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Transformative Ecumenism



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FORE- WORD

INSIGHT

Transformative
Ecumenism



Called to Create a Movement of Movements!

Transformative Ecumenism is a movement designed to address contemporary global challenges through a justice-driven, life-centered vocation. Ecumenism emerged from early theological discourses on what it means for all of God's people to live out a new heaven and a new earth. Transformative Ecumenism further emphasizes the necessity of decentralizing ecumenism to empower marginalized voices and communities. This movement signifies a shift from traditional ecclesiastical structures, inviting a diverse coalition of individuals and communities to engage in liberative actions focused on social, economic, political, and environmental justice.

The Council for World Mission (CWM) is committed to a transformative ecumenical movement that addresses historical injustices and promotes reparatory justice against the legacies of colonialism and all forms of slavery. The Steering Group for this project envisions that real change must originate from the grassroots, drawing insights and leadership from those most affected by injustice. This emphasizes that true discipleship must align with the struggles for liberation and life celebrated

in the teachings of Jesus. By encouraging partnerships for justice that stem from those at the grassroots level, Transformative Ecumenism advocates for a faith that challenges oppressive systems and builds a future rooted in mutuality and interdependence. This effort not only seeks to acknowledge past sins/wrongdoings but also actively work towards a world characterized by justice, dignity, and the holistic flourishing of all of creation.

This issue of INSIGHT includes three articles from the members of the Steering Group. Diversity and inclusivity stand at the core of Transformative Ecumenism. The contribution from Angelica Tostes highlights the importance of empowering women and the LGBTQ+ community, framing their participation as crucial to the vision of a new ecumenical future. Tostes specifically points out the need to extend ecumenism beyond institutional frameworks, rooting it in the lived experiences and

struggles of everyday people. This approach seeks to bring forth a pluralistic, dynamic understanding of faith that respects other expressions and identities, allowing for a richer dialogue that honours diverse perspectives within the global Christian community.

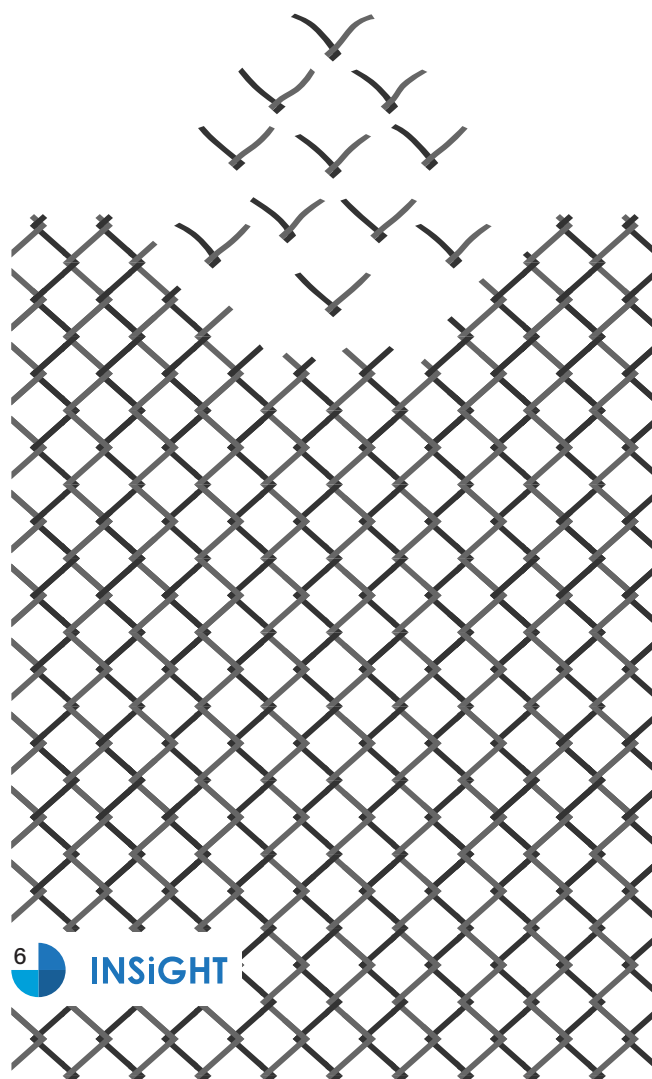
Despite a hopeful vision, Dr Deenabandhu Manchala alludes to the fact that there are substantial contemporary challenges facing the Transformative Ecumenism movement. The historical baggage of colonialism and its enduring impacts present hurdles in fostering genuine partnerships based on equality and respect. Additionally, the need for accessible language and methodologies is crucial to engage the younger generation, ensuring that the message resonates with future leaders.

Although the movement may seem to be faced with the reality of various challenges, Rev. Dr Jaeshik Shin outlines that the history of the movement strives to confront not only the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of faith but also the practical implications of living out this vision in a world rife with inequality, oppression, and environmental degradation. Therefore, the movement has not arrived

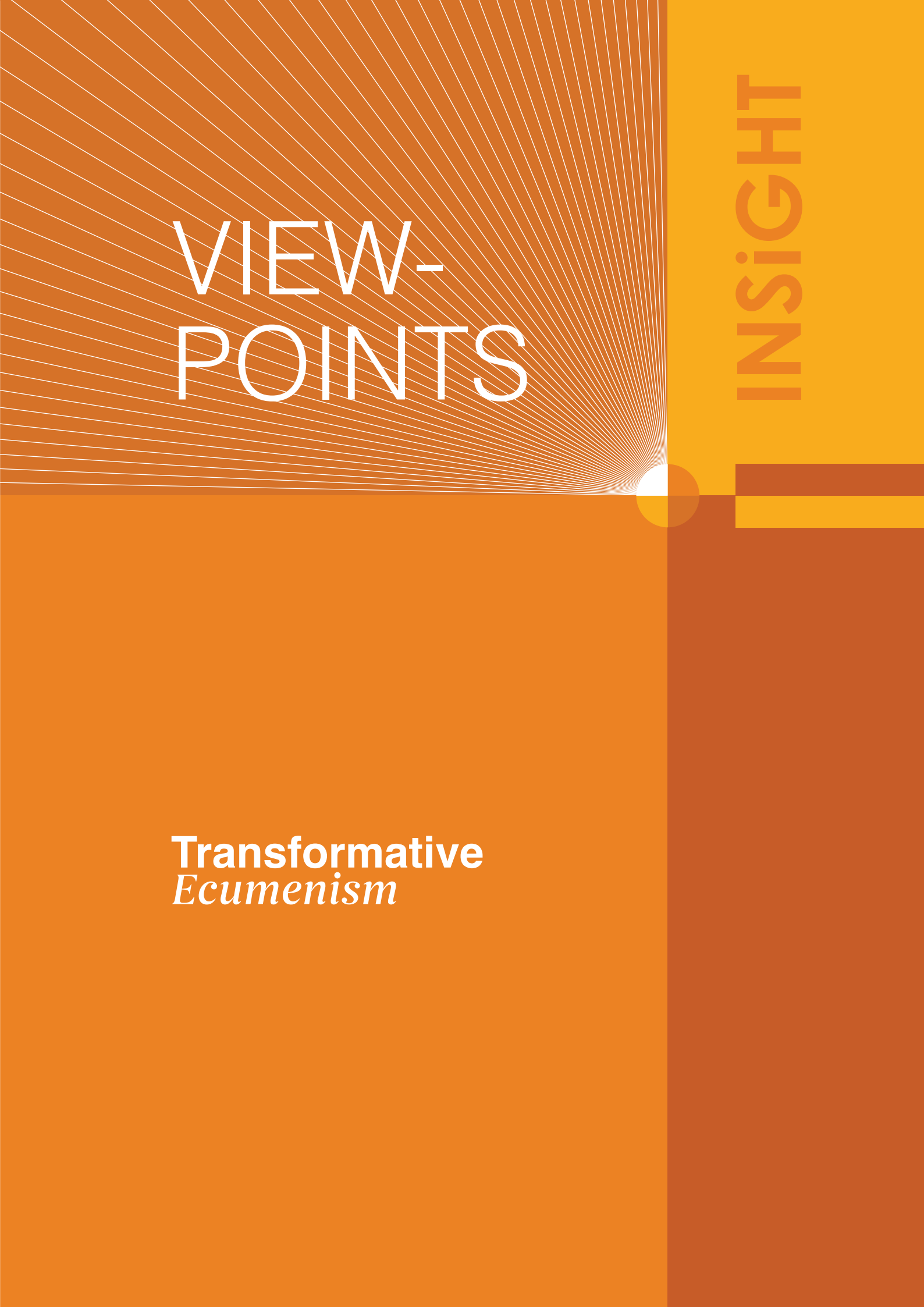
where it needs to be, but as a movement on the rise, it needs to be a prophetic voice calling believers to act, embodying a lived faith that consistently seeks justice, mercy, and humility in today's crisis-ridden context.

In seeking to build a just and equitable society, Transformative Ecumenism, as a focal point of The Onesimus Project, calls for the necessity of confession, repentance, and rebuilding life-affirming relationships. We recognize the deep-seated ties between historical injustices and present-day structures of power that perpetuate inequality and exploitation. We convey that mere apologies are insufficient; substantial actions aimed at justice and reparation are essential for healing and transformation within the Christian community and world at large.

May the God of Justice continue to challenge and inspire us to believe "another World is possible."



Sudipta Singh
Deputy General Secretary -
Programmes



VIEW- POINTS

INSiGHT

Transformative
Ecumenism



Transformative Ecumenism Movement: An Idea Begins to Take a Shape

By Rev. Dr Deenabandhu Manchala

"As an alternative vision of the future, transformative ecumenism inspires partnerships for justice and truth by anchoring itself in theological reflections and actions in solidarity with movements for justice, freedom, and dignity—especially of those on the margins and those in the struggle against the forces of marginalization. It asserts that the transformation of society must begin not according to the plans and schemes of the powerful and the privileged but with the visions and aspirations of those yearning for life (Mt. 5:6, 10). In the context of life-threatening empires that impose homogenous belief systems and cultures, globalized economic orders, and narrow and oppressive political ideologies, transformative ecumenism presents itself as an expression of prophetic

dissent in obedience to the God of life and truth," says the invitational document to Transformative Ecumenism.

This was the note on which the newly constituted Steering Group of the Transformative Ecumenism Movement (TEM) began its work in Bangkok on 28-29 July 2024. The 15 members of this group from many parts of the world started their work by making themselves conscious of the realities and challenges of the world, especially the life worlds and struggles of those marginalized by the powers - the people of Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, and similar places that are exposed to unending and intense war and violence and also those devastated by environmental disasters.

They shared their joy and enthusiasm at the possibility of being partners in creating something new - the Transformative Ecumenism

Movement (TEM). The host of challenges and threats to life that include increasing tolerance of injustice and abuse of power worldwide on the one hand and the silence, indifference, neutrality and, in some cases, the connivance of churches and religious institutions on the other, compelled them toward the need to break the silence and be proactive.

However, they were aware of the challenges of unpacking and presenting a theological idea - Transformative Ecumenism in a language that is accessible, and building a movement without any defined constituency but with individuals who are convinced about the need and vision of a people-based, justice-driven and change-seeking expression of ecumenism. They also recognized the need to stay away from the habit of rhetoric but to walk the talk, invent new language and methodologies, and make

it accessible to the younger generation. To that extent, TEM was not seen as an alternative but as a new opportunity.



After the Global Launch in Nairobi in August 2023, the concept of Transformative Ecumenism which went through a long process of discernment and development with impulses from different parts of the world for a decade, now transits into a movement.

The Steering Group identified the following as priority emphases and actions:

- The TEM would be facilitated as a movement of movements and initiatives by networking and partnering with those engaged in liberative and transformative actions in different parts of the world.
- Even though it originates and is informed by the perspectives and experiences of the people and churches in the South, it is now a global movement, reaching out to all those committed to the vision of a new world of justice and peace for all.

- The TEM also sees decolonising mission and ecumenism as important tasks. It may imply a deliberate deviation from expansionist, imperial or hierarchical meanings, and expressions of ecumenism such as “oikos” or “kingdom” and consider alternative terms such as “commons” or “kin-dom” that affirm God’s gifts of freedom, diversity, mutuality, and interconnectedness. Its vantage will be intentionally from margins. But its engagement will continue to be the realities of marginalisation and the marginalising forces.
- To ensure that it builds itself as a movement from below, the TEM will assert and enable the agency of the marginalised and explore ways by which their experiences and visions show the way ahead. Furthermore, it will be an accessible and engaging space for women, young, and lay people, especially enabling youth to shape the emerging new understandings and expressions; and promoting intergenerational conversations.
- It presents TE as a creative and proactive response to current challenges rather than a reaction to the problems and challenges. It will present itself as a new consciousness of life, a vision of the world, a movement of people, and a vocation of discipleship.
- Affirming that the church needs to be in the vanguard of life, the Steering Group underlined the need to address popular hesitations to witness through actions of social change while “being church” and “confessing Christ.” It recognized the need to find a language and pedagogy to help churches and Christians recognize the need to resist injustice and abuse of power in many forms as a moral and spiritual imperative.

As part of its efforts to promote TEM, it identified the following areas to generate interest and engagement. These are: social justice (in response to racism, gender justice, casteism, etc), Economic justice (poverty, migration, etc), environmental justice (climate change); and political justice (rise of rightwing politics, Neo-fascism).

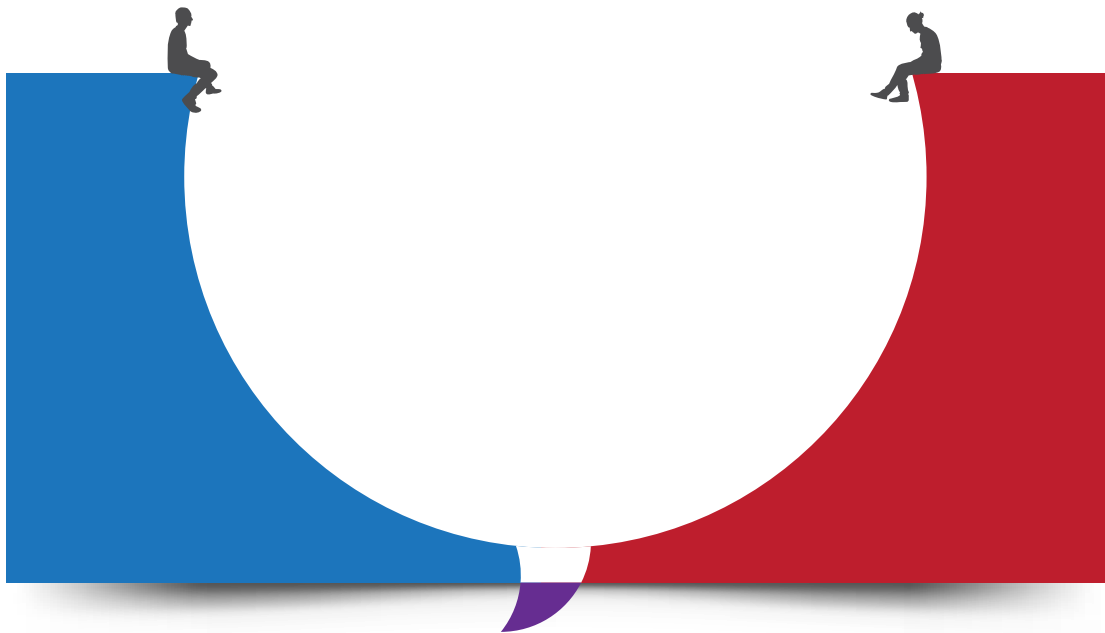
TEM will continue to be facilitated as part of The Onesimus Project (TOP) of the Council for World Mission. Although TOP is about addressing the historical wrongs of transatlantic slavery and the consequent continuing disabilities, it is also committed to confronting and

dismantling systems, ideologies, and cultures that continue to expose millions to dehumanized existence.

Besides facilitating processes by which the concept of TE assumes richness from different perspectives and experiences and opening spaces for interactive communication processes, the TEM Steering Group has also made plans to work towards a major TEM event in the Middle East in mid-2025 in solidarity with the people of Palestine and other countries who are exposed to seemingly unending war and violence and loss and destruction. The group also plans to work toward a global youth event in mid-2026 to make TEM primarily a movement of young people.



Rev. Dr Deenabandhu Manchala, from Bangalore, India, is a theologian, writer and activist. He is currently facilitating a CWM-sponsored theological study on Transformative Ecumenism, and the Indian Christian Collective for Justice, a Collective of Christians engaged in justice actions and people's movements. He is also the chairperson of the Student Christian Movement of India.



Transformative Ecumenism Cannot Exist Without Gender Justice!

By Angelica Tostes

Ecumenism is facing a crisis. Across the globe, we observe a decline in the ecumenical movement as we once envisioned it. But what are the reasons behind this? If we reflect on the history of ecumenism, we see that the term *oikoumene* has deep roots in the context of Roman imperialism, which sought to impose the *Pax Romana* as a "civilizing" force, with Christianity emerging and expanding within this colonial Roman framework. The early ecumenical councils, such as the first Council of Nicaea, were deemed "ecumenical" primarily because they provided religious legitimacy to the Roman Empire.

This brief essay does not intend to recount the entire history of the ecumenical movement. For a more in-depth

exploration, I recommend the book *Decolonising Oikoumene* (2020, CWM) by Gladson Jathanna.

However, there are several key points that are essential for understanding the current crisis in ecumenism. It is important to recognize that the council centered ecumenism, that we will call here institutional ecumenism, has distanced people from the transformative potential of ecumenism on personal, spiritual, and social levels. By placing the responsibility in the hands of ecumenical organizations and ecclesiastical leadership, the grassroots, the ordinary people, have felt alienated from the popular ecumenical movement.

This institutionalized form of ecumenism has also failed to engage with the more popular sectors of Christianity, such as Pentecostalism, which encompasses a significant portion of the impoverished populations in

the Global South. Consequently, a gap has emerged in both the understanding and practice of ecumenism, particularly with the rise of religious fundamentalism, which has closed many avenues for dialogue within the churches.

To build a Transformative Ecumenism, it is imperative to dismantle the ecumenism of authorities, where only the "official" leaders—predominantly male and heteronormative—hold the power and decision-making authority.

This "patriarchal and misogynistic hierarchical ecumenism," as Brazilian feminist theologian Ivone Gebara describes it, must come to an end. Gebara further states, "The sad end of a certain kind of Ecumenism is imminent. Would it not be better for this ecumenism, controlled by powerful authorities, to disappear? Would it not be beneficial for this institutional ecumenism to fade away?"

Within council centered ecumenism, the bodies of women and the LGBTQI+ community are often silenced or marginalized; gender issues are treated as superficial concerns, seemingly never given their due importance as other matters are consistently prioritized over the rights of women, in all their diversity of bodies, colors, forms, and territories, as well as the rights of gender and sexual minorities.

The Gospel of Matthew calls us to envision a Kingdom of Justice and Service, in direct contrast to the logic of individualism, capitalism, colonialism, racism, cisheteropatriarchy, and authoritarianism. Jesus admonishes us: "It shall not be so among you" (Mt 20:26).

The gender asymmetries within global ecumenism are stark, reflecting a clear hierarchy in leadership and power structures. A Transformative Ecumenism cannot exist without gender justice!

We must commit to building an ecumenism characterized by: i) representative balance, meaning equal representation of men, women, and trans and LGBTQI+ persons in dialogue spaces—though this alone is not sufficient; ii) gender equity, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their gender identity and sexuality, participate fully in decision-making processes within

ecumenical frameworks; iii) an explicit focus on overcoming violence, which must be a priority for Transformative Ecumenism. It is crucial to recognize that violence is not only physical but also verbal, psychological, moral, economic, and sexual.

Additionally, we must address spiritual violence and abuse perpetrated by male religious leaders who, through their influence, harass and exploit women, children, and vulnerable individuals, manipulating them under the guise of faith, "care," and



"friendship." Another vital point is that iv) gender justice also requires the active involvement of men, who must engage in the democratization and sharing of power, as well as critically examine masculinities and how they are shaped by patriarchal oppression.

The time for renewal has come.

We need to envision an ecumenism that transcends institutional structures, which, while necessary in many respects, often fail to reach the daily lives of workers who seek refuge and support in religion for their objective and subjective struggles.

We must go beyond academic discourse, which, although it nourishes reflection, must remain grounded in reality. A living ecumenism is one that is rooted in the people, seeking to understand that the diversity of faith is manifested in everyday life, in relationships, negotiations, dreams, desires, and sorrows.

A Transformative Ecumenism values the lives, voices, and bodies of women and the queer community from all corners of the world. I echo Ivone Gebara's words as my own prayer: "Perhaps it is indeed time for the end of institutional ecumenism."

Perhaps it is time to reclaim our lives, our shared freedom, our vital beliefs, our kitchen conversations, our herb gardens. Let those who have ears to hear, hear, and those who have eyes to see, see what is happening



beyond institutional borders. It is the plural movement of Jesus, like a phoenix seemingly destroyed, rising once again unexpectedly.



Angelica Tostes is a Brazilian feminist theologian with an MA in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo (2019). She is the Program Coordinator for the Latin American Course on Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue at the Ecumenical Center for Evangelization and Popular Education.

Angelica also serves as a researcher at the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, an institution closely connected to popular movements in the Global South. Additionally, she represents Latin America on the World Student Christian Federation Executive Committee and is a member of the Steering Group of the Transformative Ecumenism Movement.



A Historical Background of Transformative Ecumenism: A Prologue

By Rev. Dr Jaeshik Shin

Transformative Ecumenism (TE) was launched as a global movement in 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, following years of development and reflection. The movement arose from a deep desire to advocate for justice and dignity for all creation, positioning itself as an alternative to traditional ecumenical movements.

TE offers a justice-centered vision for Christian unity and global collaboration, evolving over a decade through a series of International Theological Colloquia that reshaped ecumenical discourse: a people-centered, justice-driven model of ecumenism.

The core values and framework of TE were shaped, refined, and deepened through four International

Theological Colloquia. Each colloquium produced a key document that laid the groundwork for TE: "Towards Transformative Ecumenism," "Living Out Transformative Ecumenism," "Growing Together in Transformative Ecumenism," and "Deepening Transformative Ecumenism."

The Korea Institute for Future Ecumenism, now known as the Center for Ecumenical Studies, provided essential support in organizing these events.

Planting the Seeds

The first colloquium was held in Pocheon, Korea from 15-17 July 2013 under the theme "Towards Transformative Ecumenism." The aim was to initiate a new, justice-driven model of ecumenism rooted in the struggles and aspirations of marginalized communities, particularly in the Global South.

The primary goal was to "plant seeds of a transformative ecumenical movement" that directly addressed the disconnection and bureaucratic stagnation of traditional ecumenism.

Participants at this colloquium sought to heal divisions within the church and the world, liberating the ecumenical movement from patriarchal, bureaucratic, and business-oriented leadership structures. Discussions focused on reclaiming the movement's prophetic voice, challenging economic and military hegemony, and advocating for an "economy of life" instead of one based on greed.

Emphasis was placed on creating spaces for marginalized voices, developing relational ecumenical frameworks, and adopting a holistic approach that transcends institutional boundaries.

Working Towards Justice, Solidarity, and Inclusivity

The second colloquium, held in Manila, Philippines from 8-11 June 2014 focused on "Living Out Transformative Ecumenism." This gathering highlighted the need for TE to embrace solidarity and inclusivity, responding to calls for justice from the margins.

Traditional Conciliar Ecumenism was critiqued for its lack of movement and justice, which had led to its isolation. In contrast, TE was presented as a dynamic, Spirit-led movement aiming for the reconciliation of humanity and creation through active engagement and mutual empowerment.

Participants engaged in solidarity visits to indigenous and urban poor communities in the Philippines, witnessing struggles against land grabbing, displacement, and exploitation. These experiences reinforced TE's commitment to being a praxis-oriented movement grounded in the struggles of marginalized people.

Key objectives included developing TE as an alternative to Conciliar Ecumenism and expanding its network globally.

Growing the Movement

The third colloquium, held in Moshi, Tanzania from 11-14 January 2016 centered on "Growing Together in Transformative Ecumenism." This gathering emphasized



the need for a proactive ecumenical movement that challenges global injustices, violence, and the commodification of human life and all living beings.

The colloquium underscored the importance of life-centered eco-ecumenism, recognizing the intrinsic value of every human being and the Earth, and fostering broader interfaith cooperation for justice and the common good.

The Moshi colloquium called for justice-centered leadership and authentic solidarity with marginalized communities. It also promoted deeper ecumenism that goes beyond inter-denominational engagement to include broader interfaith dialogues.

Practical steps were suggested to grow TE, such as establishing regional chapters, developing a website for sharing information, using social media for organizing activities, and creating training



materials for leadership development and community engagement.

The goal was to decentralize the movement, allowing marginalized people to lead and define its direction.

Honing the Visions

The fourth colloquium, held in Tokyo, Japan from 19-22 March 2019 focused on "Deepening Transformative Ecumenism." Building on the previous colloquia, this gathering aimed to further refine and deepen the understanding of TE in light of global challenges. It emphasized that TE must be a decolonial, decentralized movement led by marginalized communities.

The Tokyo colloquium highlighted the "margins" as critical sites of injustice and resilience, where transformative action and theology should emerge.

It called for a prophetic denouncement of oppressive systems, including racism, casteism, sexism, and economic injustice. Recommendations included establishing more TE chapters, involving younger leaders and women in leadership roles, and focusing on emerging justice issues such as technological, environmental, and economic justice.

Giving Voices to Vulnerable Communities

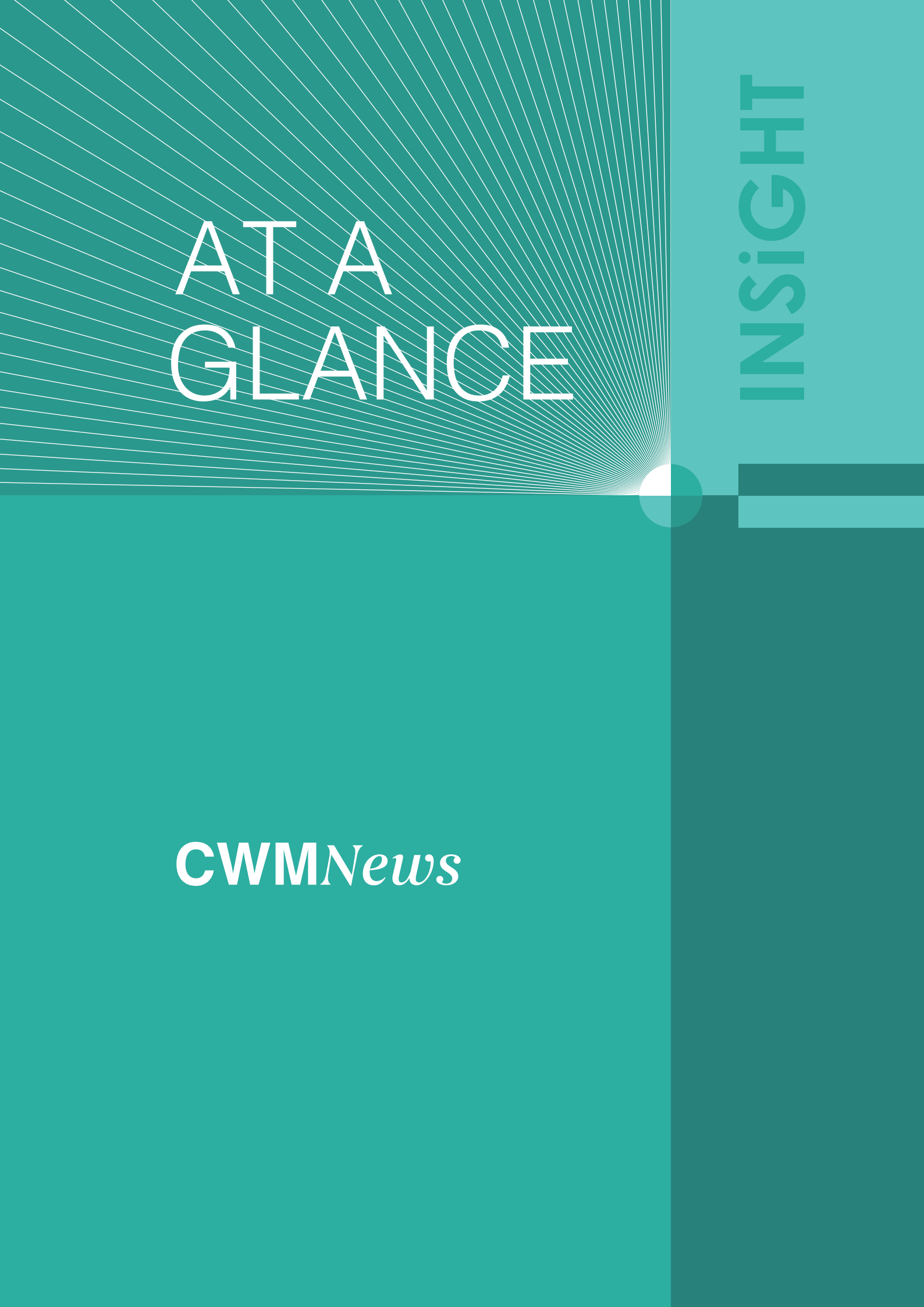
These four International Theological Colloquia have been pivotal in shaping a new model of ecumenism that is justice-driven, people-centered, and rooted in the struggles of marginalized communities.

From the first colloquium in Korea to the fourth in Japan, TE's journey reflects a significant evolution from conceptualization to a deepened praxis. These gatherings have established a movement committed to justice, dignity, and life for all, challenging traditional structures and promoting a new, inclusive ecumenical vision led by the marginalized.

This path culminated in the official launch of TE in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2023, reinforcing its commitment to justice and dignity for all.



Rev. Dr. Jaeshik Shin is an ordained pastor from the Presbyterian Church of Korea. He is also the Professor of Systematic Theology with the Honam Theological University and Seminary, Gwangju, Korea.



AT A
GLANCE

INSIGHT

CWM*News*



Conference Explores Social Justice From Dual Lenses of Black, Minjung Theologies

The Council for World Mission (CWM), in partnership with University of South Africa and Yonsei University Institute of African Studies, organised an international conference on Black Theology of Liberation and Minjung Theology.

Held at Yonsei University from 6-9 August, the conference brought together theologians, academicians, students, and activists from South Africa, South Korea, USA, India, Pacific, and Latin America under the theme "Re-Envisioning Black Theology of Liberation and Minjung Theology: A Transformative Dialogue."

Welcoming the participants, CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum said, "The conference invites us to



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reflect, challenge, and renew our collective commitment to justice and liberation by re-envisioning the Black Theology of Liberation and Minjung Theology."

Remembering the contributions of Rev. Dr Kim Yong-Bock and Prof. Vuyani Vellem, participants highlighted how they continue to inspire and guide conversations today.

In addition to 14 papers and four Bible studies, the conference featured four keynote presentations by Rev. Dr Jung Mo Sung, Rev. Dr Mitri Rehab, Prof. Fundiswa Kobo, and Prof. Soonyang Choi.

Presentations, keynotes, and Bible studies underscored the significance of amplifying marginalised voices and narratives of historically silenced groups, resisting oppressions and occupation, and creating a theological

discourse that is inclusive, liberative, and transformative.

Throughout the four days the conference actively called for:

- A shift from visibility to true recognition that includes collective efforts for radical empathy, and emphasises the need for continual adaptation and inclusivity.
- Looking into the urgent need for theological reflection and action in response to the crisis in Gaza.



- An acknowledgement of injustices and inequalities, coupled with a need to critique patriarchy and capitalism while responding to the climate emergency.
- A reflection on womanist dialogue that decolonizes praxis, confronts patriarchal violence, and nurtures a transformative dialogue.
- A re-evaluation of traditional metaphors and theological approaches that lead to social exclusion.

As part of the conference, the participants visited several sites of resistance and engaged with people struggling for justice and liberation.

The exposure visits provided deeper understanding of particular struggles of people in Korea for anti-colonialism, democracy, labour reform, LGBTQI+ rights, and human rights of internally displaced people.

Conference participants also visited monuments of disasters such as the Sewol ferry incident during which more than 300 people died in 2014, and the Itaewon stampede which killed 159 people in 2022.

The exposure visits and the conversations with socially, politically, and religiously excluded communities fostered deep conversations around many issues faced by Korea.

Meanwhile, participants also collectively addressed the pressing issues of liberation and oppression, emphasising a call to action, a clear vision for the future, and a commitment to continued dialogue.

The conference closed with two key touch points: the importance of developing new theological resources, intellectual academic exercises, and ecumenical engagement; and the affirmation of the importance of taking the Black Theology of Liberation, Minjung Theology, and other theologies of liberation beyond the church to the grassroots.



Consultation in Harare Deconstructs Effects of Slavery, Offers Hope and Strategies

The Council for World Mission (CWM) organised a Theology of Reparations Consultation under The Onesimus Project (TOP) in Harare, Zimbabwe from 22-26 July.

Hosted by the United Theological College, the event brought together over 20 academics, theologians, and ecumenical partners who investigated, debated, and presented on the theological ripples of reparations,

restitution, and justice associated with slavery.

Attendees included Rev. Roderick Hewitt, Chair of TOP; Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, Interim General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches; Rev. Dr Kupakwashe Mtata, Principal of United Theological College; and Dr Masiwa Gunda, World Council of Churches programme executive for Overcoming Racism.

Participants explored deeper understandings of longstanding historical and systemic injustices as well as possible strategies towards healing, reconciliation, and transformation.

The four-day event included a visit to the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) in Dzivarasekwa, a suburb in western





Harare where the 130-member congregation includes dedicated ministers serving the community over the years.

The visit gave participants an opportunity to foster a deeper understanding and collaboration between their respective organisations and the Dzivarasekwa UPCS church.

Additionally, the event also shed further light on the complex issues surrounding the Transatlantic slave trade and its impact on mission. It also highlighted the mission of TOP in standing up to human greed and exploitation.

Throughout the Consultation, key discussions centred on the inadequate responses of the church and of missionaries towards the egregious legacies of slavery. TOP seeks to address this by creating a missional outlook that builds upon CWM's efforts in decolonising mission since the 1970s. Through TOP's numerous projects and initiatives, a growing hunger for radical transformation and for justice has been developed.

In one of two keynote addresses that were presented during the event, Nyomi, spoke on "Some Reformed Perspectives on Reparations."

Nyomi gave a detailed account of the historical and theological underpinnings of slavery and colonialism,

emphasising the need for a comprehensive approach to reparations that includes acknowledgement, apology, restitution, and reconciliation.

The second keynote address was presented by Gunda, who spoke on "Racism is a Sin Against God: Theology and Praxis of Anti-Racism in the WCC." He guided his audience through the theological roots of racism and its devastating consequences.

Yet, despite the gloomy outlook, Gunda offered a glimmer of hope with a series of practical tactics that churches and ecumenical bodies can deploy as they create a more just and equitable world around them.





Global Consultation Calls for Churches to Stand Against Genocide

A consultation held from 20-24 August called for churches to recognize and take a concrete stand against genocide. Jointly organized by the All Africa Conference of Churches, Council for World Mission (CWM), and World Communion of Reformed Churches, and locally hosted by the Council of Churches in Namibia in Windhoek, Namibia, the consultation sought to question what role the church and ecumenical partners have played, and can continue to play, in finding justice for the crucified peoples in post-genocide settings.

The consultation was intentionally held in Namibia, the location of the first genocide of the 20th century. Starting in 1904, the Herero and Nama people were ordered to be massacred by the German colonial power, and the struggle for acknowledgement and apology continues till

today. The consultation was also essential in light of the ongoing genocide in Palestine.

Bringing together church and ecumenical leaders, traditional authorities, activists, engaged academics, and, most importantly those who have suffered the injustices of genocide, the consultation specifically sought to address the issue from the perspective of those who are being crucified. The intentionality of this approach from below allowed the gathering to name genocide as part of the mechanics of the necropolitics of empire.

In its communique, the consultation states, "The conference witnessed the resistance of the crucified, the impoverished, women, young people and children in their steadfast refusal to be erased and annihilated. Our statement arises from the cry of the earth's people against the geopolitics of empire, the way empire continues to unleash a 'necropolitics' (i.e. a politics, practice and even celebration of death)."

The consultation drew strong connections between modern-day genocide and the legacy of colonialism. In his keynote address, Namibian scholar and activist Paul Isaak expressed, "From the perspective of the colonized, mission and colonialism was dominated by missionaries, traders, settlers and soldiers or what is known as the three Cs: Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization. These three Cs imposed upon Africans a particular way of being."

Mark Lewis Taylor, a renowned theologian from Princeton Theological Seminary, further connected those who were murdered in genocides with the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. "Dying as Jesus did is what puts Christianity's reputed founder in unity with the world's peoples who suffer on the underside of the imperial systems, whether Roman or US-American." It was with this theological insight in mind that the consultation referred to those who were slaughtered and brutalized in genocides as the "crucified."

On genocide and women, Carmen Margarita Sanchez De Leon brought to the foreground the gendered dimensions of genocide. She pointed out that "Women's bodies are inseparable from the memories of genocide and power structures in society. The biological nature of female or feminised bodies, including their capacity to gestate life, systematically makes women targets of sexualised violence in peacetime as well as during war and genocide." She called for the consultation to recognize the role of women in genocides – that they are not only the victims/survivors but also leaders at the forefront of resistance and peace building initiatives.

Speaking of the consultation, Dr Sudipta Singh, Deputy General Secretary of the CWM, said, "The Council for World Mission, because of its belief in the resurrection of Christ, typified in its recent assembly's theme 'Rise to Life' is committed to the overthrowing of all imperial projects and designs that are contrary to the gospel of life."

Reflecting on "Can Theology Speak in the face of Genocide?" James Amanze called on churches to "aggressively, decidedly and deliberately the instruments of reconciliation and peace through its mission of evangelization in order to eradicate genocidal tendencies in society and bring into existence the kingdom of God."

The communique further called on the All Africa Conference of Churches, CWM and World Communion of Reformed Churches to develop a "mechanism for accompanying churches and affected communities of the crucified during genocide and struggles for self-determination. This should include training and supporting a rapid response team and strengthening the pastoral, political, and advocacy actions of churches against genocide in solidarity with those crucified by Empire and its allies."

Recognizing that the root of genocide was empire and neo-liberal capitalism, the consultation also called on the larger ecumenical community to "join forces with those who are pursuing alternatives to global capitalism and the furthering of the principles and goals of the NIFEA processes to dismantle the military-industrial complex."



CWM Delegation Visits Myanmar to Stand With Churches Facing Challenges

A Council for World Mission (CWM) delegation led by the General Secretary, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, visited the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) in Yangon from 30-31 July to develop concrete strategies for the Agape Hospital Project. They also made a solidarity visit to the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC).

The CWM team was joined by Rev. Philip Woods, Associate Director for Global Strategy and Programme from the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Update on Agape Hospital Relocation Project

The Agape Hospital was established by the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar to provide basic healthcare and accessible health services to the community in Chin State, which is currently underserved by medical facilities.

Built to complement various mobile clinics, the hospital also provides scholarships to educate and train skilled medical personnel.

Since 2022, over 10,000 out-patients, and over 1,000 inpatients have received much-needed healthcare. However, with the COVID-19 outbreak four years ago, the hospital found itself in need of a relocation as well as being able to better cope with the consistently high demand for oxygen from COVID-19 afflicted patients.





A project that was mooted since 2022, the hospital is set to be relocated to a six-acre plot of land allocated by the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. The last two years have seen the project take on a greater urgency as the hospital faces increasingly dire space constraints.

Meanwhile, the aftermath of the pandemic has necessitated the move to further develop and upgrade the hospital staff's professional capabilities through degree courses and internships as well as looking into the procurement of new medical and hospital equipment.

Besides the relocation progress updates, the meeting also provided a vital platform that allowed both CWM and the Presbyterian Church (USA) to gain a deeper understanding of current challenges in relation to local contexts and to discuss the critical steps forward.

A Show of Solidarity With Myanmar

The meeting with the Myanmar Council of Churches the next day marked an important opportunity that gave the CWM delegation valuable insights into the challenges faced by churches in Myanmar in the face of the recent local conflicts, and afforded a glimpse into Council's visions and plans for the future.



The two-day event signalled concrete steps that were taken by CWM to not only display its solidarity with the Myanmar churches and people but also greatly strengthened partnerships, and offered assurance and comfort in a time marked by increasing fear and uncertainty.



CWM Visits United Church of Zambia, Praises Strong Missional Outlook

The Council for World Mission (CWM) Mission Programme and Partnership (MSP) unit visited the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) from 5-9 August.

The MSP delegation—including Rev. Julie Sim, Mission Secretary for Mission Programme and Partnership, and MSP Project Manager Stephen Chia—affirmed the longstanding partnership between the UCZ and CWM as the delegation witnessed firsthand various challenges the church faces.

In an opening message to UCZ on 6 August, Sim identified UCZ as being one of the biggest missionary-sending partners within the CWM family of

member churches, adding that UCZ missionaries also make up the majority of CWM's 18-strong Partners-in-Mission team.

Sim further described UCZ as a member church through which CWM can learn how mission changes lives at the local level.

"We are here at the United Church of Zambia to learn from the church on how it carries out its mission, for we believe that no church is too big to receive nor too small to share," declared Sim.

Chia also expressed his appreciation of UCZ's drive in preserving mission heritage, praising its focus on efficient use of resources in furthering the church's mission, often in creative ways.

UCZ has four million members across 10 Presbyteries in a country that is home to more than 70 tribes with as many languages—yet coming together in one united spirit.

Giving a warm welcome to the CWM delegates was UCZ General Secretary, Rev. Chipasha Musaba, who gave a detailed presentation on the work of UCZ which he described as “pouring themselves out to the communities.”

The “pouring out” was evident in the bevy of life-affirming projects in which the church has been actively and locally engaged. Various livelihood programmes encompass practical agrarian skills such as producing organic fertiliser and introducing syntropic farming – an agricultural technique that combines various flora and arboreal species for more sustainable yields.

Musaba also touched on UCZ’s strategic plans in the propagation of the gospel, its tireless work in member capacity building, and its commitment in further developing its youth programmes that currently involve all 10 Presbyteries in each of Zambia’s 10 provinces.

Visiting Congregations and Church-Run Enterprises

Throughout the trip, the MSP delegation also visited various UCZ offices, congregations, and church-run commercial enterprises.

One of these was the Liseli congregation in South Lusaka where CWM-supported initiatives were fully in place to make the local church premises more inclusive to disabled members.

The delegation also had an in-depth conversation with UCZ Secretary of Community Development & Social Justice, Deaconess Mable Sichali, who shared about the tough challenges in the church’s work in northern Zambia, from funding shortages to water and sanitation issues.

Despite the hard ground upon which UCZ is working, the church nevertheless remains steadfast in its collaboration with local government agencies on numerous social and health issues such as AIDS prevention programmes.

Concrete steps are also underway towards eventual self-funding. Since 2018, UCZ has been operating a wafer-making facility that produces the majority of the Holy Communion wafers consumed by the church, with some excess left over for sale to other churches.

Another example that displays UCZ’s drive towards financial independence is the Mpongwe Beekeeping Enterprise. The company refines raw honey purchased from local farmers and subsequently packages and sells the product to wholesalers and retailers.

Facing Tough Challenges With Faith

Ending off the visit was a meeting with UCZ’s Mission and Evangelism Secretary, Rev. Andrew Chulu, who offered the CWM delegation a holistic, on-the-ground snapshot of the church’s missional and outreach efforts.

He focused on engagement with the local youth who collectively face numerous challenges such as unemployment-related drug and alcohol abuse, gender-based violence, mental health issues, and suicide.

Yet the UCZ continues to prayerfully and actively journey with the local populace through every season in their lives – the very definition of what Chulu sees Christian mission is to be.

“[We need to offer a] complete gospel package for the people, as the gospel message should be accompanied by meeting the needs of the poor and sick,” explained Chulu, who also shared future missional ideas that include establishing outpost clinics, and supporting government-run refugee areas.

Ecology and Economy Consultation Empowers African Youth to Act for Climate Justice

“The clergy should take environmental issues seriously and not respond only during calamities. We need to see sermons and Bible studies in churches targeting the environment so that we change the mindset of our people depending on government. Christians have a role to play in protecting the environment by ensuring that they avoid engaging in activities that can negatively affect the natural habitats,” declared Sakupapa.

As the present generation faces ever-worsening climate change and environmental injustice,



The Council for World Mission (CWM) organized a five-day Youth Consultation on Ecology and Economy from 4-9 August. Taking place in Antananarivo, Madagascar, the event brought together 23 participants from churches including Churches of Christ in Malawi (CCM), Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), United Church of Zambia (UCZ), United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), and Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA).

Dr Teddy Sakupapa, senior lecturer of the University of Western Cape spoke on climate activism and how vital it is for churches to rise up to the powers that threaten the sanctity of creation.

especially on African soil, the consultation was a timely gathering of youth delegates from various African member churches to share fresh and innovative ideas aimed at combating localised challenges brought on by climate change, and addressing global warming, ultimately empowering them to transform into local agents of change and advocates for climate justice.

The youth delegates, in response to Sakupapa's emphasis on the church's role in creation care,



reflected deeply upon their churches' current ecological policies, exploring and discussing possible improvements. Another objective of the event was also the development of an environmental campaign that aimed to be funded by MCI (Member Church Initiatives).

At the same time, the consultation took on a deeper and more significant meaning for the Africa region and beyond as it marked the beginning of the Global South's foray in practical approaches to climate justice, even as it now finds its footing in developing policies for churches to influence broader governmental policies on environmental justice.

In the Garden

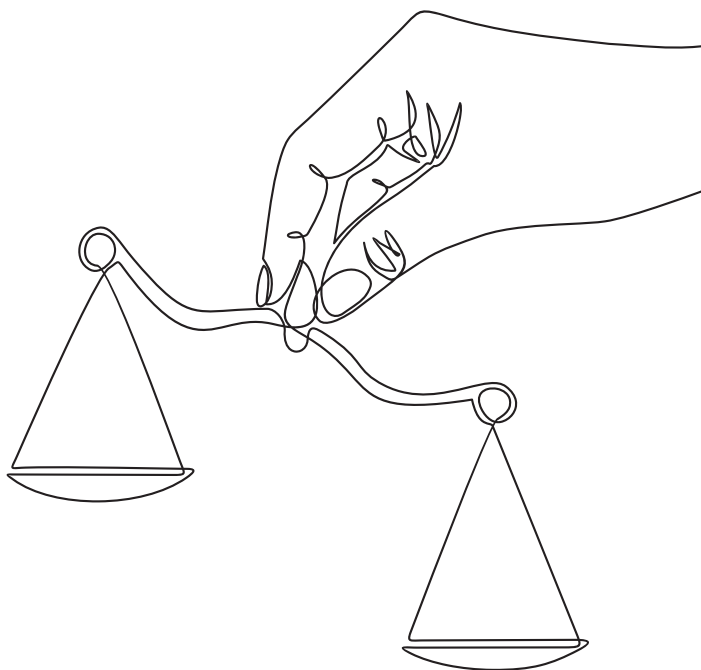
The young delegates also visited FJKM's Ivato Theological Seminary, where they were given an on-the-ground demonstration of the practicality of a localised, communal ecological initiative.

The programme educates Malagasy people about native and exotic tree species that can be planted in Madagascar. A vegetable and fruit farm was also established that currently provides food for the seminary, with commercialisation plans in the pipeline.

As a mark of the visit by CWM and as a symbol of inter-organisational solidarity, a palm tree was planted on the seminary campus by Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, CWM

Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy and the Africa Region.

Mkandawire, who is no stranger to the ill effects of environmental injustice, urged young people at the end of the visit to take bold and uncompromising action against climate injustices that they witness in their communities. At the same time, he also exhorted the church to speak out and lead the fight for environmental justice.



GEM School Looks to Build Ecological, Economic Advocacy on Solid Biblical Ground

The 2024 edition of the Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics, and Management (GEM School) officially opened in St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya on 19 August.

The 11-day programme aims to train church leaders and young persons on global economics and economic governance that is biblical and ecologically just. A key thrust of the lessons seeks to equip participants with tools to enable them to engage in advocacy for transformations in the global and local financial and economic architecture.

In all, 24 participants, specially selected from various Council for World Mission (CWM) member churches and ecumenical organisations to reflect church diversity and gender balance, will be offered a rigorously curated curriculum emphasising unique regional contexts, individual backgrounds, and socio-economic concerns.

GEM students will also explore the relationship between theology and economics, while developing a critical understanding of economics, markets, and international trade and finance.

As the GEM School opened, pointers were given on identifying cornerstones of financial and economic transformation and entry points for advocacy.

Students learned the basic elements of a New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA), a cooperative



effort by CWM, Lutheran World Federation, World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Council of Churches, and World Methodist Council that advocates for an alternative just economic and financial architecture.

Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy, said, "The GEM School is more than just an academic programme; it is a transformative journey that equips participants with tools to envision and build economies that serve life rather than exploit it.

"It challenges us to rethink governance, economics, and management through the lens of justice, dignity, and sustainability, empowering participants to be agents of change in their communities and beyond," he added.

Deeply Spiritual Issues

GEM participant Rev. Chipasha Musaba, General Secretary of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ), is also a current board member for CWM.

Leading the morning devotion after the opening day, Musaba reminded the gathered students that economic justice is not merely an economic or political issue but a deeply spiritual one.

He also challenged them to reimagine contemporary global economic systems in light of God's justice where advocacy must be given to policies and practices that protect the poor, ensure fair wages and prioritise the wellbeing of all creation.

"The scriptures remind us that God's vision for the society is one where everyone has enough and no one is oppressed or marginalised," exhorted Musaba.

Peppered throughout the programme were tracks that featured esteemed speakers and panelists who engaged the students on relevant, hot topic issues such as various ecological and feminist economic models and fostering a critical look into world markets, international trade, and finance.

The programme, while being taught with an eye on real-world issues, is grounded in spiritual roots, daily bible studies, and Christian ethics.

During the opening courses, studies explored biblical

understandings of economics as well as shining a spotlight on the Zacchaeus Tax (ZacTax) Campaign, an ecumenical initiative that offered faith-rooted African perspectives on just taxation and reparations while sharing concrete proposals on advancing corporate and wealth taxation and social and ecological reparations.

To get the students to be further acquainted with the Kenyan socio-economic context and the work of hosting churches concerning economic justice and challenges surrounding land issues, an immersion programme that comprises a visit to the National Council of Churches in Kenya is also in the works.

The vibrant opening service marking the start of the programme left a deeply positive impression on Lala Fanaingoniaina who worships at the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM).

"I hope that this program will be a space for learning, reflection, and action as we strive to create a world where every person and the entire creation can flourish," declared Fanaingoniaina.



CWM Missionaries, Past and Present, Celebrated at Annual Gathering in London

The London office of the Council for World Mission (CWM) hosted 26 visitors for the CWM Annual Missionary Gathering on 28 August. Participants included former missionaries, church leaders, and representatives from the CWM Europe region, former and current Partners-in-Mission (PIM), and CWM staff members.

The gathering provided a rich opportunity to remember and commemorate former missionaries and partners and

the work they have done. Missionaries, past and present, enjoyed moments of sharing and fellowship.

The gathering opened with a service at the local Welsh Chapel in Borough. Rev. Dr Minwoo Oh, a current PIM with CWM, gave a reflection from the Gospel of Mark, after which lunch and a tour of the London office followed, giving the participants a glimpse into a day in the life of a CWM employee.



CWM
Legacy and Vision
Gathering



The visitors then shared and reminisced about their past experiences and engaged in an in-depth discussion on the future of CWM and how much more can be done to realise the organisational vision of fostering life-flourishing communities across the world.

Representing CWM was Rev. Julie Sim, Mission Secretary for Mission Programme and Partnership, and the East and South Asian Regions.

Speaking to a roomful of missionaries, both young and old, who recognised that they have yet still more to contribute, Sim commended them for their faithful service, and also reiterated the CWM missiological outlook as one that continues to value partnerships and the sharing of resources and experiences as it brings hope and life in abundance to vulnerable communities.



CWM Board Appoints Subcommittees, Re-Elects Singapore-Based Director

The newly-elected Board of Directors of the Council for World Mission (CWM) met from 2-3 September.

The Board, meeting largely via video conference, appointed members for CWM subcommittees and elected a Singapore-based Director. In addition, the meeting also served as an orientation and onboarding exercise for the fresh leadership team.

Present for the meeting alongside CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum and CWM staff were new CWM Moderator Dr Natalie Lin; and new Treasurer Mr James Ronnie Kaboke.

United in Spirit, Recognising God's Calling

CWM Moderator Dr Natalie Lin opened the 2-day meeting with a short, informal worship segment with three hymns and a sharing of God's message taken from Ephesians 4:1-3 and 23-24.

Lin's sharing touched on the importance of being united through the Holy Spirit, casting away one's old self, putting on a new self, renewing one's spiritual attitudes, and clearly visioning God's calling.

"God calls everyone to Him but His calling to each one of us is different. Our lives should be spent in pursuit of understanding what that calling really is and live a life that is consistent to it," said Lin, who reflected that Paul chose to see his imprisonment as his calling as he wrote the letter to the Ephesians.

She exhorted the new Board to meditate and ruminate over the

message while forging a new path for CWM.

“Since we, as Christians, have received a new life in Christ Jesus, it behoves us to bring others around us to the same relational understanding of God’s love through our renewed outlooks, attitudes, and works.”

Getting the Directors Up to Speed

CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum was also on hand to give the new Board an overview of the various processes and structures of the organisation. He also outlined the many functions and responsibilities of Directors and the roles that they play in ensuring CWM is operated with transparency and accountability.

Keum, along with the Mission Secretary for Finance, spoke on the financial aspects of CWM, sharing

information on various investment portfolios, mechanics behind the spending policies, and budgets.

Sub-Committee and 13th Director Appointments

The Board appointed members for various CWM subcommittees. The following committee members will be serving over the next quadrennium from September 2024 to June 2028.



Staffing Committee

Rev. Anthony Chung, Chair – Caribbean
Rev. Kudzani Ndebele – Africa
Dr Ming-Chu Lin – East Asia
Ms Gwen Aeron Down – Europe
Ms Mina Tupu Saifoloi – Pacific
Bishop Sunil Mankhin – South Asia

Finance Committee

Mr James Ronnie Kaboke, Chair – Pacific
Elder Lim Kar Hor – East Asia
Mr Mark Tucker – Europe
Ms Celeste Khoo – Independent
Ms Zodinpuui – South Asia

Audit Committee

Mr Sanjay Patra, Chair – South Asia
Ms Yu Chia-En – East Asia
Ms Betty Kuili – Pacific
Dr Marie-Aimée Tourres – Europe
Mr Markel Virgo – Caribbean
Dr Godwin Kimaro – Africa
Mr James Ronnie Kaboke – Treasurer

Investment Committee

Mr Richard Morgan, Chair – Europe
Rev. Melanie Smith – Europe
Ms Priya Lukka – Ecumenical
Mr Mark Tucker – Europe
Rev. Chipasha Musaba – Africa
Elder Simon Chou – East Asia
Mr James Ronnie Kaboke – Treasurer

Programme Reference Group

Prof. Kenneth Ross, Chair – Expert
Rev. Goodwin L. D. Zainga – Africa
Ms Michelle L. N. Ashwood – Caribbean
Prof. Byung Joon Chung – East Asia
Prof. Kathleen Ferrier – Europe
Rev. Neil Armstrong Pitakaji – Pacific
Dr Lalmuanpui Hmar – South Asia
Mr Siosi Opao – Youth
Bishop Geevarghese Mor Coorilos – Ecumenical
Mrs Sarah Phua Yi Ran – Board

Onesimus Project Core Group

Rev. Dr Roderick Hewitt, Chair
Ms Afika Babazile Rwayi – Africa
Rev. Dr. Wonbin Park – East Asia
Ms Karen Campbell – Europe
Rev. François Opura Pihaatae – Pacific
Rev. Samuel Mall – South Asia
Mr Trevor Llewellyn Benn – Caribbean
Rev. Dr Minwoo Oh – Ecumenical
Dr Ming-Chu Lin – CWM
Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum – CWM

The Board also unanimously affirmed the appointment of Mrs Sarah Phua Yiran as the 13th Director. She will continue serving on the Board for a second term.

The meeting was brought to a close in prayer led by Ms Afika Rwayi, Director for the Africa region.

The next Board meeting will take place in person from 10-12 November in Singapore.





Youths Define and Confront “Unpeace” on Path to Transforming Conflicts

From 11-15 September, the Council for World Mission (CWM) in collaboration with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, held the 2024 East Asia Youth Programme on Peace Building and Conflict Transformation.

The programme was an offshoot from the Peace Building and Community Development Programme that aimed to translate CWM's mission into practical, theologically rooted, and action-oriented initiatives that address global and local peacebuilding within the context of living under Empire. In a world that is constantly rocked by conflicts, it was imperative that the youths of the next generation be equipped to be the harbingers of peace and bold speakers of truth to the powers bent of unravelling peace and harmony.

Thirty-one participants comprising youths from CWM East Asian member churches, representing Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Myanmar as well as international Training-in-Mission (TIM) partners and

local participants from the Philippines gathered at the UCCP Shalom Hotel in Manila, to engage in a series of discussions and conversations that sought to foster a deeper understanding and a spirit of appreciation of what it takes to transform conflicts and achieve genuine peace.

Minnie Anne Mata-Calub, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, attended as an honorary guest.

A key component of the programme was to present young participants with case studies that actively challenged them to critically reflect on their perceptions of the current world

order and to approach it from the perspectives of biblical justice and peace.

The youth also presented on the issues of “unpeace” in their respective countries, defining it not just as an anti-thesis of peace (absence of conflicts), but a global zeitgeist that threatens humanity’s access to justice, sustenance, and life’s basic needs. The programme galvanised the young participants to profoundly examine the issues within their own contexts and speak out against injustices.

Exposure Visits Highlight Areas of Unpeace in Philippines

Community visits were integral in bringing to life issues that were discussed during the sessions. Participants were brought to four locations across the Philippines

threatened by the reclamation works of Manila Bay. Youths also heard about the plights of the beleaguered workers of Nexperia Inc., who were unfairly dismissed.

“Each day feels fulfilling as I not only learn about the challenges faced by various countries, but also gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultures. The process of interacting and learning from people from different nations has helped me grow significantly,” recounted a youth participant during a closing worship that sounded the call for more concrete



exemplified the struggles against unpeace.

These included visiting the farmers of Lupang Ramos who have been embroiled in a decades-long struggle against an unfair justice system contesting their claim to land ownership; as well as the affected households in Caloocan City that saw family members killed during the war on drugs waged during Rodrigo Duterte’s presidency in 2016. These families are still struggling today to seek justice for their massacred loved ones.

Participants also met with fishing communities in the coastal town of Rosario who have their livelihoods

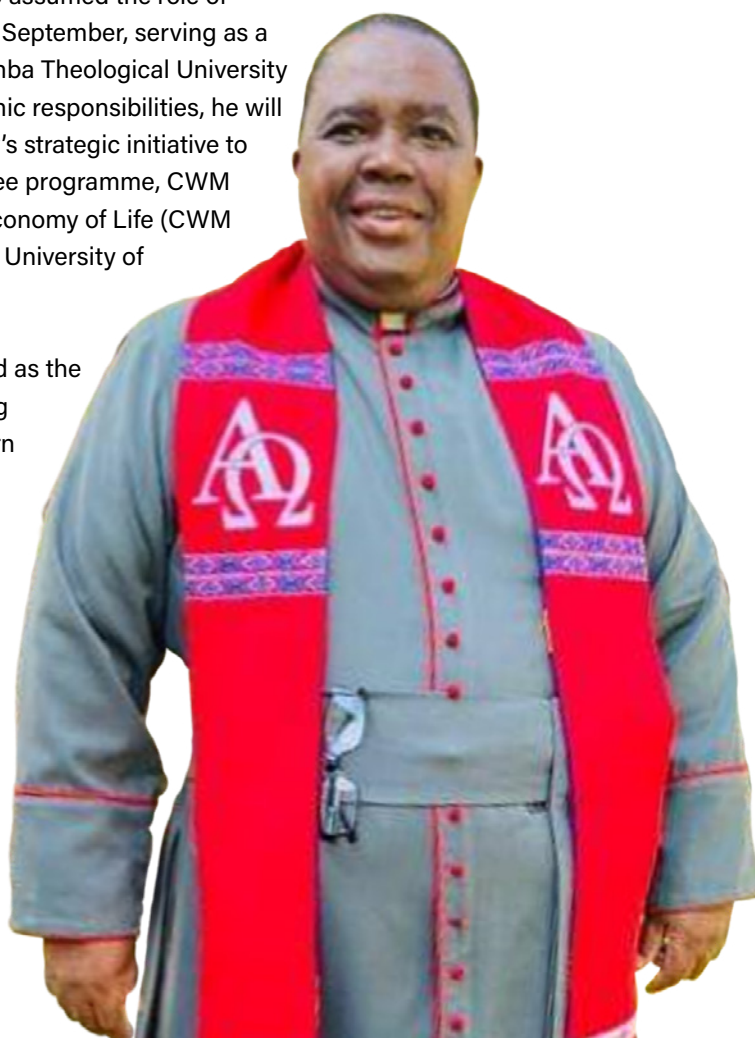
steps to be taken by the participants toward achieving peace in their respective communities through sustained international solidarity and advocacy.



New Partner In Mission (PIM)

The Council for World Mission (CWM) warmly welcomes Rev. Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, who assumed the role of Partner In Mission (PIM) from 1 September, serving as a Lecturer in Theology at the Zomba Theological University (ZTU). In addition to his academic responsibilities, he will lead and oversee the University's strategic initiative to launch an online master's degree programme, CWM Theological Education for an Economy of Life (CWM TEEL), in collaboration with the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN).

Mpetsheni most recently served as the General Secretary of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), and brings a wealth of experience in church ministry and management leadership.





**Mission Secretary
for Social Justice**

**Janet
McConnell**

Council for World Mission Appoints New Mission Secretary for Social Justice

The Council for World Mission (CWM) welcomes Janet Marie McConnell as the Mission Secretary for Social Justice. The appointment decision was made unanimously by the CWM Board which convened from 2-3 September.

McConnell comes into office with a wealth of working experience with nonprofit and ecumenical organisations. Since December 2021, she has been serving the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) as a Deputy General Secretary, overseeing the promulgation of the church's vision, mission, and goals.

As Deputy General Secretary, McConnell provides oversight and support to UCJCI's myriad entities and institutions concerning ethos, policies, and procedures.

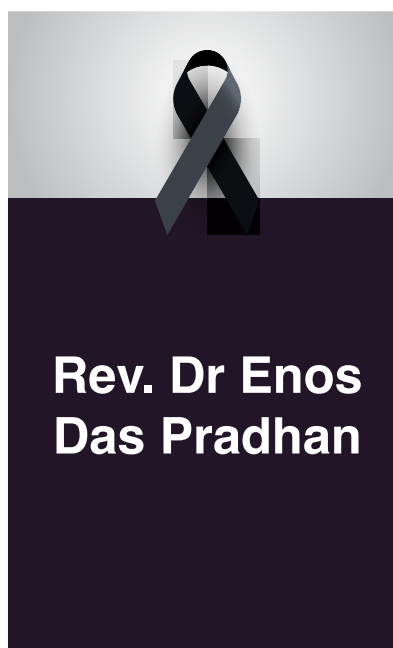
She also provides leadership to the office of the Regional Mission Council with respect to planning, directing, staffing, monitoring, and evaluation of activities and operations.

Previously, McConnell served and contributed in varied roles related to areas such as human resources, mission, education, and youth ministries. She has also served on committees and task forces serving the greater faith and ecumenical communities such as the World Council of Churches and Jamaica Council of Churches.

McConnell has also served with the CWM as a former Trustee.

Upon this appointment and a consequent relocation, McConnell is expected to work from the CWM London Office and provide accompaniment to the Caribbean region.

The appointment will begin on 1 January 2025.



CWM Remembers Rev. Dr Enos Das Pradhan With Gratitude

The Council for World Mission (CWM) is saddened to hear of the passing of Rev. Dr Enos Das Pradhan, on the night of 13 September 2024.

Rev. Dr Pradhan served the CWM faithfully as a Deputy Moderator from 2009, as well as contributing to the organisation as a Trustee. These were in addition to his various leadership and ministerial positions within the Church of North India (CNI), Communion of Churches in India (CCI), and Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh.

Rev. Dr Pradhan was known for his boundless sense of commitment in serving his church, his communities, and God—often on the frontlines of voicing issues with local people about their daily struggle to live with human rights and dignity. His life's work left an indelible mark on

everyone who has had the privilege of working alongside him.

CWM extends heartfelt condolences, thoughts, and prayers to Rev. Dr Pradhan's family during this difficult time. May the God of comfort and love be with them as Rev. Dr Pradhan's soul rests in eternal peace.





CWM Extends Congratulations on 100th Anniversary of National Council of Churches in Korea

A CWM delegation visited Seoul to extend greetings and congratulations on the 100th anniversary of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK). Founded in 1924, the NCCCK is Korea's first national Christian council. The delegation included CWM Moderator Dr Natalie Lin, General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, and Mission Secretary for Communications Rev. Dr Young-cheol Cheon.

The NCCCK organized an "International Conference for the 100th Anniversary of the NCCCK" under the theme "God of

Life, Renew All Creation in Your Love" on 20-21 September in Seoul.

During the opening service, Dr Natalie Lin prayed for a community of equality and hospitality. "We believe that God loves those who work hard with the bodies You have given them. Please grant us the strength and courage to build a society that values workers. May the world become one where labour is respected," she prayed.

100



The conference communiqué highlighted the need for a holistic approach to peace in the region, advocating for peaceful coexistence between North and South Korea and a permanent peace regime. It called on the churches around the world to pray for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, encouraging participation in prayers prepared by the NCCK and, when possible, jointly with the Korean Christian Federation from the North.

The "NCCK 100th Anniversary Ecumenical Worship of Thanks" took place on 22 September at Yeondong Presbyterian Church in Seoul, with 700 participants from

NCCK member churches and representing churches and ecumenical partners from around the world.

The CWM delegation also participated in a Sunday worship service on 22 September at YakSoo Presbyterian Church, where CWM Trustee Rev. Dr Wonbin Park serves as senior pastor.



First CWM Archives Webinar Shows Archival Capabilities and Depth

The
Council
for World
Mission

Archives
SOAS LIBRARY

To formally introduce the Council for World Mission (CWM) archives, highlight the depth of its resources and capabilities as well as to demonstrate to the various member churches how to remotely access the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) Library Catalogue, the CWM Archive Catalogue and the CWM digitised archives, a series of three webinars were organised.

The first, focused on the African, Caribbean, and European member churches, was conducted on 24 September.

Led by CWM Archivist, Jo Ichimura, the 41 participants from the region's member churches as well as ecumenical and academic partners were given a comprehensive briefing on the archives, which have been located at the SOAS Library in the University of London, since 1973.

The one-hour webinar spotlighted the archives' collection that forms a unique resource for the study of the global spread of the Christian faith over the last 200 years. The materials are accessed by academic researchers, family historians, churches, and communities from around the world.

The archives also provide a repository for a myriad of historical documents and artifacts that span the entire history of CWM from its foundation in the London Missionary Society in 1795, to the creation of CWM in 1977 and its early decades.

Participants were also given a glimpse into the vastness of the archives that comprise over 3,000 curated and preserved boxes of letters, diaries, reports, minutes, photographs, and maps, in addition to a sprawling library of printed books, pamphlets, periodicals, vernacular texts, and translations.

The next CWM Archives webinar will be conducted on 22 October at 2 p.m. (Singapore time). More details for registration and the event link will be shared closer to the date via the CWM website and social media platforms.

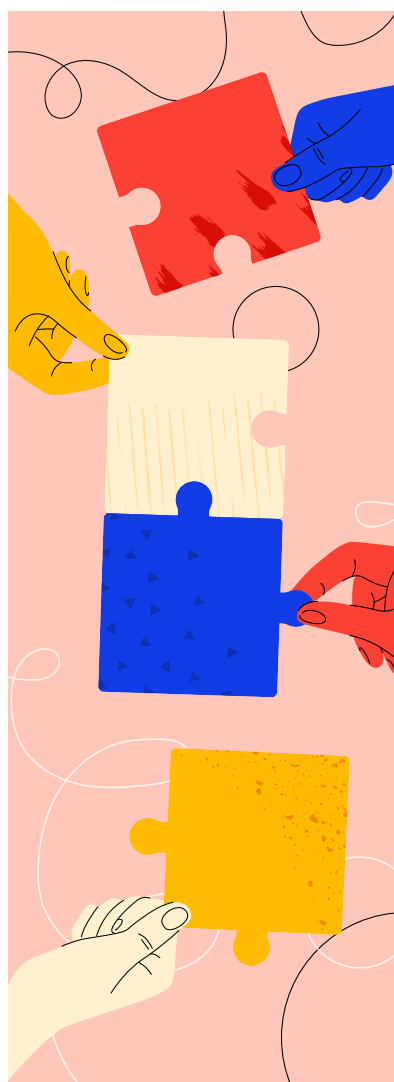




CWM Mission Support Programme Deepens Collaboration With European Churches

The Mission Support Programme unit of the Council for World Mission (CWM) recently embarked on a visit from 15-25 September to the five member churches located in the Europe region.

The churches visited were the Congregational Federation, Presbyterian Church of Wales, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, Union of Welsh Independents, and United Reformed Church. Located in Nottingham, Cardiff, Utrecht, Swansea, and London respectively, the churches form a valuable link and serve as contact points for CWM's missional programmes in the region.





The visit was also an opportunity church leaders to meet with the Mission Support Programme team, including Rev. Julie Sim, CWM Mission Secretary for Mission Programme and Partnership; and Stephen Chia, Mission Support Programme Project Manager.

“The trip was a much-needed one that allowed CWM to fully engage with our European churches on the ground and listen and learn from their varied, local contexts. Doing so will only serve to improve our capabilities to provide support and accompaniment to these member churches,” explained Chia.

One of the key objectives of the visit was to establish a channel of clear communication with the five member churches and provide a platform for them to better understand the work of CWM related to mission support while also enabling the Mission Support Programme delegation to receive updates on the ongoing projects with which the churches have been engaging.

Member churches offered suggestions for various upcoming CWM mission programmes and gave input on areas of collaboration such as the Partners-in-Mission programme.

European member churches shared their many challenges, including difficulties in engaging local educational institutions reluctant to work with faith-based entities, aging congregations and ministerial staff,

possible human resource exchanges, and matters pertaining to outreach and the development of new ways to “do church.”

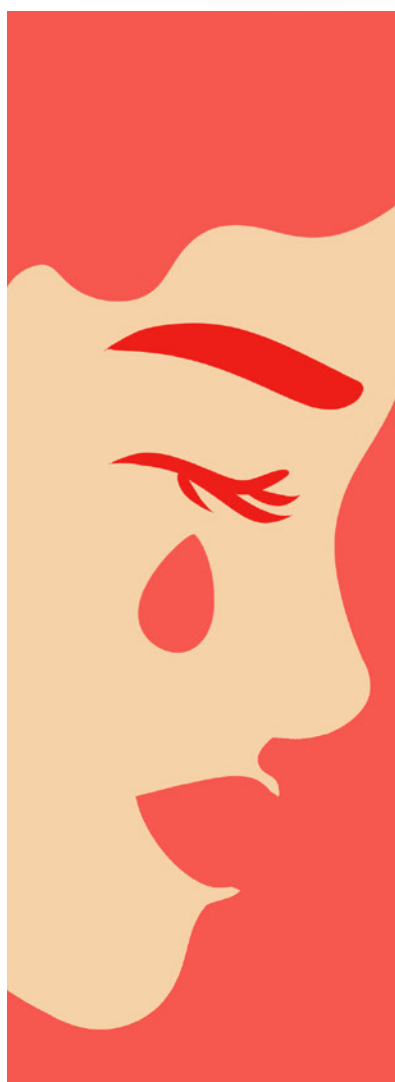
“Through our various meetings, we have consistently communicated to our member churches that no church is too big to receive nor too small to contribute,” said Sim, who also introduced the “50 Mission Stories by 2027” project being organised in celebration of CWM’s 50th anniversary. CWM will invite member churches to share impactful mission stories through any media type including but not limited to text, podcasts, or videos.



Gender and Militarisation Conference: While Men Die on Battlefields, Women Endure War's Aftermath

In the face of many global conflicts, the effects of militarisation and militarism are most keenly felt by the most vulnerable in society – the women and children. Women, in particular, are forced to deal with loss and violence, both psychological and sexual.

"[Women] always incur the first wave of violence as well as the final one," as observed by feminist scholar Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian in 2009.



Taking a stand against the evils of militarisation and the life-denying ways of militarism, women from different conflict zones in the world gathered in Juba, South Sudan as part of the Gender and Militarisation Conference organised by the Council for World Mission (CWM), in partnership with the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

The gathering, which took place 24-28 September with eight panel sessions, served as a platform for the gathering of minds and voices of female survivors who spoke out against Empire, domination and subjugation related to warfare, and the weaponisation of sexuality.

The event decried the various machinations deployed by Empire as exemplified by the USA as it prolongs conflicts, arms nations against nations, and begins new sparks of warfare to gain influence, wealth, and power.

Shining a spotlight on the intersections between gender, sexuality, and war, the conference examined closely the debilitating, crippling, and dehumanising effects that women have been made to suffer. These include glorifying toxic masculinity by forging men to be the protectors and women as the protected—but only of women on the side of the oppressors, making those on the opposing lines fair game for rape, torture and violence.

Conversations also focused on caste hierarchies which create cruel social and political structures in India that then form the backbone of the spirit of militarisation and militarism in the state. Anecdotes also touched on the plights of war widows, women who are forced to become sex workers, and the conscription of women into military service under the guise of gender empowerment.

Even female spouses and partners of soldiers are not spared from the evils of Empire as they endure marital rape and domestic abuse. In countries where the military service of men becomes the only means of income in impoverished countries, marital rape becomes a means of survival for women.

The anecdotes shared also exposed the eulogising of women as producers of war heroes, leading them to bear the pain of loss as a sacrifice and national virtue. To publicly state that their sons chose to join the military as

the only viable way of sustaining the family is viewed as unpatriotic while mothers whose sons and daughters gave their lives to resisting the powers are treated with disdain by the racial hierarchy and imperial power.

Yet the 23 female participants comprised of church leaders, activists, academics and ecumenical partners also displayed their unbowed spirits by testifying their unending quest for life in abundance and true faith.

CWM Shares and Affirms CEVAA's Vision to Inhabit Creation Differently

CEVAA member churches in the southern Africa and Indian Ocean regions co-organised a seminar entitled "Inhabit Creation Differently" from 23-27 September in Madagascar. The seminar equipped CEVAA member

churches with integral skills and abilities to respond to pressing issues concerning climate care and justice within their own contexts.

CEVAA is a community of Protestant churches in mission, created in 1971 in Paris. Currently, the organisation is a partnership of 35 member churches spread across 24 countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific.

The Council for World Mission (CWM) was also at the event as an ecumenical partner, a display of



support for CEVAA's goal to foster and cultivate a spirit of creation care that is biblically aligned.

The move to cultivate an awareness for and the urgency to galvanise church-based actions towards creation care is made in the face of an African continent that faces significant environmental challenges including deforestation, soil erosion, climate change, and the exploitation of natural resources. These crises, driven by global economic systems, cast a shadow of threat that stands to disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.

The discussion on eco-theology thus becomes ever more pertinent as it provides a theological response to such environmental issues, focusing on the interconnectedness of creation and human responsibility toward nature.

CWM Mission Secretary for Ecology and Economy and the Africa Region, Rev. Daimon Mkandawire, was a speaker at the seminar.

In his presentation, "Moving Towards an Africa eco-theology," Mkandawire reminded the 24 CEVAA member church representatives of the ingrained African Indigenous psyche that viewed the land as sacred, and its desecration was understood as a disruption of the cosmic order.

"The earth, water, animals, and plants were treated with reverence, with an emphasis on sustainability and balance. This ecological ethic, rooted in community life and spiritual responsibility, laid the foundation for a harmonious relationship between people and nature," explained Mkandawire.

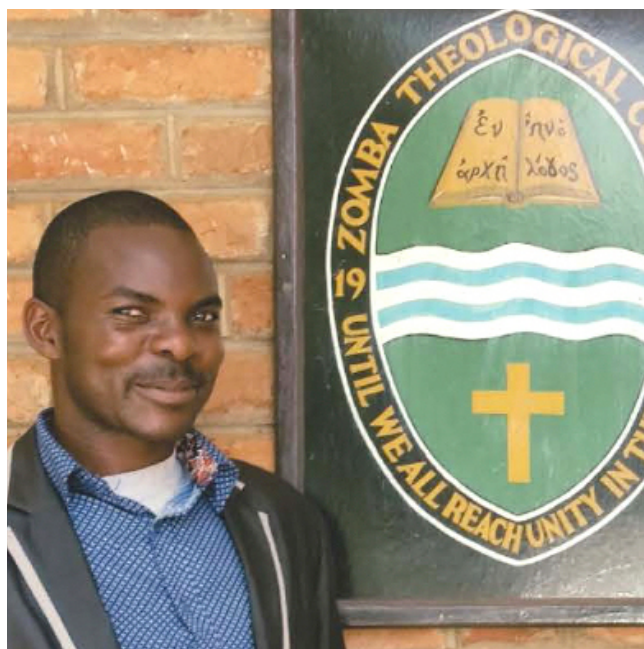
"Creation care, therefore, resonates with Indigenous beliefs about the sacredness of the land and the interconnectedness of all life. By integrating these beliefs with biblical theology, African eco-theology offers a framework for ecological justice that affirms the dignity of the earth and the responsibility of humanity to protect it," he added.

Following his presentation, Mkandawire also presented a book on decolonizing eco-theology, published by CWM, to the General Secretary of CEVAA, Rev. Claudia Schulz,



cementing CWM's commitment in working alongside CEVAA in areas of creation care and eco-justice, opening the door to future collaborations between the two institutions.

"Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum's leadership of CWM is inspiring and CEVAA is honoured and grateful for the presence of Rev. Daimon in the seminar. We look forward to working together in the future in delivering effective programmes to our communities and churches," said Schulz.



ZOMBA THEOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Master of Theology in Contextual Theology (Faith and Political Renewal)

CWM Partners With Zomba Theological University in New Masters Programme

The Council for World Mission (CWM) has announced its partnership with Malawi's Zomba Theological University in the launch of the Master of Theology in Contextual Theology (Faith and Political Renewal) programme.

The collaboration marks a significant milestone in CWM's ongoing "Theology of Life" initiative where the pressing concerns about the exploitative nature of current economic systems are addressed while fostering a faith-inspired renewal of political life across various levels.

The initiative stands as a progeny of the "New International Financial and Economic Architecture" educational model established from 2015 to 2019. Since

then, the model has undergone further development and refinement with the birth of a new curriculum, the "Theological Education for the Economy of Life," of which the Masters programme is also a part.

Through the Masters programme, students can expect to be on the cutting edge of research and schools of thought that delve into the role of politics as the primary force shaping a nation's socio-economic landscape.

The course will also seek to provide alternative forms of theological reflection, focusing on global systems that perpetuate political, economic, and ecological injustices.

Additionally, it aims to foster a faith-inspired renewal of political life at the global, national, and local levels with special attention given to the African context, with a particular focus on Malawi.

Graduates will acquire skills to organise movements and drive societal changes through challenging dominant and destructive forces.

Zomba Theological University is also accredited by the Malawian National Council for Higher Education, which ensures that its degrees and certificates will be well recognised within the country and beyond.

"I believe this programme is crucial for the times we live in, as it not only provides theological reflection but also practical tools for socio-economic and political transformation," said Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of CWM.

With a finger on the pulse of modern educational developments, the course is being offered as a fully online

programme. Successful applicants will also be offered a CWM scholarship to help support their needs in managing the costs involved in their studies. The programme will also open only ten slots per academic year.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Prof. Kenneth R. Ross at kross@zombatheological.org or Rev. Brian Theu at registrar@zombatheological.org for more information.



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Faith and Eco-Justice Workshop Sounds Call for Stronger Environmental Advocacy

The South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) hosted a workshop from 27-29 August that sought to enhance environmental advocacy, bringing together faith leaders, activists, and community members to explore the theme, "Healing Earth: Healing Humanity."

As a member of SAFCEI, an entity established to empower faith communities to act on environmental issues and foster interfaith dialogues, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) was in attendance in a show of support and solidarity with local faith-based groups.

Opening the workshop, Rev. Mthobisi Wellington Sibanda, UCCSA's Head of Internal Communications, reflected on Psalm 24:1, the sacredness of creation, and humanity's responsibility to care for the environment.

Addressing South Africa's Environmental Woes and Challenges

A key part of the workshop laid in the discussions and dialogues surrounding the government's stance on nuclear energy. As South Africa grapples with energy challenges, the risks associated with nuclear power are becoming increasingly apparent.

Coming together with a unified purpose, participants engaged in a lively debate on the potential implications of nuclear energy on both the environment and public health.

Participants engaged in advocacy training, community mapping, and



group discussions on climate challenges. The collaborative spirit fostered by SAFCEI allowed attendees to share success stories and lessons learned, creating an environment for growth and collective action.

There was also an urgent clarion call sounded on the need for faith-based, and faith community-led actions on climate change, as South Africa is already experiencing the brunt of its far-reaching negative effects. These include increasingly frequent extreme weather events that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.

Throughout the workshop was a consistent cry for the country to move away from its heavy reliance on fossil fuels that contributes significantly to its carbon footprint.

Participants also examined the intersection of climate change with sustainable food systems and food security.

A deeper discussion was formed around the principles of agro-ecology as participants learned about community-based initiatives that harmonize with natural ecosystems, enhancing food security and resilience to climate change impacts.





Church of Bangladesh Calls for Prayer Amid National Crisis

In response to the ongoing turmoil in Bangladesh, the Church of Bangladesh has issued an urgent call for global prayer.

Most Rev. Samuel S. Mankhin, Moderator and Bishop of Dhaka, has urged people to pray for peace and stability in the nation. The church's appeal highlights several key points for prayer, including wisdom and compassion for government leaders, the safety and protection of all citizens, and the restoration of communication and internet access.

The church also asked for prayers for the healing and comfort of those who have lost loved ones and for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum reaffirmed solidarity with the Church of Bangladesh. "We encourage all our member churches and partners to join in prayer for the Church of Bangladesh in these difficult times."

The following is the letter from the Church of Bangladesh:

Dear Mission Partners and Well-Wishers,

Greetings.

The Government of Bangladesh is currently facing unexpected and unprecedented challenges, which you may be aware of. As a result, we are all experiencing significant difficulties and uncertainties about our future. Tragically, hundreds of people have lost their lives, and our communication with you has been severely restricted. Internet access has been limited and slowed down,

and millions of protesters are demanding the government's immediate resignation.

Today, a nationwide curfew has been imposed and will remain in effect until peace is restored.

In these trying times, we earnestly seek your prayers for several key points:

1. **Peace and Stability:** Please pray for peace and stability in our country. The ongoing unrest has caused widespread fear and anxiety among our people. We pray for an end to violence and for a peaceful resolution to the current crisis.
2. **Government Leadership:** Pray for our government leaders to have wisdom, courage, and compassion as they navigate through these challenging times. We ask for divine guidance to help them make decisions that will lead to reconciliation and healing.
3. **Safety and Protection:** Pray for the safety and protection of all citizens, especially those who are most vulnerable. The curfew and limited access to resources have made daily life extremely difficult for many.
4. **Communication and Connectivity:** Pray for the restoration of communication and internet access. The ability to stay connected with our mission partners and the global community is crucial for support and solidarity.
5. **Healing and Comfort:** Pray for the families and communities who have lost loved ones. May they find comfort and strength in the midst of their grief.
6. **Faith and Unity:** Pray for the Church of Bangladesh and all faith communities to remain united and strong. Let us be a beacon of hope and love, supporting each other and those in need during these dark times.

We believe in the power of prayer and the strength of our global community. Your support and prayers are invaluable to us as we navigate these challenges. Together, we can work towards a brighter, more peaceful future for Bangladesh. Please pray for the peace of Bangladesh.



Scan the QR code below to
download the full letter.





Council for World Mission Ltd.

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

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

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

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