

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

INSIGHT

MARCH 2025



Europe Region: *Theology After Gaza*

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FORE- WORD

INSiGHT



Palestine is Not Pagan!

In the 19th century, leaders of the London Missionary Society (LMS), forebearer of Council for World Mission, decided that Palestine was not pagan and therefore did not require a permanent mission station. The decision to focus missionary activity on ‘the heathen’ and ‘the pagans’ exempted Palestine from LMS missionary activity. At the time, LMS leaders noted, it would be very strange to send a Christian missionary to Christians. The LMS reflected somewhat admiringly that Palestine, the Levant and the wider region we now know as the Middle East had withstood ‘Arianism,’ ‘Mahometanism’ and ‘Popery.’ The language of the time makes for deeply uncomfortable reading today.

The situation in Palestine makes for deeply uncomfortable reading today, too. This edition of *INSiGHT* gives voice to Palestinian Christians and Palestinian questions. Palestine is sometimes described as the oldest continuous Christian community in the world. The New Testament relays stories of missionary activity by Palestinians in their territory and surrounding areas.

CWM, as a global mission organisation and partnership of churches, is deeply indebted and committed to Palestine. CWM general secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop

Keum was amongst the first global leaders to name genocide in Gaza in October 2023: “The complete blockade of Gaza, wilfully leading innocent people to starvation and death, is a crime against humanity under international law. It is nothing but a genocide of an innocent population of over one million.”

The Palestinian Question, as Edward Said framed it, has been an uncomfortable one for European Christians and countries alike. Empire, settler colonialism, the misuse of the Bible all sit alongside public affirmations of a two-state solution. Those who have witnessed the genocide – and they speak to us from the pages of *INSiGHT* – recognise that a two-state solution has long not been the reality on the ground. Simply put, Palestine falls outside the conceptualising project of modernity: the modern nation state.

Today, the population of Christians in Palestine is about 42,000. Christians account for about 2% of

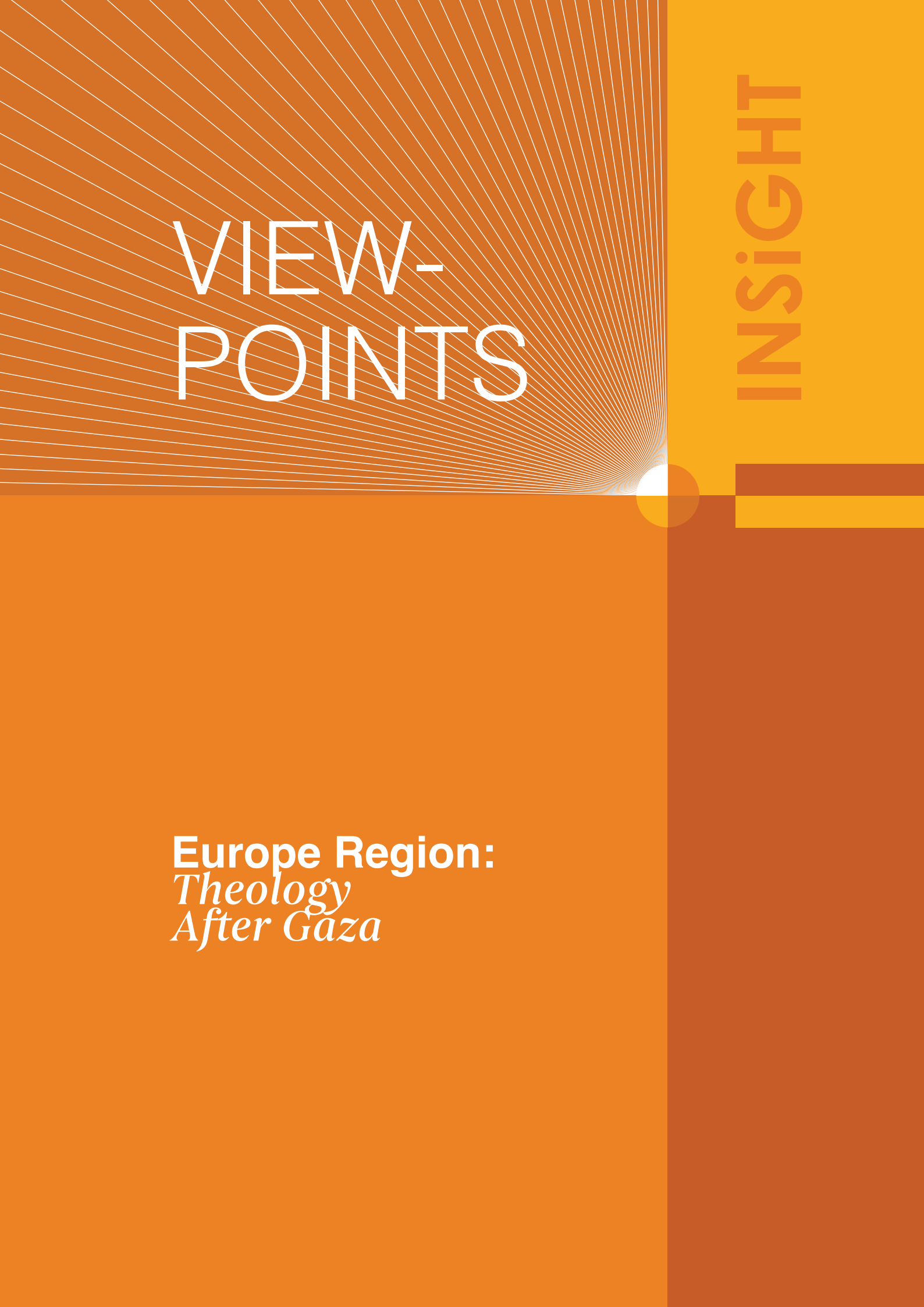


the population, down from about 11% during British Imperial Rule of the territory . CWM has increased its work with Palestinian Christians since October 2023 with solidarity grants, global consultations (notably *Theology After Gaza*), online seminars with Palestinian theologians and a new impetus in partnerships through YMCA Palestine, Kairos Palestine and the World Student Christian Federation. Palestinian Christians have been more present at CWM events from the Assembly to Members Mission Forums.

This work is reflected in the pages of this edition of *INSiGHT*. Excerpts from Yasmine Rishmawi's contribution to the Members Mission Forum (Europe) are included. Yasmine is representative of a younger generation of emerging Palestinian theologians. Her contributions at the MMF (Europe) deeply challenged, moved and inspired the Europe member churches to action. There is an interview with Mitri Raheb, the most widely published and read Palestinian theologian. Mitri has a long history of collaboration with CWM. In the interview he speaks about his experiences as a Palestinian theologian and responds to questions and themes provoked by two of his book projects, *Decolonizing Palestine* and *Theology After Gaza*. Luciano Kovacs shares the work of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) in Combating Christian Zionism. He explains the journey of the PCUSA and provides a congregational learning resource. CWM contributed to the production of this learning resource. I hope that you will find it helpful for your context.



*Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch
Mission Secretary –
Discipleship and Dialogue & Europe
Region*



VIEW- POINTS

INSiGHT

Europe Region:
*Theology
After Gaza*



Europe Member's Mission Forum Keynote:

Neutrality in the Face of Oppression is Complicity!

I want to start by extending my gratitude to CWM for their continuous solidarity with the Palestinian people, and for centering Palestine at the Europe Member's Mission Forum.

I stand before you today as we witness the ongoing genocide in Gaza. For months now, we have been witnessing Palestinian blood being shed nonstop, shredded limbs, grieving parents...

We have been witnessing how the Israeli regime – backed by the US and Western powers – has forced Gaza into a famine, starving people, dehydrating them, forcibly displacing them, bombing their lives and livelihoods, and stripping them of their most basic human rights.

At the same time, the West Bank continues to be subjected to relentless Israeli military operations - killings, roadblocks, arrests, land grabs, and settler attacks.

However, this oppressive and violent reality is not new; it has been going on for decades now, ever since the establishment of the colonial state of Israel on the mass

graves of Palestinians, the ruins of our erased villages, and the forced displacement of half of our population.

As Palestinian Christians, we have always been subjected to another layer of oppression: a spiritual one. Our own Bible has been and continues to be used to justify and uphold political agendas that oppress and subjugate us, stripping us of our dignity, freedom, and basic human rights.

This serves two primary purposes: first, the Bible is weaponised to justify the colonisation of the land, often through selective interpretations of certain texts; second, it is weaponised to suppress our agency as oppressed people by promoting empty peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation at the expense of our rights, dignity, and freedom.

For us, this struggle for justice is not only political but deeply theological.

Our faith, which we view as a source of liberation and hope, has been twisted into a tool of our own oppression. The theology of empire has co-opted our sacred text, turning the Bible into a weapon that justifies our dehumanisation and subjugation.

As Palestinian Christians, we are often asked to pray for peace, to engage in dialogue and pursue reconciliation. We are often urged, especially by Western Christians, to forgive “up to seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22), to turn the other cheek (Matthew: 5:39), and to remain silent, as not to disrupt the so-called peace.

We are asked to be “good Christians” by not challenging or resisting the theologies imposed on us, the same theologies stripping us of our humanity, and distorting the concepts of God and justice.

But I ask, can we truly believe in a God who would demand that we surrender our dignity? A God who commands us to remain silent as our land is stolen, our people are murdered, and ethnically cleansed? These interpretations have turned our Bible into an enemy to us, forcing us to ask: Is God against us? Does God not love us?

This theology - this ideology of empire - demands that we accept our oppression as a divinely ordained destiny. It

presents neutrality as a morally superior position, disregarding the truth that neutrality in the face of oppression is complicity.

Neutrality disregards the power imbalance between the coloniser and the colonised, allowing the oppressor to continue unchecked while silencing the oppressed. It gives bystanders the illusion of innocence, enabling them to look upon the ruins, the blood, and the torn bodies and say, “We will pray for you. We will pray for peace,” before turning away, leaving us to tend to the wounds of our homeland and resist colonialism alone.



Europe Region: *Theology After Gaza*

But what kind of peace are they praying for? A peace that asks us to die quietly? A peace that silences our cries for justice?

True peace cannot exist without justice and liberation.

We reject the idea that we must accept suffering in the name of shallow reconciliation and fake peace. Instead, we pray and act for a peace built on justice - a peace that dismantles systems of oppression at their roots and restores dignity to the oppressed. Prayer alone is not enough. Faith demands action. The empire is not dismantled by words alone but by resistance.

As Palestinian Christians, our faith is not one of passive endurance but of active struggle. We pray with our feet, our voices, and our unwavering commitment to liberation.

Justice is not an abstract ideal; it is a divine command.

Jesus' ministry was one of radical justice - lifting the poor, challenging the powerful, and breaking the systems of oppression. If we are to be faithful to his message, we must commit ourselves to justice.

This means rejecting theologies that justify colonialism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

It means reclaiming the Bible as a tool of liberation.

It means standing against theologies that distort our faith to serve the empire.

It means demanding accountability, advocating for liberation and decolonisation, and refusing to sanitise our words out of fear.

Liberation is not just political; it is deeply spiritual. It is about reclaiming our humanity and restoring our dignity. It is about breaking chains – both those that bind us physically and those that seek to enslave our spirits.

We need to turn our faith and anger into forces for justice, we need to walk the road of resistance with Christ, knowing that though the cross is heavy, resurrection is coming.



Yasmine Rishmawi is a Palestinian anthropologist who works as a researcher at the Odisee University of Applied Sciences in Flanders, Belgium.



“Theology After Gaza” at the Europe Member’s Mission Forum

Last September, the Presbyterian Church (PC(USA)) gathered some of our Palestinian and global partners in Dublin, Ireland to help us shape a simple resource that could be used in congregations to educate and inform people on the ideology of Christian Zionism and ways of confronting it.

At this consultation, Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch represented CWM.

The resource is designed to equip congregations to take a stand for peace with justice. The two-page resource describes historical points around Christianity within Palestine, brief theological arguments debunking Christian Zionism, and correlates the Doctrine of Discovery to settler colonialism.

It lists ways Presbyterians and others can inform themselves and engage in advocacy efforts, and act for justice in the region, and includes a list of denominational resources available to individuals and congregations.

This resource is free to be adapted by partners for their use with their constituents.

This gathering honoured one of the PC(USA) General Assembly mandates to work with partners across the world, “who are also confronting the spread of Christian Zionism in their contexts and convening spaces where experiences and resources can be shared through networks built to counter the spread of Christian Zionism globally.”¹

PC(USA) is committed to doing this work in solidarity with our Palestinian partners and in cooperation with those who are together in the struggle. Mutual invitations such as the meeting in Dublin and my participation in CWM’s Europe Member’s Mission Forum (MMF), as well as two global conferences we will be planning in the next couple of years, are a testimony to this.

The first paragraph of the resource counters the colonial Western narrative and mindset, especially of those pilgrims who, in the words of Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb, “want to reinvent the Holy Land of the Bible.”

Many “Christian theologians,” claimed Raheb, “write about Palestine from minds that are colonised [...] They write as if

Palestine were an ancient land that exists in a vacuum; they strip it of its sociopolitical context – of its real people – and they rarely think about how this theology has and is being used to enhance settler colonialism.”²

In his latest book, he relayed an episode that occurred when he had been invited to address a cohort of German theology students studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

A well-known German theology professor, by the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Marquardt was at the lecture. In a rebuttal, he said: “Mr Raheb, you stand in God’s way. If I were you, I would pack my bag and emigrate, leaving this country to its rightful owners, the Jews.”

After quoting Raheb, during the CWM Europe MMF I asked participants to discuss at their table what came to mind when they heard the term “Holy Land” and engage this passage from their own perspective.

The second paragraph of the statement is especially important in the context of the silence by many churches in the West on the massacres in Gaza and the West Bank, as pointed out by many open letters Kairos Palestine has issued to churches across the world, and one in specific to European churches.

Western churches have often hidden behind Israel’s right to defend itself, as if slaughtering tens of thousands of people could fall under that definition. In these letters, Kairos Palestine asked Western theologians and church leaders to repent for their silence and complicity in supporting Israel.

Again, at the Europe MMF, I asked participants to discuss these indictments and reflect on whether their churches spoke up or fell silent.

The third paragraph relates to the need of finding new ways to define Christian Zionism, given its presence in all continents and its different manifestations across the world.

Christian Zionism is no longer a European or North American phenomenon, but it is found in many contexts of the Global South. Many Christian groups travel to the Holy land fully funded by Israel, tour the country led by Israeli tour guides and never meet with Christian Palestinians, except the staff ushering them into the Nativity Church in Bethlehem.

In this way, these travelers are not exposed to Israeli apartheid. Many Christians believe that by blessing Israel, they will be blessed in life and possibly be bestowed with riches. Prosperity Gospel goes hand in glove with Christian Zionism.

Moreover, Christian Zionism can be considered an offspring of Christian nationalism, which in different eras has been at the center of the formation of settler colonial states,

including the US at its onset and Israel in modern times, with both cases at the expense of Indigenous people of the land.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. That is why it is essential to strengthen our ecumenical work to confront the rise of Christian Zionism globally, especially in relation to our denunciation of Christian nationalism, white supremacy, and our commitment to repairing the damages of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

1. PCUSA 226th General Assembly (2024) *overture on Confessing out complicity in Christian Zionism*
<https://www.pc-biz.org/committee/3000109/business>
2. Mitri Raheb. *Decolonizing Palestine*. Orbis. P. 53



Luciano Kovacs is the Area Coordinator for the Middle East and Europe for the Presbyterian Church (USA).



Scan this QR Code to download the PC(USA) resource on “Debunking Christian Zionism”



Theology After Gaza: An interview with Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb

Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb is the Founder and President of Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem. He is the most widely published Palestinian theologian to date, the author and editor of 50 books including *Decolonizing Palestine: The Land, The People, The Bible* (Orbis, 2023). Raheb has collaborated with CWM on several projects over the years, including the DARE Global Forum, Theology After Gaza and Combating Christian Zionism.

Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch, CWM Mission Secretary for Discipleship and Dialogue, caught up with Raheb about his work and mission.

Dr McGeoch: Prof. Raheb, you have been involved with the CWM DARE Global Forum and you have spoken about how DARE relates directly to your work as a Palestinian liberation theologian.

Dr Raheb: The DARE Global Forum is one of very few forums in the world today that engages the church in the context of contemporary Empire. DARE is a collective of scholars and practitioners who work at the intersection of religious communities, the academy and social movements. DARE scholars and practitioners have looked at the questions of Empire and resistance as they relate to scripture, land, people, body, religion and power.

Europe Region: *Theology After Gaza*

By Empire, we mean the amalgamation of global forces pooling their economic, military, political, religious and cultural powers in unprecedented and frightening ways. Its purpose is domination, subjugation and the further concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few. Empire is experienced as the increasing distance between those who make the decisions and those who suffer the destructive consequences of these decisions; all creation groans. Empire is historically constructed and therefore can and must come to an end.

On the other hand, we cannot understand the reign of God but as a critique to Empire. By announcing the reign of God, Jesus challenged and provided an alternative to Empire. History and scripture teach us that faith has been and can be at the heart of resistance, hope and the imagining and creation of alternatives. It is this recognition that has brought us together.

This resistance is manifest in movements across the world. All of us are called to listen deeply to the workings

of the Spirit in these movements. We are called into accountable, liberative, and transformative engagement. We recognise the formidable obstacles of religious and market fundamentalism. Liberalism, with its timidity, is not an adequate response.

We invite religious communities and the academy to join those already at work in challenging the manifestations of Empire by bringing their gifts, skills and resources. Communities of resistance and transformation challenge us to self-critical reflection and committed action in the firm belief that a more just and equitable world is possible and necessary. The only way to do mission is in resistance to Empire.



Dr McGeoch: Your recent book, *Decolonizing Palestine: The Land, The People, The Bible* (Orbis, 2023), has provoked a global conversation on settler colonialism, Christian Zionism, the weaponising of Scripture and Palestinian Christianity.

Dr Raheb: *Decolonizing Palestine* is a Palestinian Christian perspective on Empire and its narratives in the region. It places theology in dialogue with contemporary research as it relates to the settler colonialism practiced by the modern nation-state of Israel and its allies. Through a human rights framework, the book looks at theological concepts such as Israel, the land, election, and chosen people and challenges the weaponisation of Scripture by some Christians (including liberals) in support of the oppression and annihilation of the Palestinian peoples and their history. The book was published two weeks prior to 7 October and has been instrumental in helping people to view the genocide on Gaza within a settler colonial framework.

Dr McGeoch: You have often spoke in public about the genocide in Gaza. The CWM General Secretary, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, made a public statement in October 2023 naming genocide in Gaza: “The complete blockade of Gaza, wilfully leading innocent people to starvation and death, is a crime against humanity under international law. It is nothing but a genocide of an innocent population of over one million.” Considering the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2023, Dar al-Khalima University and CWM initiated a global conversation on Theology After Gaza.

Dr Raheb: The genocide in Gaza was without doubt another turning point in north-south relations. The genocide was the most widely covered one in history and it allowed people to see the full face of Empire in its magnified ugliness. While western imperial countries with a settler colonial history adopted the Israeli narrative and continued providing Israel with all kinds of military, political and legal support, South Africa and other countries in the global south went to the International Court of Justice accusing Israel of genocide against the Palestinian people.

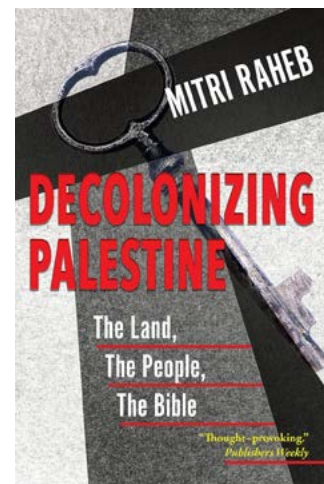
In this war, theology was weaponised against the Palestinian people by both Israeli politicians, Jewish rabbis as well as Christian Zionists. Theologians and scholars mainly from the global south have reflected on the challenge of doing theology after Gaza thus connecting the dots between their own contexts and that of Palestine. Twenty-eight theologians and scholars from countries including Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, India, Sri Lanka, Korea, Mexico, Argentina, USA and Canada met in Istanbul to begin the conversation about Theology After Gaza.

Palestinian and Middle Eastern scholars came alongside their international colleagues to share their experiences, insights and research on the failures of theology in the face of the war on Gaza, and the implications for the research of religion in general from a decolonial perspective.

It is now clear that the war in Gaza has become a crucial litmus test for international morality and ethical standards in the 21st century. The genocidal war on Gaza has also made it abundantly clear that for the past century, the people of Palestine have been fighting not just the Zionist movement and the State of Israel, but an entrenched colonial order led initially by the former British Empire and more recently, by the United States backed by Europe.

As is the tradition of CWM and its DARE fora, tough questions were raised and tackled in a “no holds barred” environment as participants debated and argued over issues such as whether theologians and scholars of religion have moral duties beyond the traditional one of speaking truth to power, especially since it is evident that the powerful know the truth but choose to ignore it. Theology after Gaza is thus a call for a radical paradigm shift in theology and practice.

Theology After Gaza: A Global Anthology by Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb and Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch will be available from July 2025.





Atoning for the Sins of the Past

I start this piece by invoking one of my favourite stories attributed to the Methodist Bishop Peter Storey.

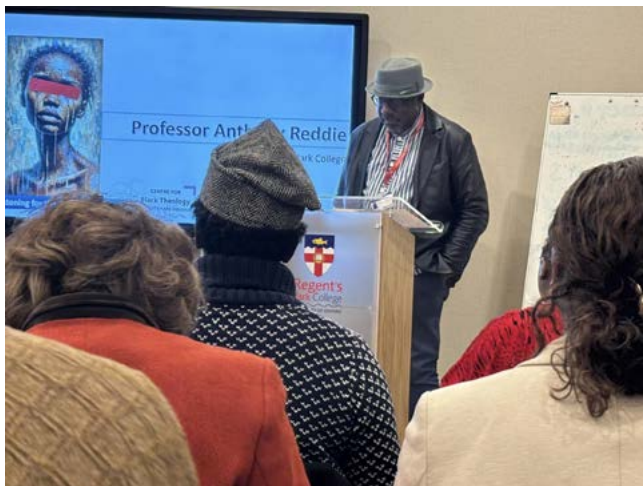
Two couples agree to go holiday together to a new resort. The important thing to bear in mind is that this was in the days when mobile phones did not exist!

The couples agree to stagger their journey by a week. So, the first couple goes for a week and are then joined by the second couple in week two. The first family arrive at the new resort and realise that not only is it incomplete, even worse,

it is situated next door to a pig farm and the stench from the farm is horrible. The couple are mortified. The husband wants to leave immediately. The wife is more pragmatic. She argues that they have already paid their money and they most likely will not get a refund if they leave. Plus, if they do leave, how will they notify the second couple, who are coming out to join them in a few days?

Reluctantly, the first couple decide to stay and to make the best of it. They will do their best to live with the smell. Into week two, and the second couple arrive. Immediately, they are confronted with the same horrible smell that met the first couple. The second couple turn to the first and say "This is disgusting. How have you put it with this awful smell?" The first couple reply to the second by saying "Smell! What smell?"

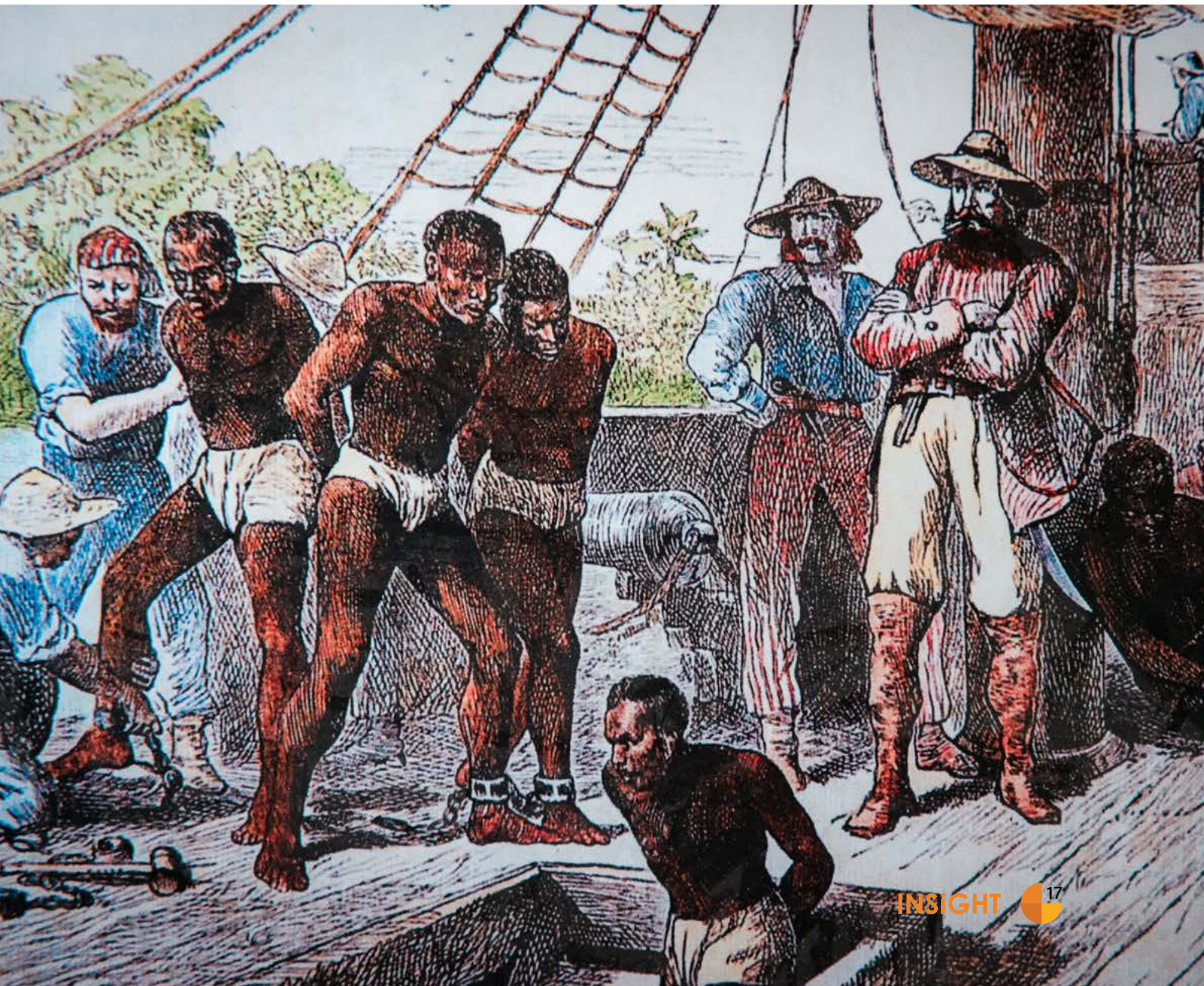
Storey (and I am sure there are numerous variations on this story) tells this anecdote to explain the role of many White liberals in South Africa during the era of apartheid



(1948 – 1994) – the enforced and legal separation of the ‘races’ in the nation, under the authority of a White nationalist regime.

The metaphor of the smell was also used by Storey to point to the ways in which many ordinary White South Africans became immune to the stench of apartheid and the racism and misery that many Black, so-called coloured and Asian people had to endure because of it.

Although others could discern the stench and the obnoxious odour of racism and discrimination, most White people had so gotten used to it, that when its existence was brought to their attention, their reply was often one of “Smell! What smell?” The equivalent of: “Evil and injustice? What are you talking about? I can’t see anything wrong. This seems normal to me.”



The recent CWM-sponsored event “Atoning for the Sins of the Past,” held in partnership with the Centre for Black Theology, at Regent’s Park college, in Oxford University on 13 February was an exercise in truthful remembering.

The call for reparations, for a comprehensive acknowledgement of the horrors of the transatlantic “so-called” trade in enslaved Africans, and the continued struggles of colonialism for Indigenous people, is a challenge to remember the past. It is a challenge to seek to make repair and to engage in various forms of restorative justice.

For much of the past century or so, the attempt by the global majority heritage peoples of the world to get recognition for the suffering they faced from European colonisation and exploitation, be it chattel slavery or colonialism, was rebuffed by many White people in the West.

Whether through government amnesia or commerce and industry or churches and charities, virtually every institution sought to pretend that these legacies of the past, these legacies of slavery and injustice were a figment of the imagination of Black and Brown people. The denial was not unlike the first couple in the story, refusing to acknowledge that there was a smell from the pig farm.

The one-day conference in Oxford took place against the backdrop of the continued oppression of Palestinian people in Gaza, in their so-called “war” with Israel.

The latter, equipped with one of the most sophisticated weapons and military capability on earth is waging a disproportionate war against a people whose capacity to “fight back” can be compared to one combatant carrying knife and the other possessing machine gun.

The tragedy of this so-called “conflict” has been the way in which so much of the world’s media has pretended that this atrocity that violates international law (collective punishment of a whole people because of the actions of small percentage of their number is illegal) is not happening.

Once again, it is not unlike the first couple retorting: “Smell! What smell?”

The Centre for Black Theology, Regent’s Park College, is proud to be partnering with CWM as we embark on a journey of truthful remembering.

As we seek to decolonise Christian mission, seeking to act in more just and equitable ways for the human flourishing of those deemed “the least of these” (Matthew 25: 31-46), we

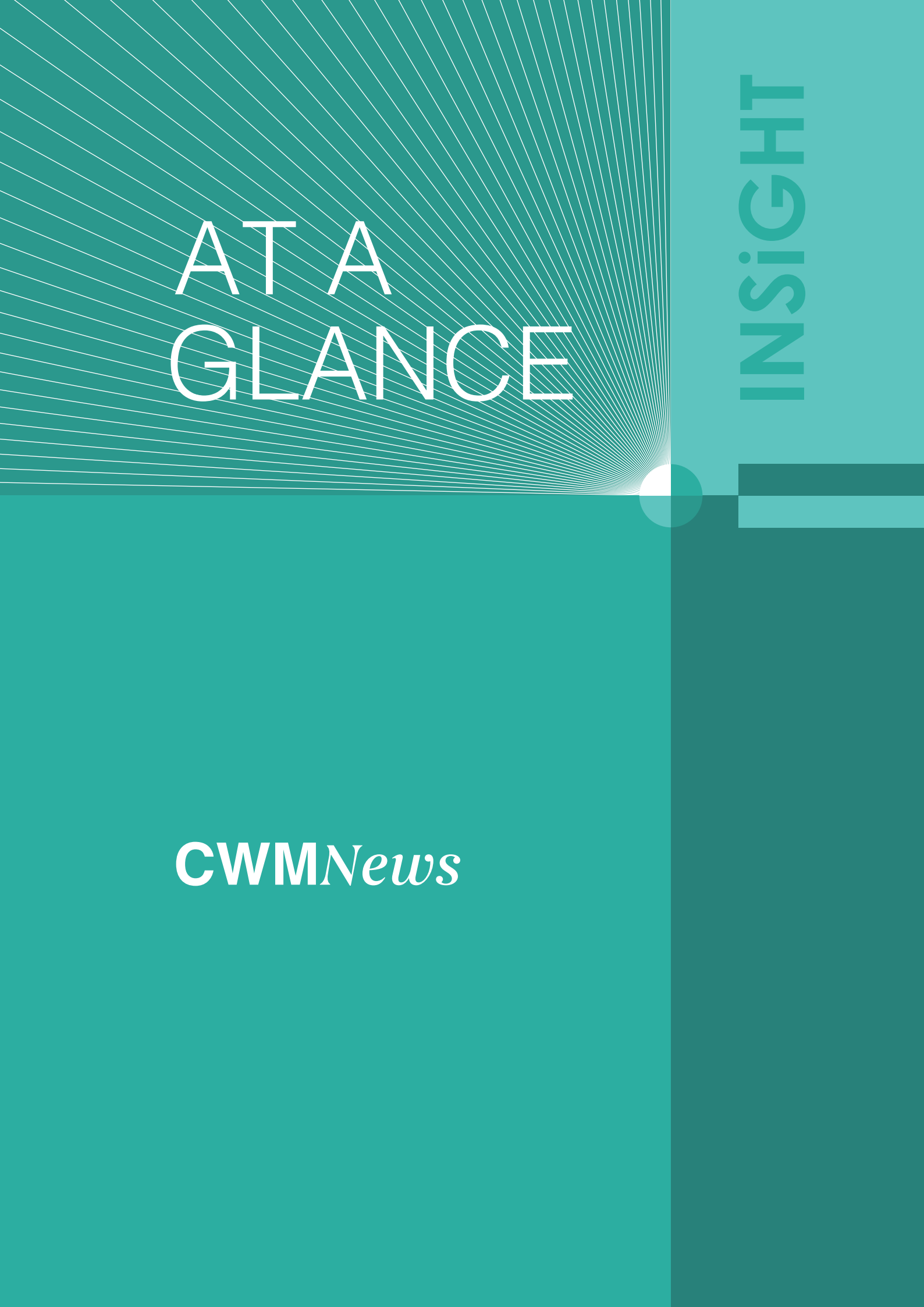
do so in light of the continued need to critically remember the past.

The challenge is one of telling the whole truth and not pretending that injustice, exploitation and oppression are a figment of the imagination of those who are consigned to the “underside of history.”

Sadly, there is a noxious smell of oppression in our world and we need to admit it and seek to remove it.



Prof. Anthony G. Reddie is a Professor of Black Theology in the University of Oxford.



ATA
GLANCE

INSIGHT

CWM*News*



CWM Europe Member's Mission Forum Focuses on Plight of Palestine

Twenty-six delegates and participants from the Council for World Mission's (CWM) European regional member churches and ecumenical partners gathered for the 2025 Europe Member's Mission Forum (MMF) held 17-20 February at the Conforti Centre – a conference facility at the Xaverian Missionaries Centre in the United Kingdom.

The second in the series of six Member's Mission Forums that will take place within each of CWM's missional regions, the Europe MMF saw its attending church representatives and members of the Europe's faith communities casting their eyes on the plight of the Palestine conflict that has killed and displaced thousands of the local Palestinians.

With the genocide as a backdrop, the Europe MMF this year transformed into a platform where robust dialogue and discussions were held as to how the church can engage in further collaboration towards challenging the injustice that is going on in Palestine.

Normalising anger as a force for good

CWM Moderator, Dr Natalie Lin, graced the event and in her address to the European member church representatives and partners, she spoke of her own Christian faith and service, the importance of the missionary movement to the Taiwanese Church and the ongoing struggles for self-determination which mirrored the plight of the Palestinians.

Lin's points on self-determination in her address were further cemented by Palestinian theologian, Yasmine Rishmawi, who was one of the two keynote speakers at the MMF.

Her keynote speech, delivered in the form of an interview with CWM Mission Secretary of Discipleship and Dialogue, Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch, included reflections of her background as a young Palestinian theologian.

Rishmawi reflected that the belief of neutrality being the best way to promote peace was a perspective that could exacerbate injustice.



David Livingstone Birthplace

Participants also visited the David Livingstone Birthplace (DLB) in Blantyre, Scotland. CWM presented the Centre with a digitised framed copy of David Livingstone's application to the London Missionary Society (LMS).

She also further noted that churches and Christian leaders often call for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation but this call does not address the root causes of injustice.

In her address that was full of references to settler colonialism, righteous anger, and liberation, Rishmawi set out a Palestinian vision that was radically different from the kind of "peace" that simply meant being conflict-averse.

Rishmawi challenged churches to act justly in support of Palestine, and to ponder over the instances when anger is a force for good especially in the face of the oppression in the Palestinian state.

Denouncing Christian Zionism

Luciano Kovacs, Area Coordinator for the Middle East and Europe, Presbyterian Church (USA), followed Rishmawi's presentation with a sharing on the work of PCUSA in combating Christian Zionism, a belief that sees modern-day Jews as the descendants of the biblical Israelites and heirs to the land of Israel.

In his keynote speech, Kovacs said that Christian Zionism has caused many to confuse the modern state of Israel with the biblical Israelites, thus directly supporting the harm that is being inflicted on the Indigenous inhabitants of Palestine who themselves belong to diverse faith communities.

"The modern state of Israel is not the biblical Israel. This is a distortion, hijacking, and weaponizing of the biblical promises for political ends in support of a highly militarised and oppressive state structure, the State of Israel," declared Kovacs.



CWM South Asia Member's Mission Forum Reaffirms Commitment to Deeper Ecumenical Ties

The Council for World Mission (CWM) South Asia Member's Mission Forum was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 2-5 March, bringing together ecumenical partners and delegates representing CWM's four member churches in the region — the Church of Bangladesh (COB), Church of North India (CNI), Church of South India (CSI), and Presbyterian Church of India (PCI).

The four-day event saw more than 20 participants engaged in robust discussions and dialogue as the region reflected on aligning mission priorities and emerging contextual challenges that call for a unified, collective response.

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of CWM, opened the forum by reaffirming CWM's unwavering commitment to resist life-denying forces, advocate for social justice, and foster deeper ecumenical ties for mission work.

He also touched on and challenged the region's member churches to continue in their work to reclaim true liberation and salvation not rooted in wealth, but in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work.

Many challenges

With its sheer geographical size and diversity in peoples and cultures, South Asia is a region grappling with a multitude of contextual issues—such as the rise of religious nationalism, climate crises, and the call for liberation from patriarchal mindsets and gendered moulds—that make mission work an uphill task.

One of the many woes facing South Asia is modern-day slavery in South Asia, said Dr Sudipta Singh, Deputy General Secretary – Programmes.

Singh shed light on persistent issues such as forced marriages, child marriages, and descent-based slavery that continue to plague many South Asian societies.



He challenged churches to embrace their missional purpose, leveraging their reach and influence to make a difference and transform lives. Most importantly, he urged churches to realign their missional priorities—to identify with the struggles of the oppressed and strive to be prophetic in mission.

Power that liberates

The forum was also a platform for pertinent theological and societal topics.

Rev. Prof. Sathianathan Clarke gave a keynote speech that cast a light on the theology of power.

Clarke emphasised that the concept of power has its origins in the Triune God, where there is power and joy within the relationship enjoyed by each of the Trinity's members bound in mutual love.

"Jesus is an empowering liberator, not an overpowering force," reminded Clarke who exhorted the attending church delegates to spare no efforts in creating inclusive spaces where power flows—and overflows—in love and in sharing.

Hospitality, gender injustice, life-flourishing communities

Two Bible studies were led by Rev. Philip Peacock.

The sessions took deep dives into the "theology of food" where the Holy Communion was examined as God's

perspective on hospitality, extolling believers in exploring alternative economies of food where everyone has access to sufficient sustenance.

The story of Hagar was also discussed, leading to conversations on gender injustice in social and economic spheres, exposing the plights of the marginalised and mobilising the member churches to stand in solidarity with them.

The forum was closed with a strategic session amongst the member churches in charting their way forward, exploring how each church can contribute to life-flourishing communities. Fund in support of local social ministries.



CWM Africa Member's Mission Forum Explores Acting for Christ in Catastrophic Times

Thirty-five delegates representing the Council for World Mission's (CWM) member churches in the African region as well as ecumenical partners attended the Africa Member's Mission Forum (MMF) in Blantyre, Malawi, from 18-22 March.

A biennial event, the MMF for the African region created a much-needed space for local faith communities and leadership to come together in dialogue and reflection over various contextual and theological challenges.

Insights on missiological strategies were also shared during the forum, themed "Transforming Power." Delegates pondered the urgent call for Africa to adapt and evolve in response to the region's existential crises—racism, xenophobia, patriarchy, economic exploitation, ecological degradation—that continue to divide communities and ravage creation.

Acting for Christ in catastrophic times

In his keynote address entitled "Transforming Power in Catastrophic Times," CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum reiterated the pressing need for Africa's churches to stand up and act against issues plaguing the region, from growing militarisation within and beyond African shores, the rise of ultra rightwing politics, the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence and digital economies that threaten traditional labour structures, to the ongoing work in the decolonisation of mission.

"As CWM prepares for its Jubilee in 2027, this gathering calls upon the church to engage in prophetic spirituality that resists empire and nurtures life, and to commit to decolonising mission, addressing historical injustices and advocating for reparative justice," reminded Keum.

Echoing Keum's decolonising call was Dr Kenneth Ross, a Professor of Theology from the Zomba Theological College.



Ross led a sharing session on “Deconstructing Whiteness” where he examined how colonial legacies still shape mission, and exhorted the delegates to work towards a radical decolonisation of theology and power structures prevalent in African Christianity.

Current CWM Partner-in-Mission, Rev. Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, meanwhile led contextual Bible studies on gender justice and ecological justice by delving into biblical texts from Judges 4 and Genesis 4, respectively.

Mpetsheni’s sessions encouraged participants to engage scripture from the margins and helped them connect God’s word to pressing contemporary challenges.

Dr Sandra Chitalu, a youth delegate from the United Church of Zambia surmised, “The contextual Bible studies reminded us that prophetic action begins with rereading scripture from the margins, not from the centre.”

Inspiring stories

The MMF also provided the space for member churches to share amongst themselves stories that continue to inspire long after the event has ended with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) reflecting on its regular reforestation efforts, recent digital mission innovations, and economic empowerment models.

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) showcased its “Going for Growth” movement focused on revitalising local congregations and grassroots mission.

The Presbyterian Church of Mauritius presented its missional work in reaching out to vulnerable local communities through education, rehabilitation, and food security.

“Hearing from all member churches showed us that holistic mission—education, environment, and empowerment—works,” said Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy and the Africa Region, who also explained that the MMF was yet another step in the collective journey embarked by the African member churches towards the CWM Jubilee celebration in 2027, one that is also rooted in radical discipleship.

Fresh missional spirit

The four-day forum was brought to a close with a vibrant Cultural Evening hosted by the Churches of Christ in Malawi, celebrating African identity, diversity, and unity in mission.

The evening showcased traditional African music, dance, storytelling, and cuisine, offering a space for participants to deepen relationships, honour local cultures, and embody the spirit of ubuntu (“I am because we are”), a conclusion to a forum that brought a spirit of deep reflection, fostered challenging conversations, and renewed a commitment towards a prophetic missional outlook.

The Africa MMF also saw the various member churches and partners forging partnerships to further theological reflection and a pact to share resources on issues concerning gender, economic, and ecological justice.



CWM Board Convenes, Sets Sights on Upcoming Jubilee

The Council for World Mission Board of Directors convened virtually on 24-25 February.

CWM Moderator Dr Natalie Lin opened the meeting with a sharing from Psalm 8, which praises God for His mindfulness towards humankind, however insignificant humans are amidst the vastness of creation. Lin based her sharing on her recent experience caring for her ailing mother in Taiwan, which made her reflect on the mercy of God.

She reminded the Board of the importance of being active seekers of God's will and being cognizant of God's authority over everything that they do especially in the decisions that were to be made in the meeting. She further highlighted that, despite everything that is at the disposal of humankind, we are not in control. Lin emphasised the importance of having a deep respect for life that must be fostered, cultivated, and maintained in all seasons.

Towards the CWM Jubilee

In his General Secretary report, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum unveiled the plan for the upcoming CWM Jubilee celebration which will take place in 2027 and during the CWM General Assembly in 2028.

Keum described the 50th year of CWM's founding as more than just a mere commemoration; it will herald a season of discernment as the global partnership of churches charts its way forward while critically examining the collective journey taken in the last 50 years.

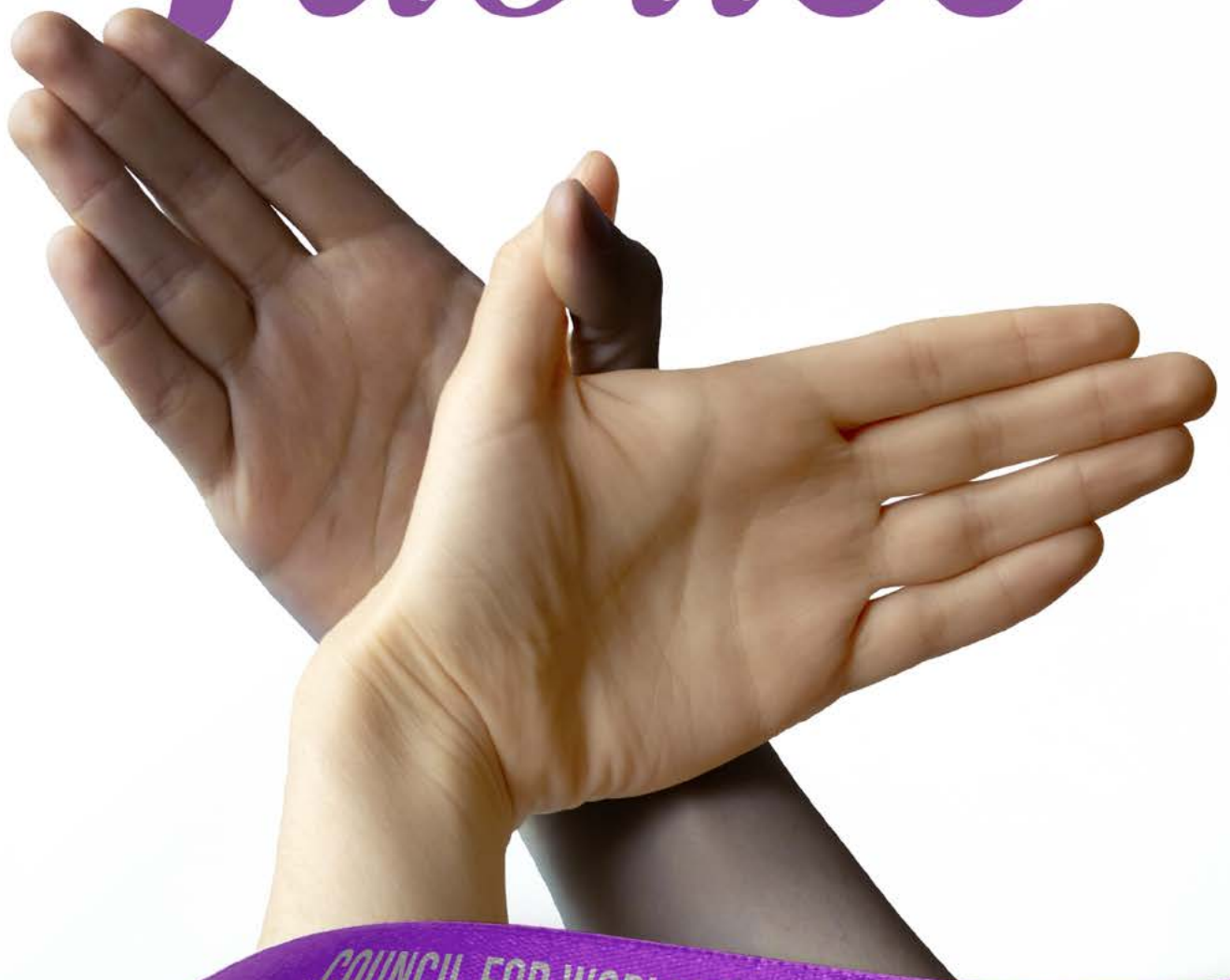
"A detailed plan for the Jubilee celebrations will be presented at the November 2025 Board meeting, following discussion at the June 2025 Annual Members Meeting (AMM)," said Keum.

He announced the next AMM will be held in Songdo, South Korea from 15-18 June under the theme "Together Towards Jubilee," with a preceding Board meeting from 13-14 June.

AT A GLANCE

TOGETHER WARDS *Jubilee*

50 Years



COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION 1977-2027



“As we journey Together Towards Jubilee, we are reminded that our collective mission is rooted in the call to justice, liberation, and life-flourishing communities,” said Keum.

In response to the General Secretary’s logistical update on the AMM, the Board approved the theme, “Together Towards Jubilee” as well as the proposed programme as well as the date and location.



“Atoning for the Sins of Our Past” Examines Black Theology, Reparatory Justice

The Council for World Mission (CWM), in partnership with The Centre for Black Theology of the University of Oxford, organised a workshop, “Atoning for the Sins of Our Past,” on 13 February.

The workshop, attended by more than 40 participants from CWM’s member churches and ecumenical partners based in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands, was held at The Centre for Black Theology at Regent’s Park College in Oxford, England.

The workshop furthered the outcomes from two previous CWM events, a Youth and Racism Workshop in 2022 and a Theology of Reparations Consultation in 2023, as well as materials from a CWM research project titled “Deconstructing Whiteness, Mission and Empire” published in 2023.

The workshop also paved the way for further collaborations between CWM and The Centre for Black Theology while reiterating the call for churches and mission organisations to continue to work together in organising future events and establishing reading groups in Black theology.

The event also served as a platform allowing faith communities in the UK and the Netherlands to discuss many facets of Black theology and reparatory justice including a deep dive into whiteness, the biblical theologies of Onesimus, the Empire instituted by the British and Dutch colonial powers, and the role of the present-day churches in the UK and the Netherlands.

Presentations by Dr Anthony George Reddie, Founder and Director of The Centre for Black Theology and Ms Thandi Soko de Jong, a CWM scholar, sparked discussions during a panel led by Richard Reddie, Social Justice Officer from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Rev. Dr Michael Jagessar from the United Reformed Church (URC), and Dr Jo Sadgrove from the United Society of the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG).



A theological case for reparations

A descendant of enslaved Africans, Reddie noted that his last name, while he was proud of it, was not an African name but a Scottish one adopted by his forefathers while they navigated their lives in a foreign land.

Reddie then further expounded upon the biblical theme of reconciliation, speaking on the differences between Jews and evangelical Protestants, and highlighting that the former views salvation to be a collective concept while the latter places more emphasis on individualistic redemption in Christ.

He also critiqued the West in having not done enough in actual reparations towards the descendants of enslaved Africans.

Was Onesimus truly restored?

Soko de Jong offered a deeper look into the account by the apostle Paul on Onesimus, a slave serving in the house of Philemon. Soko de Jong challenged the prevailing narrative surrounding the epistle with the argument that Onesimus remains a passive character without a real name besides the one given to him—a name that was simply a Greek adjective for “useful,” “profitable,” and “beneficial,” dehumanising the character.

Soko de Jong further questioned if Onesimus was really restored in the end beyond the fact that he was “forgiven” of his escape, and challenged the audience to think about whether Onesimus’ escape attempt and later conversion were in fact acts of self-emancipation from Philemon.

In her conclusion, while agreeing that reconciliation should include the acknowledgement of past wrongs, Soko de Jong also stressed that it must also be accompanied with appropriate and comprehensive reparations for the genuine repair of relationships.



CWM Finance Conference 2025 Brings Deeper Collaborations and Connections

The Council for World Mission (CWM) convened its 2025 Finance Conference from 26-28 February in Hong Kong, facilitated by the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC).

The 2025 conference, which served as a gathering for the finance stakeholders and decision-makers within CWM member churches to network, dialogue, and deliberate, was last held in 2017.

In his opening address to the financial delegates representing CWM's member churches, CWM General Secretary, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, highlighted that Hong Kong, in recent years, has undergone a challenging period that has deeply impacted its people.

Holding the conference in the bustling city displayed solidarity with local communities and churches that have continued to serve faithfully despite difficult circumstances.

Keum also expounded on the decision to hold the conference in Hong Kong as one that carried a profound meaning.

He explained that the independence CWM currently enjoys has its roots from the historic "Gift of Grace" from HKCCCC in 1997 that provided the financial foundation from which CWM could more effectively and sustainably engage in God's life-flourishing work throughout its six regions.

CWM Mission Secretary for Finance, Mr Soonyew Sum, welcomed the delegates, many of whom were new to CWM's financial history, by shedding more light on the "Gift of Grace," a donation made by HKCCCC to CWM of proceeds from the sale of a plot of land formerly registered under the London Missionary Society (LMS) to the Hong Kong government in 1997.

A balance of the sale was also used to establish the CWM/Nethersole Fund in support of local social ministries.



The “Gift of Grace” established the base for CWM’s investment portfolio through which CWM is able to support grant initiatives and programmes that have helped its member churches further their missiological goals.

Sum also reflected on the positive financial growth of CWM investments, reflecting the importance of faithful and prudent stewardship of its resources.

Balancing growth and de-growth

In a keynote presentation that echoed Sum’s reflection on CWM’s financial prudence with an eye towards long-term investing, Mr Richard Morgan, Chair of CWM’s Investment Committee, also shared his insights on the challenges that threaten to disrupt investment planning.

While speaking on the many volatile challenges in the ever-shifting global financial landscape, Morgan encouraged the conference to rethink established approaches to investing.

One way was the exploration of alternative investment routes to financial gains through embracing other indicators of growth such as the Human Development Index rather than GDP (gross domestic product), a move Morgan referred to as a “de-growth” agenda that emphasises a priority towards public good rather than economic gain.

He listed the COVID-19 pandemic of the last five years as a recent example when governments positioned public health over GDP and accepted large falls in the latter.

Morgan posited that the question now remains on whether the experiences gained during the pandemic would maintain momentum in encouraging charitable entities to have deeper discussions about striking a balance between securing sustainable, socially beneficial resources while abiding requirements of prevailing charity investment laws.

Visits showcase LMS history and legacies

To understand the missional context and history in Hong Kong, delegates visited Hop Yat Church and Ying Wa (Anglo-Chinese) Girls School, both established by the LMS.

The Hop Yat Church, located at Bonham Road, was the first church building of HKCCCC built in 1926, and has its origins in the decision by Rev. James Legge of the LMS to move to Hong Kong in 1843, where he devoted his time to educating and preaching to the locals.

Today, Hop Yat Church is a proactive voice amongst Hong Kong’s faith communities in evangelism, formation, and other social service ministries.

The Ying Wa Girls School was founded in 1900, and features a two-storey educational institution with a boarding school that was built to provide quality Christian education for local girls.

Delegates also visited the school’s Heritage Block which served as a kindergarten in 1926 until 1963 and was later repurposed into a school museum in 2023.

Ying Wa Girls School presently has an 800-strong student body, and alumni in many in positions of leadership locally.



At Bishop's College Valedictory Service, CWM Deputy General Secretary Calls for Life-Flourishing Communities

Dr Sudipta Singh, Deputy General Secretary – Programmes of the Council for World Mission (CWM), was invited by the Church of North India (CNI) to speak at the Valedictory Service of Bishop's College in Kolkata, India, on 9 March.

Established on 15 December 1820 by Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, the first bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bishop's College is a regional ecumenical theological college affiliated with and solely run by the CNI.

In his address, Singh challenged graduates to embrace a transformative vision of theological, missional, and pastoral

engagement in response to contemporary pressing global and local crises.

Speaking against the reductionist trajectory of theological education, Singh urged graduates to reimagine their calling beyond institutionalised frameworks.

"In the midst of this rampant deification of power, it is the God who is wounded for our sake that calls out to us from the cross. In the cross, we find an alternative strategy of resistance to Empire. The cross is not a site where violence and suffering are glorified but a place that calls for active confrontation of Empire through solidarity and struggle," exhorted Singh, quoting from Isaiah 53:5.

Addressing the occupation by military empires in Gaza, Singh emphasised that the world today demands not silence, but an exposé and condemnation of the forces that perpetuate oppression. He called on graduates to join voices across the globe in building people's power to resist imperialist agendas and work

toward the liberation of the oppressed, particularly the occupied people of Palestine.

Turning to the Indian context, he denounced the erosion of democracy and the rising impunity in attacks against Muslim and Christian communities as well as other marginalised sectors of society.

Stressing that “might is not right,” Singh also asserted that the church has a prophetic ministry—not to conform, but to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness that challenges dominant structures.

The church’s mission, he affirmed, is to dismantle systems of oppression and stand in solidarity with the suffering.

As he closed, Singh urged graduates to reclaim the church’s vision and commitment as participants in God’s mission to redeem the world, calling for a creative re-imagination of what it means to be and becoming the church today.

Referring to the CWM’s theological statement, Mission in the Context of Empire, he encouraged graduates to reframe and reimagine mission as the creation of life-affirming communities amidst systems of death and destruction.

As the service concluded, Singh prayed a Franciscan blessing over the graduates, sending them forth anointed by the Spirit of God to participate in God’s continuing act of creation.



Congregational Federation Missionaries Share Success Stories from Brazil

The London office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) hosted eight missionaries from the Congregational Federation (CF) on 19 March. The group visited the office to share experiences from their mission trip to Brazil in 2024, which was part of the Member Church Initiatives (MCI) of CWM.

The mission trip was led by Luzia Watt, a CF National Church Support Worker who visits, equips, and supports churches in many areas such as applying for mission grants, directing churches to resources and materials, and planning and organising national events such as the Youth and Children Assembly.

Watt shared that the 16-day mission trip to Brazil was an eyeopening experience for the rest of the seven CF members who each hail from different churches across the Federation based in the United Kingdom (UK).

The missionaries worked with two Brazilian Congregational churches and saw to several missional initiatives in the

northeastern part of the country including mobilising communities in support of animal welfare, children's ministry, and establishing a soup kitchen that served more than 200 people – a move so successful that the missionaries are looking into replicating its operating model in the UK.

One of the visiting CF missionaries, Thandar, who is originally from the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar and now serves in a CF church in southeast London, reflected with the CWM London staff on her efforts in raising funds for the mission trip, noting, "It is truly a 'mission possible' if God is in it!"

While in London, the group will also subsequently visit other CF churches to share their experiences in Brazil and to speak to them about the vitality of Christian mission.

The visit concluded with a reaffirmation of CF's continued commitment to working alongside CWM in its various programmes.



CWM-UCCSA Delegation Makes Solidarity Visit to Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola

On 23 March, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM), together with Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy, paid a visit to the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (Igreja Evangélica Congregacional em Angola, IECA) to express solidarity and strengthen the partnership in mission.

They were accompanied by Rev. Ndebele Kudzani, General Secretary of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), and Rev. Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda, UCCSA Media Liaison Officer.

Being the beacon of God's peace in a war-torn land

Keum, who was invited to preach during the Sunday service, acknowledged that through God's grace, IECA has continued to thrive in the face of historical challenges, including those posed by socialism.

Referencing 2 Corinthians 4:9–10, Keum commended IECA's resilience and strength in its central and pivotal role in healing the country's wounds sustained during the drawn-out civil war, and in being a vocal advocate for reconciliation, peace, and integration.

He also urged IECA to continue investing in and empowering its youth, recognising them as vital to the future of both the church and Angolan society.

Transforming life through education

As part of the visit, Keum also visited the Congregational University of IECA, where he met with current and former church leaders, including Rev. Dr Cangovi, former IECA General Secretary, and Rev. Dr Luciano Chienueque, a member of the UCCSA Executive Committee.

In discussions with faith leaders and academics, Keum emphasized the importance of expanding academic programmes in technology, engineering, and science. He affirmed the church's commitment to holistic development and its vital role in advancing education and innovation as part of a broader vision of a flourishing, transformed society.



CWM Welcomes Rev. Nigel Lindsay as Partner in Mission in Nauru

The Council for World Mission (CWM) warmly welcomes Rev. Nigel Lindsay from the Congregational Federation (CF), United Kingdom, as a Partner in Mission (PIM) in Nauru. He began his new role as Mission Enabler with the Nauru Congregational Church on 29 January for a two-year term.

Lindsay will focus on project management, leadership development, and youth ministry. Lindsay previously served as a pastor and chaplain with the Presbyterian Church in Grenada from September 2021 to August 2024 under the PIM programme.



CWM Welcomes Prof. Kenneth Ross as Partner in Mission

The Council for World Mission (CWM) warmly welcomes Prof. Kenneth Ross as a Partner in Mission (PIM). He is taking up a newly created post as Chair of Missiology at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. His primary responsibility will be the development of a CWM online PhD programme in Transformative Mission. This international programme will seek to enroll students with the potential to be outstanding future mission thinkers and leaders. Leading missiologists from around the world will serve as supervisors. While most of the programme will be conducted online, there will be an annual residential colloquium that will act as a laboratory of innovative thinking on mission. In addition, Ross will be expected to generate research that will be of high value to the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and CWM, as well as the wider academic community and ecumenical networks.

Ross is a pastor, scholar and activist, originally from Scotland, who has served for many years as a University Professor in Malawi. He also served for a decade as General Secretary of the Church of Scotland Board of World Mission. His most recent role, from 2022-25, was Dean of Postgraduate Studies at Zomba Theological University. He

has also been Series Editor of the 10-volume Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity (Edinburgh University Press) from its inception in 2014 until its completion in 2025. He has published many books and articles on Christian mission, including the forthcoming co-authored *Hope in Times of Crisis: Reimagining Ecumenical Mission* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2025). Ross and his wife Hester are blessed with three sons and three grandsons.

Ross loves the outdoors and has climbed all 282 Munros (mountains in Scotland above 3,000 feet).

AT A
GLANCE

INSIGHT

Member
Church
News



CSI Young Presbyters Programme Empowers Participants for Transformative Mission

The Church of South India (CSI) Synod, Department of Mission and Evangelism, in collaboration with the Rev. Dr K.K. Koshy Endowment of Kerala United Theological Seminary (KUTS), successfully conducted the “Missional Ministry of Young Presbyters” programme for young pastors from the CSI Kerala Region from 9-10 January at the KUTS campus located at Kannamoola, Trivandrum.

The programme was opened by Rev. Dr David Joy, Principal of KUTS, who emphasised the essence of three approaches to church-based mission:

Your neighbourhood is your mission

Your house is your mission

Your parish is your mission

Rt Rev. Dr Royce Manoj Victor, Bishop of CSI Malabar Diocese and Bishop-in-charge of CSI South Kerala Diocese, presided over the meeting and delivered the keynote

address on the second day of the programme, urging churches to re-envision Christian mission in the context of the present day.

The programme also saw young presbyters being equipped through learning sessions led by the Mission and Evangelism Department directors, Rev. Justin and Rev. Shobana Joslin, marking a significant step in empowering young presbyters with the spiritual, theological, and practical tools needed for transformative missional ministry.

CSI would like to express its appreciation to Rev. Jacob Devasia, Registrar of KUTS, and the various resource persons, including KUTS faculty and Rev. Anilal M. Jose, Director of Pastoral Concerns, CSI Synod for their kind coordination which made the programme possible.



United Reformed Church Shares Prayers on Third Anniversary of Russia-Ukraine War

On 24 February 2025, the world marked the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine—the largest war in Europe since 1945.

According to the United Nations, approximately 12,500 civilians, including 650 children, have lost their lives, while around 46,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action. Despite ongoing efforts, a just peace remains out of reach.

To mark the anniversary, the United Reformed Church (URC) received prayers from church leaders in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. These prayers, shared in ecumenical hope, invited the global community to join in lament and hope with those affected by the war.

Excerpts from prayers in Ukraine

Rev. Erika Margitics, Minister of the Reformed Congregation in Beregszász (Berehove), prayed for love and gratitude in the face of suffering:

"Lord, teach us to love. To love as You love. To love truly, even when it is difficult in this time of war. For it is this love that frees us to be truly grateful. This act of love has given, gives, and continues to give hope and a future in all circumstances. Amen."

Zsuzsanna Danku, Elder and wife of the Lay President of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, echoed the psalmist's plea for peace:

"From the depths of our souls, we ask You to bring about peace in an instant. We echo the psalmist's words: 'For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you."' (Psalm 122:8) In the name of Jesus Christ, hear our prayer. Amen."

Rev. Sándor Zán Fábíán, Bishop of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, places his trust in God's love and grace:

"Our Heavenly Father, I trust in Your love. I trust in Your might and in Your grace. I ask You to share the gift of Your love with those suffering from war. By Your power above all, create peace. Please, grant Your grace to all of us—sinful and broken human beings—that we may learn to forgive one another and to love. In the name of Jesus Christ, hear my prayer. Amen."



Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar Mobilises Green Movement

The Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) mobilised its staff and member churches in a joint effort to green the land of Madagascar with a reforestation activity in Andanona on 25 January.

Andanona, a mountainous area northeast of the capital, Antananarivo, is owned by the FJKM and is a site that suffers regularly from bushfires. In fact, tree planting is carried out annually by the executive staff of the FJKM since the reforestation campaign was kickstarted by the government. It usually takes place during the rainy season, from December till March.

The event, organised in alignment with FJKM's objective set between 2021 to 2025 to enable green churches and green schools also served to cement FJKM's vision to be a strong church in its witness within the nation, to be the salt and the light of the world, and to bring together FJKM schools, branches, and synods to work collectively towards the nation's ecological health and sustainability.

In his message commending the tree-planting campaign, Rev. Dr Jaona Rakotonindrainy, FJKM General Secretary, said: "[The event is] Giving glory to God the Creator of heaven and earth, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and generating hope for a new life."

Meanwhile, the Fruits, Vegetables and Environmental Education Programme (MFEE), a project implemented within the FJKM, also provides churches and schools with top quality seedlings to plant either for the reforestation activities or for the beauty of their premises.

"The FJKM is confident that evangelism is not only preaching God's words to lead people to heaven but also to make them live already the goodness of God here on earth," declared FJKM President Rev. Dr Irako Andriamahazosoa Ammi, who also highlighted that, through MFEE, every synod now has trained technicians to help with tree planting and reforestation.



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
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Unique Entity Number 201206146Z

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