

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

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*Rhythms of
the Caribbean:
the dance of
resilience*



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The rhythms of the Caribbean people: the spirit of resilience

By Janet McConnell

To study the Caribbean is to encounter a region forged in contradictions, beauty and brutality, trauma and transcendence, oppression and the relentless pursuit of liberation. For many Caribbean students during the 1960s through the 1980s, history lessons were overwhelmingly focused on those who came: came and declared they had discovered; who came, claimed and extracted; and those who came in chains or under indentureship. The emphasis was often on the colonizers, their stories, and systems they imposed, while the stories of those who were already here—the Taínos, Arawaks, and Kalinagos—were treated as preambles rather than foundational.

Yet, the true story of the Caribbean is far richer and more complex than that told by a colonially inspired syllabus. The Caribbean is a layered history of Indigenous stewardship, European colonization, forced migrations, African enslavement, Asian indentureship, and centuries of resistance. It is a living history that continues to evolve through the unbreakable rhythms of its people.

Before Columbus's arrival in 1492, thriving Indigenous societies inhabited the Caribbean as organized, agriculturally skilled, and spiritually rich communities. Their displacement and decimation resulted in many violent disruptions arising from centuries-long incursions by coloniz-





ers from Spain, France, England, and the Netherlands, all seeking to extract wealth, particularly through the cultivation of sugarcane. With the extinction of Indigenous populations through disease and violence, enslaved Africans were brutally transported across the Atlantic as replacements. Thus began the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which irreversibly altered the region's demographic, cultural, and psychological landscape.

Even in bondage, the Caribbean spirit refused to be silenced. Resistance pulsed through maroon communities, revolts, and rebellions; the gyration to the drumbeats of fury for liberation. The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) was the most successful slaves-uprising in modern history. It resulted in the world's first Black republic and inspired similar movements across the region. The momentum towards self-determination grew, culminating in waves of independence: Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962, Guyana in 1966, and others thereafter.

Independence marked a transition rather than a terminus for these Caribbean nations. They contended with inherited economic structures designed to serve foreign powers. Many faced the instability of single-crop economies, extractive industries, migration of its best human capital to the global north, and a ballooning external debt. The pursuit of diversified, sustainable economies continues today.



Still, perhaps the most enduring inheritance of our shared history across the region is not economic dependency or institutional inequity, but rather the spirit of resilience. This issue of INSiGHT explores that spirit in its many manifestations. It delves into the legacy and ongoing contribution of Caribbean women, whose labour and leadership have long been the bedrock of community life. It examines education as a generational tool of empowerment—a vehicle for mobility, identity, and justice. It considers the relationship between environmental, physical, and economic health. It reflects on leadership crisis within the church—a regional social architecture and bastion of Caribbean spirituality. It then turns a necessary lens toward reparative justice, recognizing that historical trauma demands not only remembrance but also redress.

The Caribbean is a vibrant cultural fusion where African, European, Asian, and Indigenous influences blend. Its music—including calypso, reggae, chutney, and dancehall—echoes themes of resistance, survival, and joy. Creole languages, spiritual traditions, and social customs reflect the region's history of adaptation and resilience.

Ours is a story told in polyrhythms, movements for gender equity, for health, for environmental justice, for sovereignty, for freedom, for fullness of life for all. It is a story still unfolding.

This publication celebrates these rhythms. It honours the past, highlights the present, and invokes this same spirit as a key player in shaping the future. Resilience forever!

CWM Caribbean region overview

Guyana Congregational Union

Membership: 2,000

Congregations: 32

United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Membership: 12,000

Congregations: 196

Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago

Membership: 40,000

Congregations: 108

2025 Programmes

MMF – May 1–3, 2025

Under the theme Rising to Life: Transforming Power, church leaders explored and shared unique challenges, celebrations, and mission opportunities related to:

- Race, Gender, Power, and Poverty: A Caribbean Sociological Lens
- Transforming Power: Church Crises and Opportunities
- Youth, Mission, and AI: Ethical and Theological Views
- Rising to Life: Decolonizing Power and Reading the Signs of the Times
- Modern Slavery: Church's Response

Caribbean Youth Initiative –

19-24 August 2025

Building on MMF outcomes, this initiative focused on youth and digital technologies under the theme Digital Wokeness... Ctrl + Justice. It examined ethical, moral, legal, and theological aspects of social justice in digital spaces, especially social media. It also explored digital tools for wealth creation and academic growth.



Janet McConnell is the CWM Mission Secretary for Social Justice and the Caribbean region.

VIEW- POINTS

INSIGHT

Rhythms of the
Caribbean:
the dance of
resilience



Rhythm of the people: the spirit of resilience

With over 7,000 islands, 26 countries, and 13 independent nations amongst other socio-culturally connected countries, the Caribbean is a cultural melting pot that exudes an aura of cultural euphoria. Its unique yet complex makeup dispenses a multiplex of historical chronicles ranging from the unique Indigenous people such as the Taino, Island Caribs, Galibi, and Ciboney occupying distinct islands across the regions, to the forcefully enslaved Africans who often rebelled and ran away, forming independent remote communities like the maroons in Jamaica and later indentured people from the east who were integrated into the local society. It is no secret that the Caribbean people have endured immense challenges over their recorded historical existence. Yet the Caribbean rhythm has continued to persevere and impact several generations through the integration of culture and heritage. We recognize the global impact of Caribbean music through artists like Bob Marley whose music had significant impact on the continent of Africa during the anti-apartheid movement. As language is one of the primal expressions of identity and a significant tenant of the rhythm of the Caribbean, it is pertinent to recognize the expressions of resilience within the Caribbean tongues. When we hear phrases like “We deh yah still” emanating from the Jamaican Patois from voices of firmness that translate to “we are still here” or “we are doing okay,” it sends a message of persistence regardless of circumstances. We see and hear

community and collectiveness when we hear “Wam deh” a Guyanese creole phrase meaning “What is happening there?” or “How may I help you?” coming from a random stranger on the road. The Haitian Creole term “Djanm” reflects the resilience of the Caribbean people that is undeniable when examining its historical sojourn. The true spirit of resilience is felt as we explore the trials and tribulations, past and present, that this beautiful and dynamic region has endured. The effects of humans and nature test the firmness of the Caribbean fabric and foundation.

Portuguese, Spaniard, and European voyages within the region resulted in the Transatlantic Slave Trade that saw cultural erasure and systemic exploitation of enslaved Africans stripped of their languages, traditions, and ancestral ties, while under forced plantation labour and dehumanizing conditions towards the enrichment of colonial powers.

On the other hand, colonialism reshaped the Caribbean society through systems of dependence,

racial inequality, and cultural dominance that suppress the wellbeing of the local people. Colonialism saw countries like Jamaica and Barbados being forced into a mono-crop system of primarily sugarcane, creating economic dependence and vulnerability to market fluctuation. In Guyana and Trinidad, British colonial authorities imported large numbers of indentured labourers from India after emancipation, creating new layers of social division and economic exploitation.

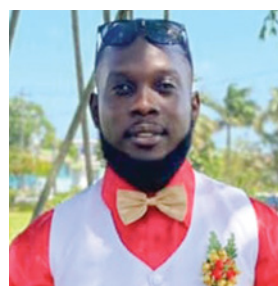
In absentia of colonialism, the region faces the threat of neo-colonialism, which exerts a subtle yet commanding grip on the Caribbean, sustaining economic dependency and limiting true sovereignty long after the end of formal colonial rule. Foreign powers and multinational corporations often dominate key industries—tourism, banking, and natural resources—leaving local economies vulnerable to external control.

A very visible illustration is that of Caribbean nations tied to trade agreements and debt repayment structures dictated by institutions like the International Monetary Fund, which have austerity measures that cut social services and stifle local development, as seen in Guyana and Jamaica during the 1980s debt crisis. Similarly, in countries like the Bahamas, the tourism sector is heavily owned and managed by foreign interests, meaning much of the profit flows abroad rather than benefiting local communities.

In countries previously navigating economic and social challenges, natural disasters such as Hurricane Maria in 2017 amplified impacts; Dominica saw the destruction of 95% of its housing stock and widespread power outages. Hurricane Ivan in 2004 devastated Grenada's nutmeg industry, destroying the livelihood of thousands. Haiti's 2010 earthquake killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions, deepening poverty and political instability.

A combination of these natural and human-caused challenges has directly inhibited stability and sustainability in the region, a raging present-day fire that is only quelled by the resilient efforts of a people. Through centuries of adversity spanning the horrors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the exploitation of colonialism, the subtle chains of neocolonialism, and the recurring devastation of natural disasters, the Caribbean people have continually transformed pain into progress. The Maroons of Jamaica preserved freedom through armed resistance; Indo-Caribbean communities in Trinidad and Guyana safeguarded cultural traditions like Diwali and chutney music; Haitians rebuilt their lives after the 2010 earthquake through community networks and the unifying power of art; and Dominicans, after Hurricane Maria, combined Indigenous knowledge with modern engineering to reconstruct homes and livelihoods. Across the region, steelpan rhythms born from discarded oil drums, reggae an-

them that carried political defiance, and carnival processions that turned the memory of oppression into vibrant celebration all tell the same story: a people who bend but do not break, who adapt without losing their essence. In a region where the sea can both nourish and destroy, and where history has often been written in the ink of struggle, is it any wonder that the Caribbean heartbeat still drums with the unyielding rhythm of the people and a spirit of resilience?



Jonathan Wrights is a self-published author and a plant quarantine officer attached to the National Plant Protection Organization of Guyana.



Rhythms of resilience: movements of the Caribbean woman

In the lively heart of the Caribbean, where turquoise oceans embrace sun-drenched coasts, a tremendous beat emerges - forged through struggle, perseverance, and faith. Caribbean women, influenced by deep histories of colonization, slavery, indentureship, and structural inequity, move with tenacity, breaking glass ceilings and redefining leadership.

The body of a Trinbagonian woman tells her story through movement. From the precision of Bharatanatyam to the elegance of Bélé, dance expresses her strength, endurance, and grace. Self-assertion is embodied in every lift, sway, and rhythmic stride. She moves with dignity, affirming her body as a vessel of honour, never to be diminished or devalued. These dances serve as emotional declarations and releases, where the body becomes a language, whether in the Calinda ring, beneath the *tassa* drum, or during a Bélé performance, conveying pain without embarrassment, laughter without inhibition, and resistance without apology. It affirms her right to feel, to heal, and to be completely present by transforming her scars into works of art.

Her movement expresses faith and resilience, reaching beyond the dance floor into all aspects of life. In this multicultural setting, each gesture, step, and rhythm is an offering to honour the Holy, connect with the Sacred, and draw power from the unseen. Her resilience is demonstrated by the

way she shatters ceilings, challenges barriers, and impacts her society. This movement evolves into a living prayer, a celebration of perseverance and worship. For Christians, it embodies devotion, lifting body and spirit in praise and faithful engagement with God.

The Guyanese woman's dance molds the body, demanding stamina, strength, and accuracy, expressing physical prowess in every step. Every motion demonstrates balance and control, whether it's the lively swirls of Masquerade, the complexities of Queh-Queh, or the upbeat tempo of Chutney. It transmits her feelings, transforming resistance, desire, joy, and grief into a flowing, visible expression that words cannot capture. Each stride respects the hardships and victories of those who came before, recalls a memory, and tells a story. Additionally, it transforms movement into prayer, celebration, and resilience by establishing a connection with God, her ancestors, and the timeless rhythms of life. The Guyanese woman is grounded and guided by the rhythm that runs through her blood. Her every gesture embodies strength, emotion, and commit-

ment, transforming dance into a manifestation of her spirit, heart, and mind. It is a celebration of life's eternal energy, a conduit of culture, and a link between the past and present.

For the Jamaican woman, wrested from distant climes, brought to this “*pearl of the Caribbean*” as slaves or indentured workers, the music of her soul was initially muted; *how could they dance their old dance in this strange land?* Soon the music broke free and as the rhythm changed, with syn-copated “Europeanised” afro-centric beats underscoring their transplant and adaptation for survival, she learned to *ride de riddim* in revolt against the staid European dances. Ancestral moves were infused into the ballroom dances, birthing the Contra Style Quadrille performed to *Mento* and marking the first steps toward a distinctly Jamaican sound and movement that transitioned to ska, rocksteady, reggae, then dancehall.

The Jamaican woman retained the tradition of having different dances, music, and moves for different occasions. Hence the celebratory *Brukkings*, the processional *Jonkunnu*, the death-rite *Dinki-mini*, as well as the spiritual *Kumina* and *Myal*, easily transitioned into Jamaican culture. She “*rides de riddim*” in every aspect of life, displaying physical, psychological, and spiritual resilience.

Her physical resilience is monumental. Having withstood the crippling lashes of enslavement, she arose from the ashes standing tall, defying the death-blows dealt to her. Her effortless undulating moves belie the travesties visited upon her body for centuries. With her head held high, shoulders squared and hips swaying to the *boom-du-dum-dum-doom-dum-doom* of the “*riddim*” pulsating in her soul, she may just as easily say “yes” (flouting the dictates of high society), or “*kill dem wid di ‘no’!*” as directed by a dancehall Dee-Jay, Mr Vegas.

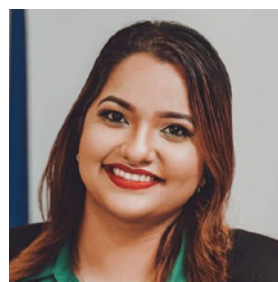
The Jamaican woman’s movement declares that she has shaken off the shackles of mental slavery, refusing to crouch in subservience. Instead, she lives life on her terms in defiance of her history of servility. Proudly bearing the responsibility of caring for her family, she has emancipated herself and now marches to the beat of a different drum that celebrates her ability to “*tun her hand and mek fashion.*” The Jamaican woman stands as the fulcrum of spiritual expression. It is on the prayers and oblations of innumerable matriarchs that countless Jamaican fortunes stand - the image of the praying mother/grandmother is a lived reality for generations. She depends on the Almighty for divine intervention as her spirituality is enmeshed in her identity, and her movement is a praise-song to the God who sees and delivers her.

The Caribbean woman’s resilience is evident in the way

she moves to the changing rhythms that have transformed her. She now strides with faith and confidence and stands in defiance, revolting against the injustices and domination of the past, embracing a new norm that throbs and thrums to a constantly evolving rhythm – the rhythm of resilience in the Caribbean.



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Reparations: the dance of justice

***“By the rivers of Babylon,
there we sat down, yea, we wept,
when we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows
in the midst thereof.
For there they that carried us away captive
required of us a song;
and they that wasted us
required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?”
Psalm 137: 1 – 4***

*Repair begins with a posture....
Where does a body bend, or twist,
To say, 'I am sorry'?.....
imagine a dance where the movements cascade
hard and fast
unable to contain their own urgency.....*

*Would there be music.....
the slow low moan of anguish?
Or maybe just the percussion of feet on the floor
and the hush and hiss of breath?
Imagine a liturgical dancer
with a needle and a golden thread
reaching out to repair
the ragged edges of peoples and generations
and years of hurt.²*

Reparations and the struggle to achieve them is not a light-hearted, happy dance. The children of Israel experienced

the heaviness of heart of the injustice of exile intermixed with a request to sing an entertaining song in a strange land.

It is not a new call for reparations for the descendants of Africans; captured, dehumanized, trafficked, and brutalized in centuries of a European project designed for the economic development of others.

The capture, trade, and enslavement of African people was initiated and developed in a quest by European powers to create an essential labor force for their exploitation of the assets of the territories which they had begun to claim in the 15th century. Between 1500 and 1880, over ten million Africans were captured and transported, many dying en route. This was a period of unimaginable physical suffering, psychological damage, and anguish of spirit in unbearable cruelty. A barbaric colonial exploitative economic venture continued for centuries.

When it eventually ended, the previously enslaved would remain victimized and dispossessed and, even after decades, the legacies of that damage persist.

Reparations are a legitimate claim which continues to be made by the

descendants who live and make a living in the face of a legacy of poverty and underdevelopment.

The struggle has been the people's. The repair work to be facilitated by reparations is also to be of the people, for the people. In the reparations issue the people claim agency. The music score for reparations is written by the people; the dance of reparations is choreographed by the people. "It is said that African dancers, all the time, dance with a purpose. not just pretty movements. The movements have a reason. It is not a spectacle. It is communicating emotional experiences, intuitive perceptions; an elusive truth that cannot be explained rationally."³

In "strange lands," they dance their dance of protest to the beat of their own drum. At emancipation, the dance morphed into a "Brukins" celebration which dramatized the breaking of the chains.⁴ Freedom was marked and celebrated but, unfortunately, that freedom was incomplete. Emancipation, without accompanying assets for the economic development of a free people, was without doubt, at best incomplete.

One hundred and eighty-seven years after the 1838 date, reparations are late in coming; but, as necessary as they have ever been. And the longer people are made to labor in building a nation on unsound economic foundations, the larger will be the necessary capital input to complete the people's emancipation. In the long and painful wait, the dance is a dance of lament.

Both the descendants of the victims and those of the perpetrators must come to a humble recognition that no quantity of funds will be enough to "compensate" for the horrendous crimes. Reparations are not meant to be "enough." They are meant to be substantial. They will effectively repair many of the persisting challenges. The quantum should reflect the magnitude of the wrong inflicted and extent of harm sustained.

Reparations coming from Britain and other parts of Europe require a sense of relinquishment.

Reparations at their best, flow from an urging of the heart. Reparations should signal relinquishment. Whatever is given is released into the possession and ultimate responsibility and control of the recipient, no strings attached.

Christians can bring a unique, positive character to reparations. Increasingly, churches on both sides of the Atlantic can mirror the Gospel imperative of being brothers and sisters in the one Body of Christ. What an example to be given to states parties and other nongovernmental organizations in an increasingly fractured world.

The work of repair through reparations, though not a light-

hearted, happy dance, by the grace of God, becomes an intimate waltz; a movement so alluring that many others, however estranged, are drawn together, to join.

"Reparations is an offer of healing for all who have been touched by the injuries of the past that cast their long shadows into the present and threaten the future."⁵

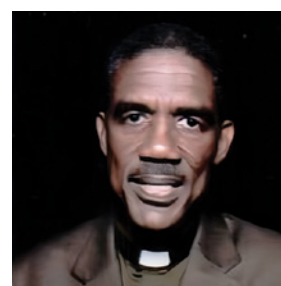
Repair begins with a hope and a promise and

Repair begin with a posture

.....

*remember that liturgical dance
with a needle and a golden thread
reaching out to repair
the rugged edges of peoples and
generations*

*and the years of hurt.*⁶



Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans is chair of the Reparations Task Force of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

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Impact of environmental health on physical health and economic growth: the lyrics must change

By Elijah Motieram

The Caribbean is home to a lively mix of cultures, peoples of colour, beliefs, and histories. It is a testament to our resilience and a living song where different voices come together in harmony.

Even if we call God by various names, our faiths unite us. Our common struggle against hardship, slavery, indentured labour, colonial rule, and devastating natural disasters has built in us a strong spirit.

But as we celebrate this resilience, we cannot forget how much our environment influences our region's wellness, health, and financial future. If we want to keep this dance of survival and prosperity going, we need to rethink our narrative.

The body of Christ and the environment

The Apostle Paul talks about the church as the "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), and it perfectly reflects life

in the Caribbean. Each nation has its role, contributing to the strength of the region.

If any one part hurts, the entire body feels it. Right now, any kind of possible environmental harm is endangering our collective health. Pollution, deforestation, and climate change are disrupting ecosystems, resulting in respiratory illnesses, waterborne diseases, and food shortages.

The Bible teaches us that we are caretakers of God's creation (Genesis 2:15). When we pollute our rivers with industrial runoff and garbage or fill the air with carbon emissions, we forsake that sacred duty.

The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) stands out by promoting recycling, cutting back on plastic, and reducing carbon footprints. Yet, the church needs to do more to motivate the locals to act.

Economic growth at what cost?

Caribbean economies depend heavily on natural resources, from oil and

gas in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, to tourism in Barbados, St Lucia, Antigua, and Jamaica, and lastly, to agriculture in Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent.

Unplanned and uncontrolled exploitation of the environment comes with a toll. Oil spills ruin marine ecosystems, deforestation causes soil erosion, and overcrowded tourist spots push water resources to the brink.

While the gross domestic product numbers might look good, it comes at a great cost to our people's health. Unmanaged and uncontrolled air pollution has led to rising asthma cases, and contaminated water sources wreak havoc through life-threatening water-borne illnesses.

Prosperity cannot just be about economic growth.

Deuteronomy 28 talks about the blessings for those who obey God's ways leading to lush lands, bountiful harvests, and healthy communities. On the flip side, disobedience results in drought, famine, and ruin. Are we inviting disaster by chasing profit at the expense of sustainability? We must always aspire to keep this in check for our survival.

A unified front for change

Unity is the Caribbean's greatest strength. When hurricanes hit, neighbours rally with support. During pandemics such as COVID-19, regional groups have come together in close collaboration. We need that same spirit of unity to also drive our environmental efforts.

What if every church, school, and business committed to:

- Cutting plastic waste (like using reusable containers and banning single-use plastics)
- Adopting renewable energy (think solar panels and wind farms) similar to Trinidad and Tobago where some 500 acres of land was converted to solar farms
- Safeguarding forests and coral reefs (community reforestation and responsible fishing practices)
- Pushing for policy changes (tougher environmental laws and holding companies accountable)

The PCTT can set the pace in organising eco-friendly workshops, teaming up with environmental nongovernmental organisations to lobby for green policies. As Proverbs 31:8-9 suggests, we must "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves."

Our land, seas, and future generations are counting on us!

The freedom to choose a better path

God grants us the gift of free will, allowing us to choose between right and wrong. In elections, we pick leaders who shape our nation's fate. But our everyday choices matter just as much. Do we throw trash without thinking twice? Do we waste water and energy? Are we turning a blind eye to the earth's distress calls?

It is time for the lyrics of our Caribbean tale to shift from exploitation to restoration. Let us find a new rhythm—one centered around sustainability, justice, and hope. As Psalm 24:1 reminds us, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." While our resilience is well-known, our most significant achievement will be leaving behind a vibrant, green Caribbean for future generations.

Now is the moment to change the tune.



Elijah Motieram is a member of The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT).



The church and education: an orchestra for life

By Rev. Dr Noel Holder

In 1808, when the London Missionary Society, now called the Council for World Mission, sent its first missionary, Rev. John Wray, to British Guiana—later renamed the Republic of Guyana—to establish the Church of God at Plantation Le Ressouvenir, one of its main goals was to strengthen the relationship between the church and education. This effort yielded a diverse and historically significant initiative that encompassed various strategies, ranging from direct involvement in education to promoting lifelong learning and moral values.

Observations of its activities have revealed a platform that fosters both spiritual and intellectual growth, functioning like an orchestra that inspires its members to preserve knowledge and wisdom. The schools provided a steady influx of new members with various educational abilities to the church, and through Christian teachings, the church offered moral discipline that helped maintain peace, respect, and humility in the broader society.



Rev. Dr Noel Holder is a lecturer in Public Health Issues in the School of Nursing, University of Guyana. He is also the Mission Coordinator of the Guyana Congregational Union.

About 20 years ago, the Department of Education implemented a policy that separated the church from active involvement in education, removing direct church control over public schools. However, churches continue to play a vital role in education through various channels, including church schools, youth groups, and adult education programmes.

Lifelong learning encourages members to pursue education throughout their lives, providing resources and support for personal and spiritual growth.

Finally, viewing education as a means of discipleship shapes

individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviors in accordance with their faith.

The outcomes of the partnership, both religious and secular foundations, have truly offered a lifelong direction that continues to promote academic and personal support, values-based education, community-building and social responsibility, and cultural awareness and enrichment.

The church and education: an orchestra for life

By Alexander Bourne

In Jamaica, like many other Caribbean nations, the church has long been a principal architect of education. From the earliest mission schools to today's classrooms, especially at the early childhood, primary, and secondary levels, Christian communities have nurtured not just the mind but also the spirit, seeking to form whole persons, prepared for life.

I recall my own days in a church-founded school, where morning devotions set the rhythm for the day. The academic programme trained our intellect, but the hymns, Scripture, and quiet moments of prayer cultivated compassion, honesty, and justice. This helped me appreciate that education is not only preparation for a career, but also character formation and preparation for service.

Of course, the legacy of church-run education is not without complexity. Mission schools were born in a colonial context and sometimes carried cultural erasures alongside opportunity. At times, faith-based schooling has risked narrowing inquiry or excluding those of other traditions. These tensions remind us that education is capable of both harm and healing. Thus, the Church must resolve to ensure education today is rooted in justice, openness, and dignity for all.

Jamaica's story reminds us that education is nation-building. It can lift families out of poverty, break intergenerational chains, and equip people to participate fully in the global economy. Even so, what is knowledge without a moral compass? Luke 2:52 reminds us that Jesus grew *"in wisdom and*

stature, and in favour with God and man." Proper education must harmonise intellect with spiritual and ethical grounding. Otherwise, learning risks becoming noise, brilliant but dissonant.

Globally, education is hailed as the most powerful weapon for change. This transformative impact, when guided by the church's prophetic mission, becomes more: a vital blend of justice, service, and hope. May the church continue to tune each generation to God's grand composition for life.



Alexander Bourne is a career educator, and currently serves as the principal of Knox College, Jamaica.

The church and education: an orchestra for life

By Carolyn Bally-Gosine

The leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago—much like the conductor of an orchestra—is responsible for training, teaching, directing, and ensuring the harmonious performance of all its members. These elements ensure that the guidelines of the Presbyterian Church are well-received, and have a valuable impact on all relevant stakeholders; these include the principals, staff, and students at denominational early childhood education centres, primary schools, and secondary schools.

In this way, the church meaningfully continues to use the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ as the “musical score” to educate our children by instilling standards of good conduct, positive values, and lifestyle choices, as well as community service programs throughout their lives. These are implemented via the clergy and strategies integrated into the school curriculum from a very young age. Similar to a successful musical rendition, the church’s harmony, collaboration, and feedback between its leadership and stakeholders remain critical in its role as “conductor.”

If disharmony occurs among the members of our “orchestra,” there will be a negative impact that can contribute to an upsurge in gang cultures, indiscipline, violence, and misconduct in our denominational schools.

Church and school leaders must continually strive for a flawless performance, especially in maintaining the delivery of the school curriculum. Ultimately, an outstanding performance resonates with its audience, leaving a lasting impact.



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Leadership, the crisis, and the opportunities in the church: who will sing this song?

Leadership

I begin by sharing the following understanding of the concept described as leadership, to remind us of its seriousness for the maintenance and sustainability of the church. Leadership is the ability to guide, influence, and motivate individuals or groups towards achieving a common goal. It is the provision of a set of skills and behaviours that empower individuals to give direction, inspire others, and foster collaboration. Leadership is not limited to formal positions of authority but can be exhibited by anyone at any level within an organization. Leadership brings together the following key components:

1. Vision: insight about what is possible and achievable
2. Influence: persuade people to act even when uncertain
3. Motivate: inspire appropriate and desired behaviour and conduct
4. Communicate: inform clearly and timely, effectively and transparently

5. Decision-making: decide thoughtfully even in challenging situations
6. Collaboration: working together, leveraging the strengths of all stakeholders
7. Adaptability: responding and transitioning to changing circumstances and realities

Crisis in the church

In the Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), the Diaconate (minister and body of deacons) provides leadership for the church. This body has been experiencing significant decline over the years, resulting in its diminished ability and capacity to provide effective leadership as indicated by the foregoing 1-7. Compounding this situation has been the decline in the functioning of church auxiliaries such as the Women's Union, Men's Fellowship/Guild, Young People's Union, Young Adults Movement, and Sunday School that have all contributed to the provision of leadership for the church.

The foregoing situation is what amounts to the “crisis” faced by the church and has, therefore, been the conversation for several years now at the Executive Committee and other levels of the church, concerned about leadership succession. The GCU continues to deliberate on the development of a strategic plan to ensure the continued maintenance and sustainability as well as progress of the church, in the face of decades of decline. The church continues to work on crafting this clear, decisive plan of action. This crisis, therefore, continues to stymie the various aspects of how the church ought to be organized and to function. In this regard, the pastoral ministry continues to languish as there have been no additions of seminary-trained personnel for more than 25 years, while the local training initiative has ceased functioning. Furthermore, the enthusiasm to be deacons and leaders of church auxiliaries has waned considerably. Efforts, therefore, to identify, recruit, and train candidates for leadership at the various levels of the church have been largely unsuccessful.

To compound the situation of “crisis” in the GCU, is the fact that its property assets, on account of a lack of property regularization, cannot be effectively leveraged, to provide for income generation to enable the church to become financially fully self-supporting.

Opportunities for the church

Even in times of crisis, insightful leadership can bring about positive turning points. You see, “crisis” in Chinese is defined by the two-character word WeiJi with wei meaning danger and ji meaning opportunity. President John F. Kennedy describes the Chinese sense of crisis as being “two brush strokes,” one that spells danger and the other that speaks of opportunity. My hope is that the GCU sees and grasps the opportunities available, as the turning point of the precarious situation it faces to bring about recovery to its mission focus and thrust. In this regard, an opportunity could be the provision of incentives such as i. adequate salary, ii. appropriate pension plan, iii. convenient means of transportation, iv. support for home ownership, v. a meaningful health plan, and vi. appropriate local training of personnel to meet the needs of the various levels of leadership.

Another opportunity would be to regularize and, therefore, commodify the fixed assets of the church, for use as income-generating instruments, to ensure the capital and financial health of the church and so build up its self-supporting capacity. The GCU needs to be open to and prepared to use other opportunities that present themselves also.

Who will sing this song? I believe as the church/GCU, the whole people of God, we all will have to sing this song.



*Rev. Leander Warren
is a minister of religion at the
Guyana Congregational Union.*



AT A GLANCE

INSIGHT

CWM news



Youth peacebuilding programme in Africa reimagines peace and hope in times of crisis

Thirty participants hailing from various Council for World Mission (CWM) member churches, the Protestant Council of Rwanda (CPR), and ecumenical partners across Africa came together from 4-8 August in Kigali, Rwanda, to position African youth at the forefront of building just, reconciled, and resilient communities in times of crisis.

The five-day programme provided a safe, intentional, and faith-rooted space, and also challenged young participants to engage in rounds of rigorous theological reflections, while preparing them for a journey of empowerment through practical skills-building with a promise for tangible action in solidarity.

The event, jointly organised by CWM and CPR, took place against a backdrop of a world that is increasingly polarised and violent – one in which the church continues to stand as both a sanctuary and a transformative agent.

Additionally, the upward trend of armed conflicts, ethnic divisions, gender-based violence, and political instabilities across the world has presented a dire challenge for churches to live out their calling as peacemakers.

Themed “Youth Initiative on Peacebuilding (Africa Region)”, Rwanda was selected as the location for the event as it illustrated the perils of political instability, economic inequality, and ethnic tensions that continue to fester beneath the wounds of historical injustices – a microcosmic picture of the larger, turbulent world.

Through the convening of youth from different countries, denominations, and faith traditions, the event also fostered vital cross-border alliances that transcend ethnic, national, and religious divides.

In a continent where young people make up the majority population, but are often excluded from political and decision-making spaces, the gathering affirmed their prophetic

agency—not as “leaders of tomorrow,” but as active agents of reconciliation and justice today.

“African youth are not merely the leaders of tomorrow—they are the prophetic voice and peacemakers of today. Through this gathering, we have witnessed courage, wisdom, and faith shaping a new horizon of peace,” declared Rev. Daimon Mkan-dawire, CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy.

“Peace is not the absence of war!”

The event also took the participants on a visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial as part of an immersion experience amidst a post-genocide peace. The visit gave life to the prevailing conversations and imbued the work of peacebuilding with a spirit of urgency.

The quiet corridors of the memorial, lined with graphic photographs of the 1994 genocide that took place during the Rwandan Civil War, and are the resting place of the remains of over 250,000 genocide victims – showcasing the tragic costs of unchecked hatred and division.

“Peace is not the absence of war—it is the rebuilding of dignity,” described Hon. Prof Uwimbabazi Penine, Senator and peacebuilding expert, who was present at the event.

Echoing Penine’s sentiment was a unified response from the participants who agreed that that forgiveness is not weakness but an important seed of peace that must be planted in every global community.



CWM TOP funds inaugural Peace Garden launch in Caribbean

Built as a physical expression of the church's missiological responsibility to work for the benefit of its communities, the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) launched the Garden of Justice, Reconciliation and Peace on the grounds of Immanuel United Church in Tower Isle, St Mary on Sunday, 29 June.

The Garden, the first of many planned, was built with the funding support from the Council for World Mission's (CWM) Onesimus Project (TOP).

As the modern mission landscape shifts from a top-down evangelistic approach from the global north to south, TOP serves as a beacon that shines light on the existence of inequalities and injustices within the heritage of missional organisations like CWM's forebear, the London Missionary Society (LMS).

The first Garden of Justice, Reconciliation and Peace, the fruit that was borne from the collaboration between the Churches Reparations Action Forum (CRAF), Immanuel

United Church, and the UCJCI Reparations Task Force led by Rev. Dr Gordon Cowans will stand as a place for reflection and remembrance, and where conflict can be mediated.

"The establishment of the gardens [will] also create an opportunity for job creation, especially for landscapers, as well as community engagement with local institutions and clubs," announced UCJCI during the garden's inauguration ceremony attended by the UCJCI leadership as well as its mission and ecumenical partners.

The Reparations Task Force also shared plans to launch successive gardens in troubled areas such as Norwood, Montego Bay as well as other ideas, including the creation of 'free villages' where communities of formerly enslaved people could live independently.



PCK delegation visits CWM Singapore office, reaffirming missional partnership

A high-level delegation from the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) visited the Singapore office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) on 4 August, where they also participated in CWM's weekly staff devotional.

The delegation included members of the PCK leadership: Moderator Rev. Young-gul Kim, Vice Moderator Rev. Hoon Jung, Vice Moderator Elder Hanjin Yoon, and General Secretary Rev. Bohyun Kim.

They were warmly received by the CWM management team, led by Deputy General Secretary – Programmes, Dr Sudipta Singh, who described the visit as a long-awaited “homecoming,” recalling that the last visit by a PCK delegation took place almost three years ago in 2022.

To provide the PCK team with deeper insights into CWM's work, Singapore-based mission secretaries Rev. Dr Young-cheol Cheon, Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, Rev. Julie Sim, and Mr SoonYew Sum provided brief presentations on CWM's history, programmes, and finances.

Partnership of mission, people of mission

To mark the occasion, PCK Moderator Rev. Young-gul Kim delivered a sermon during the staff devotion titled *“People of Mission, Church in Mission.”* Drawing on Acts 12:25–13:3, he reflected on the setting apart of Saul and Barnabas for God's work, comparing it to the deep missional partnership between PCK and CWM.

“CWM is a communion of churches gathered for mission. Like the Antioch Church, CWM embodies diversity, yet within that diversity, we cooperate for the shared purpose of mission,” said Rev. Kim, giving thanks to God for the rich history of PCK's collaboration with other CWM member churches.

He highlighted examples of this partnership, noting that in 2024, following CWM's initiatives, PCK provided oxygen cylinders to a hospital of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar amid COVID-19 and political instability, and supported theological students in Malawi whose education had been disrupted by the pandemic.

“PCK will not lose its passion for mission and will continue to walk in partnership with CWM in the future,” he affirmed.

As PCK celebrates the 140th anniversary of the establishment of Christian mission in Korea, Rev. Kim underscored the shared commitment and passion for mission between PCK and CWM, affirming their vision as “peoples of mission, embodying the essence of the church to participate in the mission of God.”



Caribbean Youth Initiative 2025 spotlights digital spaces as platforms for mission and justice

From 19-23 August, the Council for World Mission's (CWM) programme team for Social Justice organised a seminar, "Caribbean Youth Initiative on Digital Wokeness and Digital Justice," addressing the varied promises and perils of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Unlike the third Industrial Revolution that witnessed the transition from analogue to digital, the fourth is now characterised by the rapid rise of digital technology that reshapes and blurs the boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological.

Taking place in Kingston, Jamaica, and attended by youth participants representing all three CWM member churches of the region – Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT), and United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), the seminar, themed "Digital Wokeness...CTRL + Justice," took a hard look at the impact of technologies like social media

and artificial intelligence and their effects on the identities, relationships, and mental wellbeing of youths in the region.

Through various panels and presentations that featured intense theological reflections, ethical inquiries, psychological insights, and legal analyses, the seminar empowered participants to reimagine digital spaces as platforms for justice, inclusion, and faithful mission, rather than as tools of exclusion, surveillance, or harm.

The Caribbean – a region inundated by an information tsunami

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and social media platforms in Guyana alone has led to significant challenges related to attention overload, adversely affecting individuals' mental wellbeing and productivity.

A report released in January 2025

numbered Guyana's internet users at approximately 681,000, representing an 81.7% penetration rate. Social media usage was also identified as particularly substantial, with 528,000 users accounting for 63.4% of the total population.

Social media incursion into the lives of the Caribbean has significantly reshaped the information landscape, often prioritising sensational content over accuracy, creating profound implications for public perception, mental health, and societal trust.

"The seminar is instrumental in inviting youths to reimagine digital spaces as platforms for justice, inclusion, and faithful mission, rather than as tools of exclusion, surveillance, or harm," elaborated Janet McConnell, CWM Mission Secretary for Social Justice.

While tangling with hard facts and figures, the seminar turned its attention onto the Bible as a source of light over the dark allures of the virtual information superhighway.

Guided by Luke 4:18, Micah 6:8, and Amos 5:24, the seminar fully affirmed God's call to proclaim good news, act justly, love mercy, and liberate the oppressed also extends fully into the digital realm.

"As followers of Christ and participants in the *Missio Dei* (God's mission), we affirm that justice in the digital sphere is an essential expression of God's love and concern for the poor and marginalised," said McConnell, adding that the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) also further reminds the church that God's "kin-dom" is for the vulnerable and chooses a preferential option for the poor not only in physical spaces but also within the digital realm.

Mobilising Caribbean youths as digital justice change-makers

Over the course of the seminar, young participants reached a common consensus to cease being mere bystanders where injustice is being meted out in the digital space and instead transform into change-makers who intentionally advocate for ethical, legal, and faith-based principles.

There was also a collective agreement reached in leveraging digital technologies for wealth creation and personal advancement underpinned by Christian principles.

The youths' commitment will materialise in the forms of two videos to be launched later in the year to showcase growth of their knowledge in social and digital justice matters, theology, and Christian responsibility.

Perhaps as a playful nod towards the anonymity of the digital sphere, a participant who did not wish to be named, declared emphatically, "Before this Caribbean Youth Initiative, I did not see myself as having any responsibility in the digital space. Now I know that I have a role to play!"



Istanbul Genocide and Ecocide Conference: “Never again!” is for all people and creation!

In partnership with the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Council for World Mission (CWM) organised an International Consultation in Istanbul, Türkiye.

The meeting, titled, “Ending Genocides, Ecocides, and Mass Murders: Resilience, Resistance and Alternatives in the Face of Empire,” took place 25-27 August, bringing together survivors, activists, theologians, and academics from across the globe to critically examine the historical and ongoing forces driving systemic violence, while highlighting the resilience and resistance of affected communities.

A central message running through the consultation was that genocides and ecocides are deeply intertwined, both emerging from imperial logics that treat people, land, and resources as expendable.

It positioned starkly that genocide is not merely the wanton destruction of human life but also constitutes a brutal and systematic erasure of that which encompassed an entire life cycle, from lands, cultures, and identities, to the spiritual wellbeing of disparate communities.

Running parallel to its reprehensive twin, ecocide, on the other hand, entails the obliteration of precious ecosystems and natural resources that sustain life, often deployed as a deliberate strategy to utterly dominate or marginalise peoples.

Debunking “Never again!”

CWM Deputy General Secretary for Programmes, Dr Sudipta Singh, opened the consultation with a compelling statement: “We gather because we dare to believe that another world is not only possible but demanded by the God of justice. The cry of ‘Never again!’ must extend beyond a single people or land—it must echo for all peoples and all of creation.”

He also added that the mission of God was nothing less than a radical mission. It must be also a mission of resistance, and of a struggle for life in the very midst of death.

Singh asserted that the path of Christ and discipleship does not lead into centres of power, but into places of

suffering—into the streets, refugee camps, and graveyards.

Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb, an academic and theologian based in Palestine, explored in his keynote address the complex ways in which historical trauma, biblical texts, and political structures intersect to enable ongoing cycles of oppression, particularly in relation to Israel and Gaza.

Echoing Singh's criticism of "Never again!" a slogan used by Israel to lend credence to its present acts of military violence, Raheb observed that the cry has become a political theology of security, nationalism, and exceptionalism to justify genocidal acts in Gaza under the pretext of "security."

"Where are the Bonhoeffers of our time?" lamented Raheb as he concluded.

Themes that challenge and resist

Four central themes were eventually reached via the rigorous dialogues amongst the participants:

Reclaiming the narrative

Participants highlighted the importance of the voices of survivors and resisting the imperial framing that justifies extractive violence under the guise of "development." Across contexts—from Namibia, Gaza, and West Papua to Tamil Eelam and French Polynesia, empires have historically defined who counts as a victim and who does not, suppressing resistance and erasing histories of oppression.

Challenging hegemonic imaginaries

The consultation emphasised the need to confront Eurocentric, colonial, and racially supremacist frameworks embedded in theology. Decolonising education, language, and faith practices emerged as essential strategies for cultivating solidarity, reclaiming identity, and nurturing prophetic action rooted in justice.

Recognizing geopolitical and resource-driven dimensions

Genocide is rarely a purely ethnic or religious conflict. Across multiple case studies—such as Namibia, Palestine, Sudan, and Guatemala—resource extraction, militarisation, and strategic territorial interests underpin systemic violence. The consultation stressed the interconnectedness of imperialism, extractivism, and state violence as structural drivers of human and ecological destruction.

Resistance and resilience

Despite centuries of oppression, affected communities have continually resisted through cultural preservation, grassroots organising, and political mobilisation. Examples included the

Eelam Tamil women preserving their narratives, the Mayan communities defending ancestral lands and cultural identity, and West Papuan populations resisting assimilation through art, music, and protest.

"Addressing genocides and ecocides is a practical necessity!"

During the closing moments, the Istanbul consultation collectively affirmed the stance that addressing genocide, ecocide, and mass atrocities must require an integrated, global approach that recognises the interdependence of life, land, and identity.

Doing so is not only a moral and theological imperative but also a practical necessity: survivors' voices, lived experiences, and strategies of resistance must form the foundation for any efforts toward justice, reconciliation, and the sustainable flourishing of communities worldwide.

Additionally, the consultation also reinforced the necessity of global solidarity, highlighting that collaborative action across borders is essential to protect communities from systemic violence.



NIFEA consultation addresses global inequality, rise of AI, Fourth Industrial Revolution

The Council for World Mission (CWM) came alongside its partners from the World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council, and United Society Partners in the Gospel from 27-29 August in Pocheon, South Korea, for a New International and Financial Architecture (NIFEA) Consultation on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and AI.

NIFEA is a collective of faith-based communities committed to a just economic and financial architecture alternative to current global regimes.

The event drew 45 delegates—including theologians, church leaders, and youth and justice advocates—to critically examine how emerging technologies intersect with global inequality.

The consultation also amplified the voices of young people and communities from the Global South—people most vulnerable to the disruptions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution—ensuring that theological reflection was rooted in lived experience and struggles for justice.

An important milestone of the event was the affirmation of Christian mission as one that interrogates not only colonial histories but also provides spiritual checks on algorithmic futures.

Faith that demands resistance

“The Fourth Industrial Revolution is not arriving on neutral ground. It lands on soil already scarred by slavery, colonialism, and ecological destruction,” warned Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy, as he addressed the gathered delegates.

Mkandawire further sounded the call for caution towards the rise of AI, raising the point that the global technological phenomena that also included the increased use of algorithms as not merely a technical one; but a potential theological crisis.

“If algorithms are coded to serve empire and profit, they will deepen the wounds of inequality, turning workers into disposable data points and creation into an extractive machine,” said Mkandawire.

However, he added, the church must base its discernment of the situation on the Gospel, as it continues to resist the injustices in the wake of AI.

Affirming the CWM mission as one that nurtures the creation of life-flourishing communities and economy even in the age of AI, Mkandawire reminded the consultation that the Christian faith compels the church to disrupt empire whilst the Holy Spirit calls for the re-imagining of economies of care, technologies of solidarity, and communities where dignity is not automated away but affirmed as the image of God.

Unified ecumenical uprising is in order

The consultation concluded with an outpouring of prayerful discernment and a prophetic spirit of urgency.

Participants collectively affirmed that AI and the Fourth Industrial Revolution cannot be left to governments and corporations alone; and their rise are a matter of faith, justice, and discipleship.

A powerful commitment was made amongst the delegations to stand together as a global communion of churches, insisting that technological futures must be shaped by values of equity, ecological sustainability, and human dignity.

The closing liturgy of the consultation further reminded the gathered members to “test the spirits” of rising technologies and to proclaim the possibility of another world—one where creation is healed and communities flourish beyond empire’s algorithms.

Rev. Namelia Lutchman of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago—a new member of the CWM global family of churches—emphasised the importance of a united church front: “Our time to act is now, as an ecumenical community, to resist technologies that commodify humanity and creation, and to reimagine digital futures shaped by justice, solidarity, and the flourishing of all God’s creation!” she said.

“In a world increasingly driven by algorithms, surveillance capitalism, economic injustice, and ecological destruction, the church must act as a beacon of hope and transforming power.”



Scan this QR code to read the full communiqué released at the close of the consultation.



Transformative Ecumenism to become global movement, announces steering group

Planning for major growth of Transformative Ecumenism from a theological concept into a global movement, a steering group met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 21-24 August to discuss a detailed strategy for elevating the nascent movement.

The 16-member steering group comprises ecumenical leaders and youth from across the world to plan, reflect, and concretise actions for justice, peace, and life-affirming Christian witness.

Drawing up plans with a strategic eye towards current global contexts and guided by Council for World Mission (CWM) General Secretary, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum's keynote on "Transforming Power in Catastrophic Times," the meeting saw the leadership reaffirming the Transformative Ecumenism Movement's (TEM's) core identity as a people-led, justice-driven movement rooted in the margins.

"Transformative Ecumenism is not merely a theological idea; it is a call to action, rooted in the margins and led by young people. We are proud to support this movement as it seeks

to embody justice and the need to 'rise to life' in every context," said Keum.

The four-day meeting also gave increased clarity in matters that would lead to the movement's future, sustainability, and cadence.

Members found themselves in unanimity concerning TEM's future goals, including a renewed and increased commitment to youth leadership, positioning TEM as a youth-led movement. They also signalled a dedication towards theological resource development, and a desire for grassroots mobilisation.

Thematic priorities that included global issues and crises such as climate justice, gender justice, and solidarity with Palestine were identified as vital milestones for the strategic roadmap for 2025–2027. The roadmap also included elements such as a TEM website, the creation of a social media presence, and the planning for future regional youth gatherings.

CWM Deputy General Secretary

for Programmes, Dr Sudipta Singh, chimed in on the significance of the meeting, “[Through the meeting], Transformative Ecumenism [has now] evolved as a ‘movement of movements,’ engaging with the grassroots struggles while maintaining theological coherence and strategic focus to address the issues people face.”

The group also unveiled bigger plans that would put TEM onto the greater church map with deliberations being made to produce a TEM publication by October 2025, with editorial contributions from members of the steering group.

Additionally, planning is underway for both a regional theological consultation in 2026 and the creation of study resources in partnership with All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Centre for Ecumenical Studies.

As a step towards the commitment to strengthening youth engagement, the steering group has agreed to organising regional meetings, such as an in-person youth steering group gathering in 2026, and a Global Youth Meeting in the following year.

TEM will also be promoted and placed on the agenda of major ecumenical events including the AACC Theological Symposium, Youth Congress, and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) General Council in October.

Meanwhile, a dedicated communications team will be established to coordinate content production and dissemination across regions while continued mapping of grassroots movements and potential partners aligned with TEM’s vision and values will also be undertaken.

Commenting on the exciting crossroads that TEM has found itself in, Samuel Munayer, a Palestine theologian, and member of the steering group observed, “Ecumenism becomes authentic and transformative only when it is forged in costly solidarity with the oppressed; all other expressions remain shallow. In Malaysia, there is a refreshing sense that the Steering Group on Transformative Ecumenism is seeking to incarnate Christ’s prayer in our own time.”



CWM WCC joint youth conference empowers next generation of church leaders

A youth conference on “Youth and Evangelism: Empowering the next generation of church leaders,” jointly organised by the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC), brought together 58 participants under the age of 30 from the member churches of both organisations. The three-day event was held at the Malaysia Bible Seminary from 25- 27 August.

The conference was convened in response to a growing global concern: the declining presence of youth in churches. Young people are often overlooked, marginalised, and denied a voice within faith communities. By creating a dedicated platform for dialogue, the organisers sought to invite and engage youth in shaping visions for life-flourishing evangelism, spiritualities, and societies. Participants were encouraged to return to their churches and communities with fresh perspectives, renewed courage, and strengthened resolve.

Evangelism must evolve

In his opening address, CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum challenged participants to become the church’s most fearless agents of change. He underlined that empowering young people is not only a missional priority but also a theological imperative.

Keum noted that in today’s world—marked by dysfunctional democracies, climate crises, rising secularism, and wide-

spread scepticism of religious institutions—traditional approaches to evangelism are no longer sufficient.

“CWM’s evangelistic calling is inseparable from its commitment to life-flourishing mission, grounded in the liberating ministry of Jesus,” he said.

“The involvement of youth in evangelism is not optional; it is essential. They bring energy, innovation, and a prophetic edge. The church must walk with them, learn from them, and support them as co-disciples on the journey of mission.”

He further urged: “Evangelism is a calling for days like ours. Let us live it together as communities of faith, reimagining evangelism as hospitality and healing, as dialogue and discipleship, and as justice and joy.”

Breaking the Ice

On the opening day, participants engaged in lively team-building games that introduced them to one another’s cultures—ranging from personal trivia exchanges to energetic dance and sing-along sessions.

A highlight of the day was the story-sharing segment, where participants were divided into small groups and invited to bring an object of personal significance. Each object served as a doorway into sharing local contexts, personal encounters, and defining moments of faith. These intimate exchanges nurtured mutual understanding and laid the foundation for the deeper discussions and dialogues that followed in the subsequent days.



Youth and Evangelism conference explores revisioning mission

The second day of the Youth and Evangelism conference jointly organised by the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) opened with a morning worship session based on Isaiah 61:1-4 where the idea of mission is seen through the eyes of Isaiah, who described the year of the Lord's favour.

Youth participants divided into small discussion groups to talk about how Christian mission has a history of complicity with oppression and colonialism, leading to societal division and environmental destruction.

By reading the biblical text through different cultural contexts, the youth were also encouraged to share their vision of mission, and how their local churches have been meeting the needs of communities.

Revisioning mission workshops

The bulk of the second day's programme centred around workshops on "Revisioning Mission" led by the Training in Mission team.

The workshops contained three sessions designed to shift mindsets on mission and evangelism, employ creativity and

action to experience mission, and see mission as something ingrained in each believer.

CWM Mission Secretary for Education, Formation, and Empowerment, Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, who led one of the workshops, described the sessions as ones that involved the participants in asking broader questions that stretched their understandings in rethinking mission.

She also added that fear can be countered with communal fun and collective encouragement in prayer and kindness.

"Creativity and caution, positivity and facts, ideas and inspiration, tweaking details and listening to God's direction need to be embedded in our practices," stressed Koh-Butler.

Six thinking hats

Using Matthew 14:22-33 as a backdrop for the discussions, participants also employed the use of the model of six thinking hats to critically examine the Matthew's biblical account of the disciples' encounter of Jesus walking on water.

The model, pioneered by Maltese physician, Dr Edward de Bono, is a popular tool for problem solving, decision-making, and creative thinking.

Through group-based reflections and dialogue, participants were introduced to the various hats that embodied a different style of thinking from fact-based to emotionally driven ones.

The exercise served to educate participants on rethinking and planning for missions holistically and to consider various fronts and contexts before the drawing up of missional goals and embarking on missiological planning.

Visio divina

The second part of the workshop entailed the exploration of “visio divina” (divine seeing). A Christian spiritual practice that used images, art, and other visual mediums as a gateway to prayer, the session taught the powerful ways in which images elicit feelings and how the “visio divina” can be used in calls for prayerful reflections and responses.

In two larger groups, participants depicted a silent scene of violence and how, simply by changing the characters’ positions, the entire context showed movements of peace and love.

A balloon game

The third section of the workshop entailed participants grouped in pairs to transport a balloon in three different stages, the first being deflated, the second while inflated, and the third without the use of hands and feet.

Accompanied with the exploration of Mark 2:1-12 that described how a paralysed man was lowered into a house through the roof to get past the crowds gathered to see Jesus, the exercise served to illustrate how mission often requires collaboration and finding creative, nonviolent solutions to proclaim the gospel.

Participants shared how they felt in trying to get the balloon (symbolising missional work) from point to point while accounting for its fragility and extrapolating it to methodologies they should employ in missions within their own local contexts.



Youth explore the Transformative Ecumenism Movement

The final day of the Youth and Evangelism conference opened with an inspiring worship experience led by youth representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Through four prayer stations set across the seminary grounds, participants were invited into a journey of embodied prayer, combining movement with a Scottish chant that sought God's deliverance for the oppressed, abused, and marginalised.

Exploring the Transformative Ecumenism Movement

The highlight of the day was an in-depth engagement with the Transformative Ecumenism Movement (TEM), facilitated by Samuel Munayer, a Palestinian theologian from Jerusalem. Munayer posed a series of probing questions: What distinguishes good ecumenism from bad? How does it impact local churches? And what roles can youth play in grassroots ecumenism?

From among the participants, Trevaughn Hylton, a Training in Mission representative from Jamaica, highlighted how ecumenism has enabled collaboration in his community—especially in accessible healthcare and educational initiatives for the less fortunate. Meanwhile, Zeerak Shahbaz, representing the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom, cau-

tioned against ecumenism's "shadow sides," such as superficiality and complicity.

Three subsequent presentations touched on various topics pertinent to TEM, such as the dumping of nuclear waste and rising sea levels in the Pacific, gender justice issues in Kenya including child marriage and teenage pregnancy, and the plight of Palestinians in the context of the Israel–Gaza conflict and the need for decolonisation. These are issues that demand the collective attention of the church.

Summarising the discussions, Munayer identified three hallmarks of TEM: people-based, justice-driven, and transformative.

"TEM is informed by the challenges and resources of worldwide Christianity. Its goal is to be an eventual movement of movements, connecting people and communities," he concluded.

Reflections and closing

As the conference drew to a close, participants celebrated in song and dance, offering reflections on their three-day journey.

Laneta Sateko of the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT) expressed gratitude:

“This conference opened my eyes to the diverse cultural contexts my peers face. I was especially impacted by the Six Thinking Hats model, which challenged me to think critically and creatively in addressing problems.”

An-An (Anita) from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) pointed to the TEM segment as the most transformative:

“It was inspiring to be visionary about ecumenism in our local contexts and to see youth fervently committed to addressing injustices in their own communities.”

For Afika Rwayi, from the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) and a member of CWM’s Board of Directors, the event embodied ecumenism itself:

“It is about different colours coming together to paint one beautiful image of young people united in the spirit of ecumenism.”

Looking ahead

The programme was hailed as an initial step towards CWM’s goal of engaging its younger members further and encouraging them to become influential agents of change in their communities.

Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch, CWM’s Mission Secretary for Discipleship and Dialogue, affirmed this vision: “The Youth and Evangelism conference opens the door to deeper engagement with young people. With more such programmes on the horizon, we aim to build a robust community—not only as a support network but as a powerful part of the Transformative Ecumenism Movement.”



Scan this QR code to watch the interview with two of our youth delegates.



CWM to Singapore Bible College: you are called to be “a community of hope”

The Council for World Mission (CWM) was invited by the Singapore Bible College (SBC) to participate in its annual Missions Emphasis Month. CWM set up a booth on campus on 4 September as part of an exhibition featuring various mission agencies in Singapore.

Founded in 1952, SBC is an evangelical and interdenominational seminary established by pastors and leaders from Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and independent churches, with the support of the Chinese Church Union, the Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission, and the Overseas Missionary Fellowship.

During the exhibition, CWM staff engaged with students and faculty, introducing the mission and programmes of CWM.

A love without limits

Beyond the exhibition, CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum preached at the chapel service on the theme “From Disciples to Disciple-Makers.” Drawing from John 21:5–13, which recounts the risen Christ’s seaside breakfast with his disciples after a night of fruitless fishing, Keum highlighted the disciples’ moment of obedience that preceded

the miraculous catch.

Challenging the SBC community, he asked: “What about the SBC? Do we have any fish? We have the best-equipped faculty and curriculum. But do we have faith and obedience like the disciples, who said, ‘Because you say so, I will let down the nets?’”

Keum went on to emphasise the radical love of Christ, demonstrated most fully at the cross: a boundless, sacrificial love unconcerned with cost. He noted that such love is profoundly disruptive to worldly systems built on self-interest and limitation. He exhorted students to accept Christ’s invitation to challenge the grain of culture, confront power, and embody a courageous lifestyle that stands up for what is right.

Three dimensions of transformation

Reflecting on Peter’s restoration in John 21 and the disciples’ renewed commission, Keum reminded the community that discipleship is never static but always calls for transformation.

He explained that this transformation begins with reimagining what it means to be a disciple. Too often, discipleship is reduced to church membership or personal piety. Instead, Christians are called to be missionary disciples, stepping beyond the walls of the church and living out their faith in the everyday spaces of life, actively continuing Jesus' mission in the world.

Disciples are invited to remain constantly open to being transformed, both individually and communally. Discipleship, Keum reminded, is a spiritual journey. It is a way of life that shapes actions, words, and attitudes so that they reflect the character of Jesus.

Finally, Keum stressed that disciples are called not only to be transformed but also to be transformative. As such, we are privileged to join in the mission of the triune God: moving in the Spirit, working together towards life, living out the values of the kingdom of God, engaging in mission from the margins, and humbly bearing witness to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

"True discipleship creates a movement of resistance and hope, countering the death-dealing forces of our time and discovering fullness of life. It is a calling to be disciple-makers!" he declared.

Concluding his message, Keum exhorted the SBC community: "The missionary God who sent the Son into the world calls you to be a community of hope. May the Holy Spirit empower you in weakness, provide fellowship in isolation, courage in fear, and life in the place of death."



CWM inducts four new member churches

The leadership of four new member churches — the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) from the Caribbean, Presbyterian Church of Mauritius (EPIM) from Africa, and the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV) and Cook Islands Christian Church (CICC) from the Pacific — gathered at CWM's Singapore office for a three-day induction programme from 9-11 September.

The programme introduced them to CWM's history, policies, programmes, finances, and communications.

Opening: A call to faithful witness

The induction opened with prayer and a sharing by Kenneth Ben, general secretary of CICC, who encouraged the delegates to “work, walk, and witness faithfully in the Lord who has called them to a mission in a world that is impatient, noisy, and restless.”

“In a world that stands on many truths, the church must stand on one unshakeable truth — Jesus Christ,” Ben exhorted.

Warmly welcoming new members

CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum welcomed the new members with heartfelt joy, likening the induction to a long-awaited reunion. He acknowledged the early challenges that delayed the joining of the four churches, expressing gratitude that these obstacles had now been overcome.

CWM Moderator Dr Natalie Lin echoed the welcome, describing the induction as the beginning of an invaluable journey of learning and collaboration:

“I am so glad to be able to work with all of you and to walk alongside your churches and your people.”

CWM Treasurer James Ronnie Kaboke also shared his reflections, framing the induction as a living testimony to CWM's mission of inclusivity:

“CWM is all about ecumenism, the sharing of resources, and reaching out to the marginalised. It is my joy to see all of us — who share a common DNA from the LMS — working closely to advance God's kingdom here on earth.”

Greetings from new member churches

The four new churches conveyed their gratitude and commitment to CWM's global mission.

Douglas Nelson, moderator of EPIM, opened the responses with a simple yet powerful message:

“We are blessed to be a part of CWM, and I look forward to working together for the Lord.”

Ashford Tamby, general secretary of PCTT, called this moment a milestone:

“This marks a significant step in our journey of faith, fellowship, and shared mission. May this be a time of deep connections, spiritual renewal, and mutual learning.”

Kenneth Ben, speaking again for CICC, referenced Rev. Dr Keum’s earlier presentation that spoke of CICC’s homecoming:

“CWM has given us the opportunity to witness the gospel not just in our community, but regionally and globally. We are ready to deepen our partnership and share resources to further the mission field.”

Pastor Collin Keleb of PCV closed the responses with gratitude:

“On behalf of PCV, we are honoured to join the CWM family, where together we can share resources, ideas, and visions on how best to evangelise the world around us.”

Symbolic conclusion

The opening session ended with a symbolic and heartwarming gesture: CWM stoles were bestowed upon the representatives of the new member churches. This act formally cemented their place in the CWM global family and affirmed their shared commitment to building life-flourishing communities in their regions and beyond.

The programme concluded on 11 September with video interviews featuring the four new member churches, marking the beginning of a new chapter of collaboration within the CWM family.



CWM mourns the passing of Rev. Dr Peter Cruchley

In Loving Memory of REV. DR PETER CRUCHLEY (12 June 1966 – 15 August 2025)

It is with heavy hearts and deep sorrow that the Council for World Mission (CWM) mourns the passing of Rev. Dr Peter Cruchley. Our deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Lena, his daughters, Enfys and Eleri and all those who grieve him. His departure is a profound loss to the global ecumenical community and to all who were inspired by his life, witness, and tireless commitment to God's mission of justice, reconciliation, and hope.

Rev. Dr Cruchley served faithfully as CWM's Mission Secretary for Mission Development for more than six years, offering outstanding leadership in mission work among our member churches. Born to missionary parents of the London Missionary Society (LMS), CWM's forbearer, Rev. Dr Cruchley often described himself as a "troubled missionary child", a self-awareness that shaped his missional vocation. It gave him both the courage and compassion to call the church to confront its past and embrace the work of liberation with humility and integrity.

One of Rev. Dr Cruchley's most transformative contributions to CWM was his pioneering leadership in the Legacies of Slavery Project, which is now known as The Onesimus Project (TOP). For him, it was a personal and theological jour-

ney, driven by his conviction that the church must reckon with its history of slavery and colonisation, and must be committed to the difficult but redemptive work of reparatory justice.

A minister of the United Reformed Church (URC) and a gifted mission theologian, Rev. Dr Cruchley published widely on contextual mission, postmodernity, ecumenism, decolonisation, and Whiteness. His deep insight, prophetic voice, and ability to speak the truth in love contributed significantly to CWM's theological vision in recent years.

Rev. Dr Cruchley currently serves as Director of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), a role that recognised his life's work and gave him a global platform to continue his mission that aims to repair, restore, and witness to the new world Christ promises. Though his tenure at the WCC has been tragically short, we pray that his vision remains with us: that in the face of global challenges, Christian communities must be recentered in

Christ and united in justice-seeking, reparative witness.

Rev. Dr Cruchley's ministry was inspired by hope in God's power to transform the world. He believed the church's calling was not simply to proclaim the Gospel, but to live it, visibly and tangibly, through relationships reshaped by repentance and love. His life stands as a testament to that calling.

While we grieve deeply, we give thanks to God for Rev. Dr Cruchley's life and ministry. We uphold his beloved family, friends and relatives, and the many communities he served in our prayers. May the Lord comfort and grant them peace. We commend him into the loving arms of the One who called him, trusting in the promise of resurrection and life eternal.

As the scripture reminds us in Hebrews 12,

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."

May Rev. Dr Cruchley's memory continue to guide us as we strive to be a fellowship that enables life-flourishing communities.

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum

General Secretary



CWM memorial service celebrates life of Rev. Dr Peter Cruchley

The Council for World Mission (CWM) held a memorial service on 20 August at its Singapore office to honour the life and legacy of Rev. Dr Peter Cruchley, former CWM Mission Secretary for Mission Development. Staff from all three CWM offices gathered to pay tribute to his profound impact on the organisation and the wider ecumenical community.

Cruchley, who passed away on 15 August at the age of 59, joined CWM in 2016 before moving to the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 2022, where he served as Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). The hourlong service, led by Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, CWM Mission Secretary for Education and Empowerment, included prayers, reflections, and eulogies. Attendees included Cruchley's widow, Mrs Lena Cruchley, and Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba, WCC Programme Director for Unity, Mission, and Ecumenical Formation and former CWM Mission Secretary, who joined via video link.

The memorial featured heartfelt eulogies from colleagues. CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum remembered Cruchley as a close comrade and prophetic voice in the struggle for justice:

"Peter was one of my closest comrades in our struggle against racism and colonialism. I truly appreciate his contributions to the journey towards decolonisation and the legacies of slavery in CWM. The organisation will continue to live out and embody his missiological creativity and commitment towards the liberation of creation."

Born to missionary parents of the London Missionary Society (LMS), CWM's predecessor, Cruchley spent his formative

years in Zambia. This cross-cultural upbringing shaped his global outlook and empathetic approach to mission.

His journey with CWM began with the Training in Mission (TIM) programme (1987–1988), which he often described as foundational to his theological perspective and missional calling.

He made a significant contribution to CWM through his pioneering leadership of the Legacies of Slavery Project, now known as The Onesimus Project (TOP).

An ordained minister of the United Reformed Church (URC) and a gifted mission theologian, Cruchley published extensively on contextual mission, ecumenism, decolonisation, postmodernity, and whiteness. His deep insight, prophetic witness, and ability to speak the truth in love have been valuable contributions to CWM's theological vision in recent years.

The service concluded with words of gratitude from Lena Cruchley, who shared:

"Peter never fully believed me when I told him how special he and his work were. Seeing the recognition that he has received today is a great comfort to me and the rest of the family. Thank you."



CWM at United Evangelical Mission 11th Assembly: “Diaconia is inseparable from justice!”

The city of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, hosted the 11th General Assembly of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) from 14–19 September. The six-day event brought together delegates from UEM’s 39-member community across Africa, Asia, and Germany to forge a unified voice against discrimination and explore new opportunities for collaboration in the pursuit of peace.

The assembly was held under the theme, “The Beam in Our Eye: Discrimination in the Church and Diaconia,” inspired by Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 7:3. The gathering reaffirmed UEM members’ shared vision of reconciliation and their commitment to empowering women and young people. It also served as a renewed call for action against discrimination and sexual violence in all its forms.

CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum attended the assembly and presented his greetings at the opening of the event.

Expressing gratitude to Rev. Dr Andar Parlindungan, UEM’s general secretary, for the invitation, Keum commended the close and enduring partnership between CWM and UEM—one deeply rooted in common witness, mutual learning, and a joint commitment to God’s mission of building life-flourishing communities.

Reflecting on shared moments of solidarity, Keum highlighted how both organizations continue to dismantle colonial legacies and advance transformative mission. He likened CWM and UEM to “companions on the road,” united in their commitment to building communities where the gospel is embodied in word, deed, proclamation, and diaconia.

Calling the assembly’s theme a “clear challenge” to all delegates, Keum urged deeper self-reflection:

“It is a call to self-examination before critique of others, to confession before judgment, to transformation before proclamation,”

exhorted Keum. “Discrimination, whether based on gender, race, caste, class, disability, or sexuality, contradicts the gospel of Christ and distorts the diaconal mission of the church.”

He stressed that true diaconia is inseparable from justice. Quoting the well-known Swahili proverb *Umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu* (“Unity is strength, division is weakness”), Keum reminded participants that while the church is called to unity, it must also embrace the diversity and gifts of all God’s people.

Keum closed by reaffirming CWM’s commitment to journeying with its partners to reshape church and society toward equality and equity, highlighting CWM’s work in gender justice, ecological justice, and economic justice:

“We believe that the church, as the body of Christ, must be the first to model communities where power is shared, dignity is upheld, and discrimination has no place.”

A key outcome of the assembly was the adoption of a comprehensive protection package against sexualized violence, underscoring UEM’s resolve that churches and diaconal institutions must be safe places offering protection and healing. The assembly reaffirmed its commitment to peace, reconciliation, and the empowerment of women and young people, resolutely calling for action against all forms of discrimination and sexual violence.



CWM at Yonsei 140th anniversary: “Christian higher education must reimagine mission”

Speaking at Yonsei University’s 140th anniversary conference, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, general secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM), who was conferred a Distinguished Professorship of World Christianity by Yonsei University, iterated on how the relationship between CWM and the university is one that showcases a collective commitment to education in God’s mission and to the flourishing of life for all creation.

Since its founding in 1885, the Christian tertiary institution, located in Seoul, is widely regarded as one of the top three universities in South Korea, alongside Seoul National University and Korea University.

Keum’s passionate address at the conference titled “*Pioneering the Future of Christian Higher Education – Fostering a New Dialogue: Life-Medical Science, Artificial Intelligence and Technology, Humanities, and Christian Mission*,” touched on the plethora of social, environmental, political, and economic challenges that are plaguing the world today from technological conglomerates directing and influencing global economics and politics, to the encroaching dangers of climate crises, as well as the rise of artificial intelligence that threatens to dehumanise and disenfranchise.

A world teetering on catastrophe

“The world is deeply wounded. It is catastrophic!” cried Keum who highlighted that Christian higher education has its work cut out for it as it continues to empower faith-based academia to reckon with the current world order that continues to inflict untold suffering on the defenceless and vulnerable.

Decrying empire’s death-dealing practices as “*necropolitics*,” Keum spoke strongly on the increase in global armed conflicts due to world empires being unable to resolve their conflicts through negotiations and treaties. He also warned pointedly on the trend of these wars inching closer towards the East, threatening the advent of a third world war.

Active, collaborative force

In a gloomy age when humanity is increasingly being commodified and stripped of personality and dignity, Keum nevertheless offered hope to the gathered audience that the “true humanity can only be discovered through a relationship with the Cre-

ator and creation in community, rather than through individual abilities, technology, or perceived ‘usefulness’ alone.”

Reminding the gathered “Yonseians” of the power of Christian faith, hope, and love which possess the ability to transform communities, Keum exhorted the audience to also rise to life and experience the transforming power of God by being active participants in his mission.

“To be disciples in today’s world is to not only proclaim and live out a love that does not conform to the *‘status quo’* but actively reshapes it, breathing life into a world longing for transformation,” said Keum who also encouraged the audience to embody the Yonsei values of adaptability and resilience, while bearing a strong commitment to community service and global impact.

As he closed his speech, Keum urged Christian educators and students to reimagine mission beyond individual institutional confines and cultivate a spirit of *ubuntu symbiosis* – a deep interconnectedness that fosters shared liberation – as they bring about a biblical transformation that cannot be achieved in isolation but requires partnership, mutuality, and a fervent commitment to life, justice, and peace.



The Council for World Mission (CWM) expresses its deep sorrow over the unfolding crisis in Madagascar. Since 25 September 2025, youth-led demonstrations under the banner of *Gen Z Madagascar* have drawn attention to the hardships endured by the people, including severe electricity blackouts, lack of water supply, corruption in the state utility (JIRAMA) and government, inequality in wealth distribution, as well as restrictions on fundamental freedoms.

These legitimate demands for justice and dignity have been met with violent repression. According to the United Nations, at least 22 people have died and over 100 have been injured, including protesters and innocent bystanders. We grieve with the families who have lost loved ones, including the tragic death of a baby suffocated by tear gas, and we lament the destruction of property and community institutions, such as the Malagasy Bible Society, which suffered severe losses.

The Council for World Mission (CWM) is a worldwide partnership of churches in mission comprising 36 member churches across six continents, representing over 22.5 million Christians, including over 5 million Christians in Madagascar. As a global mission community committed to resisting life-denying systems, affirming peace, promoting justice, and enabling life-flourishing communities for all, we:

- Condemn the violent crackdown against civilians and the excessive use of force by state security.
- Call upon the government of Madagascar to respect the democratic values and the people's right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.
- Urge the authorities to fulfil their sacred duty to provide basic amenities, water, electricity, and security, not as privileges, but as fundamental rights of every citizen.
- Plead for immediate dialogue between leaders, youth, and civil society in pursuit of justice, reconciliation, and sustainable solutions.
- Deplore the acts of looting and violence and appeal to protestors to make their voices heard through peaceful means that affirm life rather than destroy it.
- Stand with the churches of Madagascar and encourage them to continue their prophetic witness, their ministry of comfort to the wounded, and their call to prayer.
- Call upon the global ecumenical family to pray, advocate, and stand in solidarity with the people of Madagascar, seeking peace with justice.

CWM affirms that the path forward for Madagascar lies not in violence, repression, or revenge, but in justice, dialogue, and reconciliation. We long for the day when the Malagasy people may live in peace and dignity, embodying the shalom of God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

CWM Prayer for the People of Madagascar

God of justice, we lift before you the cries of the Malagasy people, who yearn for light in the midst of darkness. Hear the voices of the grieving families, the wounded, and the poor who have been denied their fundamental rights. Let your justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream in Madagascar.

God of peace, we lament the violence, the bloodshed, and the loss of innocent lives. We pray for leaders, security forces, and citizens to turn away from hatred and hostility, and to choose the path of dialogue and reconciliation. Calm the fears of your people, and make peacemakers rise up to heal divisions and sow harmony in the land.

God of life, breathe your Spirit of hope upon Madagascar. Renew the land, and grant strength to the churches as they stand with the broken and marginalised. May your promise of life in all its fullness be made real for every household, every community, and every child. We trust in you, Lord of life, to heal, to transform, and to lead Madagascar into a future of shalom.

Amen.



AT A GLANCE

INSIGHT

Member church
news



Bible Society of the South Pacific hones new strategic plan

Kiribati Uniting Church (KUC) General Secretary Rev. Mareweia. Riteti and KUC Bible Translator Rev. Iote Tebaio attended a 4-day meeting of the Bible Society of the South Pacific (BSSP) in Suva, Fiji.

Six church members of the BSSP—representing the the Methodist Church in Fiji, United Church of the Solomon Islands, The Salvation Army in Fiji, Assembly of God in Fiji, Anglican Church of Vanuatu, and Kiribati Uniting Church—met to discuss a new strategic plan for more convenient, affordable service.

They discussed three key concerns.

First, the shortage of Bibles is one of the most common problems faced by the South Pacific churches. BSSP member churches decided that Bibles should be ordered in bulk and in a container. Second, the cost of Bibles is quite high, and those gathered agreed the BSSP should work on more affordability. Last, they proposed establishing or reestablish-

ing the BSSP Bookshop in different areas. The BSSP Bookshop is responsible for providing the Bible in different versions, as well as Bible commentaries, diaries, and other materials.



Union of Welsh Independents welcomes new general secretary

The Union of Welsh Independents (UWI) welcomed Elinor Wyn Reynolds as its newly appointed general secretary, effective 1 September 2025. Reynolds succeeds Rev. Dyfrig Rees who had served in the role since 2018.

Established in 1871 during a period of growth and expansion among the Welsh Congregational churches, the UWI is a voluntary union of over 400 churches mainly located in Wales, United Kingdom.

Breaking glass ceilings

A member of Priordy Church in Carmarthen, Wales, United Kingdom, Reynolds is the first layperson to be appointed to the role in the past century. She is also the first woman to become general secretary in the history of UWI.

“It is an exciting privilege to be elected the general secretary of the Union of Welsh Independents. I am looking forward eagerly to this next period. Together we have work to do,” declared Reynolds upon her successful election into office – a process that first saw her nominated by UWI district associations, followed by ballots that were cast by the union’s churches.

Before being appointed to the role, Reynolds had worked for eight years as UWI’s publications officer, producing and editing content for the UWI weekly newspaper, *Y Tyst* (The Witness).

She also had a hand in producing the quarterly publication, *Union Matters*, a collection of articles from the UWI which informs congregations on church matters, while working on related publications that included the annual UWI yearbook and associative digital content, including the *Church of the Month* series on the UWI website.

With her rich background in broadcasting, Reynolds has put her experience in the service of UWI through storytelling and podcast media. Her work as an interviewer for two seasons on the series “*Y Cwmni Bach*” (The Small Company) has seen her engage in deep conversations with a variety of guests including renowned authors, politicians, music icons, poets, and peacemakers about their lives and faiths.



Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar General Synod elects new president

The 20th General Synod of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), held in Tolagnaro from 13-20 August, elected Rev. Dr Zaka Hary Masy Andriamampianina as the new president of the FJKM. This marks his third term on the Executive Committee; he first served as an advisor, then as vice president, before assuming the leadership of the church.

In his remarks, he stressed that holding three terms does not necessarily equate to experience, underlining instead the importance of collaboration. “When you take on a responsibility, you run, and the wind blows. Wind on the road is to be expected. But the joy is having colleagues and having the church praying for you [...] What I seek to demonstrate is humility and the ability to work with everyone,” he noted.

Rev. Daimon Mkandawire – CWM Mission Secretary for the Africa Region, praised “the fullness and character of the prophetic witness of the FJKM” when he addressed the General

Synod on its opening day, highlighting the value of the partnership between CWM and FJKM.

“This partnership is not built on convicts or formality, but on shared conviction that God calls us to work together in solidarity to proclaim the good news of Christ in word and deed and to embody the justice and peace and life abundance that God intends for all creation.” He underlined that CWM will continue to journey with FJKM in mission.

Former FJKM president honoured

A service of thanksgiving was held on 17 August in honour of Rev. Dr Ammi Andriamahazosoa Irako.

During this service, led by the Jubilee Committee, the General Synod paid tribute to the former president of the FJKM, who is retiring after nine years of faithful leadership.

In his tribute speech, FJKM Vice President Timoty Razaraso expressed gratitude for Irako's accomplishments, exemplary leadership, and unwavering dedication to God's service. "At all times, we desire that you continue to speak and admonish when necessary, as you remain a father figure of the church," he stated.

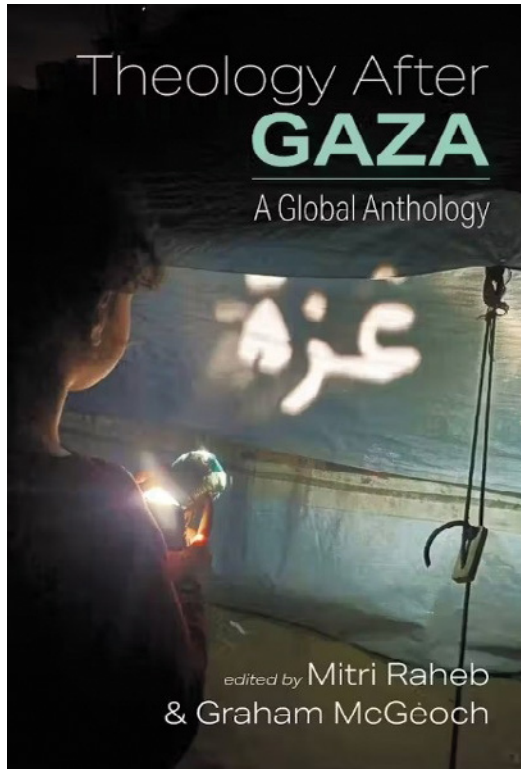
FJKM celebrates 57th anniversary

Irako urged the General Synod to recognise that "God is doing a new thing" as FJKM celebrated its 57th anniversary on 18 August in Tolagnaro.

At the same time, he exalted the FJKM believers not to dwell on the past, recalling instead the promise that "God is doing a new thing," referencing Isaiah 43:19.

"What has been achieved is small compared to the greatness that is yet to be accomplished. May the Holy Spirit guide us. Then the glory of God will shine forth more than ever, the church will advance greatly, and the number of the saved will increase," he declared.

The FJKM was founded in 1968 through the union of the London Missionary Society, the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, and the French Protestant Mission, which chose to form a single church body named Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM).



New DARE title delves into theology after Gaza

A product of DARE Palestine – a Council for World Mission (CWM) DARE (Discernment and Radical Engagement) Regional Forum, held in Istanbul in 2024 and inspired by Palestinian liberation theologies, *Theology After Gaza*, is the latest CWM title published by Cascade Books that collects scholarly and practical responses to the Israeli invasion of Gaza, a part of occupied Palestinian territories.

The 394-page book, the latest entry in the series of titles produced from the global DARE conferences, boldly tackles the armed conflict with well-known authors and prolific writers, including Jewish and Muslim scholars in five curated sections.

“DARE and liberation theologies are radically interdisciplinary, interreligious, and intersectional in their approach,” explained CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, who reaffirmed the organisation’s commitment to radical discipleship and prophetic spirituality.

Through the DARE programme, Keum highlighted that CWM conveys its prophetic role in the present sociopolitical, economic, ecological, and global landscapes.

Coedited by Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb, theologian, author, and editor of 50 books that deal with modern Middle Eastern church history, contextual theology, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and Rev. Dr Graham McGeech, CWM Mission Secretary for Discipleship and Dialogue, *Theology After Gaza* is a powerful anthology that is all at once seminal, timely, and relevant.

“This book sensitises Western Christians and the Western academy to Palestinian perspectives and voices,” described McGeech, who added that the self-determination of the Palestinian people continues to be a prescient political topic in the 21st century.

Sounding the urgent call for the Western world to recognise the theological crisis that is happening in Gaza, Raheb warns that the current conflict threatens the very survival of Christianity in the battered territories.

“It is obvious that Christianity [in Gaza] will not survive this genocide, nor will it survive this decade. We are witnessing the death of a Christian community that was once a major thriving Christian hub in the region.”



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