2024 Message:

Pursuing Unity Amidst Division



In New Zealand, 6 February marks Waitangi Day which honours the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi), between Maori (Tangata Whenua) and the British Crown in 1840. The treaty included terms to retain and preserve specific rights of the indigenous communities in the face of a growing European presence in New Zealand in the late 19th century. It strove to characterise and contextualise the relationship between both peoples as one of partnership.

Enshrined within the treaty is also the understanding that the Church recognises the bicultural partnership that exists between the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the other churches of the land as they work together for God's mission and purpose.

However, recent times have seen echoes of political voices of dissent that questioned the relevance of the treaty. In response to this segment of incendiary



rhetoric, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has issued a message for the upcoming Waitangi Day to assuage and calm fraying local emotions.

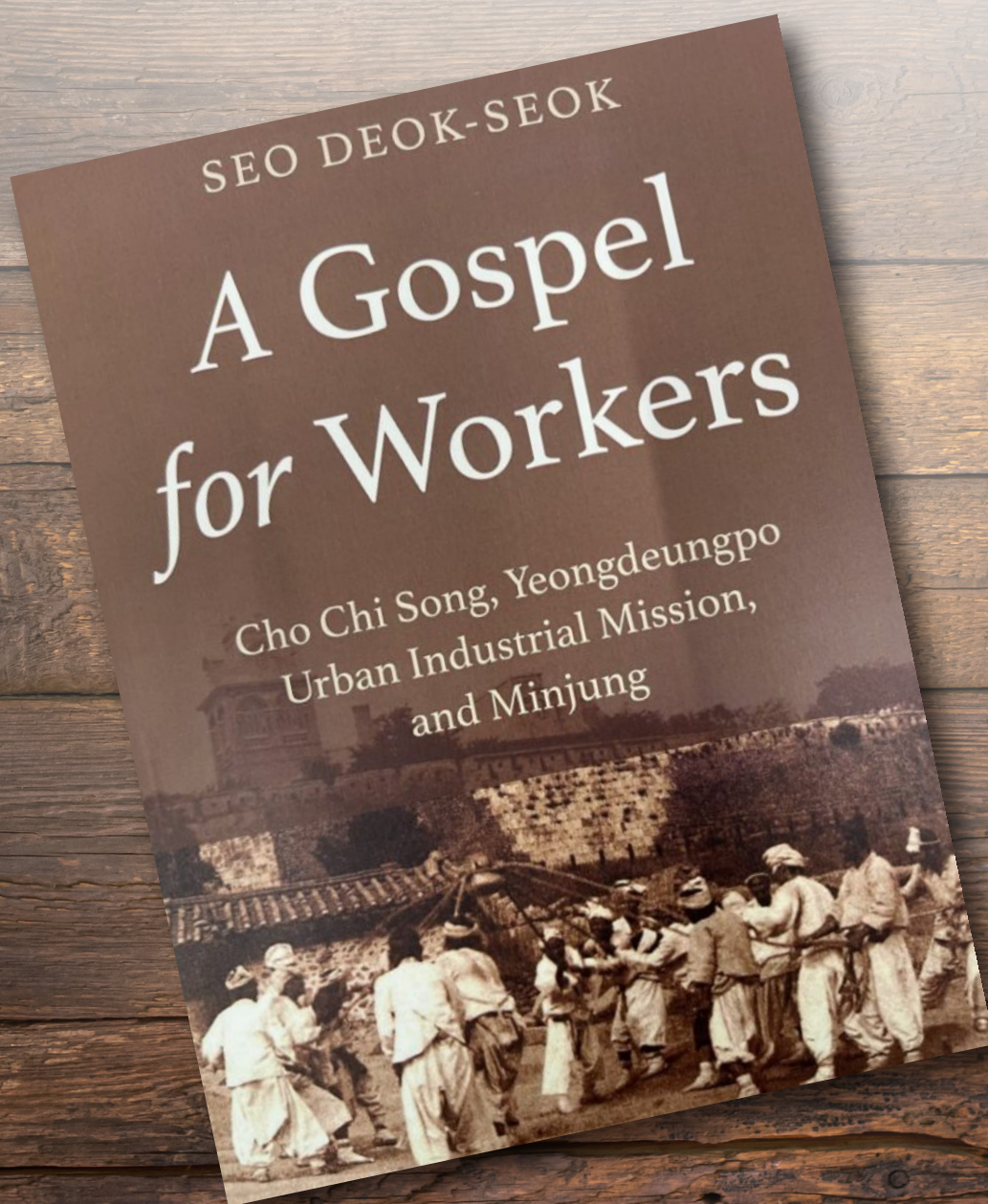
The message, written by the Right Rev. Rose Luxford, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, is a treatise on the importance and relevance of the 1840 Treaty. Rev. Rose reminded readers that the Church continues to stand in opposition to any forms of cultural monopoly on the interpretation or transmission of the Christian Gospel. She also affirmed the Church to be cross-cultural, that the Christian Gospel creates community across cultures.

“We honour the Treaty, [and] see relationship [to be] at the heart of how we operate: relationship between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti (all others who have come here). We uphold respect for and the worth of people of other cultures,” penned Rev. Rose.

The message concluded on a note of Christian hope that despite the spirit of divisiveness that is present in the country, the church continues to “pray for, and seek to action in our own contexts, justice, equity, respectful dialogue, attentive listening to others, finding ways forward that honour all people, and living out our faith as followers of Christ – the one who came to bring fullness of life to all people.”

For the full message, please log on to:
<https://www.cwmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Moderator-2024-Waitangi-Day-message.pdf>

“A Gospel for Workers” Unfolds the Story of Korea’s Urban Industrial Mission





A new book, *A Gospel for Workers: Cho Chi Song, Yeongdeungpo Urban Industrial Mission, and Minjung*, was unveiled at the Korea Christian Building in Seoul on 19 January.

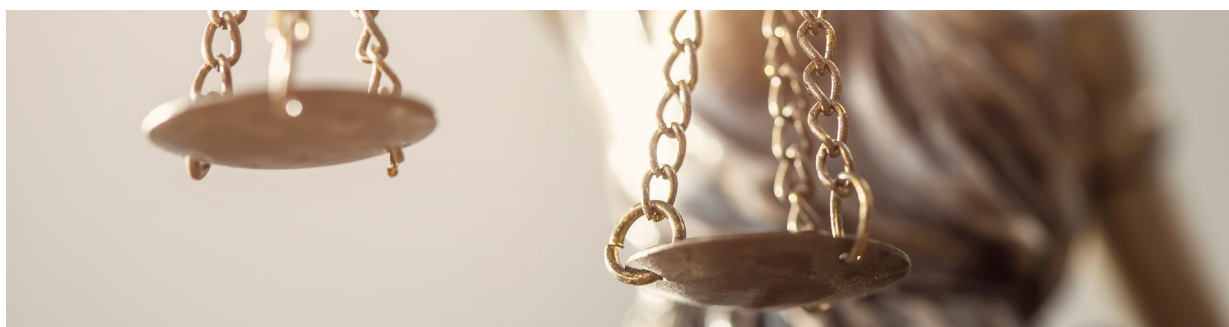
The Yeongdeungpo Urban Industrial Mission (UIM) played a key role in the Korean labor movement from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s. The Council for World Mission (CWM) supported the publication of this book as part of the series: “Prophets from the South”.

The book features three concurrent stories: first, the life story of Rev. Cho Chi Song, a pioneer of urban and industrial missions; second, the UIM in Korea, which Rev. Cho pioneered; and third, the emergence of Korean Minjung Theology, a theological perspective that grew out of the roots laid by the UIM.

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of CWM, emphasized the global impact of the UIM, stating, “It is no exaggeration to say that Urban Industrial Mission movements worldwide have been significantly influenced by Asian initiatives, especially those in Korea and the Philippines.”

He specifically highlighted the Yeongdeungpo UIM, established through Rev. Cho’s unwavering commitment, as a “global benchmark for UIM missions and movements, exemplifying courage and the active embodiment of faith.”

UCCSA Releases Statement on Germany's Questionable Alliances, Reiterates Namibia's Resolute Stand for Justice



The UCCSA has issued a statement as a response to Germany's decision to defend Israel's military actions in Gaza before the International Court of Justice where South Africa filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the "Genocide Convention") in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The statement was written against the backdrop Namibia's painful history inflicted by German colonial oppression and genocide against the Herero and Nama peoples, a coloured past that casts doubt on German authenticity in adjudicating matters related to genocide.

The five-page document, "Namibia's rejection of Germany's involvement extends beyond a local dispute. It serves as a warning to the international community about the dangers of allowing a nation with a murky historical record to influence matters of justice."

"If the world succumbs to Germany's sway, the consequences for global justice could be dire... [and] compromise the pursuit of justice, especially in Namibia's resolute rejection of Germany's involvement [in] the genocidal horrors inflicted upon the Herero and Nama peoples during the German colonial era... casting a damning light on Germany's claim to any moral authority in discussions surrounding genocide."

The strongly worded statement further puts forth the charge that Germany's "propensity for genocide denial appears deeply ingrained in the German identity... that for Germany, confronting and acknowledging historical atrocities seems to be an insurmountable challenge."

Mincing no words on the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip, the UCCSA wrote, "The ongoing Israeli campaign of violence, resulting in the tragic loss of over twenty-three thousand Palestinian lives, demands urgent attention and condemnation. It is a call to action for the global community to advocate for an immediate end to the suffering of innocent civilians, including women, children, the elderly, and those living with disabilities."

Commending South Africa's decision to bring charges against Israel's brutal military response in the Gaza Strip, the UCCSA reiterated its stance in its continued drive to challenge powerful alliances to support the weak and that genocide, under no circumstances, should be justified.

UCCSA concluded its statement with its continued call for an immediate ceasefire in Israel's disproportionate violent retributive reaction against Palestinians and an appeal for an earnest and active pursuit towards a two-State solution, involving the Palestinians. The UCCSA also called out the State of Israel for its war crimes and crimes against humanity that are being perpetrated in Gaza.

For a full version of the statement, please log on to <https://www.cwmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UCCSA-Statement.pdf>

At A Glance

Ecumenical News

Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi

Elected Interim General Secretary of World Communion of Reformed Churches



Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, chairperson of the CWM Programme Reference Group, has been elected as interim general secretary for the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

“Setri Nyomi is a dedicated leader who has been journeying with the Communion for a long time as a continued voice against global economic injustice, ecological destruction, and climate change,” said Najla Kassab, WCRC president. “His coming back will provide strength to the journey of the Communion that is alive in its programs. His pastoral approach and wisdom will deepen communion relations among the churches and secure trust in our ministry together, supported by a capable team in the head offices.”

Nyomi received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Ghana, Legon, in 1978; a Certificate of Training for the Ministry from Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, in 1980; a Master of Sacred Theology degree from Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, USA, in 1981; and a Ph.D. in Pastoral Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, USA, in 1991.

He was ordained in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana in August 1980 and served as a parish pastor in both Ghana and the USA. He taught pastoral theology and homiletics at Trinity Theological Seminary in Legon, Ghana, in the 1990s.

After previously serving as WCRC general secretary, Nyomi taught in Princeton Theological Seminary (USA) and the University of Göttingen (Germany). He was also the chairman of the University Council of the Evangelical Presbyterian University College in Ho, Ghana, from 2015 to 2023. He is currently a senior lecturer in Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, and the district pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Accra New Town, Greater Accra Region, Ghana.

Rev. Dr Nyomi is married with three adult children, two of whom are married.

Source:
<https://wcrc.ch/news/nyomi-elected-interim-general-secretary>

Strengthening Community, Building Structures



“Getting to know more about Ubuntu was new to me, but like having gold on your doorstep: You always step on it going inside and outside, but it was like a new discovery at the same time!” this is how UEM volunteer John Donald Mziray describes what inspired him most during the Weekend of the Young Adults Network. The talk by Leita Ngoy about the southern African philosophy of Ubuntu was a highlight of the weekend for many participants.

Young Adults play an important role in UEM: They are part of every

General and Regional Assembly, they are invited to volunteer in UEM member churches – thus establishing the UEM’s Young Adult Network.

A group of young adults from Asia, Africa and Europe met in Hattingen, Germany, last November to discuss the structure these networks should have in the future: How do they make it open and inclusive? Which needs should be met, and how does the Network deal with long distances within UEM?

Part of the event was dedicated to renewing structures of communication between the UEM and the Network members, linked by a group of peers, to handle interests, requests and organizational matters in a representative way.

The so called "structure group" for the German Region consists of three people, each with their own fields of interest while the Regions of Africa and Asia have their own coordinators with regards to building and maintaining networks. Participants decided

collectively to think internationally in all aspects as well as proactively staying in touch with the Network.

After the weekend, Michellvin Kasenda, a UEM volunteer, hailed the event as a success.

"The weekend was quite exciting: We not only met with other volunteers and had a relaxing time together, but also had the chance to discuss the plans for our network. It was really a weekend by ourselves, for ourselves!"





Council for World Mission Ltd.

114 Lavender Street
#12-01, CT Hub 2
Singapore 338729

T: (65) 6887 3400
F: (65) 6235 7760
E: council@cwmission.org
W: www.cwmission.org

Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in Singapore
Unique Entity Number 201206146Z

Copyright © 2024 Council for World Mission Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
Content may not be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, published,
or transferred in any form or by any means, except with the prior written
permission of Council for World Mission Ltd.