

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

INSiGHT

MAY 2025



**TRANSFORMING POWER
RENEWING HOPE**

AFRICA RISING

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FORE- WORD

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Africa Rising: Transforming Power, Renewing Hopes

The story of Africa is too often told from the margins. Yet in these times—when the world groans under the weight of ecological collapse, economic injustice, and moral fatigue—Africa emerges not only as a crisis to be solved, but as a people bearing prophetic gifts. I greet you, therefore, in the name of Christ our Ancestor—who walks with the wounded, dwells among the exiled, and dances with the defiant.

Today, the centre of global Christianity has unmistakably shifted to the global south, and I dare say Africa. Once seen as a distant mission field, the continent now stands at the spiritual centre of the world church. Its faith communities are not just numerically dominant—they are repositories of deep theological wisdom, cultural resilience, and spiritual vitality. Africa is not merely surviving history; it is actively reshaping it, drawing from ancestral memory and divine promise.

The Council for World Mission's Africa Region, rooted exclusively in southern Africa, stands as a witness to this

unfolding story. From the river valleys of Mozambique to the copper belts of Zambia, from the mountain highlands of Malawi to the townships of South Africa and the plains of Zimbabwe, to the rainforest coasts of Madagascar, our churches are not static institutions—they are living movements of Spirit and justice. They are sacred places where lament becomes liturgy, where resistance becomes resurrection, and where worship is a gateway to transformation.

CWM Africa comprises five member churches, serving millions of congregants across the continent: the United Church of Zambia (UCZ), Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) and Church of Christ in Malawi (CCM). While our theological vision is pan-African, our operational base and programme engagements are deeply embedded in the Southern

Africa Rising: Transforming Power, Renewing Hopes

Africa subregion, where churches are confronting the unfinished work of liberation with courage and creativity.

This witness is expressed through transformative programmes held across the African continent. The CWM Assembly in 2024 gathered member churches and partners to discern God's call amid the world's ecological and economic crises, renewing the church's commitment to justice, peace, and life-flourishing communities.

The Youth Consultation on Economy and Ecology in Madagascar brought together young activists and theologians to explore the intersection of environmental degradation and economic exploitation, grounding their analysis in Indigenous wisdom and prophetic action.

The School of Intersectional Ecotheology and Ecojustice Witness (SIEEW) offered a critical space for theological reflection and praxis, equipping participants to challenge systems of domination and imagine alternatives rooted in Earth justice.

Meanwhile, the CEVAA Meeting on the Environment convened churches from CEVAA member churches to engage in eco-theological reflection and develop strategies for creation care and climate advocacy. Together, these programmes are giving birth to a new African theology—contextual, liberative, and unapologetically prophetic.

Two key regional programmes shape the rhythm of our shared journey in 2025. The Global Consultation on the Environment, to be held in Lusaka, Zambia, will gather theologians, activists, and senior church leaders from across the world to grapple with the environmental crisis from the lens of faith, justice, and reparatory action.

Here, Africa's ecological witness will be affirmed not as peripheral, but as central to global transformation. The School of Intersectional Ecotheology and Ecojustice Witness (SIEEW) will serve as a critical learning space, equipping participants with theological and analytical tools to resist systems of domination and embody alternative futures rooted in ecological balance and economic justice.

We do not ignore our wounds. The economic stranglehold of neoliberalism continues to fuel unemployment, displacement, and disillusionment. Climate breakdown destroys lives and livelihoods. Colonial trauma is repackaged through global capital, cultural erasure, and theological silence. Gender-based violence and the marginalization of Indigenous cosmologies remain deeply rooted.

Yet even amid these pains, Africa rises. The land remembers. The people resist. Christ our Ancestor journeys with us—through suffering, into solidarity, and toward resurrection.

The theme, "Africa Rising: Transforming Power, Renewing Hopes," is not merely aspirational—it is theological. It affirms that Africa's rising is not powered by imperial blueprints or Western validation, but by Spirit-led transformation. It is about turning the tide of exploitation into restoration, turning despair into dance, turning inherited wounds into wellsprings of wisdom. This hope is not fragile optimism—it is rooted, resilient, and resistant.

As you encounter this issue of INSIGHT, may the global church come to see Africa not as peripheral, but as central—not only to the past of Christianity, but to its future. For the tomb is empty. The soil speaks. The ancestors rise.

Africa rises.



Rev. Daimon Mkandawire is CWM's Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy, and the Africa region.

VIEW- POINTS

INSiGHT

Africa Region:
*Africa Rising–
Transforming Power,
Renewing Hopes*



The Church in Africa and Masculinities

The church has emerged as a key actor in the discourse on gender in Africa. Its legacy, however, tends to divide opinion.

On one side of the debate are those who contend that the church has been making a positive contribution towards gender equality and gender justice in Africa. They mostly point towards the church's interventions against harmful practices, during different historical periods. These include during the inception of Christianity where missionaries and their African agents sought to protect and promote the rights of women and girls, as well as the church's opposition to harmful practices against women and girls in the contemporary period.

On the other hand, critics charge that the church continues to reinforce harmful masculinities by emphasising the (exclusive) leadership of men in church and society.

This brief note seeks to highlight the potential of the church in promoting transformative, positive, and liberating masculinities.

The central goal is for the church to support the emergence of a critical mass of boys and men who are agents of social transformation, dedicated to gender justice and working to ensure that women and men have life in abundance (John 10:10).

Among other qualities, men and women who are advocates of transformative masculinities insist on the equality of men and women, seek to transform power by supporting women in leadership, actively resist misogyny and violence against women and girls, challenge harmful norms and place gender justice at the centre of their activities.

As Africa rises, transforms power and renews hopes, it is strategic to invest in transformative masculinities.

Promoting transformative masculinities in Africa: The role of the church

The church is strategically placed to promote transformative masculinities. While it is already engaged in some initiatives, the following areas can facilitate more effective interventions:

Catching them young: Working with boys and young men

African wisdom and Christian teachings (e.g. Proverbs 22:16) place emphasis on equipping/empowering children with the right values from early on in life. In this regard, it is critical for the church in Africa to inculcate the values of gender justice and gender equality among boys and young men to ensure that they embody and express these values throughout life.

According to a proverb from Burundi, “A tree is straightened when it is still young.” This speaks to the necessity of training boys and young men in the ideals of transformative masculinity.

Through the use of positive role models in the Bible, boys and young men can be shaped to become active in promoting social justice. Churches are well-placed to accompany boys and young men to appreciate that the struggle for gender justice is integral to their mission.

By ensuring that boys and young men in Africa are acquainted with positive values that promote gender justice in both Indigenous cultures and Christianity, churches will be laying solid foundations for the future.

Utilising Christian institutions for transformative masculinities
Churches in Africa have a distinct advantage when it comes to having platforms for inculcating the values of transformative masculinities. Across most parts of the continent, they run schools, colleges, universities and other training institutions. Whereas traditionally these institutions have tended to promote inequitable gender norms, the church in Africa needs to embrace a new perspective and regard them as spaces for promoting transformative masculinities.

Graduates of these diverse Christian institutions will emerge as the key actors who will be the vanguard in Africa's transformation towards gender justice.

Investing in transformative femininities

In order to attain gender justice, it is critical for the church in Africa to invest in transformative femininities alongside transformative masculinities. Africa's rise requires that women and men embrace new approaches to gender.

Conservative gender ideologies run the risk of preventing women from reaching their leadership potential. It is vital for church women to critique inherited oppressive gender norms and promote women's rights and dignity. The joint transformation of masculinities and femininities will position Africa strategically for prosperity and sustainable development.

The way forward

Churches in Africa have played, and continue to play, a major role in social transformation.

Although they have not always lived up to expectations, they stand at a critical juncture in the continent's development trajectory.

By continuing to invest in transformative masculinities and femininities, churches in Africa are laying a solid and sustainable foundation for the continent's development. It is for such a time as this that the churches in Africa are challenged to rise to the occasion.



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Africa Can Achieve Climate Justice if the Global North Plays Its Rightful Role

Africa has been rising steadily, most notably on the economic front. According to the African Development Bank, Africa accounted for 11 of the world's fastest-growing economies in 2024*. They estimated that the real GDP growth for the continent in 2024 and 2025 is expected to average 3.8% and 4.2%, respectively, higher than the projected global averages.

That Africa is indeed rising is therefore not in question. What is in question is what this rising means and how we continue rising in a way that is responsible and sustainable, and also inclusive, considering the odd situation where nearly 600 million Africans** have no access to electricity.

Africa Is at a Crucial Juncture

Africa is finding itself at a crossroads. With a bulging youth population that is growing restless and feeling disillusioned from the lack of social opportunities, including decent job opportunities, there is real pressure on African governments

to deal with the issue of energy access urgently.

As long as energy access is limited, development will be limited because there is no reliable electrical source to power industries, and with it will come socioeconomic challenges that make the continent “risky.”

Risky for investors who blame political instability or lack of a thriving economic environment, and risky for the natives who now end up drowning in the seas trying to find a better life outside the continent, while those who are unable to leave turn to crime. The fewer with jobs are forced to take on immense roles of supporting relatives because African governments are also plagued with corruption that makes it impossible to provide even basic services like quality healthcare and education for free.

So, how is it then that the fastest-growing economies in the world are in Africa, when the situation is this bad? There is no one simple answer but an attempt at understanding this paradox lies in understanding inequality. And Africa is a deeply unequal continent, and this inequality has been largely driven by the energy source the continent has embraced.

What Climate Justice Looks Like for Africa

We must continue repeating the tired phrase that Africa contributes the least but suffers the most from climate change, because we must demonstrate the injustice that over-dependence on fossil fuels has brought on the continent.

Africa remains the place for resource extraction in its rudimentary form that powers the world. Whether oil or critical minerals, Africa plays no significant role in the value chain of its resources, leaving the continent poorer. And it is on this basis that fossil fuels are not a viable pathway for economic development.

Insisting on fossil fuels is politically motivated because those in power, at best, see themselves getting quick dollars they can use to offset the huge loans that the continent services because it is “risky,” and at worst, those leaders see an opportunity for plunder.

Climate justice in the African context, therefore, means investments in the abundant renewable energy to ensure the transition from the use of charcoal and biomass. Although these sources of energy have very little impact on global warming, their continued usage brings with it environmental destruction, respiratory diseases, and an inability to really industrialise as they cannot provide the reliable energy required for that level of growth.

The reality is that Africa cannot achieve climate justice on its own.

The world is connected, and the actions of countries on another continent impact those in Africa. Nothing proves this better than climate change. The industrialisation of the global north was built on fossil fuel extraction that has now put the world in a climate crisis. And while extreme weather events know no borders, global north countries have proper adaptation and mitigation – as they should considering their wealth, while Africa struggles with similar events.

As recently as January this year, the fires in Los Angeles (LA) razed more than 10,000 homes and property estimated to cost upwards of US\$250 billion***. Scientists confirmed that the dry weather gave rise to the devastating LA fires. They noted that the LA wildfire season is getting longer while the rains that normally put out the blazes have reduced.

I share this example to show that as sad as the LA fires were and the unbelievable losses in property, the US was able to keep the deaths at just 30 people, according to the same BBC story, and there is little doubt they will bounce back because of their disaster preparedness, and ability to plan for and adapt to climate events.

In Africa, devastating climate events claim lives by the millions.

According to the World Food Programme, in May 2023, more than 23 million people**** across parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia faced severe hunger due to the longest drought in recorded history.

To put this into perspective, the majority of the people impacted are pastoralists. Their carbon footprint is nonexistent. They hardly use vehicles, power their homes, or use any electric gadgets, yet the continued use of fossil fuels by the global north has left them vulnerable to the climate crisis in the form of these prolonged droughts and flash floods and, with them, conflicts, as some become climate refugees.

Climate justice, therefore, goes beyond looking at the energy sources and condemning fossil fuels and pushing for a renewable energy transition. It must also look at reparations. It must look at climate adaptation and mitigation and insist that polluters must pay.

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BRICS and Digital Currencies Implications on African Economies

Digital currencies were introduced into the global financial markets with the launch of Bitcoin in 2009 – a launch that would fundamentally alter the world's financial landscape (Opare and Kim, 2019).

Unlike electronic money, interfaced by third parties such as Visa or Mastercard and mobile payment solutions like M-Pesa and PayPal, digital currencies exist solely in computer memory, are not issued by a commercial sponsor, and are not denominated in the national unit of account (Chen et al., 2022; Raskin and Yermack, 2016).

Digital currencies include cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, which are characterized by their decentralization from monetary authorities; stablecoins, while like Bitcoin, differ in that they are pegged to the dollar to mitigate market volatility risk; and finally Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) are issued by central banks and are denominated by sovereign national currencies to meet the growing demand for digital currencies, and prevent the collapse of the monetary system and the banking sector.

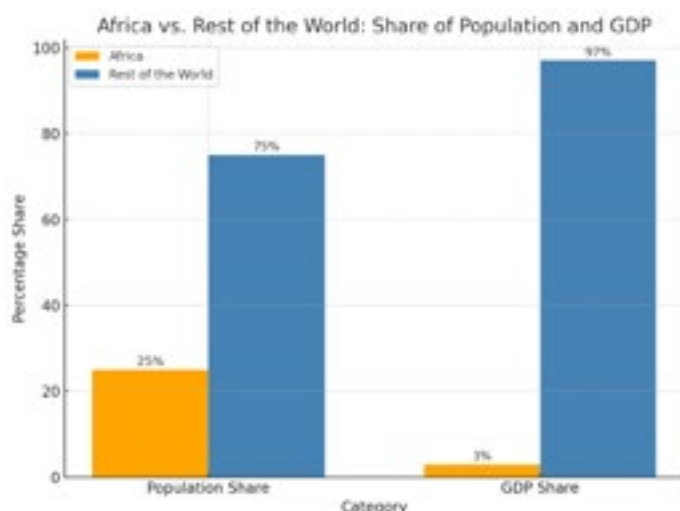
While the widespread popularity of digital currencies was primed by the Global North's declining demand for

physical cash (M0), and growing preference for quicker and cheaper digital payment solutions, it is unbanked populations and countries with large informal economies in the Global South, that are rapidly leveraging digital payment solutions to overcome the financial exclusion sustained by the post-Bretton Woods global financial system (Auer et al., 2020; Nanez Alonso et al., 2021).

Beyond these regional dynamics, it was the onslaught of COVID-19 and subsequent halting of the economic machine that precipitated a significant shift towards digital markets and digital payment technologies (Auer et al., 2020).

These developments are especially significant for the African continent, home to a disproportionately high number of underdeveloped and small economies. The African continent accounts for close to 20% of the global population and holds significant potential for economic and political reform.

The continent's past, which is characterised by a lack of development, oppression, and the trade of natural resources to enrich Western countries, points to the potential for transforming economic structures to reduce inequality and improve livelihoods across the continent.



When combined, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Africa's 54 countries is significantly less than that of Germany's alone.

In simpler terms, despite contributing almost a quarter of the world's population, Africa accounts for less than 3% of the global GDP (World Bank, 2023). The development of institutions such as BRICS, which is the new economic and political grouping of developing countries, currencies hold immense potential for the intentional economic development of African countries.

The adoption of cryptocurrency within the original BRICS member states underscores the importance of digital currencies for effective participation in the global economy and for forging new and alternative financial systems that decentralise powers that exploit and subdue economic prosperity.

For instance, with over 190 million unbanked individuals, India recognizes crypto as an essential tool for facilitating financial inclusion due to its low transaction fees, fast cross-border payments and improved transparency. While in Russia, ongoing war and widespread global sanctions have led to increased reliance in decentralised finance (Defi) both at the institutional and grassroots level, with about \$182.44 billion in crypto inflows in 2024.

Digital assets are increasingly viewed as safer alternatives to secure financial stability.

For Brazil, the crypto market is driven by interest from large financial entities seeking to diversify portfolios, as the crypto market matures. Investors are progressively integrating digital assets into their asset management strategies.

In China, investors are turning to over-the-counter (OTC) crypto and luxury goods to move money out of the country due to the negative sentiment toward the Chinese economy, propelled by a prolonged decline in the property market since 2021.

Finally, in South Africa, institutional investors are using stablecoins to reduce exposure to currency volatility and manage liquidity.

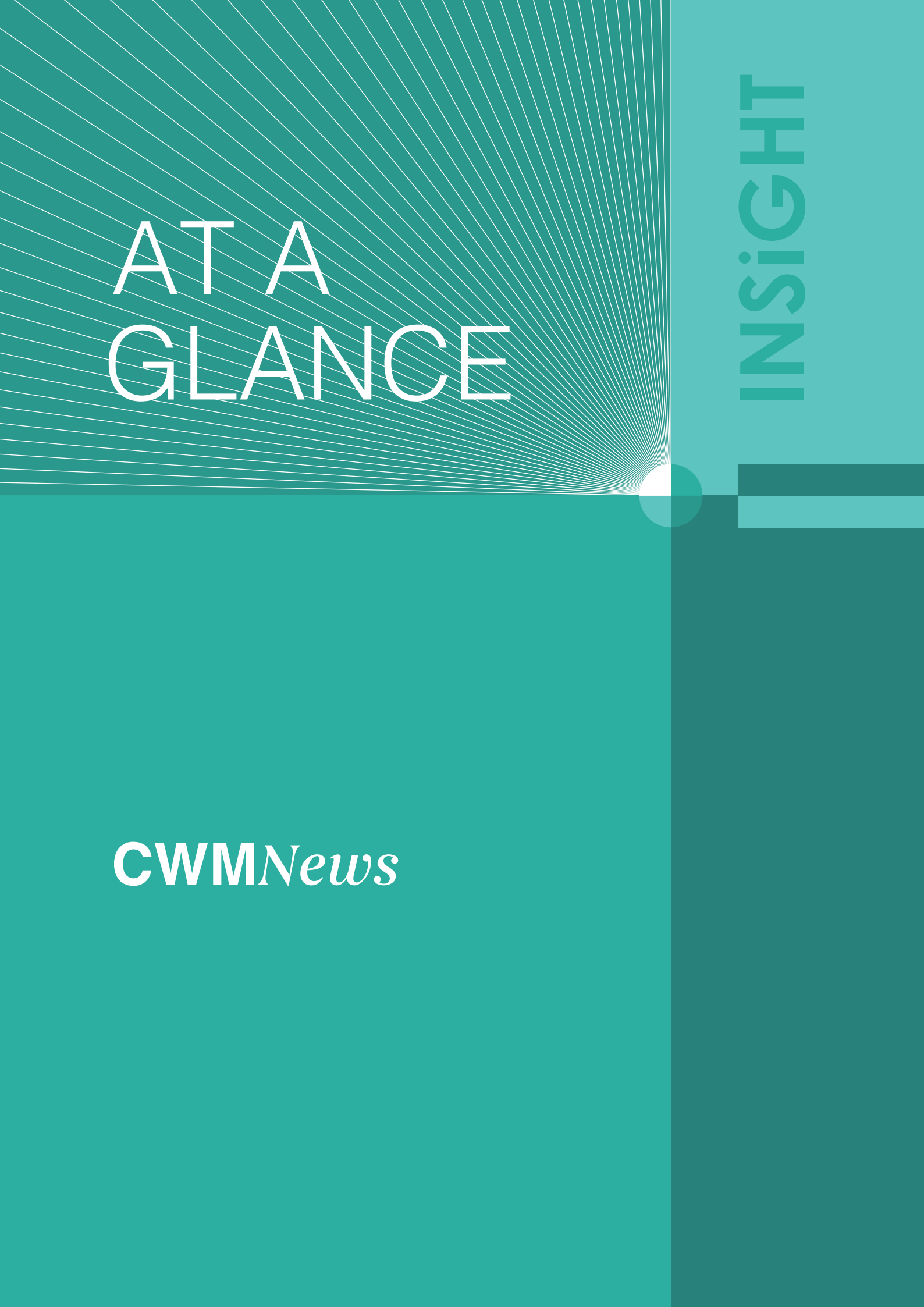
As demonstrated by prevailing trends in the original BRICS member states, African economies can leverage digital currencies to promote financial stability, reduce exposure to currency volatility, manage liquidity, diversify investment portfolio, widen financial inclusion through quicker and more affordable international payments.

The ongoing shift towards a digital economy and the use of cryptocurrencies will positively impact the economy through decentralisation as well as cost-effective and transparent transactions.

More importantly, participation in the global markets with crypto stands to fast-track economic growth and investment in Africa. With a bounty of natural resources together with a steadily growing population, there is potential and hope for a stronger and more stable economy in Africa.



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AT A
GLANCE

INSIGHT

CWM*News*



CWM Moderator's Easter Message 2025

Dear beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Easter greetings to you from the Council for World Mission!

As we approach celebrating the Resurrection of Christ across the world in different nations and cultures, we are united in the same hope—the hope for Life. Easter is not just a day to remember Jesus's resurrection; it is a day that gives us hope for life. It is the declaration that death does not have the final word. On this day, the chains of sin were broken, despair was overcome, and new life was offered to all of us and all of creation.

This is the ultimate triumph of God's love—a love that restores, redeems, and resurrects. But in a world marked by suffering and injustice, what does the Resurrection mean for us today?

We live in a time of deep wounds. Around the world, poverty, war, oppression, and ecological destruction devastate lives and communities. Over 700 million people struggle in extreme poverty, many of them children and women. The very earth groans in pain caused by human greed and

exploitation. From conflict zones to silent cries of despair in broken families, our world bears the scars of injustice.

What does Easter have to say to this wounded world? For me, the Resurrection is a call to “rise to power.” It is not the power as the world defines, but the power of love, justice, and restoration. The power of resurrection is not found in dominance or self-interest but in humility, service, and self-giving love. It is a power that lifts up the lowly, heals the broken, and transforms the world.

Jesus's resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene is a prime example of such power. In a society that often silenced women and marginalised them, Jesus chose her to be the first witness of the resurrection. This is not a minor detail in the resurrection narrative. It is a declaration that in God's kingdom, the unseen are seen, the oppressed are lifted, and the voiceless are given voice. Christ's resurrection is a call to rise in power above the systems of oppression and injustice.

As followers of the risen Christ, we, too, are called to rise. To rise above fear, above divisions, and above complacency. The world tells us that power belongs to the rich and the strong because of their wealth and influence, but Jesus shows us that true power is found in compassion and courage.

As a Taiwanese person sharing this message, I see this message as something that resonates deeply with our Taiwanese identity. Taiwan has known struggle, resilience, and the fight for dignity. We are a people who understand what it means to rise—not through force, but through perseverance, through the power of hope, and through a spirit of unity. The values of solidarity, care for one another, and standing firm in the face of challenges are embedded in our culture. The message of resurrection affirms these values, calling us to be instruments of healing in a world that longs for restoration.

As Christ bore the wounds of the cross yet rose in glory, we, too, can rise above our wounds, both personal and collective. Every act of love, every stand for justice, every effort to care for the earth is part of this rising to power.

Dear sisters and brothers, let this Easter be more than a celebration. It must be a commitment. A commitment to rise with Christ in our daily lives, to embody His love in our homes, our workplaces, and our societies.

In doing so, we boldly proclaim: Christ is indeed risen! Hallelujah!!!

Amen.



Dr Natalie Lin
CWM Moderator





CWM East Asia Member's Mission Forum Re-Envisions Mission in “Catastrophic Times”

An East Asia Member's Mission Forum (MMF) held in Hong Kong from 8-10 April drew 28 participants from the six Council for World Mission (CWM) East Asian member churches who came together physically and online to dialogue, share missional stories, and discern regional trends and challenges while engaging in soulful, corporate worship.

In his greetings to the representatives of the host church, the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC), as well as the gathered delegates, CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum emphasised the importance of the MMF as a platform for East Asian member churches to re-evaluate how missions can be done in the current “catastrophic times,” seeing that Myanmar was rocked by an earthquake in March, with continued aftershocks, and Taiwan continues to grapple with

geopolitical tensions with China.

“We need to discuss what our missional goals are in such a catastrophic time as this, experienced by our two member churches [PCM and PCT] in the face of ongoing climate crises, and dysfunctional democracies that grow increasingly threatening to the wellbeing of people in this region today,” said Keum.

“In this context, the way that we show the quality of discipleship as a follower of Christ to the rest of the world is now therefore more important than ever before.”

A call to decolonise mission and power

In response to the MMF's theme of “Transforming Power,” Dr Kwok Pui-Lan, a Distinguished Scholar from the Episcopal Divinity School (USA), noted in her keynote address that the first step towards witnessing a transformed power is through a determined will to decolonise it, especially in East Asia, where power takes on many forms from political and military to the cultural and symbolic.

Kwok defined power, colonialism, and post-colonial thought through real-world examples and biblical references, drawing attention to the sordid relationship between colonialism and Christianity, and identifying the Roman Catholic Church as the first globalising religious force.

To effect real change, Kwok suggested that the way forward must encompass steps that not only acknowledge and critically analyse colonial histories and power structures but also involve building and galvanising solidarity and collaboration across various social justice movements to transform said structures from within, and lift up voices from marginalised communities towards self-determination and amplification of their perspectives, knowledge, and leadership.

Exploring three sub-themes through East Asian eyes

MMF offered an opportunity to delve further into three sub-themes that evoked strong discussions among the delegates.

Sub-Theme One – Gender, Power, and Leadership

Rev. Dr Lizette Tapia Raquel took the delegates through a treatise on the concept of the unlimited translatability and incarnation of Jesus Christ across various cultures and traditions. She also made a case for the act of resistance that flies in the face of the theology of repentance that prioritises suffering, submission, and sacrifice; she drew on the account in Exodus which she posited is a piece of “resistance text.”

“When God acts to liberate, there is a corresponding human action, and this [action] begins with ‘resistance,’” opined Raquel.

Sub-Theme Two – Mission and Migrants: A More Compassionate Caring Church

Rev. Phua Chee Seng, a delegate from the Presbyterian Church in Singapore, touched on the importance of furthering God’s mission through diaspora evangelism that emphasises cross-cultural communication and multicultural interaction with migrant groups.

Phua highlighted the global trend of migration, drawing the audience’s attention to the fact that since 2020, there were more than 281 million people living outside their country of origin, thus providing the opportunity to bring forth new energy for the spread of the Gospel. He followed up with a case study of the efforts by a Singapore church in its outreach to Thai migrant workers.

Sub-Theme Three – Modern-Day Slavery: Challenges Before Church

CWM Deputy General Secretary – Programmes, Dr Sudipta Singh, bookended the sub-theme presentations with a sobering account of the insidiousness of slavery that still pervades in contemporary times.

Singh presented on the many ways that slavery has touched lives through consumption of goods and services that have their roots in the exploitation of people in the global south who are caught in webs of poverty and war.

Quoting Gustavo Gutierrez, the father of liberation theology, Singh exhorted the delegates to participate in the struggle for the liberation of those oppressed by others. “...[by doing] such would be to place oneself in the perspective of the Kingdom,” concluded Singh.

Concerning youth, mission, and AI

Youth delegates were also given the space to expound on the rise of AI and how the phenomena would either drive extensive change in mission outlooks and practices or evolve to become a potentially disruptive element.

The presentation, via the employment of lively discourse, brought forth to the older members of the audience the realities of the extent of influence that AI wields in the fields of content creation and messaging, and provides a cautionary backdrop against its increased, often unregulated usage especially among the younger population in the church.



CWM Caribbean Member's Mission Forum: Sounding the Collective Call to Rise to Life

Rounding up the series of Council for World Mission (CWM) regional Member's Mission Forums (MMF) was the Caribbean MMF in Kingston, Jamaica from 1-3 May.

The 16 participants included representatives from the region's two member churches – United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) and the Guyana Congregational Union (GCU). The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) was present as an observing entity.

A region risen to life

With the theme of “Rising to Life” which illustrated the call for radical discipleship by all who follow the God of Jesus, the MMF was a platform to galvanise the regional members to rise up and resist the forces that deny fullness of life to the entire creation.

It also provided an opportunity for faith leaders to showcase

unique and shared issues, collectively dialogue, and investigate possibilities for advancing mission imperatives, in the face of and in response to numerous contextual and global realities.

Warning against being an overly-cautious church, CWM Deputy General Secretary for Programmes, Dr Sudipta Singh urged the forum attendees to lift up and extend their heads as would a turtle out of its shell to evaluate the landscape and recognise the death-dealing signs of the times.

“Keeping [your] head inside the shell may be the safer option but the church is called to engage beyond the confines of safety,” Singh reminded.

Underscoring Singh's clarion call for a bolder church was Janet McConnell, CWM Mission Secretary for Social Justice and the Caribbean region who emphasised the importance of the MMF in emboldening regional members and shaping the region's direction in mission.

"If the delegates of the MMF fail to advance the missiological imperatives which emerged during the MMF, then the MMF would have been in vain – a waste of God's resources," said McConnell.

Decolonising power

The legacies of colonisation have created and continue to exacerbate social, economic, and political disparities in the Caribbean, a hotbed of western exploitation.

In his keynote address expounding on empire and neocolonial practices, Rev. Dr Stephen Jennings spoke out against modern instances of exploitation, extraction, and exportation of human and other resources by powerful nations.

"As Christians, we must utilise our power of praying, preaching, and pastoring. We must be prophetic in voice and action," Jennings exhorted.

Examining race, gender, power, and poverty in the Caribbean

The Head of the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work at the University of the West Indies, Dr Orville Taylor gave a sociological reading of the Caribbean's deeply layered landscape of race, gender, power, and poverty with roots in unfair and unjust practices related to human resources.

Taylor challenged the church to invest in formal education and Christian formation of young people, and to respond to issues of gender, violence, and poverty in a tangible manner. "Rising to life means that in our reflecting on our history and context we do not speak without action," he proclaimed.

Discussions highlight AI and church role

During a panel session, regional youths gave their takes on engaging in mission in the face of an AI-driven future. Key messages were crystalised and coalesced into talking points that include undergirding AI with ethics, justice and theology; safeguarding the tenet of being "made in the image of God" through positive human relationships amidst an increasingly faceless world; and monitoring of, prevention, and a church-led response to negative AI-related implications.

In addition, the elders of the church also engaged in a discussion that touched on the crises and opportunities faced by the church. The elders committed to the church

being an example and a force for moral power, and also acknowledged a church that needs to adopt innovative models of ministry to strengthen its leadership capacity.

Regional conviction renewed

The MMF closed with a renewed commitment to "show up, stand up, and speak up" in response to the call of God to be agents of justice and liberation.

The three-day forum also produced an intense soul-searching exercise that had member churches recognising regional social, political, economic, and other realities which deny the fullness of life.

Despite the challenges, member churches reaffirmed their collective conviction to allow for the movement of the Holy Spirit throughout the region so that the experience of rising to life through Jesus Christ can be ultimately realised.



CWM Extends Solidarity to Korean Churches Devastated by Wildfires

The Yeongnam region of South Korea was hit by a spate of intense wildfires since 27 March that have affected a total of 79 churches and displaced 378 families across four local presbyteries.

Extensive damage caused by the fires that originated in Uiseong county includes church buildings, manses (pastoral residences), and homes of congregation members completely or partially burnt to the ground.

“Twenty churches in the Pohang Presbytery, 57 churches in the Gyeongan Presbytery, one church in the Pyeongnam Presbytery, and another in the Hamhae Presbytery have reported significant damage,” wrote Rev. Bo Hyun Kim, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) in a letter to Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM) describing the devastation caused by the wildfires in the PCK.

Reports from mainstream media have cited more than 33,000 hectares (81,500 acres) of land being burnt in the wake of one of the largest of wildfires that the country has witnessed in recent history. The previous record was 24,000 hectares (59,000 acres) of destruction wrought by a similar fire 25 years ago in March 2000.

Climate change has been cited as a main contributing factor for the extreme wildfires.

PCK expresses gratitude to CWM

In a move of partnership and solidarity, CWM has provided emergency relief funds to assist the victims of the disaster.

“We are deeply moved by the CWM’s generous support in response to the unprecedented large-scale wildfires that have severely affected our churches and communities,” said Bo. “On behalf of PCK, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to CWM for your faithful partnership in expressing the love and mission of God.”

CWM fervently seeks the prayers of our global members and ecumenical partners over the families and churches that have their work and lives disrupted by the wildfires.



CWM Solidarity and Action Grant Will Help Earthquake Survivors in Myanmar

The nation of Myanmar is still reeling from the aftermath of a deadly earthquake that rocked the country on 28 March, destroying homes and infrastructure, and displacing and killing thousands caught in the epicenter in central and upper Myanmar.

While almost a month has passed since the disaster, rescue and restoration efforts have shown no signs of abating as members of the global community work to help the struggling nation grapple with the destruction of homes, lack of access to potable water, food shortages, and disruption of vital healthcare services.

As a member church of the Council for World Mission (CWM), the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) is hard pressed to provide comfort and care to its affected congregation and surrounding communities while having to manage already strained operational aspects of its

ministries disrupted by the sudden earthquake.

“As of 3 April, 2025, 5,313 people have died, while more than 10,000 were injured and another 1,000 individuals remain missing. Approximately 10,197 households were also rendered homeless and about 47,451 are taking refuge in relief camps,” reported Rev. Pek Muan Cuang, General Secretary of PCM.

According to the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) which oversees the various Myanmar churches in the country grouped in regional councils, one of the hardest hit regional councils, the Mandalay Council of Churches, reported that from amongst its 125 churches, a staggering total of 4,400 households have been affected by the earthquake.

As part of the ecumenical community's commitment to provide relief and support to our brethren in Myanmar, CWM has dispensed a Solidarity and Action Grant to MCC to assist in various recovery works and projects extended to the quake survivors.

In a letter expressing gratitude and appreciation of the grant monies received, MCC reported that the funds will provide essential support such as establishing temporary shelters, distributing dry food and clean water, addressing the specific needs of pregnant women, and providing trauma healing for children.

As aid efforts continue, CWM seeks the collective prayers of our partners for God's timely intervention and mercy in this difficult season for Myanmar and for PCM to be able to continue its outreach ministries to its local communities.



PRG/TOP London Meeting Maps Course for Upcoming CWM Programmes

The Council for World Mission's (CWM) Programme Reference Group (PRG) and The Onesimus Project (TOP) met in London from 24-26 April. Those gathered for the biennial meeting reviewed CWM programmes and TOP initiatives in the past two years, identified key trends and priorities, and set strategic directions that aligned with CWM's programmatic and project goals.

With close collaboration with the CWM Programmes Team, the PRG, comprised of regional members and ecumenical partners, plays a key role in the evaluation of programme outcomes, and provides strategic recommendations to improve the programmatic direction, ensuring the mission, values, and visions are aligned.

Serving as a companion to the PRG, the TOP core group works and builds upon the foundations laid by the preceding Legacies of Slavery (LOS) programme.

With the aim of addressing injustices rooted in the colonial heritage of the London Missionary Society through

promoting reparatory justice, empowering communities, advocating for liberation, and reimagining ecumenical solidarity, the TOP working group members engage closely with CWM by providing oversight on four main areas: Legacies of Slavery, Modern-Day Slavery, Education for Liberation, and Transformative Ecumenism.

As the PRG and TOP working groups were newly elected since the Assembly last year, feedback was also solicited and documented with an eye towards enhancing programmatic effectiveness for the year ahead, while ensuring coherence and alignment with CWM's overarching goals.

Discussions were also marked by collaboration with the programmes team and dialogue to refine and strengthen existing programme strategies.

Transforming power in catastrophic times

In his opening address to the working group members of the PRG and TOP, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum,



CWM General Secretary, reflected upon the nature of power, global forces, and God's mission for justice and renewal.

Citing the issues of economic inequality, numerous climate crises, technological advancements, and the erosion of democratic values, Keum emphasised the importance of the Holy Spirit as the source of transforming power and called for a mission that promotes love, faith, and hope.

His address stressed the need for decolonising mission and the value of ecumenism, advocating strongly for reparatory justice and transformation that leads to life-flourishing communities.

CWM's indelible impact on communities

Meeting with the PRG members, CWM Deputy General Secretary for Programmes, Dr Sudipta Singh, along with the Programmatic Mission Secretaries, provided a comprehensive overview of the programmes organised during the review period.

"Each CWM programme is designed to reflect the organisation's vision and missional priorities, underscoring their importance in addressing global challenges such as climate change, economic injustice, and social inequality," said Singh, reiterating CWM's commitment to transformative mission work.



In Samoa, Congregational Christian Church Is “Shining Example of Partnership in Mission”

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM), visited the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) on 16 May to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the General Assembly of CCCS.

Keum was received warmly by CCCS General Secretary Rev. Dr Taipisia Leilua, who heads one of the first Pacific churches founded by the missionaries of CWM's predecessor, the London Missionary Society (LMS).

The seeds of faith that have grown into the CCCS were laid by one of LMS' most prolific missionaries, Rev. John Williams, whose missionary journey was supported by Christian teachers from Tahiti and the Cook Islands, as well as a converted Samoan couple from Tonga.

In his greetings given during the 150th anniversary celebration service held at the Malua Theological College, attended by political dignitaries, ecumenical partners, and former CWM officeholders, Keum commended CCCS for having upheld the ethos of “partnership in mission” as it helped to form and nurture many churches in the Pacific.

“As one of the earliest churches founded by the LMS missionaries, the CCCS carries forward a proud legacy of mission work,” said Keum. “We [now] celebrate how CCCS became not only a recipient of the gospel but a courageous bearer of it, sending out missionaries to proclaim Christ in the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and elsewhere.”

Keum further observed that CCCS' missionary impulse in the region has been a shining example that mission is no longer from the “centre to the margins” but from everywhere to everywhere.

Addressing historical injustices

Not content with merely spreading the Good News across the Pacific,



CCCS has long been at the forefront in being a regional advocate for victims of historical and modern injustices, from speaking up for the descendants of victims of Blackbirding to forced labour under colonial exploitation.

Recognising their efforts in giving the voiceless a voice, Keum praised the church's courage in confronting the dark, life-denying practice of slavery with a spirit of theological conviction and pastoral care.

Keum encouraged CCCS to take an even more active stance as it works alongside CWM in initiatives such as The Onesimus Project (TOP) and the Modern-Day Slavery Fund.

Biblical foundation for youth

As he closed his address, Keum credited CCCS for being a visionary in its decision to develop their youths. Describing their work amongst the local young people as an "investment in God's future," Keum remarked that the building up of youth leaders in faith and in their Samoan identity will not only help to resist the forces of cultural erosion but also imbue in the next generation a rooted and liberating faith.



CWM Receives General Secretary of Myanmar Council of Churches

The General Secretary of Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC), Rev. Mahn Palmerston visited the Singapore office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) on 25 April. The MCC oversees the various Myanmarese churches grouped according to regional councils.

Palmerston was warmly received by Rev. Julie Sim, Mission Secretary for Mission Programme and Partnership; Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, Mission Secretary for Education, Formation, and Empowerment; SoonYew Sum, Mission Secretary for Finance; and Rev. Dileep Kandula, Mission Secretary of the General Secretariat.

The hour-long visit was marked by a heartfelt sharing by Palmerston on the current situation in Myanmar as the country continues to grapple with the aftereffects of a terrible pandemic, a military coup that has thrown the state into chaos and division, and ongoing struggles and challenges brought about by an earthquake in late March that

devastated homes, killed and displaced multitudes, upended infrastructures, and disrupted core public services.

Describing the Myanmar people as a spirited and erudite population that have remained strong despite grave challenges, Palmerston expressed his deep appreciation for the support, prayers, and a strong sense of solidarity shared with the MCC and PCM through the extensive CWM partnership network.





Bemoaning the lack of quality education which he identified as the key to unlocking the latent potentials of Myanmar youth and society, Palmerston also critiqued fiercely the current junta's obsession with power that has seen it prioritising the extension of its political might over the wellbeing of the population, a dichotomy that was exemplified by its abysmal budget on public healthcare and education vis a vis spending on itself.

Palmerston's sharing was also peppered with interesting anecdotes that allowed a close glimpse into the daily lives of the common Myanmar citizenry that has displayed a remarkable spirit of resilience in the face of so much destruction, as he recounted a visit to a bar that continued its operations while being flanked by rubble and corpses.

"The proprietor told me that a portion of the proceeds of his sales will be donated towards restoring his neighbourhood," said Palmerston, highlighting the sense of community that was evident in Myanmar.

The visit was closed with prayer by Koh-Butler over Myanmar, and with Palmerston receiving funds from a Solidarity and Action Grant in aid of Myanmar's efforts in combatting the hardships wrought by the earthquake, and a CWM plaque as a token of friendship and support.





Finnish Mission Leaders Visit CWM UK Office

In the face of uncertainties brought on by political, economic, and social happenings, the visit by the Finnish delegation created a platform and opportunity for deeper, stronger ecumenical relations between CWM and its regional partners.

Ten missionary leaders from Finland visited the London office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) on 28 April as part of an exploratory effort looking into prospective areas where CWM and various Finnish missional agencies can further engage and collaborate.

Rev. Dr Risto Jukko, Global Mission Director of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland led the delegation largely made up of Executive Directors or CEOs of various mission organisations and churches in Finland, such as the Finnish Bible Society.

CWM Mission Secretary for Discipleship, Spiritualities, and Dialogue, Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch, received the visitors and followed up with a presentation on CWM's missional work and projects. Delegates were also invited to an interactive Q&A session that saw many fruitful exchanges on insights related to global mission trends and associated challenges.

The visit was significant as it paved the way for important connections to be established for future dialogue and conversations. In addition, the visit also fostered continued conversations between CWM and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland concerning potential mission partnerships and shared learning opportunities.



CWM Global Staff Gathers for Easter Service as “Testifiers to Life”

Staff from the three offices of the Council for World Mission (CWM) came together physically and online on 21 April to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus in an Easter service led by the Singapore office.

The staff devotion that included a communion segment was opened with a prayer by CWM Mission Secretary for Education and Empowerment and the Pacific region, Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler who also noted with sadness the death of Pope Francis and commented on the poignancy of the fact that hours before his passing he was still able to pronounce the Easter blessing from St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican City.

“It seems fitting that blessing the world would be Pope Francis’ final act,” she observed.

Koh-Butler also preached on the aftermath of Jesus’ resurrection in a sermon taken from John 20:19-29 that recounted Jesus’ appearance to the disciples to His eventual second appearance to Thomas who needed to physically encounter the Lord in order to believe the account of His resurrection.

The encounter would lead to Thomas’ restoration of his faith and his eventual establishment of the Church in India and his martyrdom whilst being steeped in a belief in Christ that was unshakeable.

Koh-Butler reminded the staff that Thomas’ legacy was something that believers should aspire to.

“Death does not have the final say. We are to be the signs of life in the world. We are to be signs of Jesus’ resurrection and the Kingdom of heaven in the here and now,” said Koh-Butler, who challenged the staff on how they could live so that they could testify to and espouse life, what kind of seeds they would plant in their lives and of others, and how they could support the flourishing of life.



CWM Receives Historical Book Collection From Former Mission Partner

The archives of the Council for World Mission (CWM) located within the SOAS Library at the University of London received on 4 April a sizable book donation from the personal collections of Chris Wright, a former London Missionary Society (LMS) and CWM mission partner who worked in Africa.

The donation included several private letters, publications on worship services, and a collection of LMS Committee Papers.

Most notable amongst the books donated were volumes detailing the storied history of CWM as well as Bible and worship service booklets written in Ndebele and Shona, two of the main languages spoken in Zimbabwe (formerly called Rhodesia), Africa, where Wright served as a mission partner from 1968 to 1974.

Subsequently, Wright would also serve in a similar capacity in South Africa from 1975 to 1980.

CWM expressed its deep gratitude for Wright's generous donation of the historical materials.

"This fascinating collection of books and papers from Chris evidence the significance of mission work in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) during the 1960s and 1970s, and includes important early vernacular translations of the New Testament, hymnals, services and prayers in Ndebele, Shona and Sikalanga," said Jo Ichimura, CWM Archivist at SOAS.

The books and publications will be a part of a curated collection comprising around 2,500 boxes of archive material and around 13,000 publications – a priceless collection that provides an unbroken historical record of CWM's roots in 1795 to the current postcolonial model of a partnership of churches in mission where missionaries continue God's work in establishing life-flourishing communities everywhere they go.



6th NIFEA Ecumenical Meeting Warns: “We Might Be Beyond a Point of No Return”

The Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) met for the sixth time in Geneva, Switzerland from 25-27 March to discern and discuss future strategies in resisting and dismantling anti-life economies for ones that nurture life in its fullness.

The meeting, jointly convened by the World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council, and the Council for World Mission, lamented that the world is in a far worse situation than it was 13 years ago when the 2012 Sao Paulo Statement on International Financial Transformation for an Economy of Life was drafted.

The original statement condemned the ideology of consumerism, the explosion of monetisation, and how the workings of the financial and economic order were biased towards the wealthy.

During the meeting, the NIFEA panel members collectively voiced deep alarm over the unprecedented and increasing consolidation of capital, technology, and political power exacerbating inequality, undermining democratic governance, sparking wars and invasions for resources, and destroying fragile ecosystems in their wakes.

New evils amongst the old

In a three-page letter signed by all NIFEA partners after the meeting, a grim observation was made in the document that the world today is still beleaguered by old and new forms of colonialism that continue to destroy lives, cultures, livelihoods, and societies.

The letter identified Indigenous people, people of African descent, migrants, and refugees as particularly vulnerable.

Looking beyond, the letter also noted the alarming level of inequality where over a billion across the world – half of them children – subsist in poverty whilst billionaires increased their wealth by over 15% in 2024 to US\$15 trillion.



An escalating climate and biodiversity disaster also loomed large on the minds of the gathered faith leaders who believed that further inaction will pose a devastating existential threat to all life.

“Several tipping points are close to being crossed or have already been crossed, leading us to recognise that we may be beyond a point of no return,” warned the ecumenical panel who levelled the blame on the presence of global inequality as the catalyst of the numerous climate crises around the world.

“Through their hyper-luxurious lifestyles and investments in fossil fuel (“carbon bomb”) projects, the richest 1% are overwhelmingly responsible for the bulk of carbon emissions, whilst pre-existing disparities based on class, gender, and race have created a precarity immediately worsened by climate change.”

Additionally, the letter also called out the rampant expansion of authoritarian and nationalistic ideologies that are rooted in notions of supremacy that have their flames fanned by social media resulting in polarisation and anger in societies, making it even tougher to exercise rational thought and compromising political decision-making.

That the world is in the age of oligarchs is a phenomenon which did not escape the discernment of the gathered ecumenical community who identified the small class of the ultra-rich as a dangerous group that have increasing control over all dimensions of life that threatens to undermine democracy.

The letter further urged the strengthening of existing democratic governance systems, persistent efforts in fighting corruption, the building of economies centred on human rights-based policies, and installing robust, equitable financial regulatory mechanisms internationally.

Remembering the reasons to resist

In an introspective conclusion, the NIFEA meeting called for a return to the church’s theological foundations.

“As a Church, we must stand with the poor and the oppressed. We must advocate for walking gently on this earth,” declared the partners unequivocally. “As Christians, we must support those who experience forced migration... fight against systemic racism, challenge existing colonialist policies and systems, reject the economic system that lacks compassion for the vulnerable, and resist structures that keep women in positions of disadvantage.”

“A Church that remains silent in the face of injustice misses an important mark of being a true Church.”

Scan the QR code to read the full version of the Communique released at the 6th Meeting of the Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA).





Ecological and Debt Consultation Renews Call for Global Economic Liberation

The London office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) hosted a Consultation on Ecological and Economic Debt from 12-16 May. The event was co-organised by CWM and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

Attended by 22 participants from across the Global South, including representatives from CWM member churches and ecumenical organisations, as well as scholars, mission partners, and social justice activists, the consultation was a response to worsening global public debt.

The gathering was also a platform for various faith communities to collectively highlight climate debt as a form of reparations owed to the Global South, to develop concrete policy proposals and advocacy strategies that disrupt exploitative financial structures and prioritize the wellbeing of people and the planet, and to strengthen global alliances and grassroots movements for faith-based economic resistance and systemic transformation beyond 2025.

Global debt spiraling out of control

The topic of global public debt again became a deep concern when it surged to over USD100 trillion in 2025 while global GDP tripled. The ongoing crisis is particularly acute in developing countries where debt servicing often exceeds expenditures on essential public services such as healthcare and education.

Even as a successful international economic justice campaign that was mounted in 2000 saw the cancellation of much debt, several countries have since fallen back into the mire of endless debt.

The four-day consultation decried the fact that, while Western nations have bailed out their banks and corporations in the face of economic hardship, countries in Africa (including the African diaspora), Latin America, Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific were instead urged to tighten their belts and privatise their resources, sending a clear message that some lives matter more than others.



In his keynote address, Rt Rev. Dr Anderson Jeremiah, bishop of Edmonton, Church of England, reiterated the crucial role of the church as one that would seek to be a sacrament which demonstrates a new liberated humanity with respect for the life and dignity of the human person.

“...any socio-economic structures that do not align with the demands of human dignity lived in community must be challenged and fundamentally altered,” Jeremiah added.

As the Catholic Church marked 2025 as the year of a biblical Jubilee, signalling the start of a God-mandated period of economic justice, land restoration, and the release of the oppressed, the consultation sounded a clarion call to mobilise the church to hasten a radical transformation in the global economy.

Speaking to the participants, Philip Vinod Peacock, WCRC Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness, reiterated the spiritual importance of the Jubilee. “The cancellation of debt is the prayer of every Christian when they say, forgive our debts as we forgive those who have debts against us,” he said.

Economic, ecological debts inextricably linked

Through vigorous dialogue, a strong consensus emerged during the consultation that advocated for the urgent need for debt cancellation as a moral imperative and a manifestation of Jubilee justice.

“The twin crises of economic and ecological debt are not disconnected—they are symptoms of the same exploitative system that treats both the Earth and the poor as

expendable,” noted Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy.

Mkandawire also added that the church must rise in such a time, not as a passive observer, but as a prophetic community of resistance and repair.

“Debt cancellation is not just fiscal—it is theological. It is about dismantling the architecture of greed, repairing the wounds of ecological violence, and proclaiming an economy where creation thrives and all life flourishes.”

The consultation also saw the reiteration of a joint commitment by churches and ecumenical partners to advocate globally for economic systems that respect dignity, justice, and creation.

At the closing of the consultation, a palpable sense of a renewed ecumenical commitment to campaign for economic justice through theological advocacy, international solidarity, and prophetic resistance to systems of exploitation was also evident, heralding a closer working relationship between CWM, WCRC, and their partners in the continual resistance against the empire’s ruthless economic shackling.



A Turning Point to Protect Christianity in Palestine: An Urgent Call for Unity and Action

**Christ is Risen!
Let Justice and Hope Rise with Him!**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark... John 20:1a

It is a dark moment for Palestinians. As we approach **Easter**, a time of renewal and resurrection, we Palestinian Christians stand at a crossroad—one that will determine whether our presence in the land where Christ was born, crucified, and resurrected will endure or fade into history. The threats facing us and all Palestinians—land confiscation, forced displacement, physical assaults and violent arrests, targeted killings, movement restrictions, economic strangulation, and political marginalisation—have reached a critical point.

Still, we are told that while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away. We call you now—Christians and people of all faiths and good will—to help us roll away the stone of ethnic cleansing and genocide that, without strong and united

vision and actions, could mark the beginning of the end for Christianity in the Holy Land. We cannot and should not allow this to happen.

Gratefully, this year all Christian denominations in **Palestine** will celebrate **Easter** together. This rare moment of unity in celebrating **Easter** must not be symbolic alone; it must become a turning point in our collective struggle to safeguard the Christian presence in historic **Palestine**.

For centuries, Palestinian Christians have been the living stones and the guardians of Christian faith in the Holy Land. Yet today, our communities are shrinking under cruel and relentless Israeli policies and practices aimed at erasing our presence. The expansion of settlements in Bethlehem, the attacks on Armenian Christian properties in Jerusalem, the takeover of Greek Orthodox Patriarchate land in **Palestine** and the broader annexation plans threaten to push Palestinian Christians out of their homeland.

Christians in Gaza, along with their Muslim neighbours, continue to face

immense suffering during this genocidal war, enduring killings, maiming, and the destruction of their homes, while even their places of worship, like the historic Church of Saint Porphyrius, have been shelled and partly destroyed. Moreover, the destruction of civil infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, including the devastating attack on the Baptist Hospital, has all made life unbearable. The number of our brothers and sisters has dwindled to such an extent that the future of Christianity in Gaza is now in grave peril, raising fears that the community may soon disappear entirely.

At the same time, rightwing Christians and global Christian Zionist movements are enabling these policies by supporting Israel's violations against Palestinian rights. Over 3,000 American Christian Zionist pastors have called on U.S. President Donald Trump to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, disregarding the suffering of all Palestinians and fueling our displacement. The church in the West, especially in the U.S., must expose and challenge this unholy alliance between faith and settler colonial occupation.

We do not exaggerate when we say: If we do not act now—locally, nationally, regionally and internationally—this could be one of the last Easter celebrations with a significant Christian presence in Palestine.

But on that first **Easter** morning, the stone was rolled away. **Easter** is a message of hope, victory over death, and the triumph of justice. This is our Gospel, the Good News: No oppressive power can silence the truth forever.

We call upon all Palestinian Christians, all Palestinians—Christian and Muslim alike—and our global allies to make this Easter a turning point:

To Local Churches in Palestine

Let this **Easter** be the moment where Christian unity translates into collective resistance. Our churches must stand together in defending our land, our people, and our future. We must support one another to prevent further emigration and ensure that our children and grandchildren can continue to celebrate **Easter** in the land of resurrection.

To Palestinian Political Leadership

Christianity in **Palestine** should be a national concern, not a sectarian issue. Protecting Christian presence is protecting **Palestine** itself. This **Easter**, Palestinian political leaders must reaffirm their commitment to national unity among all components of the Palestinian society, fully integrating them into the national struggle and securing their rights.

To the Palestinian Public

Palestinian Christians are an inseparable part of the Palestinian people. Our struggle is the national struggle. This **Easter**, let us commit to reinforcing our unity, ensuring that no Palestinian—Christian or Muslim—feels abandoned in the face of occupation, apartheid and displacement.

To Global Churches and Christian Organisations

This **Easter**, you will celebrate the resurrection of Christ. But how can you truly rejoice if Christianity is dying in the very land of the resurrection? We urge you to take a clear stand: reject racist theology; challenge Christian Zionism; denounce Israeli policies and practices that oppress Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians; insist on the enforcement of international laws and conventions on human rights; demand accountability for war criminals; and commit to concrete actions to protect Palestinian churches' properties and communities.

To Churches in the United States

In word and deed, challenge the U.S. administration which provides weapons, intelligence, diplomatic cover and increasing support for the notion of forced displacement of Palestinians as Israel continues to kill Palestinians, and to support ideas of forcible transfer.

To Global Political Leadership

The erasure of Palestinian Christians from the Holy Land is not just a religious crisis. It is a matter of political justice. We demand that governments stop enabling Israel's violations of international law, hold Israel accountable, and ensure that Israel's racist policies against Palestinians stop. The right of Palestinians to self-determination must be respected.

To the Vatican, the World Council of Churches (WCC), and Other Global and regional Ecumenical Bodies

This **Easter** must be a season of prophetic leadership. The Vatican, the WCC, and all Christian institutions must move beyond statements into action. Pressure must be exerted on Israel to stop its violations, to end its settler colonial occupation, to end its apartheid regime. Serious efforts must be made to preserve Palestinian Christian communities.

A word of gratitude to the many churches, faith-related institutions and secular organisations that have stood up and spoken out. We know of and are strengthened by your demonstrations, protests, contacts with elected officials and other efforts of advocacy and solidarity.

We all face, today, a way that is blocked and a future that promises only woe. Our word to all our Christian brothers and sisters is a word of hope, patience, steadfastness and new action for a better future. Our word is that we, as Christians we carry a message, and we will continue to carry it despite the thorns, despite blood and daily difficulties. We place our hope in God, who will grant us relief in His own time. At the same time, we continue to act in concord with God and God's will, building, resisting evil and bringing closer the day of justice and peace.

Easter is not only about Christ's victory over death. It is about the triumph of truth over oppression, of justice over injustice. Let us ensure that this **Easter** is not one of mourning but of mobilisation. Let it be the moment when Palestinian Christians and Muslims, together with our global allies, declare that we will not allow our history, our faith, and our land to be stolen from us. This **Easter**, let us commit to ensuring that it is not the last **Easter** with a vibrant Palestinian Christian presence.

Christ is risen! Palestine will rise!





CWM Mourns Passing of His Holiness Pope Francis

The Council for World Mission (CWM) mourns the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis, the first Latin American leader of the Roman Catholic Church. According to a Vatican spokesperson, Pope Francis passed away peacefully on Monday, 21 April, at Casa Santa Marta—a guesthouse near St Peter's Basilica where he had chosen to reside since his election in 2013.

Born in 1936, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Pope Francis was elected to the papacy in March 2013 following the historic resignation of Pope Benedict XVI. From the outset of his pontificate, he embodied humility and simplicity, notably declining to move into the traditional Papal apartments. Instead, he remained in modest accommodation at the Vatican guesthouse, sharing meals with other residents.

Pope Francis's vision for the church was deeply rooted in "missionary discipleship"—a call for all Christians to share their encounter with Jesus Christ in everyday life. He wrote, "Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love." For

Francis, missionary discipleship was not an abstract idea but a practical and profound expression of faith, urging believers to build the Kingdom of God through lives of love, justice, and mercy.

Reflecting on his legacy, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church, said: "His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of His Church. He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favour of the poorest and most marginalised."

CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum expressed his deep sorrow, stating: "In these difficult times of war, climate crisis, and dysfunctional democracies, the absence of the Holy Father brings great sorrow. His commitment to peace, justice, and the poor leaves a profound legacy that defines the mission of the church."

The Vatican has announced that a memorial ceremony will be held on 26 April.

Rt. Rev. Michael S. Baroi



CWM Mourns the Passing of the Rt. Rev. Michael S. Baroi, Former Moderator of the Church of Bangladesh

It is with deep sorrow that we at the Council for World Mission (CWM) receive the news of the passing of the Rt. Rev. Michael S. Baroi, former Moderator of the Church of Bangladesh and the first Bishop of Kushtia Diocese. Please accept our heartfelt condolences on behalf of the CWM global family.

We join you in mourning the loss of this beloved Bishop, a man whose memories I fondly remember as we served together in the CWM executive council when he was the moderator of the COB. He was a man deeply committed to the Church and mission. He endeavored to safeguard the Church's interests despite the difficulties the church faced amidst the religious context in Bangladesh.

I believe that his legacy will continue to inspire others and bear fruit in ways that will continue to bless generations to come. Truly, as Scripture reminds us, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants" (Psalm 116:15).

We give thanks to God for the life and witness of Bishop Baroi. As we remember him with gratitude, we also hold his family, the Church of Bangladesh, and all who grieve this loss in our prayers. May the Holy Spirit surround you with comfort, strength, and hope in the resurrection.

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum
General Secretary

Rev. Lee Ching-Chee



CWM Mourns the Passing of Rev. Lee Ching-Chee, Former Executive Secretary for Mission and Education of CWM

With hearts full of gratitude and sorrow, the Council for World Mission (CWM) remembers and celebrates the extraordinary life of Reverend Lee Ching-Chee, who went home to be with the Lord peacefully on 27 May 2025 at the age of 93. Rev. Lee was a prophetic leader, pioneer of women's ordination in Hong Kong, devoted educator, and beloved pastor whose life and legacy continue to shape generations across Hong Kong and beyond.

Born in Hong Kong on 26 April 1932, Rev. Lee's spiritual journey began at Ying Wa Girls' School, where she first encountered the Christian faith. That seed of faith blossomed into a life of service and transformation. In 1966, she was ordained by the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC), becoming the first woman

pastor in Hong Kong, a groundbreaking step in an era when the ordained ministry comprised predominantly male pastors. Through her courage and determination, Rev. Lee opened the way for women to serve equally in ministry, setting a powerful precedent for gender justice within the church.

In 1977, Rev. Lee joined the staff of the Council for World Mission in London as the Executive Secretary for Mission and Education, bringing with her a deep passion for ecumenism and global solidarity. She served as a missionary of peace, travelling extensively to visit partner churches across the world, including Northeast India, Northern Ireland, Wales, and the South Pacific. Her encounters with communities under curfew, conflict, and economic hardships gave her opportunities to listen, earn, and build bridges of compassion and cooperation between CWM churches in the Europe and the Global South. She brought to her global ministry a quiet strength and profound humility, always attentive to the voices at the margins. Upon returning to Hong Kong in 1981, Rev. Lee served as the Associate General Secretary of the

HKCCCC until her retirement in 1998. Simultaneously, she continued to serve her alma mater, Ying Wa Girls' School, as a vice principal, chaplain, teacher, and supervisor, where her influence as a pastor and educator made a lasting impact in the lives of many. She transformed religious education into a dialogical, life-oriented discipline, creating space for honest conversations about life and faith. Through morning assemblies and personal mentoring, she sowed seeds of hope, self-worth, and spiritual curiosity in countless young women.

Rev. Lee was a prophetic voice for women's empowerment in the church, not through confrontation, but through gentle guidance and example. As a long-time advisor to the Hong Kong Women's Christian Council, she quietly but firmly advocated for gender equality and dignity. She walked alongside younger women, encouraging them to recognise their gifts and to serve boldly in faith, while also respecting the unique contexts of the church.

Her life was rooted in four simple yet profound principles: "Give up not, refuse not, fear not, and have hope."

In 2005, Rev. Lee was nominated as one of 1000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize, a recognition of her lifelong commitment to peacebuilding through education, mission, and service. Her leadership was always marked by deep empathy, uncompromising faith, and a pastoral heart.

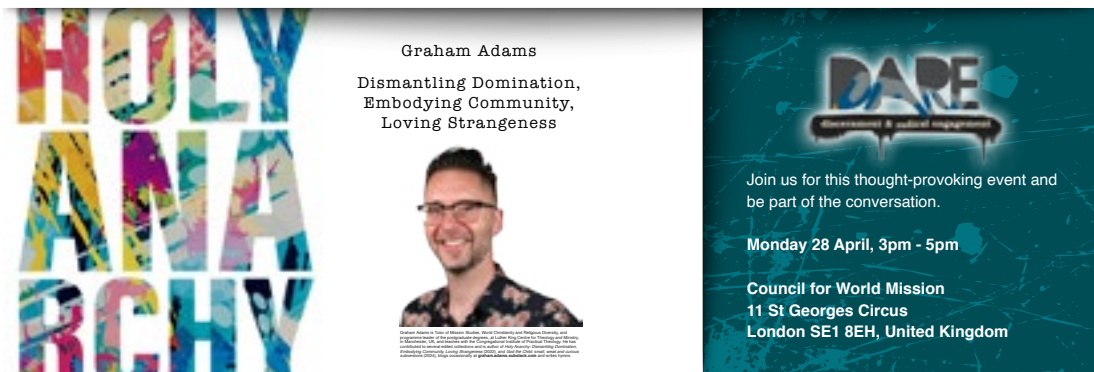
For those who knew her, as teacher, chaplain, mentor, colleague, and friend, Rev. Lee was more than a leader. She was a person of abundant wisdom and serenity, known for her humour, her gentle smile, and the way she made each person feel seen, and loved. As we mourn her passing, we also celebrate her legacy—a legacy that continues to inspire all who seek to follow Christ in humility, justice and love.

The Council for World Mission gives thanks to God for the life of Rev. Lee Ching Chee, a faithful servant, a courageous pioneer, and a beloved sister in Christ. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of those she nurtured, the systems she transformed, and the global church she helped to shape.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord. (Matthew 25:23)

Funeral and memorial service details will be shared by the HKCCCC and Ying Wa Girls' School in due course.

Empire, Liberation and Decolonial Practice in Mission



CWM Book Seminar at Explores “Empire,” Dialogues on Dismantling Systems of Dominance

The London office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) hosted a seminar on the book *“Holy Anarchy: Dismantling Domination, Embodying Community, Loving Strangeness”* (*Holy Anarchy*) written by Graham Adams, Tutor of Mission Studies, World Christianity and Religious Diversity, and Programme Leader of postgraduate degrees at the Luther King Centre for Theology and Ministry, Manchester, United Kingdom.

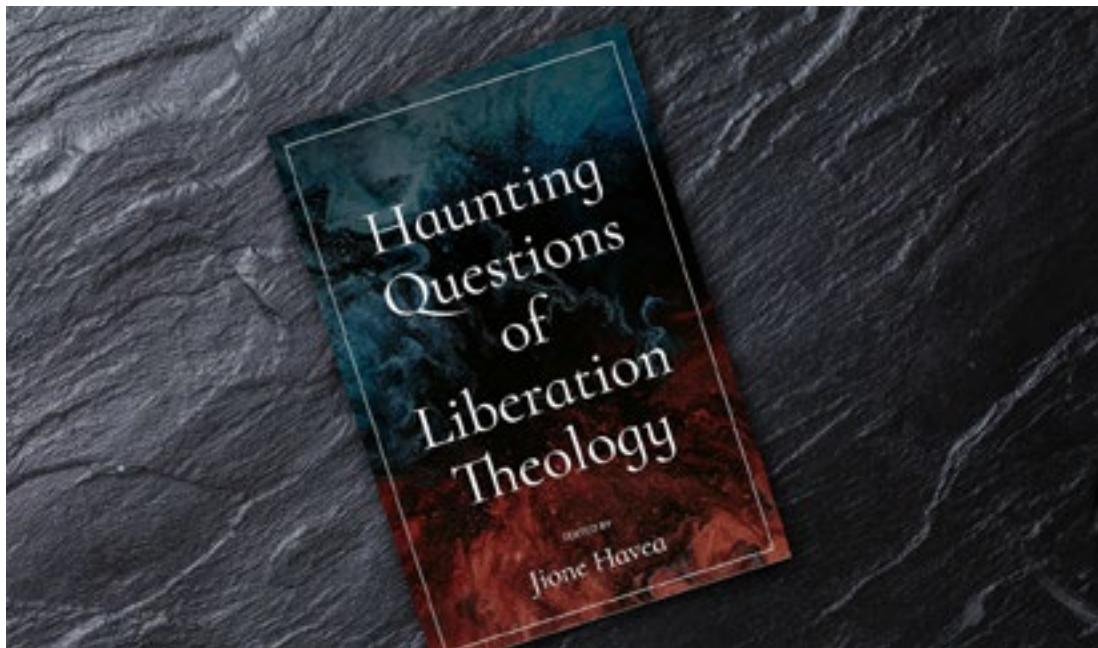
Published in 2022, *Holy Anarchy* delves deeply into the themes of empire, liberation, and decolonial practices juxtaposed with the nature of church communities, interreligious engagements, mission, and worship.

Attended by participants from international and regional partners as well as representatives from CWM European

member churches both in-person and online, the one-day seminar on 28 April, used *Holy Anarchy* as a topical backdrop while Adams, through his presentation, provided a critical theological exploration of dismantling systems of domination, building inclusive communities, and embracing diversity—themes central to CWM’s mission values.

One of the major focuses of the discussions revolved around the concept of “empire.” Adams re-emphasised the critical missiological role of CWM and its theological statement in shaping the research that went behind the writing of the book.

Participants also enjoyed lively discussions and conversations among themselves with a thematic focus placed on strategies around dismantling empire within theological, social, and community contexts.



Book Review: Authors Explore Challenging Christian Fields

Haunting Questions of Liberation Theology

A new book entitled *Haunting Questions of Liberation Theology* by Rev. Dr Jiona Havea, hitting Christian bookstands in April, is probably the toughest one yet that Havea has had to pen. It is a publication of eDARE 2022.

“It is difficult for me to find one word that appropriately describes the state of our world. Conflicts and wars jam our world – wars with weapons, wars with words and ideologies, and tariff wars that weaponise the fruits of the land and of the sea, and the widgets of human labour,” said Havea.

In the book, Have a describes and reflects over the many pertinent global challenges such as climate change brought and wrought by almost a century of unwise human decisions despite evidences pointing towards better ones. He also critiques, with an almost brutal candour, the nations, supposedly paragons of democracy, flexing their political muscles while espousing isolationist policies through trade wars and withdrawing from international collaborations.

Containing writings and reflections from a group of international contributors, *Haunting Questions of Liberation Theology* comes out of the gates blazing with the recognition that the world is ravaged by an insatiable greed for more power and wealth, and highlights the myriad of questions that has haunted and continues to beset liberating theologies, theologians, and activists.

Scan the QR code to purchase *Haunting Questions of Liberation Theology*.





World Christianity and Ecological Theologies

World Christianity and Ecological Theologies co-edited by Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch, CWM Mission Secretary for Discipleship and Dialogue, has been commended as one of the 10 outstanding books for 2024 by the International Bulletin of Mission Research (IBMR). Established in 1950, IBMR is a peer-reviewed journal looking into the field of Mission Studies and World Christianity.

Committed to expanding the field by examining diverse geographical, political, ecclesiastical, and social contexts, the publication engages with primary sources and provides an editorial voice that is dispassionate, analytical, and nonpartisan.

World Christianity and Ecological Theologies features scholars of religious studies and theology from different continents and contexts in a global North-South dialogue on environmental ethics, political ecology, and ecofeminism.

The book puts forth the argument that all Christian theologies are contextual as they continue to shape and be shaped by specific historical and cultural circumstances; while showcasing the various ways where religion and ecology intersect.

Scan the QR code to purchase *World Christianity and Ecological Theologies*.





CWM Publishes Two New DARE Titles

The Council for World Mission (CWM) is releasing two new books in May: *Facing Climate Collapse* and *Decolonizing Development and Religion*. The multi-contributor volumes had their genesis during the Discernment and Radical Engagement (DARE) Global Forum held in Bangkok in September 2023.

The DARE Global Forums, founded in 2019, have become an international network of over 500 scholars and activists, working alongside almost 200 theological institutions or research centres, mainly in the Global South. Being comprised of people from different locations, academic disciplines, and religions means that the voice of DARE is highly diverse and vibrant whilst remaining Empire-critical and committed to establishing life-flourishing communities around the world.

First of many titles to come

Edited by experienced scholars recognised in their own fields, both titles draw on liberationist and decolonial perspectives with contributions from the Global South and its diasporas. They introduce new voices, perspectives, and analyses of major themes facing Christianity, theology, and missiology.

Published in conjunction with SCM Press, a British publisher of theological titles, both books were the first salvos in a planned series featuring titles inspired by upcoming DARE events that will cover “Reparatory Theology,” a movement rooted in the work done by CWM in the legacies of slavery programme (now The Onesimus Project) and books related to the major themes of legacies of slavery, modern-day slavery, transformative ecumenism, and education for liberation.

Speaking to SCM Press, CWM Mission Secretary for Discipleship and Dialogue, Rev. Dr Graham McGeoch said that the books were written with the aim that they will provide a trove of new resources to spark conversations amongst students and teachers of theology. “We hope that the books will make contributions to global conversations on the relevant themes, perhaps informing policy initiatives in churches, other religions, and civil society,” said McGeoch.

“I am also hopeful that the books demonstrate liberationist and decolonial approaches in the 21st century, making contributions to wider research questions and conversations.”

SCM Press is offering 20% off all orders of both books during May. Scan the QR codes to go to purchase the respective books.

Facing Climate Collapse



Decolonizing Development and Religion



JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mission Secretary – Mission Programme and Partnership

If you are looking for a meaningful career with a bigger sense of purpose, we invite you to be part of our global family of driven individuals to make a difference to the lives of the people and communities around the world.

We currently have the following full-time position open:

Mission Secretary – Mission Programme and Partnership

About this Role:

The “Mission Programme and Partnership” is one of the six primary areas of the Council for World Mission’s (CWM) Programmatic Structure. This programmatic area aims to help strengthen the CWM’s mission identity and equip member churches in achieving the vision of creating life-flourishing communities through Life-flourishing Churches in action that work together for God’s Mission in partnership. The “Mission Secretary for Mission Programme and Partnership” will assist CWM in developing proposals and strategies for guiding member churches to engage in mission and partnership, through the CWM’s flagship programmes like Partners in Mission (PIM), Mission Support Programme (MSP), etc.

Directly reporting to the Deputy General Secretary-Programmes (DGS-Programmes), the successful incumbent will be expected to relocate to Singapore, for a contract period of four years which can be renewed to another term. The candidate will work in partnership with member churches, ecumenical partners, and peoples’ movements in promoting peace and community development while also taking the responsibility of a particular region the person represents.

Key Roles and Responsibilities:

Global

- Assuming full responsibility on planning, budgeting, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating the

programmes or projects on mission and partnership programmatic activities across the member churches and ecumenical partners.

- Engaging with member churches and assisting them in developing medium and long-term mission programmes towards building partnerships to fulfilling God’s mission in the contexts.
- Working in collaboration with the member churches in advocating for life-flourishing church in action responding to the contemporary challenges in various global contexts through their mission.
- Engaging with and assisting all the member churches, and line-managing the CWM MSP Project Coordinator, in successfully implementing and completing the Mission Support Programmes (MSP) as a way of affirming CWM’s mission identity.
- Strengthening and line-managing the CWM PIM Coordinator in engaging with the member churches in sending and receiving the Partners in Mission (PIMs) and assisting the PIMs in fulfilling their missional call.
- As part of the management team, assisting the CWM for public witness and diakonia in mission and partnership through effective relations with wider missional communities.
- Planning and organising mission consultations, implementing strategic responses, drafting and releasing appropriate statements on contemporary missional issues and challenges.
- Enabling the CWM’s work on mission and building a network of member churches, ecumenical organisations and local communities through the partnerships to collectively respond to the missional challenges.

Regional

- Support and facilitate the member churches in the pursuit of their mission and coordinate shared mission activities of the churches in the East Asia region.
- Implement CWM's global strategic objectives within the context of the region. Assist the member churches in transforming themselves into life-flourishing communities.
- Assist the member churches in transforming themselves into life-flourishing communities.
- Organisational
- Work in collaboration with the other CWM staff in relevant programmatic areas and maintain clear and open lines of communication.
- Work in collaboration with the finance office to prepare, monitor and manage an annual budget for the programme within the agreed guidelines.
- Maintain proper documentation, prepare necessary reports and present to the administrative bodies when needed.
- Integrating the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) system, and constantly working with a result-oriented approach.
- As part of the Management Team, making programmatic decisions and providing executive level leadership to the CWM office.

Required Skills and Experience:

Candidates should possess over five years of experience in working in faith-based organisations and churches in the areas of mission and partnership with a clear understanding of global and regional missional issues, especially that of the CWM member churches.

Education

Postgraduate (PG) degree (Master or Equivalent) in the relevant area. A PhD will be an added advantage.

Competencies

- Proficiency in the English language to effectively communicate through verbal, written and digital communication tools.
- Ability to work in a team with mutual respect, commitment to diversity and inclusivity, and quality of discretion in handling confidential and sensitive information.
- Understanding of CWM's model of working in partnership with member churches and ecumenical organisations.
- Knowledge of CWM's Strategy Framework for the decade, 2022-2029.
- Ability to cope with working schedules, required travels, and maintaining communications.
- High level of computer skills to adapt to hybrid work style, and maintain digital communications.

How to Apply:

- Please scan the QR code for the online job application form and attach your cover letter and resume.
- The closing date is **15 June 2025**.





Asian Rural Institute Accepting 2026 Training Programme Applications

The Rural Leaders Training Centre of the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) in Japan is currently soliciting applications for the 2026 Rural Leaders Training Programme.

ARI's Rural Leaders Training Programme teaches practical skills in organic agriculture and servant leadership. Through the programme, rural leaders also discover the values needed for healthy community development, and widen their understanding of social issues, embodying the programme's goal of empowered leaders with the knowledge and vision to build an environmentally healthy, just, and peaceful world.

Sharing best practices

Rural leaders participating in the programme stand to gain valuable experience that will enable them to return to their home countries to transform their local communities into vibrant, prosperous rural societies of the future.

Every year from April through December, ARI invites rural leaders from grassroots communities across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific to its training facility in Japan, where an international community of learning is fostered on campus, sharing a common goal to study the best ways for rural people to improve their lives.

Participating rural leaders must be between 25 to 45 years in age, with at least three years of leadership experience serving in organisations such as faith-based ones to nongovernmental organisations.

Application process

The ARI programme does not accept applications from candidates directly. Before a candidate applies, a representative from the sending body (SB) must first complete and submit the Sending Body Application.

The SB representative is usually the head or leader of the SB. ARI will remain in contact with them throughout the application process.

Whenever a SB Application is approved for registration, ARI will formally invite the candidate/s from each SB to complete the Individual Application form with guidance from the ARI Admissions Team.

Each SB can recommend up to **TWO** candidates.

Application Deadline

The application deadline for the submissions of the SB Applications is **31 May 2026**.

Scan the QR code for more information.





AT A
GLANCE

INSIGHT

Member
Church
News



URC “Conversations at the Crossroads” Sets Vision for New Christian Communities

About 100 participants representing the various congregations of URC gathered at the High Leigh Conference Centre for a 48-hour symposium entitled “Conversations at the Crossroads” (CatC) in January to explore current practices and to learn from ongoing challenges and success stories, in order to establish new Christian communities.

URC defined new Christian communities as anything from a full church plant, to a full-blown constituted unincorporated association or local ecumenical partnership.

Participants included mission enablers, training and development officers, children and youth work development officers, special category ministers, church-related community workers and others doing pioneering and missional work.

The Council for World Mission was also present as an ecumenical partner, contributing its experiences and insights via key conversations and reflections.

“This was a first for the URC in gathering people on the frontline of mission and discipleship. We benefited from input from our ecumenical partners as we discussed the shape of potential new communities and the way in which we could nurture and invigorate existing ones. This will form a platform for the direction of future work as the denomination adapts to new contexts,” said Philip Brooks, URC Deputy General Secretary for Mission.

CatC concluded with a renewed commitment towards ‘midwifing’ new communities, but also highlighting the need for palliative care for some, and for nurturing and/or reinvigorating others.

URC has also assembled a taskforce as a support to a new Church Life Review working group which will map the next steps.



NCCK Statement on the Constitutional Court's Impeachment Ruling

The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) has issued the following statement on the Constitutional Court of Korea's decision to uphold the impeachment.

In the statement, the NCCK welcomed the historic and courageous judgment, which reaffirms the integrity of Korea's constitutional democracy and restores the principles of justice and the rule of law.

The NCCK pledged: "We will continue to serve as watchpersons for democracy, walking alongside the people of Korea and the global ecumenical community in our common witness for the fullness of life for all."

The full statement is as follows:

Statement of the National Council of Churches in Korea(NCCK) on the Constitutional Court's Impeachment Ruling against President Yoon Suk-yeol

"The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome
it." (John 1:5)

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea has rendered a unanimous ruling to uphold the impeachment of President Yoon Suk-yeol. With this decision, the President has been removed from office. The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) welcomes this historic and courageous judgment, which reaffirms the integrity of our constitutional democracy and restores the principles of justice and the rule of law.

We understand this ruling as a solemn moral and legal reckoning against the abuse of power and a significant step toward safeguarding the democratic order. We offer our



deep respect to the Constitutional Court justices, who have borne the weight of this profound responsibility and arrived at their decision through careful deliberation grounded in justice, conscience, and the common good.

In recent months, our nation has endured heightened polarization and social unrest. The process of impeachment has not been without conflict or pain. Yet, through constitutional and lawful means, the people of Korea have held those in power accountable for an attempted illegal imposition of emergency rule. This moment is a testament to the resilience of democratic institutions and the vigilant spirit of the Korean people. Regardless of differing opinions, we call upon all to receive the Court's decision with humility and civic maturity.

As we move forward, the Republic of Korea must now turn from division toward healing, from political strife toward reconciliation. We urge political leaders—both in government and the opposition—to act with integrity and responsibility in the service of democracy and the rebuilding of public trust. We appeal to public officials to respond with wisdom and compassion to the concerns and suffering of the people, and to guide the nation through this time of transition with clarity and accountability.

We also call upon all citizens of goodwill to come together in solidarity, drawing upon our shared hope for a more just, participatory, and peaceful society. The NCCK, following the light of Christ that shines in the darkness, remains steadfast in its ecumenical commitment to justice, peace, and

reconciliation. We will continue to serve as watchpersons for democracy, walking alongside the people of Korea and the global ecumenical community in our common witness for the fullness of life for all.

April 4, 2025
General Secretary
National Council of Churches in
Korea (NCCK)
Rev. Kim Jong Seng



HKCCCC “Always Stands Ready to Support CWM and Its Programmes”

With the conclusion of the East Asia Member's Mission Forum (MMF) in Hong Kong on 10 April, Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC) General Secretary (GS) Rev. Wong Ka Fai reflects on his vision for the MMF and Hong Kong's challenges.

What was your vision for the MMF when HKCCCC first accepted the invitation to host the event?

Rev. Wong Ka Fai (RWKF): I think first and foremost, I envision the MMF to be the ideal platform for all of our CWM regional member churches to come together and share our stories and best practices so that we can learn from one another.

For example, the contexts between Hong Kong and

Malaysia are very different in terms of the ability to share the gospel amongst the people. Hence, we can also learn about how to relate and communicate with others who may have different faith and life experiences so that the message of God can be shared more effectively, and how we can forge deeper and more genuine relationships with our communities.

Secondly, the MMF is also a way that the delegates can create friendships that extend beyond borders as they network amongst themselves. This helps to bridge gaps between our fellow CWM member churches and foster a closer knitted community so that help is never too far away should any of our members need it.

How do you see your role as General Secretary in fostering life-flourishing communities in Hong Kong?

RWKF: At this moment as GS, I am in the unique position to influence how we can reach the wider Hong Kong society through our various schools. This way, we were able to

engage with the various demographics in Hong Kong including those who were left behind by their relations or friends who have migrated to other countries. There are many reasons why these people stay, one of which can be the lack of financial ability. HKCCCC provides a channel of support to these communities in our work.

The other group that we are reaching out to is the college students, through a ministry designed for them. Many of these young people are suffering from PTSD from the social movement in 2019. We provide them a safe space for them to express themselves and a place that they can put their trust in.

What are some of the challenges Hong Kong faces today and how has HKCCCC risen to address them?

RWKF: The one challenge that is on top of our minds would be an ageing society in Hong Kong that has affected the church landscape where you would see congregations which are older. This is not to say that our elders in our churches are inactive, in fact, on the contrary, they are very much involved in ministries. However, there is an urgent need to look into sustainable succession planning in terms of church leadership and ministers.

As I have also mentioned, Hong Kong has experienced a huge migration amongst our locals (most being young or established families) which has left a gap between the youths and the elderly. We have our work cut out for us in bridging this generational gap and having to get our older leaders to empower our youths gradually to take on their roles.

On the other hand, we are also lacking in ordained ministers. We are looking into how we can shorten the serving period that our local preachers have to go through before their ordination. As such, for the past three years, we have ordained almost 25 new ministers, most of whom are in their 30s. This is unheard of as recent as just a decade ago, as some ministers were already in their 50s when they receive their ordination, making the time that they can serve in the church very short indeed before their retirement.

With an emphasis on ordaining younger ministers, they are able to thus serve in the church for longer. This also allows us more time to train the next batch of ministers.

Can you share some success stories in the missional work in which HKCCCC has engaged?

RWKF: I think our school ministry is a very special one. For myself, I grew up being educated in HKCCCC-affiliated

schools and gone on to serve in church. There are many others like me including the numerous delegates that have attended CWM events and programmes. The collaboration between our churches and the schools is therefore a very strong link in building up our HKCCCC communities and beyond.

Speaking of which, the schools are also an excellent channel where we can engage non-believing parents who may nevertheless be keen to enroll their children into a faith-based institution. The parents have the belief that even if their children do not fare well academically, they can still receive a solid education based in Christian values and principles.

Looking forward, how will you seek to achieve a deeper partnership between HKCCCC and CWM, seeing as both organisations share such a deep, historical relationship?

RWKF: I would like to renew and reaffirm HKCCCC's commitment in supporting future CWM programmes, be it through participation or the sharing of our resources. We hope to receive CWM again in Hong Kong when the next opportunity arises! **RWKF:** I would like to renew and reaffirm HKCCCC's commitment in supporting future CWM programmes, be it through participation or the sharing of our resources. We hope to receive CWM again in Hong Kong when the next opportunity arises!



GPM Youth: “Youth Retention in Church a Challenge!”

The East Asia Member's Mission Forum provides not just a platform for various Council for World Mission (CWM) member churches of the region to discuss and discern contemporary issues and challenges; it is also a way for the voices of the youth delegates to be heard. CWM speaks to Lee Jie Xi, a 22-year-old youth delegate from Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia (GPM) for some candid thoughts on the challenges facing young Christians.

Hi Jie Xi, thank you for availing yourself for this quick interview! Please introduce yourself.

Lee Jie Xi (JX): Hello everyone, I am Jie Xi. I am 22 this year. Currently, I worship at the Logos Presbyterian Church in Selangor, Malaysia, which is a member church of GPM. I am studying Accounting and Finance at Sunway University.

What are some key challenges facing young Christians in Malaysia today?

JX: I cannot speak for the entire country but I can certainly illustrate the dire situation in my local church which is the

decreasing number of young members in the youth ministry.

This has perhaps to do with the youth fellowship in my church not being attractive enough to retain them. The lack of youths has also impacted the leadership of the youth fellowship, where some are already in their 30s. These leaders might also appear to be preachy and unapproachable, resulting in members leaving.

The exodus of youths may also be due to them not returning after attending tertiary education overseas or, for some of them, the Gospel has not fully touched their hearts even though they have attended church with their parents since childhood.

What do you think can be done to keep youths in church?

JX: In terms of the youth fellowship, I feel that there should be a leadership renewal where available youths are encouraged to step into the role rather than having the usual overaged leaders present to restore the vibrancy of the ministry.

More events like casual gatherings outside of church and team-building events may also help allow individual members to bond in a more comfortable setting. Ultimately, I think the goal has got to be getting the youths to realise that they do need God in their lives and return to church.

Turning to the bigger picture, how can Christian youths further God's mission, especially in Malaysia with religious restrictions?

JX: Actually, to clarify, the laws just spell out that it is illegal to proselytise to Muslims. We can still evangelise to others. My take is that Christian youths should bravely go out into the public space to proclaim the redemptive message of God boldly.

The youth fellowship in my church has previously organised street preaching and the results were very encouraging. We had people who were initially reserved about attending church or even believing in God but through the building of a relationship with them, some of them have since accepted Christ and have stayed on in my church! The key to sharing the Gospel is certainly about building sincere friendships and relations.

With the rise of AI, how do you think youths can use it as a mission tool?

JX: AI does allow the Christian message to be shared in a more attractive way as it can create, on the fly, visually and textually arresting materials. I do feel that the church has a role in reclaiming this space for God by using it as a stepping stone in presenting the Gospel in an engaging and easy-to-understand manner while also being able to be produced at a cost-effective and efficient pace.

I feel that this presents a very strong case for AI use and youths should be adopting it—albeit with understanding and caution—as it is still a new platform with various associated software and applications that may present a high barrier of entry to some of the youths in the community.

I think a solid education on the use of AI including the ethical aspects has to be in place so that the youths can learn to use AI responsibly. This I feel should be taken as a first step before everything else.



Pacific Regional Learning Forum Focuses on Gender Equality, Climate Change

Three Representatives from the Kiribati Uniting Church (KUC) attended the UnitingWorld Pacific Regional Learning Forum in Nadi, Fiji, from 22-25 April. The forum was part of UnitingWorld's plan to keep updated on how its partner churches in the Pacific have been doing with projects related to gender equality and climate change.

UnitingWorld is a Uniting Church of Australia organization which has been working with the KUC on gender equality theology since 2018. Since then, the UnitingWorld has provided the KUC with financial support for implementation of a Gender Equality Theology Project.

During the forum, representatives from the KUC had a chance to learn what other churches in the Pacific have faced when implementing their projects related to gender equality and climate change.

KUC representatives also had a chance to present what the KUC has been doing in its Gender Equality Theology Project for nearly eight years. They also sat with one of the UnitingWorld's staff to discuss thoroughly the KUC Project on Gender Equality and Climate Change Resilience. The project, operating from 2025-2029, aims to address impacts of gender inequality and climate change.renewal where available youths are encouraged to step into the role rather than having the usual



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