

Education, Formation and Empowerment

We value life-flourishing education

“Rising to life and breaking out from Babylon” are two biblical concepts that have been informing CWM’s approach to understanding God’s mission for us. The two ideas are woven throughout Christian doctrines and shape behaviours in mission and ministry.

1 – Resurrection [rising to life]

In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we find a different approach to living. Because of the resurrection promise, we are not to be afraid of death. Rather, we remember that a grain of seed must die in order for new life to rise. Resurrection is core in Christian faith. When mortal death comes, we welcome this eternal new life in Christ. Even the very act of Baptism is a dying to self and a rising to Godly life. We actually begin our eternal relationship in this earthly life.

The resurrected Body of Christ, the Church, has the mission to continue God’s work on earth. We learn. We teach. We are healed. We heal. We forgive. We are forgiven. Our education needs to form us in these skills and practices, helping us to become fit as a body to do this work.

2: Liberation [breaking out from Babylon]

Babylon was one of the places where the people of Israel experienced dislocation and displacement, forced labour (slavery) and exile. Babylon was the place people were taken to when their homeland was overcome and occupied. Babylon was a place of captivity, where Israelite language, culture, religion and identity, were constantly under threat. It was a region and period of war and conquest, with Israel being subject to the powers around it. When we hear the names of the Empires, Babylon and Persia, we are meant to think of conquest and oppression, occupation and displacement.

The story of Babylon, like the story of exile in Egypt, outlines centuries of oppression, and contributes to shaping a theology of liberation. We talk today of being liberated by Christ. It is Jesus who frees us from the consequences of sin and challenges those things that oppress and bind us. When Jesus saves, he breaks the chains of our captivity to sin. He is guided by the prophet Isaiah, quoting...

Luke 4:18-19

*“The Spirit of our God is upon me: because the Most High
has anointed me to bring Good News to those who are poor.
God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive,
recovery of sight to those who are blind, and release to those in prison—
to proclaim the year of our God’s favour.”*

Attentive study of the bible guides our missional thinking today. The good news (gospel) is that God wants life for us. God's intention for us and for all creation is goodness and flourishing. As we die to sin, we are invited to rise to life-flourishing. Our CWM Education philosophy is that education should be geared towards this flourishing of life. We learn to live in the ways God intends. We learn to influence the world to live out God's calling to us.

Formation for Mission and Ministry – energized by Scripture

We learn both formally (courses) and informally (experiences) as we engage with our environments and times. Faith allows us to re-read life through God's stories. Study, alongside the spiritual disciplines of prayer and service, helps us to grow in wisdom. The combination forms us for discipleship. As disciples, we engage in public witness, in our public worship, our social advocacy and in our charitable service.

Christian doctrines form the theological threads that weave communities of faith together and serve as lenses to see, understand, and engage in the world. However, some doctrines inherited from the past were also used to perpetuate domination, exclusion, and subjugation. When we recognise that even the devil quotes scripture, we see the need to critique how Bible passages and doctrines have been used. The weaving together, of education and disciplined Christian life, allows us to review and refine doctrines and claim new life. We measure theoretical ideas, against Jesus' demonstrations of behaviours, to see if our current practices are shaped by a healthy reading of scripture or if our cultural habits and preferences are distorting our understandings.

Con-text can be translated as "with the words". Contextual study is about reading the scriptures within the situation in which they were written AND reading in our own situations. It is about recognising the influence and impact of societies and settings that interact with the text. Jesus is able to correct distortions and misinterpretations by placing particular passages alongside the great themes in the scriptures (meta-narratives) and shows how they play out in the context of real life.

As students of scripture, we have a responsibility to be mindful of both the verses in front of us AND the broader themes. The more we study the scriptures, the more links and layers of meaning we discover. Theological education, however, does not exist for its own ends. It provides us with tools, methods and ingredients. The Holy Spirit forms us for mission and ministry, breathing into and inspiring the learnings so they can be embodied in our lives.

Instead of being ruled by the values of the world, God invites us to become part of God's own family. We become part of the KIN-dom of God (or the KIN-dom of Heaven/Resurrection). To do this, we need to be de-colonized from the world and brought into the citizenship of the People of God. We die to the old and rise to new life. We come back to (the promise of) Heaven after our (worldly) exile in Babylon. We become, together, the new resurrected Body of Christ.

The calling of Christ is to proclaim God's good news, serve God's world, show God's love, challenge injustice, make peace and heal, create and tend to creation. As Christ's Body, Christians are formed to do these works. We are not just saved from sin. We are also saved for the ongoing mission of God. We become God's missionary people, hands and feet, hearts and minds, ready to do God's work.

Formation includes practical community living, social analysis, learning God's revelation among Indigenous communities, and participation in the campaigns and struggles to dismantle systems of oppression (Babylon). Formation also includes the development of competencies to engage in missional work. Physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual health and well-being all contribute to formation in discipleship. Formation for mission and ministry will integrate different styles of learnings and build the capacity of people to respond to God's call.

Recognizing that we all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), we undertake education and formation with an attitude of faith. We ask God to open us up to God's own wisdom and power. There is no need for us to 'suffer from imposter syndrome' as we learn to become vehicles for the Holy spirit to operate in the world. We do not work miracles ourselves, but by God's grace we may bear witness to what God does around us. We can become people who rely on the Spirit. We can pray in humility that we might be part of God's great purposes. We do not set the mission agenda for God, rather, we look at the whole of God's mission and discover which part of it God is calling us to participate in.

Empowerment through Programmes

CWM education strategies serve to empower individuals and communities. Building capacity becomes a starting point and is followed up by application of learning. By empowering people to act on what they have learnt we are activating mission. Mission is both sending and receiving. Education is fuel for both.

1. AAP / SAAP [Academic Accompaniment Programme]

AAP provides for further education. Such opportunities are used by member churches to:

- Build up or upgrade a theological faculty
- Develop new leaders
- Acquire specific skills for emerging challenges in mission

Generally, preference is given for local courses (i.e. in country and, where in country is not available, in region). Courses beyond the local region may be considered where the programme of study is not available in the region and it is demonstrably important to the mission plan of the local member church. These may be referred to the Special Academic Accompaniment Programme [SAAP].

More about AAP

Breadth and Depth of Community Learning

- Special consideration is given to women, young and emerging leaders and lay leaders. Specifically, fifty percent (50%) of AAP funds will be earmarked for women, with at least every second programme participant from a member church being a woman.
- Generally, applicants should have demonstrated aptitude by completion of a first level of study. Post-graduate and doctoral studies are strongly encouraged. [The exception to this will be where the member church seeks to educate a disadvantaged or under-represented group of leaders.]
- Preference will be given to applicants whose courses are not traditionally chosen but whose study will be beneficial for the member church's missional engagement.

APPLICATION closing dates

Tuesday 15 August 2023	[for November Board]
Tuesday 14 March 2024	[for June Board]
Tuesday 13 August 2024	[for November Board]
Tuesday 11 March 2025	[for June Board]

LINK to AAP Online Application - <https://forms.gle/dNmpHGGgLRmduHeW7>

LINK to Member Church Endorsement - <https://forms.gle/xbnbnK4WBRN1KZds6>

LINK to Medical Report Form - <https://forms.gle/NUhUBiDGZnGmy7XcA>

SAAP offers Masters and Doctorate programmes to promote academic excellence in in partnership with selected renowned academic institutions. SAAP also helps to promote different study/research projects (short / long term) relevant to emerging challenges in mission. Individuals, endorsed by a Member Church and those endorsed by an Ecumenical partner church or organization may apply.

THREE categories are available:

Category A – from a Member Church [but not qualifying for AAP]

Category B – from an Ecumenical Partner [Church or Organization]

Category C – Specialist Missiological Research

Link to SAAP Online Application - <https://forms.gle/RgrnxwFF6BLih6Fp6>

LINK to Church Endorsement - <https://forms.gle/xbnbnK4WBRN1KZds6>

LINK to Medical Report Form - <https://forms.gle/NUhUBiDGZnGmy7XcA>

2. MCI

Member Church Initiatives

This Programme facilitates capacity development of the member churches through offering opportunities for people engaged in mission to undertake short-term, skills-oriented training, or learning from experiences. There are wide ranges of schemes and possible methods for this, including but not limited to:

- On-the-job training by advisers, consultants, experts, etc. in the respective work or living environment

- Learning by doing in the respective work and living environment, accompanied by specific training measures and advice,
- Ready-made or tailor-made training programmes for the dissemination of specific know-how and abilities
- Linking local learners by networking of local actors
- Participation in workshops for the exchange of information and experiences.
- These opportunities might be used to:
 - Offer financial or management training to a newly-appointed church officer
 - Improve presentation or media skills training
 - Provide Project management training
 - Train for advocacy and public policy
 - Provide human rights training
- Visits between churches, enabling the sharing of experiences and learning about a particular programme or activity in another church with a view to implementing something similar in one's own context
- Facilitate exposure/live in experience to new life-threatening situations which have missional challenges
- Involve and engage youth in the church's mission programme and enable young people to play a fuller part in the life of the church
- Engage with children as part of their mission priorities
- Address issues of Rights of the children.
- Empower women in ways that affirm their contribution to leadership
- Give voice to women's spirituality and theology
- Address issues of gender inequality in the church and society

Group Skills Development courses may also be delivered – e.g. A locally-delivered course to develop skills of church-related-workers in a particular field or promote awareness on a core missional issue, as identified by the member church.

THE MCI is available for annual application by Member Churches. Funds must be used within the calendar year of application. Travel and accommodation (if any) should take up no more than 40% of the overall budget. MCI applications are usually developed in consultation with a CWM staff person allocated to their region.

Applications close September 30 each year.

3. TIM / Face2Face / A New Face

TIM Training in Mission

TIM is open to young adults with Christian maturity and a sense of adventure and discovery. TIMs are usually emerging leaders, recognised by their denominational churches as having particular potential for serving in mission settings in or on behalf of their home church. TIM is designed to nurture and form missional leaders who will live a mission-oriented life, serving in a variety of capacities in the decades ahead of them. Many TIMs go on to have

varied careers in church and mission work or in global development settings. TIMs develop resilience, a can-do attitude and value teamwork.

TIMs now undertake a 6-week Diploma in Mission. This forms the first stage of a six-month immersion experience, allowing theory to be put into practice. They undertake a range of Mission Projects, developing project management skills and working in a variety of communities. Participants do First Aid training and biblical storytelling. They participate in various regional youth initiative programmes.

In 2023, the two Youth initiative programmes are in Tuvalu, the Pacific, and in Kingston, Jamaica. The first is on ecology and economy, especially climate justice. The second is on The Onesimus Project, which includes studies about the Legacies of Slavery and Modern-day slavery, racism, peacemaking and reconciliation.

“Setting off on a missionary journey takes faith. It stretches us. We have excitement and anxiety. We anticipate, yet, we are called to maintain a calm aura of trust in God. We know in our heads that God is faithful under all circumstances, but now we must experience that same faith in the depths of our souls.”

For more information about TIM 2023, please see the TIM’s blog:

<https://cwmtim2023.blogspot.com/>

LINK to Church Endorsement - <https://forms.gle/xbnbnK4WBRN1KZds6>

LINK to Medical Report Form - <https://forms.gle/NUhUBiDGZnGmy7XcA>

Face2Face

Face2Face aims to facilitate immersion, bible studies and seminars for participants to reflect on mission in a post-colonial context, and engage in a global dialogue on theology, spirituality and mission. Through the six-week programme, current and recently graduated theological students will encounter the lived realities of local multi-faith communities, reflect on the motivation and method of mission in different parts of the world, and bring this reflection back to their own contexts.

After a series of exposure visits and thematic sessions on various religious practices and understandings, students are expected to contribute towards the development of a global network of young theologians, regularly update reflections on websites and social media, and offer local students and communities the richness of inter-cultural exchange.

In 2023 Face2Face will focus on “Building Life-Affirming Communities: peace-making in places of inequality and plurality”. It will take place in Nagpur and Delhi in India from 20 September to 29 October.

Applications for the 2024 Programme should be available by April 2023.

LINK to Church Endorsement - <https://forms.gle/xbnbnK4WBRN1KZds6>

LINK to Medical Report Form - <https://forms.gle/NUhUBiDGZnGmy7XcA>

ANF A New Face – 2023-2024- an opportunity for New Female Faces

A New Face recognises that the face of ordained ministry is constantly changing. Pastoral and ecclesial leaders require a range of skills to function in a rapidly changing world.

A New Face [2023 Cohort] is open to ordained women with demonstrated leadership capacity. She must be interested in exploring mission issues in international and multicultural contexts; able to relate well with others and mature enough to cope with stress; and committed to sharing the experience in a mentoring relationship with other women upon returning home. Ideally, she must have completed a first degree and preferably other further development. English proficiency is an advantage, as this is the language of communication of the Programme.

To better explore the possibilities of feminine faces of leadership, we will look at how women make leadership contributions in different cultural settings. We will explore how women can develop networks that are culturally sensitive and bless the local context. Over two years (3 weeks + 3 weeks), participants will meet women from different cultural contexts. In between, participants will identify and record women's leadership stories from their own cultures to be able to share with the cohort. In the second gathering, the first cohort will be asked to mentor a second cohort.

During the first gathering (14 ordained women), the focus will be on:

- Women leaders in the Bible
- Heroines, Harlots and Texts of Terror
- Hermeneutics of Suspicion and Generosity
- Women leaders in the local community, work and family [we are currently exploring the possibility of staying with indigenous villagers in Taiwan]
- Women as role models and Mentors
- Our stories
- Encounters with Feminist, Womanist and Post-colonial theology
- Designing what we want to share with other women

During the second gathering (14 from the first cohort, to be joined by 14 emerging women leaders), the focus will be on:

- Sharing Wisdom and Corporate Discernment in mentoring relationships
- Comparative cultures of women in leadership
- Women overcoming obstacles in the Bible and the local community [tbc venue - we are currently exploring options for local engagement]
- Encountering models of Women's collective leadership
- Womanist Communities, Women in Ministry Networks, the 'Me too' movement
- Vulnerable Leadership
- Developing Women in Church Leadership Goals and Action Plans

Applications close on August 5, 2023.

Link to ANF Online Application Form - <https://forms.gle/cp11bABNH7PM7Q1So8>

LINK to Church Endorsement - <https://forms.gle/xbnbnK4WBRN1KZds6>

LINK to Medical Report Form - <https://forms.gle/NUhUBiDGZnGmy7XcA>

Revisioning Educational Ministry

One of the legacies of the missionary movement is the educational institutions established in the colonies. In some cases, these were designed to empower indigenous communities, with schooling systems were designed to include and serve marginalized communities. In such instances, we can celebrate indigenous theologies, as people describe how God is revealed and working in the local setting. However, the nature of colonization has often meant that education systems in colonized societies has oppressed local poor at the expense of colonizing powers. In these cases, the indigenous voices have often been silenced or unheard. God is regarded as an import. Jesus Christ is depicted as remaining in the image of the colonizer, rather than seeing God revealed in the images of both colonizer and colonized.

To embrace a broader global understanding of formation for mission, CWM is thinking GLocally (both globally and locally). You will notice that most of our programmes have two core elements: 1) being based in a particular place for a particular time, and 2) facilitating the interactions of people from around the world in a short-term intentional community. We think about the particular context in which we are temporarily placed and how this speaks to our varied contexts, together helping us to gain insights about worldwide issues and concerns.

In addition to programmes, we are involved with global communities:

a. ***Theologians without Borders*** is a community of socially engaged theologians committed to accompanying the theological institutions and churches in the Global South to facilitate life-flourishing education.

b. ***Service, Witness and Worship*** - Ministry of Service (*DIAKONIA*) the Word and Sacrament (*LOGOS*) is central to the vocation of the Church. However, it is important to decolonize the altar and pulpit and transform them as spaces that inspire the church to “rising to life and breaking out from Babylon.”