

World Communion of Reformed Churches  
Executive Committee  
5-12 May 2011  
Geneva, Switzerland

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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Thanks go to Páraic Réamonn, recording secretary, and all the recorders of the various group meetings, as well as to Penny Blachut for her able assistance.

*Kristine Greenaway, Executive Secretary for Communications*

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **President**

Rev. Dr Jerry Pillay (Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa)

### **Vice-Presidents**

Mr Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz (Presbyterian Church of Colombia)

Ms Yueh-Wen Lu (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)

Rev. Dr Bas Plaisier (Protestant Church in the Netherlands)

### **Treasurer**

Rev. Dr Gottfried Locher (Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches)

### **Members of the Executive Committee**

Rev. Dr Peter Borgdorff (Christian Reformed Church in North America)

Mr Allan Buckingham (United Church of Canada)

Rev. Dr Peter Bukowski (Reformed Alliance, Germany)

Rev. Dr Yang-En Cheng (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)

Rev. Mary Fontaine (Presbyterian Church in Canada)

Dr Kobus Gerber (Dutch Reformed Church, South Africa)

Ms Yael Eka Hadiputeri (Indonesian Christian Church)

Rev. Jan-Gerd Heetderks (Protestant Church in the Netherlands)

Mrs Najla Kassab Abou Sawan (National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon)

Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick (Presbyterian Church (USA))

Rev. Clayton Leal da Silva (Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil)

Rev. Subha Singh Majaw (Presbyterian Church of India)

Rev. Cheryl Meban (Presbyterian Church in Ireland)

Elder Cheh Liang Mok (Presbyterian Church in Malaysia)

Ms Veronica Njoki Muchiri (Presbyterian Church of East Africa)

Rev. Dr Elisée Musemakweli (Presbyterian Church in Rwanda)

Rev. Gradye Parsons (Presbyterian Church (USA))

Rev. Neal Presa (Presbyterian Church (USA))

Rev. Carola Tron Urban (Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Uruguay)

Rev. Salome Twum Ofori Danquah (Presbyterian Church of Ghana)

### **Advisers**

Ms Robyn Ellen Goodwin

Rev. Yong-Kyu Kang

Rev. Dr William T. Koopmans

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**Consultants**

Rev. Stephen Kendall

Rev. Stephens Lytch

**WCRC UN Representative**

Rev. Mark Koenig

**Strategic Planning Team Moderator**

Ms Omega Bula

**Representatives of some member churches and sister organizations**

Father Gregory Fairbanks, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican

Rev. Karen Thompson, United Church of Christ, USA

**WCRC Staff**

Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, General Secretary

Ms Kristine Greenaway

Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

Rev. Dr Douwe Visser

Mr Yueh Cho

Mrs Penny Blachut

Mrs Daphne Gnanadason Martin

**Interpreters**

Rev. Carlos Sintado

Mr Manuel Quintero

**Recorder**

Rev. Páraic Réamonn

## CORE GROUPS

### **Theology, Mission and Communion**

Bas Plaisier (Moderator)  
Peter Bukowski  
Yang-en Cheng  
Kobus Gerber  
Yael Hadiputeri  
Najla Kassab  
William T. Koopmans  
Gottfried Locher  
Elisée Musemakweli  
Gradye Parsons  
Neal Presa  
Carola Tron Urban

### **Justice and Partnership**

Yueh-Wen Lu (Co-moderator)  
Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz  
(Co-moderator)  
Mary Fontaine

Jan-Gerd Heetderks  
Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Clayton Leal da Silva  
Veronica Muchiri  
*Absent (with apology)*  
Subha Singh Majaw

### **Communication**

Peter Borgdorff (Moderator)  
Alan Buckingham  
Yong Kyu Kang  
Stephens Lytch  
Cheryl Meban  
Cheh Liang Mok  
Salome Twum Ofori Danquah  
*Absent (with apology)*  
Yvette Noble Bloomfield  
(Moderator)  
Allen Nafuki

## COMMITTEES

### **Finance**

Gottfried Locher (Moderator)  
Stephen Kendall  
Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Yueh-Wen Lu  
Stephens Lytch  
Cheh Liang Mok  
Veronica Muchiri

### **Membership, Constitution and Bylaws**

Cheryl Meban (Moderator)  
Peter Borgdorff  
Yael Hadiputeri  
Gradye Parsons  
Neal Presa  
Elisée Musemakweli  
Carola Tron Urban

*Absent (with apology)*  
Allen Nafuki

### **Partnership Fund**

Kobus Gerber (Moderator)  
Najla Kassab  
Clayton Leal da Silva  
Bas Plaisier  
Salome Twum

### **Personnel**

Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz  
Gottfried Locher  
Yueh-Wen Lu  
Setri Nyomi  
Bas Plaisier  
*Absent (with apology)*  
Yvette Noble Bloomfield

Executive Committee 2011

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM**

### **Facilitator**

Omega Bula (Canada/Zambia)

### **Members**

Peter Borgdorff (USA)

Allan Buckingham (Canada – Youth)

Clifton Kirkpatrick (USA)

Cheryl Meban (United Kingdom)

Cheh Liang Mok (Malaysia)

Setri Nyomi (General Secretary)

Jerry Pillay (President)

Bas Plaisier (The Netherlands)

Carola Tron Urban (Uruguay)

## **TIMETABLE**

### **Theme: "A Communion committed to Justice"**

#### **Wednesday, May 4**

19.00 – 21.00            Officers meeting

#### **Thursday, May 5**

08.30 – 09.00            Opening worship  
09.00 – 10.30            Opening actions and orientation to the WCRC  
11.00 – 12.30            Address of the President  
13.30 – 15.30            Strategic planning session 1  
16.00 – 17.30            Strategic planning session 2  
19:00 – 21:00            Introductions, news from churches, nations  
and regions, followed by a time of prayer

#### **Friday, May 6**

08:30 – 08.50            Morning worship  
09.00 – 10.30            Strategic planning reports to plenary  
11.00 – 12.30            Core groups – briefing by executive staff:  
Communications, Justice, Theology  
14.00 – 15.30            Core groups  
16.00 – 17.30            Core groups  
19:00 – 21.00            Regional caucuses

#### **Saturday, May 7**

08.30 – 09.00            Worship  
09.00 – 10.30            Strategic planning session 3  
11:00 – 12.30            Report of the General Secretary  
14.00 – 15.30            WCRC Area Council and UN reports  
16:00 – 17.30            Executive Committee in closed session  
19.00 – 21.00            Strategic Planning Team meeting

#### **Sunday, May 8**

11.00 – 12.30            Morning worship in Church of Scotland  
15.00 – 16:00            Area Council representatives meet with  
Officers  
16.30 – 18.00            Committee meetings: Partnership Fund  
Membership, Constitution and Bylaws  
19.00                        Committee meeting: Finance

## Executive Committee 2011

### **Monday, May 9**

08.30 – 09.00	Join Ecumenical Centre worship
09.00	Executive Committee meeting in closed session
10.00	Opportunity to visit the WCRC offices
10.30 – 12.00	Dialogue with the general secretaries of the WCC, the LWF and CEC
13.30 – 15.00	WCRC finances and fundraising
15.00 – 15.30	Core groups to firm up plans for the years 2011 to 2013
16.00 – 17.30	Core groups
19.00 – 21.00	Personnel Committee, WCRC Michigan Foundation trustees

### **Tuesday, May 10**

08:30 – 09.00	Worship
09:00 – 10.30	Reflection on communion and justice
11.00 – 12.00	Groups report back with plenary discussions
15.00	Visit to Old Town, Reformation Museum, Saint Pierre Cathedral, and Auditoire de Calvin
18.00 – 21.00	Evening with the Protestant Church of Geneva

### **Wednesday, May 11**

08.30 – 09.00	Worship
09.00	Committee meetings: Finance, Partnership Fund, Constitution, Membership and Bylaws
11.00 – 12.30	Committee meetings
14.00 – 15.30	Core groups
16.00 – 17.30	Mission and challenges of Swiss churches, with Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
19.00 – 21.00	Officers, WCRC Michigan Foundation trustees

### **Thursday, May 12**

08.30 – 08.50	Worship
09.00 – 10.30	Committee reports
11.00 – 12.15	Executive Committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation
12.15 – 13.00	Any other business
14.30 – 15.15	Closing worship



## **ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### *The Executive Committee*

1. received the Record of Proceedings of the Uniting General Council, with no questions or corrections.
2. received the report of the President (*Document 1*).

### **Strategic Plan**

3. received the report of the Strategic Planning Team (*Document 11*), with gratitude to the facilitator and the members of the group.
4. affirmed the direction of the Strategic Plan and commended it to the member churches, regional councils, and staff of the WCRC as the guiding document for the work of the WCRC until the next General Council.
5. approved a) the vision and mission statements, b) key directions, c) our renewed way of working (methodologies) and d) programme priorities.
6. directed the General Secretary to work with staff, regions, member churches, partners and others to implement the Strategic Plan.
7. requested the regions and member churches to participate actively in implementing the Strategic Plan in their contexts.
8. directed the General Secretary to work with regions in a plan for regional empowerment, to be approved by the Officers within six months. The plan should include a) considering possibilities for adequate human and financial resources (e.g. part-time staff for some regions), b) conversations with churches on appropriate regional structures where there are no regional councils, and c) looking again at the composition of regional councils.
9. directed the core groups of the different operational offices to draw up an action plan to implement the programme priorities related to their area of responsibility.
10. directed the Officers and the Finance Committee to draw up a Financial Plan in line with the Strategic Plan.
11. referred questions of the location of the Secretariat and how it fits into the Strategic Plan to the Officers and asked them to report to the Executive Committee in 2012.
12. instructed the Officers to oversee an evaluation process to ensure the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
13. received the report of the General Secretary (*Document 2*).

## Actions of the Executive Committee 2011

14. received the reports of the regional councils (*Documents 8.1-8.5*).
15. received the report of the United Nations Ministry (*Document 9*).

### **Theology, Mission and Communion**

16. resolved to encourage the theological and missional capacity of the Communion by inspiring and equipping the regions through networking with theologians and through organizing regional consultations.
17. agreed that the Global Institute of Theology (GIT) take place every two years, with the next one scheduled in Indonesia in July 2012.
18. agreed that *Reformed World* focus on regions once a year, with the core group sending suggestions for themes and theological authors, especially young people.
19. agreed that the evaluation of the Reformed-Pentecostal meeting be reported to the Executive Committee through the Theology, Mission and Communion Core Group for approval for the next dialogue.
20. agreed to plan the consultation process of member churches of WCRC for the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification.
21. agreed that the Executive Secretary for Theology, Mission and Communion continue to be involved in the John Knox Programme Commission.
22. agreed that the Executive Secretary for Theology, Mission and Communion and the General Secretary begin planning in consultation with partners the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.
23. a) agreed to develop a network of theologians active within the Reformed community. (This network should consist of persons who are involved in theological reflection in a challenging and contextual way, and some of them should have an expertise in missiology.)  
b) agreed that the core group will become a virtual member of the theological network and serve as an advisory group on Theology, Mission and Communion programmes and priorities.
24. asked the Executive Secretary and the core group to explore how the voices of indigenous people can be included in the theological and missional discourse of WCRC programmes.
25. mandated the Theology, Mission and Communion Core Group to develop and publish theological reflections on what it means to be a Communion, these publications be made available to WCRC members.

## Justice and Partnership

26. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office develop a map of member churches, indicating where there are issues relating to both women's ordination, women in leadership positions as well as issues of gender, power and leadership within member churches, at the same time enabling churches to critically address other gender justice issues.
27. agreed to encourage member churches that do not ordain women to consider doing so, and encouraged WCRC leaders to raise the issue of women's ordination and role in key leadership positions in appropriate ways when visiting member churches. This will be included as a contribution to the mapping initiative by submitting reports to the Justice and Partnership Core Group.
28. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office continue the Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South, especially young women, taking a proactive role through members of the Executive Committee to promote the fund among churches that do not have women or have only few women in the ordained ministry.
29. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office, in collaboration with regional councils, networks, member churches and partners, develop and implement a project on human trafficking and slavery, utilizing the tools of education/conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects.
30. requested and recommended to the regional councils that, in coordination with the Justice and Partnership Office and Network, they continue the work on the promotion of positive masculinity, using the WCRC men and positive masculinity manual, *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership*; and that the manual be translated, in collaboration with the WCC, funds permitting.
31. agreed that a process of dialogue and joint action projects on key (and difficult) justice issues regarding economic justice and climate justice build on the work that has begun in the Caribbean and North America regions (through CANAAC), including immersion and joint action within specific communities and churches; and that this conversation invites/includes the voice of Indigenous North Americans, recognizing the unique and important voices to be heard from this constituency.
32. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office and Network, in cooperation with the WCC and the Council for World Mission, establish a global ecumenical and multidisciplinary commission to develop a process for a Global Ecumenical Conference to propose a framework and criteria for a new international

## Actions of the Executive Committee 2011

financial and economic architecture that promotes justice in the economy and the earth.

33. a) appointed the following as members of the three Justice and Partnership Networks:

### **Gender Justice Network**

1. Yueh-Wen Lu, Taiwan – moderator
2. Veronica Njoki Muchiri, Kenya
3. Majaw Singh, India
4. Robyn Goodwin, Australia
5. Dora Arce, Cuba
6. Benebo Fubara Fubara Manuel, Nigeria
7. Evelyn Martin, Austria (Community of Protestant Churches in Europe)
8. Simone Singh, Trinidad and Tobago
9. Philip Peacock, India
10. Isabel Phiri, Malawi/South Africa
11. Ann Ferguson, USA
12. Middle East representative
13. Pacific Island representative/CWM regional representative
14. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Guyana

### **Covenanting for Justice Network**

1. Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz, Colombia – moderator
2. Clifton Kirkpatrick, USA
3. Clayton Leal Da Silva, Brazil
4. Jan-Gerd Heetderks, the Netherlands
5. Mary Fontaine, Canada
6. Christie Neufeldt, Canada
7. Septemmy Lakawa, Indonesia
8. European Area Council to name a representative
9. Representative of the Federation of Swiss National Churches (FEPS)
10. Puleng LenkaBula, South Africa
11. Rose Teteki Abbey, Ghana
12. CWM representative
13. Rogate Mshana, WCC
14. Peter Vander Meulen, USA

### **Oikotree – Covenanting for Justice Movement (CfJ)**

1. Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz, Colombia, CfJ Moderator
2. Indigenous person (church-related social justice activist)

3. Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership

33. b) agreed to hold a face-to-face meeting of the Justice Network to develop the action plan, including expected roles of members and ways in which the regional councils, seminaries and member churches will participate in developing, implementing and evaluating projects and mobilizing resources; this meeting to be held before the end of the first quarter of 2012, providing the new Executive Secretary is in office.
34. mandated the Justice and Partnership office promote further theological, biblical and liturgical work on justice and encourage similar work in the life of member churches.

**Finance**

35. adopted the audited 2010 accounts.
36. approved the 2012 core budget.
37. retained la Compagnie Fiduciaire de Révision S.A. as the WCRC auditor for 2011.
38. authorized the Officers to constitute an Investment Committee.
39. authorized the Officers to define investment guidelines.
40. assigned Clifton Kirkpatrick to be the additional authorized signatory for the WCRC account at the 5th 3rd Bank.
41. directed the General Secretary to conduct an internal audit and report on the WCRC comprehensive risk profile of the WCRC by 31 December 2011.
42. instructed the General Secretary to submit a comprehensive budget including both core and programme sections, starting next accounting year.
43. endorsed the fundraising strategies as outlined in the Finance Planning paper (*Document 6*).
44. instructed the General Secretary, under the guidance of the Finance Committee, to implement the fundraising strategies as outlined in *Document 6*.
45. appealed to its members to make a personal pledge to the WCRC.
46. referred the question of how to support the regions financially to the Officers.

**Communications**

47. requested the General Secretary to ask the WCC and LWF to provide the funding needed to sustain ENI.
48. agreed a policy of using clear and widely understood language to communicate the objectives and programmes of WCRC.

## Actions of the Executive Committee 2011

49. confirmed the appointment of the following as members of the Communications Advisors Network: Judi Fisher (Australia), Achowah Umenei (Cameroon), Jerry van Marter (USA), Rasoavelonirine Vololoniaina (Madagascar), Lydia Ma (Taiwan), Yael Eka Hadiputeri (Indonesia), Yushi Fujimori (Japan), Thomas Flügge (Switzerland).

### **Constitution, Membership and Bylaws**

50. approved the application for affiliate membership by the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT), Stellenbosch, South Africa.
51. thanked the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NHKA) for the decision at its 69th General Assembly to admit it was wrong to defend apartheid; acknowledged the difficulties currently experienced in the church and agreed to convey the WCRC's commitment to pray for the NHKA; encouraged the NHKA to invite Jerry Pillay and Kobus Gerber (and a third from the South Africa Task Force if needed) to be present at the General Assembly in the fall of 2011 to serve as advisors and facilitators; and resolved that the results of that assembly be reported to the South Africa Task Force for any further follow-up and that the task force report to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at its next meeting.
52. a) established the three-year time requirement baseline of communication from member churches that have neither paid dues nor corresponded with reasons for not paying dues as 18 June 2010, the date of the founding of the WCRC (Constitution VI J. 6.)  
b) agreed that USD500 be considered the minimum membership dues and that any exemption to the minimum be negotiated with a team consisting of the president of the regional council, the WCRC vice-president of the region, and the General Secretary, with any disagreement among the team to be negotiated by the President of the WCRC.
53. approved the constitution and bylaws of WCRC Europe, with the following suggestions for inclusion to be reported to the committee in 2012:
  - a) that language be added to submit the annual audits to the General Secretary of the WCRC (WCRC Bylaws III I).
  - b) that language should be added to state that the election of the Secretary and the Treasurer are subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee of the WCRC (WCRC Constitution XVI E).

54. confirmed all current persons elected as secretaries or treasurers of regional councils; the General Secretary to communicate to all regional councils their responsibility to submit the names of those they elect (WCRC Constitution XVI E).

### **Partnership Fund**

55. raised the limit of the grants from CHF20,000 to CHF30,000.
56. raised the limit for the Emergency Fund from CHF5000 to CHF10,000; the beneficiaries in future will be required to submit a report on how the money was used.
57. noted that the Partnership Fund Committee has asked Douwe Visser and the General Secretary to research how other ecumenical bodies use money from the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) and is very cautious about the fact that the use of EED money could bring WCRC at a point where a development department would need to be registered if the process got too big.
58. affirmed that the percentage of the EED grant for administrative purposes must be used by the Partnership Fund to cover costs in the Secretariat and with regard to applications from member churches or regional bodies.
59. tasked Douwe Visser, the General Secretary and the Moderator of the Partnership Fund Committee to monitor the workload of Antoinette Berkouwer; and tasked the General Secretary to formalize a volunteer contract with Antoinette Berkouwer.

### **Staff vacancy**

60. agreed to search for an Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership on the usual terms and conditions but with the stipulation that it be stated in advertising the post and in the contract that in 2013 there will be a comprehensive review of the whole structure of the WCRC including the staffing structure, the location of the Secretariat, and the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and with end August 2011 as the time for the Search Committee to present a candidate to the Officers.

### **Officers**

61. agreed to meet in 2012 from 10 May (arrival date) to 18 May (departure date) in Sumatra, Indonesia, hosted by the Batak Karo Church.

## Actions of the Executive Committee 2011

62. agreed to meet in 2013 in Ghana; in 2014 in El Salvador; in 2015 in Jamaica or the Cayman Islands; and in 2016 in Canada; and requested the President and General Secretary to propose appropriate dates for those meetings, as well as consider the request (from a member of the Executive Committee) to change one of those venues to Lebanon or elsewhere in the Middle East.
63. approved the intention of the Officers to meet in Busan, Korea, in the context of the 10th WCC assembly.
64. added Jan-Gerd Heetderks and Carola Tron Urban to the Justice and Partnership Search Committee, in addition to the five original members.
65. referred to the Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership the question of a Northeast Asian member of the Covenanting for Justice Network.
66. referred to the Officers the questions of the search for a new General Secretary and the location of the WCRC Secretariat, with a request that they report to the Executive Committee in 2012.
67. confirmed the designation of the finance officer as Finance Coordinator and asked the Officers to review the salary of the Finance Coordinator but within a particular framework.
68. adopted the statement on foreign military presence and intervention in Columbia (*Document 22.1*).
69. adopted the statement on weapons proliferation (*Document 22.2*).

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WCRC MICHIGAN FOUNDATION**

### *The Executive Committee*

1. agreed that the actions of the Executive Committee of the WCRC during its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 5-12 May 2001, be fully concurred in and entered into the permanent record of the WCRC Michigan Foundation.
2. agreed to issue an extract minute of the decision assigning Clifton Kirkpatrick to be the additional authorized signatory for the WCRC account at the 5th 3rd Bank.



**NARRATIVE RECORD  
of the Meeting of the Executive Committee  
Geneva, Switzerland, 5-12 May 2011**

**THURSDAY 5 MAY**

**Plenary Session 1: Thursday morning**

The Executive Committee met in the Ecumenical Centre. The President opened the meeting with greetings. Changes to the timetable were approved.

The General Secretary called the roll and confirmed there was a quorum. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, Vice-President from the Caribbean, was absent due to ill-health. Allen Nafuki of Vanuatu was unable to attend because of travel problems.

The General Secretary led an introduction to the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) as an orientation for the work of the committee.

It was moved by Peter Borgdorff, seconded by Kobus Gerber, and unanimously agreed to receive the Record of Proceedings of the Uniting General Council, with no questions or corrections.

**Action 1**

*Report of the President*

The President presented his report (*Document 1*). Small group discussion followed, and the President responded to questions arising.

What partnerships did the President envisage? He pointed to new opportunities, beyond those the WCRC already has. How should the church relate to political parties? Churches operate in settings where political parties have an influence that can't be ignored.

How should we deal with extremists who criticize other faiths in the name of Christianity? The WCRC should be involved with churches and church-related groups in peace-keeping and peacemaking in affected areas. The WCRC needs to understand contexts, accompany people, and engage in interfaith discussions to find solutions for the world's problems.

## Narrative Record

How should the WCRC challenge churches on such issues as women's ordination? We must speak the truth as we see it in love but maintain relationships by speaking firmly but gently.

How can the WCRC respond to regional ecumenical challenges?

People are more interested in faith and culture than faith and tradition. The future of ecumenism lies in its connection to people in the pews. The WCRC cannot reach congregations directly but needs to work with and through member churches.

How to reconnect with churches that have stepped back from the WCRC? We need to ask why specifically in each case; a renewed emphasis on spirituality (as in the UGC initiative "Worshipping the Triune God"), connection with youth through worship, and emphasis on mission may help with their concerns.

What will happen to the aboriginal justice commitment made in Grand Rapids? This fits in justice and ecumenical engagement and will be seen clearly in the report of the Strategic Planning Team. It is not enough to make statements about natural disasters; we need to make a difference. We could think of establishing a disaster fund or work with others in disaster relief.

The report was received by consensus.

## Action 2

### *Strategic planning I*

The President introduced the members of the Strategic Planning Team: Omega Bula, chair (Canada), Allan Buckingham (Canada), Cliff Kirkpatrick (USA), Cheh Liang Mok (Malaysia), Cheryl Meban (Northern Ireland), Bas Plaisier (the Netherlands), and Carola Urban Tron (Uruguay).

Omega Bula said the team had focused on what the vision for the WCRC is: What would we like to be known for at the next General Council in 2017? Thursday afternoon would allow small group discussion of the draft Strategic Plan.

Carola Tron Urban reviewed how the team gathered, reviewed, analysed, and synthesized information to form the plan. Cliff Kirkpatrick spoke on vision, mission, and the five key directions, discerned from discussion at the Uniting General Council (UGC) and through input from member churches and partners in response to questionnaires.

Bas Plaisier spoke on new ways of working: networking, youth leadership development, resourcing, communication and partnership. The WCRC is its member churches and regions; the Secretariat will connect them and contribute to programmes, networking and communication. Partnership with other ecumenical organizations will also be key: How can we use each other's resources? Cheryl Meban emphasized that programming will be done with the regions, not just from Geneva.

Questions for clarification: How will Reformed identity be focused in the programmes proposed, what will be the role and importance of theology in this strategy, how will the objective of having 50% women in representation be met, how and when will the role of regions be developed, what is the timeline?

## **Plenary Session 2: Thursday evening**

The Executive Committee met in the John Knox International Reformed Centre.

### *Sharing of news from churches*

Clayton Leal da Silva presented the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil and the Latin American Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (AIPRAL), of which he is president.

Colombia had been stigmatized for decades for drug dealing, as if this were merely an internal problem rather than a global challenge, said Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz. To speak against violence and in favour of human rights was to run a high risk. Every month ordinary church members from the USA came to accompany his church, with a double effect: protection for Colombian Christians, conversion for those who came.

Subha Singh Majaw described the problems posed by the Indian caste system. High castes didn't want lower castes to convert to Christianity and were especially hostile to Dalits becoming Christian.

Elisée Musemakweli said the Democratic Republic of Congo would hold a presidential election this year. Church leaders were meeting to explore how the Rwandan churches might help the Congolese churches.

The recent elections in Canada meant churches there needed to think about the politics of fear, Allan Buckingham said.

## Narrative Record

Yael Eka Hadiputeri described how children and teens in Indonesia, many from broken homes, felt unwanted and found it hard to see themselves in God's image. It was difficult to be young, Chinese, a woman and a Christian, but she believed God had a great purpose to bless people who were marginalized in her country.

Bas Plasier was working in Hong Kong, in a Lutheran theological seminary with an international, interdenominational student body. Over half the students in one of his classes were new believers, who had become Christians in the last 10 years and now wanted to become pastors.

William Koopmans, advisor, reported on discussions on the Belhar Confession in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. He was working on a commentary on Haggai.

Gradye Parsons said the Presbyterian Church (USA) was reflecting on how to react to the killing of Osama bin Laden. The recent tornado storms were the largest in US history.

Asia was suffering from earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons, Yueh-Wen Lu said. Three years ago, landslides killed many indigenous Taiwanese. Following the Fukushima disaster, nuclear power was again in discussion; Taiwan has four nuclear power stations, all located in national parks. Churches in Taiwan were focused on mission, leading more people to faith (first-generation Christians), and on climate change. The presidential election in January 2012 would probably determine Taiwan's final relation with China.

Cheh Liang Mok explained the difficulties of working in a Malaysia that strongly favours Islam. Churches came under pressure when they sought materials to build churches. Bibles in Malay were problematic, because of the perception that Malays are supposed to be Muslim. It was a big difficulty to work in three languages.

Carola Tron Urban described how teenagers in Uruguay reacted to the sharp contrast between rich and poor with vandalism, violence, and theft. Conservative parties were collecting signatures to reduce the age at which teens can be jailed; the churches opposed this.

Stephens Lytch, the president of the WCRC board of trustees, said people need to feel involved in what they are funding. The Strategic Plan should help to clarify things people might want to invest in.

## Executive Committee 2011

Headline problems in Australia included immigration policies, fear-mongering governments, ridiculous policies for asylum seekers, and horrible relationships between first and second peoples, Robyn Goodwin said. In the Pacific, climate change was the biggest issue.

Rising food prices and extreme hunger were causing problems in Uganda and protests in Kenya, Veronica Nyoki Muchiri reported. The timeline for implementing Kenya's new constitution before next year's elections was tight. Churches were playing an important role in holding the government accountable.

Churches in Germany were in decline, said Peter Bukowski; by 2030 they would have, at best, 50% less money and 30% fewer members.

Congregations in the Dutch Reformed Church and other South African churches were now intensely aware of being missional, Kobus Gerber reported. Churches faced a huge struggle to combat poverty, cope with HIV/Aids and heal the nation, as well as financial pressure. After 17 years of democracy, they needed a new struggle for the soul of their country.

Cheryl Meban said religious bigotry in Northern Ireland still ran deep. The chief constable was committed to making the police service a non-sectarian force, dedicated to real policing; but some Republicans still tried to kill policemen, especially if they were Catholic. Coming up was a whole series of potentially divisive centenaries, starting with the Ulster Covenant. Some people in the churches wanted to reconcile memories: to do history together, so that they could build a common future.

Jan-Gerd Heetderks said the political climate in the Netherlands was changing: old tolerance out, new right-wing prejudices – Islamophobia, rejection of international aid as a waste of money – in. Churches were finding a new passion for mission: to tell the gospel of Jesus Christ was very important because most people don't know anything about Jesus.

Mary Fontaine, of the Cree nation in Canada, described her work with Hummingbird Ministries – not just for First Nations people but also with whites alienated from their own community. She was glad to have grown up Presbyterian, but there were many things in her people's spirituality that shouldn't have been thrown out.

Najla Kassab Abou Sawan said churches in Lebanon and Syria were concerned lest changes in the Middle East lead to radical Islam.

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Current rulers might be autocratic and corrupt but could protect the Christian communities. The democratic style of Presbyterian church life, where they are taught to listen to each other, is a model they could present to society. She asked that the Executive Committee come to the Middle East and be hosted by her church.

The situation in Zimbabwe was not good, said Jerry Pillay. President Mugabe had called for general elections with or without a new constitution, not yet finalized. Previously churches were quite divided, but now they spoke with a more unified voice. Madagascar was still under military rule, and the president of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar at one point had been forced into exile. In South Africa, 12 Reformed churches were coming together to look at what it means to be African and Reformed, in the hope that this may lead to bigger things.

The Executive Committee learned that Mary Fontaine's first cousin had died the previous day. The committee paused for prayer.

### **FRIDAY 6 MAY**

#### **Plenary Session 3: Friday morning**

The Executive Committee met in the Ecumenical Centre.

##### *Strategic planning II*

The Executive Committee heard feedback from the four groups that had discussed whether the Strategic Plan as drafted was moving in the right direction, how it could be strengthened, and its implications for the next six years.

There was general agreement that the direction was right. It was consistent with what the UGC had said about facilitation and decentralization, communion and justice. It could be strengthened by empowering the regions and by enhancing people's sense of belonging. It was likely to have an impact on WCRC structures. It might require a larger exchange of resources within and across regions.

The groups also identified several questions or concerns, among which were the following:

Can we articulate what the document is for and who is its audience? It could be used as a tool to prioritize and fundraise. It could be used as a benchmark. A corporate mindset may help in planning

when resources are scarce but may not help us to be church: Where is grace?

What are our distinguishing characteristics as a communion of Reformed churches? How do we differ from other ecumenical bodies? What scares some people about the WCRC or about being in communion? We are always going to be diverse because we are Reformed.

How can we strengthen regional councils when they don't have sufficient resources to function? If we push work into the regions, what will happen if it is not done well?

Why not plan specific projects with other ecumenical bodies? Can a small staff do what we are planning? How do we reach children and youth?

How will we seek a balance between justice and communion among our member churches? Ultimately, the goal is not to promote communion and justice as ends in themselves but to glorify God.

It was suggested that the definition of the WCRC vision should be revised and shortened, and several other detailed changes to the text were proposed. The new way of working stressed working with young people, but the distinction between the two sections on methodology and a new way of working was unclear.

The President said that all the feedback would go the Strategic Planning Team to see how it could be worked in.

Peter Bukowski said it might help to focus on what we have to do specifically as the WCRC and what we can do together with other ecumenical organizations. Kobus Gerber pointed to questions pending: the location of the Secretariat and the search for a new General Secretary in two years time.

The President broke the Executive Committee into buzz groups to focus on regional empowerment. He said the Officers would also meet with the regional moderators to hear their views.

Najla Kassab suggested that a person, not necessarily in Geneva, be designated to follow up what is happening in the regions. Peter Borgdorff urged that regional capacity building be part of the Strategic Plan. Clayton Leal da Silva and Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz spoke of the experience of AIPRAL, the benefits of joint meetings, and the different strengths of different regions. Clifton Kirkpatrick

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noted that CWM and the WCRC were both building regional Reformed bodies. There should be a formal dialogue about a common strategy, leading to one set of regions rather than two. He was assured that the conversation had already started.

The President adjourned the discussion on the Strategic Plan.

## **SATURDAY 7 MAY**

### **Plenary session 4: Saturday morning**

The Executive Committee met in the John Knox International Reformed Centre.

#### *Strategic planning III*

Allan Buckingham introduced the revised draft of the Strategic Plan on behalf of the planning group. They wished to stay with the mission statement drawn from the WCRC constitution; but the values stated in that constitution underlie the plan, and they had tried to make these clearer by bolding some phrases. The key directions were not ranked in order of priority. They had combined the sections on methodology and new ways of working. The revised text highlighted the centrality of communion to all we do, the key role of young people, and the desire to work in the regions with the regions. In looking to do new work, we should first explore the possibility of doing it in partnership.

Several minor suggestions for change to the text were proposed and accepted. It was agreed that the plan speak not of the Geneva office but the WCRC Secretariat, since the future location of the Secretariat was under review. It was clarified that the WCRC does not work directly with congregations but with member churches and through them with their congregations. Proposals to drop some examples from the text were resisted. A final text for the vision statement was agreed. The combined section on methodology and way of working was renamed "Our renewed way of working (methodologies)".

It was argued that we need to focus on what only the WCRC can do, but it was noted that some of the most important work we have done is to offer a Reformed perspective on things that are ecumenically common, for example, on justice. Neither should the priorities set in the plan be seen as carved in stone: if circumstances change, they can change with them.



The Executive Committee agreed 10 recommendations.

*The Executive Committee*

1. received the report of the Strategic Planning Team (*Document 11*), with gratitude to the facilitator and the members of the group.  
**Action 3**
2. affirmed the direction of the Strategic Plan and commended it to the member churches, regional councils, and staff of the WCRC as the guiding document for the work of the WCRC until the next General Council.  
**Action 4**
3. approved a) the vision and mission statements, b) key directions, c) our renewed way of working (methodologies) and d) programme priorities.  
**Action 5**
4. directed the General Secretary to work with staff, regions, member churches, partners and others to implement the Strategic Plan.  
**Action 6**
5. requested the regions and member churches to participate actively in implementing the Strategic Plan in their contexts.  
**Action 7**
6. directed the General Secretary to work with regions in a plan for regional empowerment, to be approved by the Officers within six months. The plan should include a) considering possibilities for adequate human and financial resources (e.g. part-time staff for some regions), b) conversations with churches on appropriate regional structures where there are no regional councils, and c) looking again at the composition of regional councils.  
**Action 8**
7. directed the core groups of the different operational offices to draw up an action plan to implement the programme priorities related to their area of responsibility.  
**Action 9**
8. directed the Officers and the Finance Committee to draw up a Financial Plan in line with the Strategic Plan.  
**Action 10**
9. referred questions of the location of the Secretariat and how it fits into the Strategic Plan to the Officers and asked them to report to the Executive Committee in 2012.

This recommendation provoked extensive discussion. Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz and Najla Kassab said the question was

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important and should be discussed early, especially as incoming staff would like to know where they were coming to. Peter Borgdorff said the question was hugely complex and could easily occupy all the Officers' time. Yueh-Wen Lu pointed out that the Christian Conference of Asia had suffered for five years from relocation discussions: every Executive Committee meeting was kidnapped by the question. Clifton Kirkpatrick proposed to refer consideration of the question to the Executive Committee in 2013, as in the decision of the joint REC-WARC Executive Committee of 2009; Kobus Gerber agreed, provided some people looked at it before 2013 to prepare the debate. With the clarification that the Officers weren't being asked to make a recommendation about location themselves but rather to make a recommendation on how the question should be handled, the recommendation was agreed.

### **Action 11**

10. instructed the Officers to oversee an evaluation process to ensure the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

### **Action 12**

### *Report of the General Secretary*

The General Secretary presented his report (*Document 2*), using a PowerPoint presentation and with input from colleagues highlighting the work of their areas of responsibility. It was moved, seconded and agreed to receive the report.

### **Action 13**

## **Plenary session 5: Saturday afternoon**

### *Reports from the regions*

Clayton Leal da Silva presented the report of the Latin America Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (AIPRAL) (*Document 8.1*). From 2011 onwards, the Presbyterian Church (USA) would no longer be able to support the office of AIPRAL's part-time general secretary; but it was very important to have a general secretary. It wasn't possible for AIPRAL to work just with volunteers.

Neal Presa presented the report of the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) (*Document 8.2*). CANAAC was very excited about the new Strategic Plan. It would hold a joint assembly with the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) in September 2011, at which it would welcome its newest member, the Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican

Republic. CANAAC and CANACOM were working on deepening their relationship.

Jan-Gerd Heetderks introduced the report of WCRC Europe (*Document 8.3*), noting that the finances of the European area were very transparent; Europe would welcome greater transparency about finances in other regions.

Yang-en Cheng presented the report of the Northeast Asia Area Council (NEAAC) (*Document 8.3*). The next council meeting would discuss three questions: how to change the bylaws to become the WCRC NEAAC; whether, and if so how, other WCRC member churches in Asia should participate in the council, currently limited to Northeast Asia; and responses to the Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis. In response to a question from Bas Plasier, he said it was still open to discussion whether to expand the NEAAC to become an Asian Area Council or whether to set up additional subregional councils.

Jerry Pillay introduced the report of the Communion of Reformed Churches in Africa (CRCA), formerly the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA) (*Document 8.5*). He was resigning as president of the African region, which would appoint a new president in October 2011. In response to a question from Peter Bukowski, he said that the CRCA was thinking of working in three subregions: east, south and west.

The Executive Committee received the reports of the regional councils.

## **Action 14**

### *Report of the UN Ministry*

Mark Koenig presented the report of the United Nations Ministry (*Document 9*), highlighting the new staffing pattern and the many areas in which he and his colleague Ryan Smith had been active. It was unfortunate that the United States vetoed the Security Council resolution on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially as the language was US language the US had previously agreed to. In response to a question on Libya (paragraph 12), he said this meant primarily advocating with the Security Council, and Libya itself, at the point where Libya was beginning to turn on its own people. In response to a question on how seriously the voice of the churches was taken in the UN system, he instanced Sudan (paragraph 6). The Sudanese church leaders were so in demand that eventually they had to split up. They said, "We are the

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fire alarm for our country: the referendum must go forward, or there will be violence." And that message was heard.

The Executive Committee received the report of the United Nations Ministry.

### **Action 15**

#### *Questions from regional meetings*

The regional meetings reported back to the plenary.

In AIPRAL, because of the Latin American context, it was necessary to work on Reformed identity.

Two concerns from the Asia meeting were 1) how member churches outside the NEAAC would come into a regional or subregional structure and 2) the allocation of responsibility for member churches to Executive Committee members. The General Secretary noted that the list of allocations could be adjusted.

In Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda had set aside a day to promote the work of the WCRC. Unification talks in the DRC family in Southern Africa continue.

Rapprochement between the WCRC and the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa/Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA) remained a challenge. The NHKA had been suspended by WARC in 1982 for its support for apartheid. In 2006 the WARC Executive Committee sent a team to visit to church, and broad agreement was reached on how to mend the breach; but the resolution did not pass the NHKA Assembly. In September 2010, the Assembly passed a resolution clearly and boldly denouncing apartheid; but a minority dissented in writing. The consequences of this were still being sorted out in South Africa.

Veronica Njoki Muchiri expressed the gratitude of the African region for having the president of the region elected as president of the WCRC. She described the impact of a pastoral visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo on her and on the churches there: "They felt the presence of the WCRC."

From CANAAC, a question was how to continue the discussion with Native Americans and First Nations people.

### **Plenary session 6: Saturday afternoon**

## Executive Committee 2011

The Executive Committee met in closed session to discuss staffing issues. The main focus was the appointment of the Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership. The report of the search committee was received and a small team appointed to propose the way forward towards the search for the right person for the position.

The Executive Committee resumed in open plenary and received the greetings and report of Dr Cyril Ritchie, the president of the John Knox International Reformed Centre. He welcomed members of the Executive Committee and reiterated the close relationship between the WCRC and the John Knox Centre. The John Knox Centre would work with the WCRC General Secretary to align the statutes of the Centre with the coming into being of the WCRC.

### **MONDAY 9 MAY**

#### **Plenary session 7: Monday morning**

The Executive Committee met in the Ecumenical Centre and moved into closed session to continue the discussion of the search process for the Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership.

#### *Orientation to the Ecumenical Centre*

When the open plenary resumed, the General Secretary gave a brief introduction to the Ecumenical Centre. He welcomed and introduced the general secretaries of the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the Conference of European Churches.

The General Secretary said the Ecumenical Centre was an ecumenical space, owned by the WCC but shared by other ecumenical organizations. The chapel – in the form of a boat, in close proximity to nature, open to the outside world – symbolized a common understanding of the ecumenical movement as a movement called to serve the world. He introduced the three general secretaries from the sister organizations.

#### *Lutheran World Federation (LWF)*

Martin Junge (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile), the general secretary of the LWF, was pleased that in Grand Rapids two Reformed organizations had given recognition to the gift of communion. The LWF had recognized this gift in Curitiba, Brazil, 20 years ago. It was a journey into uncharted land: there was no

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roadmap to guide churches that had previously understood themselves to be an alliance, a council or a federation in understanding what it means now to be a communion.

The LWF and the WCRC were both Christian world communions (CWCs), with a distinctive ecumenical role acknowledged by the WCC at its assembly in Porto Alegre. The LWF had always been grateful for the Reformed stress on justice. How, in turn, might the WCRC and its member churches engage with the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification or in seeking forgiveness from the Mennonites for what was done in the Reformation?

The Lutheran and Reformed church families had a special relationship, shaped by a common origin in the 16th-century Reformation. Three principles guided the LWF's preparation for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017: to celebrate the Reformation in its global expression; to approach the anniversary with ecumenical sensitivity and accountability (it should not lead to self-expression over against the "other", or reopen divisions that have already been overcome); and to see ourselves less as churches of the Reformation than as churches *in* reformation – *semper reformanda*, as the Reformed say.

### *Conference of European Churches (CEC)*

Viorel Ionita (Romanian Orthodox Church), interim general secretary, explained that CEC was currently in a two-year revision process. CEC was a fellowship – a vague term that everyone could interpret in their own way – but nonetheless had an ecclesial dimension that could not be ignored. CEC as a regional ecumenical organization and the WCRC as a Christian world communion had many European member churches in common; the Brussels office of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), formerly the Leuenberg Church Fellowship, was almost like a CEC office. CEC needs to work on worldwide questions from a European perspective, together with worldwide ecumenical partners such as the WCRC; equally, there were worldwide questions that need to be reflected regionally, and CEC trusted that the WCRC would be happy to work with and through CEC.

### *World Council of Churches (WCC)*

Olav Fykse Tveit (Church of Norway), the general secretary of the WCC, said the Council had no illusion of working alone on the enormous tasks facing the world church: we must do this together. He spoke of learning from Reformed churches in the Leuenberg

Church Fellowship. The Church of Norway only got its synod in 1984; the Reformed had been in synods and councils already for 400 years. "You know what it means to sit around the table, to listen, to pray, to take responsibility for a common decision." This was a particular Reformed gift to the one ecumenical movement.

Geneva was the centre not just of Reformed Christianity but also of the global humanitarian movement, the UN organizations and others. It was right that the ecumenical movement, working towards a united witness for justice and peace, have a visible and audible presence in Geneva.

It was important for the WCC and the WCRC to see themselves as a fellowship of churches, with the strength and the rootedness in all kinds of human realities that are what it means to be church. The role of the WCC was to bring coherence, leadership and mutual accountability to the ecumenical movement, but that could be done only in partnership with others, including the WCRC.

Bas Plaisier asked about the reconfiguration of ecumenical bodies. Olav Fykse Tveit said that in Busan the WCC wanted to have a more open assembly, with stronger participation from the CWCs, but not yet a common assembly. He reminded the committee of the asymmetry in the CWCs: the LWF and the WCRC are exceptions, because they are strong organizations with their own strong assemblies. Viorel Ionita said reconfiguration was not just up to the goodwill of the institutions. The pressure was from our common constituencies. Martin Junge said that the LWF planned to have its executive committee meet in the context of Busan. "As we move together we are accountable to many relationships and need to bear in mind that accountability."

Peter Bukowski said he had lived through this discussion three times: after Debrecen, after Accra and now. The problem was still the little phrase "on the way". Clifton Kirkpatrick agreed that we had been around this conversation a number of times. Maybe the need was to work more deeply on theological foundations. The US National Council of Churches defined itself as a community of communions: did this work for the ecumenical movement worldwide?

Elisée Musemakweli asked about the debate within the LWF on homosexuality. Martin Junge explained that the need for a discussion sprang from the LWF's being a communion of churches. Homosexuality was not an isolated issue. In 2007, the LWF received

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a document on family, marriage and sexuality; this initiated a five-year discussion that will culminate in 2012.

### **Plenary session 8: Monday afternoon**

Gottfried Locher introduced the discussion on finance, indicating that the session would look first at the financial status today and then at fundraising for the future.

#### *Report on finance*

Yueh Cho presented the staff report on finance (*Document 6*). He explained that deficits in previous years were due not to overspending but to not meeting targets for income. He was confident that expenses in 2011 could be kept within budget, but the key to breaking even was income.

He noted that 108 member churches were delinquent in their contributions. Sixty churches had not contributed for three years and were thus constitutionally liable for suspension. They came from challenging financial contexts, but this was an issue that had to be dealt with.

Gottfried Locher said that the Finance Committee agreed with the remarks on pp.2-3 of the report. He emphasized three points.

First, in real terms, WCRC reserves were about CHF100,000 – enough to cover expenses for one month. This was not acceptable. The responsible thing was to cover at least six months.

Second, a small group of member churches finance the WCRC. Nothing was wrong with this as such: churches in a stronger financial position had a responsibility. But many churches did not show even a symbolic sense of commitment. This was not in the first place a financial question: if the defaulters were to contribute, it wouldn't make much financial difference. It was about being a credible Communion. If many churches made no contribution, this made it difficult to convince the stronger churches to carry on carrying most of the burden.

Third, it was proposed to have an internal audit by the Finance Coordinator, reporting to the Finance Committee. If a further investigation of finances were needed, an external auditor would be called in.



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In response to a question from Peter Bukowski, Yueh Cho said that many member churches had not replied at all to the request for their contribution, despite two letters and a phone call from the Finance Coordinator and the intervention of the General Secretary.

Kobus Gerber said that a comprehensive risk profile of the organization was needed and he would like a preliminary risk profile as early as possible, because the Executive Committee was being asked to take financial decisions.

Gottfried Locher said that the WCRC had to balance a complete profile of the financial situation with the ability to pay for it, which was why so far as possible the work would be done internally. Risk was a scale. Depending on the organization, one would say here is a situation where emergency action is needed – or not. There was a dependable base of membership contributions. The small reserve fund was a cause for concern, but building the reserves had to be balanced with keeping the organization going.

On the question of suspension, the General Secretary explained that Article VI of the Constitution provides that any member church that fails to make membership contributions and does not communicate the reason to the Secretariat for three consecutive years shall have the privileges of membership withdrawn by the Executive Committee until the requirements of membership are fulfilled.

### *Fundraising*

The Executive Committee turned to Finance Planning and Fundraising Strategies (*Document 6.2*).

Stephens Lytch introduced the work on fundraising in North America. Fundraising took funds, and CANAAC had made a grant to fund initial fundraising efforts. A US Presbyterian who had worked as a college development officer had offered training.

Members of the Executive Committee were inevitably committed to being evangelists for the WCRC and its work. When they went looking for contributions, it was important that they themselves were contributing.

Real-world giving occurred in the context of a social interaction between giver and receiver. Successful fundraising was the right person asking the right prospect for the right gift for the right programme at the right time in the right way. The four imperatives

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of fundraising were to interest the prospective giver in the organization, inform, involve and invest.

Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz was not convinced that member churches in Latin America or Africa were so poor they could not support the WCRC. The Executive Committee could adopt a punitive approach that would reduce the Communion, or it could take a more pedagogical approach to the churches.

Peter Bukowski asked the Finance Committee to consider whether moving the Secretariat should not be put on hold, given its cost.

The Executive Committee moved into closed session for further discussion of staffing issues.

## **TUESDAY 10 MAY**

### **Plenary session 9: Tuesday morning**

The Executive Committee met in the Ecumenical Centre.

#### *Theological reflection on communion and justice*

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth and Douwe Visser presented papers to introduce the reflection (*Document 12* and *Document 13*)

Douwe Visser emphasized that communion doesn't mean that you are always nice to each other. Communion means you are moving. No communion without justice, no justice without communion: that should be our mantra.

The Executive Committee heard two voices from Northern Ireland and Brazil.

Cheryl Meban spoke of the Good Friday Agreement that ended decades of conflict between two communities defined as often by their version of Christianity as by ethnic identity – and began the harder work of peace-building. She told the story of a young Roman Catholic constable in the Police Service of Northern Ireland who had been murdered by unreconstructed Republicans. At his funeral, the coffin was carried by members of both the Gaelic Athletic Association and the police. On that day communion was experienced in grief, around the broken body of a beloved son. It was a question of grace. Grace to have the space in one's heart to welcome former enemies, grace to attend a worship service of which one did not approve, grace in a mother's heart not to cry out for revenge.

## Executive Committee 2011

Clayton Leal da Silva lit two candles and then extinguished them. He described how his congregation in downtown Botucatu (“good air”) in the state of São Paulo had tried to implement the Accra Confession. They created an organization called Bethel, with an initial project to promote adult literacy. To begin with, they received no support from local government, and it was difficult to continue. Then he saw a man in a bank humiliated because he could not read or write. It was clear that they could not be a church in downtown Botucatu when people near them were being humiliated. Even if they had to pay for it ourselves, they had to continue the programme.

He lit a candle. A new mayor was elected in the city, with a new secretary of education. For the seventh time, the congregation proposed the same project for funding; and this time it was approved.

He lit the second candle. In 2011, the congregation decided to start the same project in another part of Botucatu, and the struggle for funds began all over again. But the light that shines in the darkness cannot be extinguished.

The Executive Committee broke into groups for discussion. Among the points made in reporting back were the following:

Hospitality is a key word in being a Communion. The church’s task is not to judge but to journey. How do we extend grace to each other? How do we navigate through multiple viewpoints and perspectives? How do we listening gently to one another – for example, churches that struggle with ordaining women, church that struggle with those churches?

Jan-Gerd Heetderks told of going to the Sacré-Coeur in Paris: it was the church of all the diverse people worshipping there. If he went to a Reformed church in Paris, that would their church, it would not be his. We think too local. We need to overcome a congregationalist mindset.

Najla Kassab asked why secular institutions were often faster than the church in moving on justice. She hoped to see the church on the front lines.

Yael Eka Hadiputera said that the WCRC had 28 member churches in Indonesia but they were from very different tribal backgrounds. How can the WCRC help these churches to work together and live in communion?

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Cheh Liang Mok pointed to the Executive Committee as modelling communion: a group that had come together for the first time and yet was able to handle a difficult issue. Peter Borgdorff concurred: the committee had worked through a question that could have been deeply divisive. Instead it had been galvanized. It was a moment of community-building.

It was exciting when the Executive Committee set aside time to reflect on what is at the heart of the WCRC, the General Secretary said. He invited the committee to follow the example of previous executive committees in writing a set of short Bible studies that could be edited together, this time starting from the theme of communion and justice.

### **WEDNESDAY 11 MAY**

#### **Plenary session 10: Wednesday afternoon**

The Executive Committee met in the Ecumenical Centre.

*Theology, Mission and Communion (TMC) Core Group*

Bas Plasier presented the report of the core group (*Document 14*). The Executive Committee discussed the recommendations.

*The Executive Committee*

1. will encourage the theological and missional capacity of the Communion by inspiring and equipping the regions through networking with theologians and through organizing regional consultations.

#### **Action 16**

2. agreed that the Global Institute of Theology (GIT) take place every two years, with the next one scheduled in Indonesia in July 2012.

#### **Action 17**

3. agreed that *Reformed World* focus on regions once a year, with the core group sending suggestions for themes and theological authors, especially young people.

#### **Action 18**

4. agreed that the evaluation of the Reformed-Pentecostal meeting be reported to the Executive Committee through the core group for approval for the next dialogue.

## Executive Committee 2011

Clifton Kirkpatrick asked whether the core group had looked at where the WCRC should engage in dialogue over the next seven years. "Yes," said Bas Plasier, "especially given our limited resources." Douwe Visser said a Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogue had just begun. Preparatory work had been done for an Anglican-Reformed dialogue, which would deal with the important topic of communion but could only start if and when the Executive Committee authorized it. Dialogue with the Pentecostals was important for many member churches facing challenges from Pentecostal churches.

It was moved and agreed to amend "reported to the core group" to "reported to the Executive Committee through the core group".

### **Action 19**

5. agreed to plan the consultation process of member churches of WCRC for the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification.

### **Action 20**

6. agreed that the Executive Secretary continue to be involved in the John Knox Programme Commission.

Allan Buckingham asked for clarification. The General Secretary explained that the relationship with the John Knox Centre was close. The WCRC was entitled to at least two places in the JKIRC structure: one on the management committee and one on the programme or theological commission. This was why Douwe Visser was a member of the Programme Commission and why it was part of his job description; it was the Commission that had elected him president.

### **Action 21**

7. agreed that the Executive Secretary and the General Secretary begin planning in consultation with partners the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

### **Action 22**

8. agreed to develop a network of theologians active within the Reformed community. (This network should consist of persons who are involved in theological reflection in a challenging and contextual way. And some of them should have an expertise in missiology.) And agreed that the core group will become a virtual member of the theological network and serve as an advisory group on TMC programmes and priorities.

Funding for the consultation in India was already secured, but programme funding for the network itself remained to be found.

### **Action 23**

## Narrative Record

9. asked the Executive Secretary and the core group to explore how the voices of indigenous people can be included in the theological and missional discourse of WCRC programmes.

Mary Fontaine said there was a commitment to work with indigenous people in North America; she had hoped that for the next two years, the work might start there. Clayton Leal da Silva said there was now an Indigenous Presbyterian Church of Brazil: how could it be brought into the WCRC?

### **Action 24**

It was suggested by Veronica Njoki Muchiri, seconded by Kobus Gerber and agreed that the TMC Core Group develop and publish theological reflections on what it means to be a Communion and these publications be made available to our members.

### **Action 25**

In response to a question, Bas Plasier clarified that the anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism will be dealt with in cooperation with the churches in Germany; Douwe Visser will organize a consultation on liturgical resources; and mission in context will be dealt with through consultations, the network of theologians and probably also the GIT.

### *Justice and Partnership Core Group*

Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz presented the report of the Justice and Partnership Core Group (*Document 15*). He expressed the appreciation of the group for the work of Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, and this was echoed warmly by the Executive Committee.

Yueh-Wen Lu presented the recommendations.

### *The Executive Committee*

1. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office develop a map of member churches, indicating where there are issues relating to both women's ordination, women in leadership positions as well as issues of gender, power and leadership within member churches, at the same time enabling churches to critically address other gender justice issues.

### **Action 26**

2. agreed to encourage member churches that do not ordain women to consider doing so, and encouraged WCRC leaders to raise the issue of women's ordination and role in key leadership positions in appropriate ways when visiting member churches.

## Executive Committee 2011

This will be included as a contribution to the mapping initiative by submitting reports to the Justice and Partnership Core Group. This recommendation was deferred and then considerably amended after concerns were raised about the propriety of an ecumenical organization intruding itself into the internal life of member churches with a wide variety of polities. It was proper for the WCRC to express its view.

### **Action 27**

3. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office continue the Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South, especially young women, taking a proactive role through members of the Executive Committee to promote the fund among churches that do not have women or have only few women in the ordained ministry.

### **Action 28**

4. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office in collaboration with regional councils, networks, member churches and partners develop and implement a project on human trafficking and slavery, utilizing the tools of education/conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects.

In response to a question, Yueh-Wen Lu clarified that trafficking referred to both women and children.

### **Action 29**

5. requested and recommended to the regional councils that, in coordination with the Justice and Partnership Office and Network, they continue the work on the promotion of positive masculinity, using the WCRC men and positive masculinity manual, *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership*; and that the manual be translated in collaboration with the WCC, funds permitting.

This recommendation was revised to use the words "request and recommend" and to add the point about translation.

### **Action 30**

6. agreed that a process of dialogue and joint action projects on key (and difficult) justice issues regarding economic justice and climate justice build on the work that has begun in the Caribbean and North America regions (through CANAAC), including immersion and joint action within specific communities and churches; and that this conversation invites/includes the voice of Indigenous North Americans, recognizing the unique and important voices to be heard from this constituency.

This recommendation was amended to better reflect the reality that the process has already begun.

## Narrative Record

### **Action 31**

7. agreed that the Justice and Partnership Office and Network, in cooperation with the WCC and the Council for World Mission, establish a global ecumenical and multidisciplinary commission to develop a process for a Global Ecumenical Conference to propose a framework and criteria for a new international financial and economic architecture that promotes justice in the economy and the earth.  
There were good indications that programme funding for this would be found.

### **Action 32**

8. a) appointed the following as members of the three Justice and Partnership Networks:

### **Gender Justice Network**

15. Yueh Wen Lu, Taiwan – moderator
16. Veronica Njoki Muchiri, Kenya
17. Majaw Singh, India
18. Robyn Goodwin, Australia
19. Dora Arce, Cuba
20. Benebo Fubara Fubara Manuel, Nigeria
21. Evelyn Martin, Austria (Community of Protestant Churches in Europe)
22. Simone Singh, Trinidad and Tobago
23. Philip Peacock, India
24. Isabel Phiri, Malawi/South Africa
25. Ann Ferguson, USA
26. Middle East representative
27. Pacific Island representative/CWM regional representative
28. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Guyana

### **Covenanting for Justice Network**

15. Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz, Colombia – moderator
16. Clifton Kirkpatrick, USA
17. Clayton Leal Da Silva, Brazil
18. Jan-Gerd Heetderks, the Netherlands
19. Mary Fontaine, Canada
20. Christie Neufeldt, Canada
21. Septemmy Lakawa, Indonesia
22. European Area Council to name a representative
23. Representative of the Federation of Swiss National Churches (FEPS)
24. Puleng LenkaBula, South Africa



25. Rose Teteki Abbey, Ghana
26. CWM representative
27. Rogate Mshana, WCC
28. Peter Vander Meulen, USA

### **Oikotree – Covenanting for Justice Movement (CfJ)**

4. Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz, Colombia, CfJ Moderator
  5. Indigenous person (church-related social justice activist)
  6. Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership
8. b) agreed to hold a face-to-face meeting of the Justice Network to develop the action plan, including expected roles of members and ways in which the regional councils, seminaries and member churches will participate in developing, implementing and evaluating projects and mobilizing resources; this meeting to be held before the end of the first quarter of 2012, providing the new Executive Secretary is in office.

A question was raised about global and regional networks. It was argued that the global networks were to encourage work in the regions. A further question was raised about geographical representation. It was argued that each region was represented in the networks and there would be consultation. The Executive Committee resolved to come back to the question of representation from Northeast Asia in the Covenanting for Justice Network.

### **Action 33**

Peter Bukowski said that under the guidance of Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth a lot of theological, biblical and liturgical work had been done. What he missed in the report was any reference to further theological, biblical and liturgical work as such. Theology was too important to be left to the TMC office.

He moved and it was agreed that the Justice and Partnership office promote further theological, biblical and liturgical work on justice and encourage similar work in the life of member churches.

### **Action 34**

#### *Finance Committee*

Gottfried Locher presented the report of the Finance Committee (*Document 16*). The Executive Committee discussed the recommendations.

## Narrative Record

### *The Executive Committee*

1. adopted the audited 2010 accounts.
2. approved the 2012 core budget.

**Action 35**

The budget initially submitted for 2012 had been revised and the Executive Committee was satisfied that the revised budget showed the necessary financial prudence.

Kobus Gerber asked for a discussion of the precarious financial situation. It was difficult to approve a budget if there was no security in it for the staff and when the Executive Committee needed to make new staffing decisions.

Gottfried Locher said that the staff was working in a multitasked manner that was not the case elsewhere and it was not possible to reduce the staff further. But there was a hopeful side to an admittedly precarious situation: with the revised and more conservative budget there was increased stability and the possibility of increasing the reserves. There would be quarterly financial evaluations. Gradye Parsons asked that the quarterly evaluations be shared with the Executive Committee.

**Action 36**

3. retained la Compagnie Fiduciaire de Révision S.A. as the WCRC auditor for 2011.

**Action 37**

4. authorized the Officers to constitute an Investment Committee.

**Action 38**

5. authorized the Officers to define investment guidelines.

**Action 39**

6. assigned Clifton Kirkpatrick to be the additional authorized signatory for the WCRC account at the 5th 3rd Bank.

**Action 40**

7. directed the General Secretary to conduct an internal audit and report on the WCRC comprehensive risk profile of the WCRC by 31 December 2011.

The audit would start right away and would be shared with the Executive Committee.

**Action 41**

8. Instruct the General Secretary to submit a comprehensive budget including both core and programme sections, starting next accounting year.

**Action 42**

9. endorsed the fundraising strategies as outlined in the Finance Planning paper (*Document 6*).

**Action 43**

10. instructed the General Secretary, under the guidance of the Finance Committee, to implement the fundraising strategies as outlined in *Document 6*.

**Action 44**

11. appealed to its members to make a personal pledge to the WCRC.

Peter Borgdorff said that the tax ramifications of donating differed for people in different regions – in North America contributing through the Michigan foundation had tax advantages and fulfilled the commitment.

Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz agreed with the pledge but asked that contributions made in other ways also be recognized: for example, travelling to request and paying for a single-entry visa to Switzerland that for some members of the Executive Committee was not easy to obtain.

**Action 45**

Clayton Leal da Silva asked that in 2013, a line of support for regional councils be added to the budget. Gottfried Locher said this would mean taking money from some other line. Clifton Kirkpatrick suggested it might be possible to approach some organizations for specific funding to allow us to do that.

Peter Bukowski moved and it was agreed that the question of how to support the regions financially be referred to the Officers.

**Action 46**

Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz said the Executive Committee needed more than a technical report of income, expenditure and church contributions. It should request a clear financial Strategic Plan.

The President welcomed the leadership of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (FEPS) and invited them to share with the Executive Committee the mission and challenges they face.

### *Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches*

The roots of the WCRC were in the Swiss Reformation, the General Secretary said. Meeting in Switzerland, the Executive Committee was the guest of FEPS. He had pleasure in introducing the president

## Narrative Record

of the FEPS council, who was no stranger – formerly a vice-president of WARC and a president of the WARC European area, and now General Treasurer of the new Communion – Gottfried Locher.

Gottfried Locher introduced Rev. Claudia Bandixen, president of the Reformed Cantonal Church of Argau; Rev. Dr Andreas Zeller, president of the Synodal Council of the Reformed Churches Bern-Jura-Solothurn; Rev. Gabriel Bader and Ms Barbara Borer, president and member of the Synodal Council of the Reformed Cantonal Church of Neuchâtel.

The snow-covered mountains of Switzerland had a strong influence on human settlement, Gottfried Locher said, with relatively thinly settled areas in the rural, mountainous regions, and a densely settled belt of more urban areas – including Basle, Berne, Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich.

Around 22 percent of the population is of foreign background, mostly from the European Union. One in ten inhabitants now has a native language other than French, German, Italian or Romansh, the four official languages.

Reformed Protestants and Roman Catholics represent 70 percent of the population. In Berne, the majority of the population is Reformed – practically the only case of its kind in the world. Switzerland has seen a rise in the number of Muslims and people of other religions or none.

The modern Swiss state (since 1848) is organized in three layers: the national federation, 26 cantons, and around 4,000 communes. Regional churches generally follow the cantonal borders. Church-state relations range from close cooperation to complete separation – with major consequences for their organizational independence and financial situation.

Among the many Swiss reformers are Huldrych Zwingli, pastor of the Grossmünster church in Zurich, who helped lay the foundations and contributed to the success of the Reformation during the Zurich Disputations of 1523 and 1524. From John Calvin's work in Geneva, the Calvinist Reformation was carried throughout the world. Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor in Zurich, contributed significantly to the unity of Reformed Christians in Switzerland with the Consensus Tigurinus (1549). Berchtold Haller in Berne, Johannes Oecolampadius in Basle, Guillaume Farel in Neuchâtel, and Pierre Viret in the canton of Vaud also did much to ensure the success of the Reformation.

As churches in the homeland of Reformed Christianity, FEPS and its member churches feel responsible for this legacy and for bringing it to bear on daily life. Hence, together with WARC, the Swiss Reformed churches worked to mark the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth in 2009 and beyond (see [www.john-calvin.org](http://www.john-calvin.org)).

Andreas Zeller described the Reformed Churches of Bern-Jura-Solothurn as a "people's church" – a church for the people, carried by the people, in which the whole church community could participate in decision-making. It was a lively and colourful church. Particularly in rural regions, religious celebrations were still supported and celebrated by a large part of the population.

The church felt a responsibility for almost five centuries of Reformed tradition but was also strongly committed to Switzerland's increasingly multicultural society.

The church tried to lay the foundation for a rich life of faith at an early age. It saw religious education as an essential part of general education in the society. One important focus was on mentally challenged children and teenagers, communicating the core values of the gospel so that they can hear, feel and experience that God loves them, building bridges so that they may participate in the religious community as equals and without reservations.

Gabriel Bader described the work of the Reformed Cantonal Church of Neuchâtel in communicating through advertising. "Advertising" might not rhyme with "church"; but the church was not funded by the state; to contribute services that were recognized as in the public interest, it needed to raise funds, and not just from its members.

Some examples:

A campaign with large green posters on the back of buses: "Contribute to safeguarding your spiritual environment." This picked up the popular concern with safeguarding the environment and gave it a spiritual dimension. Additional subliminal messages were of a church close to the people and on the move.

A series of posters based on road signs talked about making sense of current problems. "Values are falling?" – a play on falling stock-markets. "Your life seems upside down?" "How much does it cost to fill your life with meaning?" – a wordplay (in French!) on the rising cost of filling up your car.

## Narrative Record

A robot pastor: “Must we adapt our services for lack of resources?”  
The secular press gave this front-page coverage.

The aim was not just to raise money, but to communicate a sense of a church with a human face, a church that struggles with human difficulties in society, a church that adds value by seeing things from a different angle, a church with a sense of humour.

Claudia Bandixen began with her predecessor Sylvia Michel, in 1980 the first woman to be elected president of a cantonal church. In partnership with WARC and now the WCRC, the Reformed Cantonal Church of Argau had established the Sylvia Michel award for women from the WCRC constituency who have made a significant contribution to church and society.

Among the contributions of her own church, she focused on pastoral care. In 1925, Switzerland was one of the first three countries to initiate training in clinical pastoral care. In 1960, the church employed its first clinical pastoral trainer. Today, the main emphasis was on training volunteers.

Palliative care for seriously ill and dying people was of growing importance, since the number of deaths was increasing and only about one death in ten occurred abruptly and unexpectedly. Currently the church was running an interdisciplinary course on nurturing and pastoral aspects of dying; spiritual care and resources; and legal issues, including wills and advance healthcare directives.

Gottfried Locher concluded by outlining the structure of FEPS, its main tasks, and its role within the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), formerly the Leuenberg Fellowship. FEPS in recent years had published studies on baptism, eucharist and ministry from a Protestant perspective, all commissioned by member churches; and studies on immigrant churches, climate and energy justice, and the global financial and economic crisis. He was pleased that the CPCE model of unity in reconciled diversity was also being adopted on other continents.

In response to a question about diversity in the Swiss Protestant churches, Gottfried Locher said this even went to church order. In one cantonal church, they ordain deacons; this is not done in any other church. As the churches grow together, these questions will come to the forefront.

**THURSDAY 12 MAY**

**Plenary session 11: Thursday morning**

The Executive Committee met in the Ecumenical Centre.

*Communications Core Group*

Peter Borgdorff presented the report of the Communications Core Group (*Document 17*). The Executive Committee discussed the recommendations.

*The Executive Committee*

1. requested the General Secretary to ask the WCC and LWF to provide the funding needed to sustain ENI. **Action 47**
2. agreed a policy of using clear and widely understood language to communicate the objectives and programmes of WCRC. **Action 48**
3. confirmed the appointment of the following as members of the Communications Advisors Network: Judi Fisher (Australia), Achowah Umenei (Cameroon), Jerry van Marter (USA), Rasoavelonirine Vololoniaina (Madagascar), Lydia Ma (Taiwan), Yael Eda Hadiputeri (Indonesia), Yushi Fujimori (Japan), Thomas Flügge (Switzerland). **Action 49**

*Constitution and Bylaws Committee*

Cheryl Meban presented the report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee (*Document 18*). The Executive Committee discussed the recommendations.

*The Executive Committee*

1. approved the application for affiliate membership by the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT), Stellenbosch, South Africa. **Action 50**
2. thanked the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NHKA) for the decision at its 69th General Assembly to admit it was wrong to defend apartheid; acknowledged the difficulties currently experienced in the church and agreed to convey the WCRC's commitment to pray for the NHKA; encouraged the NHKA to invite Jerry Pillay and Kobus Gerber (and a third from the South Africa Task Force if needed) to be present at the General

## Narrative Record

Assembly in the fall of 2011 to serve as advisors and facilitators; and resolved that the results of that assembly be reported to the South Africa Task Force for any further follow-up and that the task force report to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at its next meeting.

### **Action 51**

3. a) established the three-year time requirement baseline of communication from member churches that have neither paid dues nor corresponded with reasons for not paying dues as 18 June 2010, the date of the founding of the WCRC (Constitution VI J. 6.)  
b) agreed that USD500 be considered the minimum membership dues and that any exemption to the minimum be negotiated with a team consisting of the president of the regional council, the WCRC vice-president of the region, and the General Secretary, with any disagreement among the team to be negotiated by the President of the WCRC.

Peter Borgdorff explained that to apply the constitution retrospectively was ungracious and likely to be unenforceable. Those churches that were in arrears with contributions to WARC or REC or both before the founding of the WCRC were still in arrears and would still be asked to pay as much of their arrears as possible.

### **Action 52**

4. approved the constitution and bylaws of WCRC Europe, with the following suggestions for inclusion to be reported to the committee in 2012:
  - a) that language be added to submit the annual audits to the General Secretary of the WCRC (WCRC Bylaws III I).
  - b) that language should be added to state that the election of the Secretary and the Treasurer are subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee of the WCRC (WCRC Constitution XVI E).

### **Action 53**

5. confirmed all current persons elected as secretaries or treasurers of regional councils; the General Secretary to communicate to all regional councils their responsibility to submit the names of those they elect (WCRC Constitution XVI E).

### **Action 54**

## *Partnership Fund*



Kobus Gerber presented the report of the Partnership Fund Committee (*Document 19*). The Executive Committee turned to the recommendations.

*The Executive Committee*

1. raised the limit of the grants from CHF20,000 to CHF30,000. Clifton Kirkpatrick asked why the committee wasn't proposing an ever greater increase, given the extensive balance in the Partnership Fund account. Kobus Gerber said that, where the committee agreed, it was possible to exceed in the limit in particular cases.

**Action 55**

2. raised the limit for the Emergency Fund from CHF5000 to CHF10,000; the beneficiaries in future will be required to submit a report on how the money was used.

**Action 56**

3. noted that the Partnership Fund Committee has asked Douwe Visser and the General Secretary to research how other ecumenical bodies use money from the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) and is very cautious about the fact that the use of EED money could bring WCRC at a point where a development department would need to be registered if the process got too big.

Peter Borgdorff said that the WCRC was an ecumenical organization to facilitate member churches. He got nervous when governments said you may not use our money for purposes that are the purposes of your organization. The General Secretary said the caution was well-taken. The Strategic Plan included capacity building, and the Partnership Fund, which antedated the EED increase, was meant to respond to that. The committee agreed that the question required further study and reflection.

**Action 57**

4. affirmed that the percentage of the EED grant for administrative purposes must be used by the Partnership Fund to cover costs in the Secretariat and with regard to applications from member churches or regional bodies.

**Action 58**

5. tasked Douwe Visser, the General Secretary and the Moderator of the Partnership Fund Committee to monitor the workload of Antoinette Berkouwer; and tasked the General Secretary to formalize a volunteer contract with Antoinette Berkouwer.

**Action 59**

## Narrative Record

### *Personnel Committee*

The General Secretary presented the report of the Personnel Committee (*Document 20*). The Executive Committee discussed the recommendations; recommendations 3 to 5 are summaries of decisions taken in closed session.

### *The Executive Committee*

1. noted with appreciation the work of the WCRC staff.
2. a) thanked Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth for 11 years of faithful and effective service to WARC and the WCRC.  
b) asked the General Secretary to work with the co-moderators of the Justice and Partnership Core Group in putting in place interim arrangements that get the work of the office done until a new Executive Secretary comes into office.
3. renewed the contract of Kristine Greenaway for a five-year term.
4. agreed to search for an Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership on the usual terms and conditions but with the stipulation that it be stated in advertising the post and in the contract that in 2013 there will be a comprehensive review of the whole structure of the WCRC including the staffing structure, the location of the Secretariat, and the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and with end August 2011 as the time for the Search Committee to present a candidate to the Officers.

### **Action 60**

[Recommendation 5 was voted on in Plenary Session 12.]

### *Officers report*

The Executive Committee turned to the recommendations of the Officers (*Document 21*). Discussion of the two statements was deferred to Plenary Session 12, since they were not yet printed.

### *The Executive Committee*

1. agreed to meet in 2012 from 10 May (arrival date) to 18 May (departure date) in Sumatra, Indonesia, hosted by the Batak Karo Church.

In discussion, it was noted that dates earlier in May were difficult for members of the Executive Committee in academic posts and dates that included Ascension or Pentecost should be avoided.

**Action 61**

2. agreed to meet in 2013 in Ghana; in 2014 in El Salvador; in 2015 in Jamaica or the Cayman Islands; and in 2016 in Canada; and requested the President and General Secretary to propose appropriate dates for those meetings, as well as consider the request (from a member of the Executive Committee) to change one of those venues to Lebanon or elsewhere in the Middle East.

**Action 62**

3. approved the intention of the Officers to meet in Busan, Korea, in the context of the 10th WCC assembly.

**Action 63**

4. added Jan-Gerd Heetderks and Carola Tron Urban to the Justice and Partnership Search Committee, in addition to the five original members.

**Action 64**

5. referred to the General Secretary the question of a Northeast Asian member of the Covenanting for Justice Network.

**Action 65**

6. referred to the Officers the questions of the search for a new General Secretary and the location of the WCRC Secretariat, with a request that they report to the Executive Committee in 2012.

**Action 66**

**Plenary session 12: Thursday afternoon**

*Personnel Committee (continued)*

The Executive Committee returned into closed session to conclude its discussions of recommendation 5 of the report of the Personnel Committee (*Document 20*).

*The Executive Committee*

5. confirmed the designation of the finance officer as Finance Coordinator and asked the Officers to review the salary of the Finance Coordinator but within a particular framework.

**Action 67**

The Executive Committee continued in open plenary to complete the discussion of the report of the Officers.

*The Executive Committee*

## Narrative Record

7. adopted the statement on foreign military presence and intervention in Columbia (*Document 22.1*). **Action 68**
8. adopted the statement on weapons proliferation (*Document 22.2*). **Action 69**

The President suspended the meeting of the Executive Committee so that the members of the Executive Committee could meet in their formal capacity as the Executive Committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation.

The President resumed the meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCRC.

### *Greetings from the Roman Catholic observer*

Father Gregory Fairbanks brought greetings to the Executive Committee on behalf of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

### *Any other business*

Yueh-Wen Lu said the Executive Committee needed to respect its own cultural and linguistic diversity and to reserve space for those who hardly speak.

The President thanked the Executive Committee for way in which it had engaged in the work and the spirit in which it had tackled sometimes difficult questions. He thanked the staff for their contribution to the running of the meeting.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Cheng-Liang Mok thanked the President for his manner of chairing the meeting.

The Executive Committee closed with worship.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WCRC MICHIGAN  
FOUNDATION**

The President constituted the meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation. The roll was taken as read. The meeting was quorate. The agenda was agreed.

It was moved by Peter Borgdorff, duly seconded, and unanimously agreed that the actions of the Executive Committee of the WCRC during its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 5-12 May 2001, be fully concurred in and entered into the permanent record of the WCRC Michigan Foundation.

**Action 1**

It was further agreed to issue an extract minute of the decision assigning Clifton Kirkpatrick to be the additional authorized signatory for the WCRC account at the 5th 3rd Bank.

**Action 2**

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation was closed with prayer.

## **ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT**

Jerry Pillay

In Mark 2.18-22, Jesus is questioned by some people as to why John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees were fasting but none of his own were found doing the same. Jesus responded by saying that they are were not fasting but celebrating because the Bridegroom was among them, referring to himself, but pointed out that they would fast when he would no longer be with them in person. Jesus then said something most powerful and compelling in verses 21-22:

*"No-one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."*

The point that Jesus was attempting to make in these examples was that he came to introduce the new and not to patch up the old. The religious leaders were impressed with our Lord's teachings and somehow they wished that they could in some way reach a compromise and retain the best of pharisaic Judaism and the best of what Christ had to offer. But, using these illustrations, Jesus made it clear that you could not mix the old with the new. He pointed out that in his ministry he came to usher in the new and not unite with the old. In doing so he would not destroy the law but fulfil it. He would establish a new covenant in his blood (Luke 22.19-20). The law would (now) be written on human hearts, not stones (2 Cor 3. 1-3; Heb 10.15-18), and the indwelling Holy Spirit would enable God's people to fulfil the righteousness of the law (Rom 8.1-4). Jesus was bringing in something new!

Since the inauguration of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) in June 2010 we have attempted both deliberately and consciously to discern what it means to be a new body rather than to continue to perpetuate the purpose of WARC or REC. The intention was to discern what new things, if any, God was calling us to. The desire is to pour new wine into new wineskins and not to simply attempt to pour new wine into old wineskins. The establishment of the new World Communion of Reformed Churches created for us an opportune time to ask precisely what God was calling us to be and to do. So at our very first meeting of the new Executive Committee in Grand Rapids we agreed to embark on a

strategic planning process. We engaged in a wide consultation process with member churches, area councils, staff and ecumenical partners, and appointed a Strategic Planning Team.

The team met in November 2010 and working from the material collected was able to come up with a vision and mission statement together with a Strategic Plan for the WCRC'S work within the next seven years. I must say that as we embarked on this exercise it looked like a rather ambitious one because so much had to be done in one meeting since our financial constraints as an organization did not avail us the luxury of meeting more than once. But by God's grace and the skilled work of our facilitator, Omega Bula, and the team we were able to do what others usually take six months to two years to complete. The team met again just before this Executive Committee meeting to complete their work and to report to us. I trust that we will appreciate the work they have done and offer constructive criticism and input where necessary since this work will not be fully completed until we all have discerned together that this is what God is saying to us. More significantly, I hope and pray that when we eventually agree on our vision and mission statements that all of us as members of the WCRC Executive will both embody it and become champions of our cause wherever we are found.

The need to re-look at ourselves and to re-think our vision, mission and priorities as an organization is also necessitated by what I would refer to as the changing ecumenical landscape brought about by new realities in the world. While the issues may not necessarily be new, yet the things we are now called to emphasize are certainly different. Let me paint a brief picture of a rising global ecumenical scenario. We stand at the brink of crucial times as we encounter various crises in the world. We have experienced uprisings in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and other parts of the world where people are not prepared to tolerate political dictatorships anymore. Zimbabwe and Madagascar, to name a few, continue to struggle with political unrest, violence and forced leadership. We have witnessed the devastating effects of world disasters as we recount the earthquakes/tsunamis in Haiti, Myanmar, Christchurch, and more recently in Japan, etc. The world is characterized by religious factions and wars, for example, as seen in the Middle East, Sudan, Kenya, Pakistan, India, etc. We live in a world in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. In the light of all of this, churches and ecumenical organizations are called to work together in establishing peace, justice and fullness of life for all. The challenge to us as the WCRC is to discern how we can be God's new wine in

## Address of the President

the midst of struggle, political unrest, natural disasters, strife, violence, global poverty and suffering.

The reality of natural disasters is right in our faces, so to speak, and the question is what are we doing to address these as the WCRC? Do we simply make public statements and go on with business as usual? How do we more significantly accompany and journey with those affected? Should we get involved in disaster management training? Should we establish a Disaster Relief Fund? How do we effectively work with others and especially with other ecumenical bodies in addressing these new greater challenges? The need for partnerships and ecumenical cooperation is probably far greater now than it has ever been because we cannot tackle these issues alone.

As we witness political uprisings and unrest, we need to ask to what extent we get involved in our accompaniment of member churches and others without getting caught up in party politics. How do we stand true to the Word of God in these experiences and speak prophetically in the given contexts? As we witness conflicts generated by religious factions, divisions and fundamentalism we need to ask how we can work with other faiths to engage, promote and sustain peacemaking and peace-keeping initiatives. As we encounter the effects of globalization, economic injustices, gender injustice, eco-injustice and other forms of discrimination and oppression, we need to constantly assess and re-assess our role and involvement as we seek to move towards the mission imperative found in John 10.10, "That all may have life in its fullness."

Of course, the questions I am posing are not new; we have asked them before as WARC and possibly as REC. As a matter of fact, the Accra Confession that emerged in 2004, calling us into covenanting for justice and caring for the earth, asked these or similar questions. I believe that this document is a gift to the church and to the ecumenical movement. I am pleased to see that many ecumenical organizations have taken this confession and drawn up their own vision, mission and theological statements. And that is fine, the document is not for us to possess and own; it is for all Christians to be challenged and to respond. So we are greatly encouraged when we see others use it in the way they have. However, the tragedy for us would be to merely produce a confession and leave it at that as if our work were now complete. We know that that is not true. We need to seek in earnest ways in which we can live out the Accra Confession both within and beyond the WCRC. Well, the mandate from Grand Rapids, "Called to



communion and committed to justice”, certainly ensures that all the issues raised above will continue to remain on the agenda and work of the new WCRC.

The Strategic Planning Team will offer suggestions as to what should be our programme priorities in the next six years. Admittedly, there is much to be done but we must be realistic in our ambition not to try and do it all. Instead, we need to ascertain what the pressing issues are, focus on a few things, and do them well. We recognize also that as a Communion we have many varied experiences, backgrounds, theological/biblical interpretations, e.g., the ordination of women, etc. Instead of raising walls and causing separation around these issues we need to encourage open dialogue and gently challenge one another on our views. This stresses the ongoing need for theological reflection and education on various matters from a Reformed perspective. Our focus must be on embracing diversity and building a new community in which Jesus Christ is the centre and Lord of all. Jesus encouraged people to gather round the table and talk. In fact, the Pharisees questioned the type of people he dialogued with: prostitutes, tax collectors, thieves, etc. But Jesus pointed out emphatically that he did not come for those who were well but for those who were sick and needed healing, forgiveness and restoration. In our Communion we must seek to build unity and work towards justice. In so doing, we must not limit ourselves to those within the Reformed family, instead we must seek to work with others, including other faiths and denominations as we seek God’s justice and peace in the world. This raises the need for strengthened ecumenical engagement and partnerships with others who have similar vision and hope for the world.

We speak of communion and justice but we must be careful that we do not see these two as separate entities. For in essence, biblically speaking, we cannot have communion without justice and we cannot have justice without communion. These two are like the two scissor blades; we need both to cut. We must thus signal out a warning to ourselves that when we agree on our programme priorities that we resist the “unconscious” tendency to separate them. We realize, too, that in our Communion injustices prevail and we must therefore commit to not only calling for an “alternative society” but also to actually becoming that “new society” ourselves. As I have moved around I have heard some people express their outrage at the Uniting General Council’s decision to send 50% women and 50% men as delegates to future General Councils. Perhaps this is a step in the right direction as we seek to be that

## Address of the President

“alternative/new society” that God is calling us to be as we address the issue of gender justice.

Our task as the WCRC is to proclaim the love and presence of Jesus Christ to a suffering and sin-sick world. We must be guided and motivated by the *missio Dei* (God’s mission) rather than by what we think is our mission. I am glad to see that the WCRC intends to focus on mission in a more intentional way as we promote the holistic understanding of mission. We also realize that the local congregation is the key place in and through which mission happens. My vision is that somehow we will find creative ways to take the work of the WCRC into congregations and mobilize them in mission engagement and activity. In order to achieve this we would require the assistance of our area councils and the leadership of our member churches. We have set plans afoot to empower the work of area councils. Where they do not exist we will mobilize their formation and where they do exist we will attempt to empower them with vision, drive and resources where needed. I personally believe that the strength of the WCRC must not necessarily lie in the General Council, where it is currently placed, but in the work of the regions. What matters most is what happens in the seven years we have in between the General Councils if we are to have any significant impact and if we are really to make a difference contextually and globally.

I am hoping that we will sharpen and shape the work of the WCRC vice-presidents and members of the Executive Committee in the regions. If we are to mobilize the work of the WCRC on the ground then the leadership will need to be more actively involved in their region and not merely attend Executive Committee meetings. We need to set up structures of responsibility and accountability so that we become a close-knit family in which leaders offer more time and effort in spite of the challenges we may already face in this area. We will strengthen our lines of communication among the Officers, the Executive Committee members, our regions and member churches using the facilities we already use and further employ media such as Facebook, Skype and video and teleconferencing. We would like to encourage the exchange of personnel from different regions to help shape, stretch and inform our discussions. In fact, I have already raised this challenge with WCRC Europe and I am pleased to report that they have responded very favourably to this and will invite someone from another Area to their next meeting. We need to share stories, exchange ideas and express interest in what is going on in other regions if we are to understand what it means to be a global organization. I share all of these thoughts with

you in humility because I believe that God has called us to be more and to do more as the WCRC. I hope and pray that you will dream with me of more possibilities as to how we may move the WCRC forward to the glory of God and the transformation of the world.

Let me conclude with a few other remarks. Since the beginning of 2011 it has proved to be pretty hectic. I am finding that many Areas and member churches are very keen to meet with me as President. It was a real joy and privilege for me to address WCRC Europe in March in Prague. Immediately after that meeting I was invited by the Christian Reformed Church to visit Hungary. My experiences are recorded on my blog on the WCRC website.

It was also a great opportunity to attend the Justice Reading of the Grand Rapids UGC consultation that took place in the USA. The contributions made at this meeting were passed on to the Strategic Planning Team to factor into the shaping of the WCRC's future.

General Secretary Setri Nyomi, Vice-President Bas Plaisier and I made a visit to China where we held conversations with the China Christian Council. We appreciated the cordial welcome and the stories shared by the church with us and we look forward to the building of better relationships. I was invited to address the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan about the WCRC and its vision and work. It was really a joy and pleasure for the General Secretary, Vice President Yueh-Wen and me to attend this gathering. We were deeply blessed by their warm hospitality and the marvellous work in missions and their vision to grow their Church as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in Taiwan and beyond.

We also realize that the future work of the WCRC cannot rely exclusively on the membership fees of member churches. I am pleased to report that the General Secretary and I have already embarked on conversations with possible donors to support the work of the WCRC. Let us hope and pray that something good will materialize out of these initiatives.

It has been really great to see our staff located in the offices in Geneva enter so willingly into the processes we engaged in strategic planning. I wish to thank each one of them for their untiring service and labour of love. Many others from other organizations are fascinated as to how the WCRC is able to do so much with so few staff. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Setri Nyomi, the executive secretaries and all other staff for their faithful work. Setri

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Nyomi and I are in constant communication and consultation with each other and I certainly appreciate the efforts from his side. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Patricia Sherrattan-Bisnauth who will be leaving us in due course. The impact of her commitment and work in justice and partnership speaks for itself. We will surely miss her but we pray that God will lead her into a new path of service and ministry where she will find joy and fulfilment.

I wish to thank the Officers and Executive Committee for their support, encouragement and prayers over the last 10 months. My prayer is that we would indeed pour new wine into new wineskins, that we would prayerfully discern God's will for the WCRC, and that each of us will ask not what the WCRC can do for us but what we can do for the WCRC to make it relevant, significant and an agent of hope as we engage God's mission in the transformation of the world: "Called to communion and committed to justice".

## **REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

Setri Nyomi

### **Called to communion, committed to justice**

1. In June 2010, history was made. Reformed churches said “no” to division and “yes” to unity. More than that, we said “yes” to confirming our calling as koinonia. This takes us beyond a feeling that we belong together merely because we are an association of churches that trace their historical roots to a particular strand of the Reformation family. That historical affinity is true – but the World Communion of Reformed Churches is more than that. It is a reflection of a response to nothing less than our Lord Jesus’ prayer that we may be one, or what is described in Ephesians chapter six from which the June 2010 Uniting General Council theme comes – “Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace”.
2. As a koinonia that shares in bread and wine at the table of our Lord Jesus Christ we are called to live that out in right relationships with one another. We cannot truly be a Communion without commitment to justice. How we relate to one another within the Communion and how we foster right relationships in God’s inhabited earth and with God’s creation is part of our self-understanding as a Communion. Thus we cannot live in a world in which women are oppressed, racism is rampant, economic injustice is tacitly accepted as normal, climate injustice is threatening many communities, and do nothing about it. We have sisters and brothers who are affected.
3. In the months since we left Grand Rapids, we have had disasters and devastating political conflicts in many parts of the world – Madagascar, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Australia and Japan – to name a few. We have sisters and brothers in these parts of the world, and our being Communion demands that we do something.
4. We cannot engage in justice without a deep sense of who we are as a Communion – that would make us merely a politically motivated NGO. It is what our Lord Jesus Christ has done to reconcile us with God that brings us into a relationship with God that makes us instruments of reconciliation, justice and making a difference in the world. The change that results from life in Jesus Christ beckons us to care for one another and to care for

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God's creation. We do this together as a Communion, and not as isolated individuals.

5. Communion and justice are, therefore, the key action orientations of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). They are not just catchwords. They stem from our firm theological conviction that being in a eucharistic and covenantal communion relationship with one another calls us to care for and be accountable to one another in how we stand for right relationships among us, in the world, and for the earth's resources.

### **Welcome and congratulations**

6. I take this opportunity to welcome you to this first Executive Committee meeting of the WCRC. Once again, congratulations on your election as members of the Executive Committee. My colleagues and I are very grateful that you have accepted this responsibility to serve the Communion as its leaders in these challenging times.
7. We thank God for the Uniting General Council (UGC) and for your role in making it a success. While we were touched by grief at the end of the council, through the sudden death of our sister Christina Mandang, we have also been inspired to live out our Communion through challenging times as well as some great times.
8. You have been called to leadership of the WCRC in this time to move this organization to great heights in our praying together and our common actions to live out our calling to be a Communion committed to justice.

### **Strategic planning and UGC mandates**

9. My colleagues and I came back from Grand Rapids inspired to keep pace with the momentum of the spirit of Grand Rapids. Thus we lost no time at all in preparing ourselves for three initial tasks:
  - start unpacking the mandates of the UGC.
  - begin the strategic planning process.
  - go through the processes of transition in the office.
10. Even before we left Grand Rapids, our President had announced the need for a comprehensive strategic planning process. The

President and I in consultation with the Officers took a number of steps in this regard. Following responses to the skills audit questionnaire that was sent to all Executive Committee members, a small team of Executive Committee members was chosen to lead in the strategic planning process. We also appointed an external strategic planning facilitator – Ms Omega Bula, from one of our member churches.

11. We sent questionnaires to all our member churches, area council leaders, staff and strategic partners. These were analysed by the Strategic Planning Team that met in November 2010. They worked with staff to begin the process of identifying a clear vision and mission for the WCRC and to point towards key directions, methodologies and priorities for the WCRC.
12. Our dedicated staff in Geneva worked through all the reports of the UGC to identify the clear mandates of the UGC and possibilities for implementation. These were offered to the Strategic Planning Team to process within the framework of the strategic planning. The Strategic Planning Team in turn gave some tasks to the staff to continue working on to facilitate the development of programme priorities and financial planning.
13. The hope is that by the end of the strategic planning process the Executive Committee will approve a report with clear mandates, directions and priorities to focus on for the WCRC.
14. The only part of the process we had to monitor was the intention to hold a consultation with our partners in April. Preliminary exploration led us to conclude this was unrealistic. Therefore we identified a number of key partners (e.g. CWM, EED, EMW, FAP) that we have been holding discussions with.
15. We are very grateful to the facilitator of our strategic planning process and the Strategic Planning Team. What we are doing through this process is crucial for the life of the WCRC, moving us forward as a strong and effective Communion. The process is designed to lead to concrete strategies that will place this organization in good stead to serve our member churches and to be a real instrument of transformation in the world.

### **Staff changes**

16. The year 2010 has been quite difficult in terms of staff changes. The merger of WARC and REC itself did not bring unanticipated

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change. However, in view of the financial difficulties of the REC and WARC, the Joint Executive Committee of the REC and WARC, meeting in May 2009, designed a staff structure with fewer people than in the former WARC and changes in the role of the Finance Office. This restructuring was aimed at arresting budget deficits so that from the year 2011 on, the WCRC will not incur any more deficits.

17. 30 September was designated as the time for the old structure to give way so that by 1 October, the new structure would be in place. The only exception made was for the Mission Project (which is funded as a programme) to continue until the end of December 2010, which was the duration for which all partners planned (January 2006 to December 2010).
18. This meant the end of contracts for two executive secretaries and three of our administrative assistants between September and December 2010. Consistent with the commitments of the WCRC, an opportunity was given to our colleagues whose contracts were ending to apply for the new positions and be considered alongside other applicants. The commitment was to give an automatic interview privilege to those colleagues who applied. After the process of interviews, a new appointment was made for the position of Finance Coordinator, in the person of Yueh Cho. A new appointment was made for the position of Administrative Assistant for Programmes – Daphne Martin-Gnanadason.
19. It is difficult to see colleagues go. The transition period has been complicated. We are grateful to God for the services of our former colleagues who left us in the last few months of 2010 – Jet den Hollander after 11 years, Maureen O'Brien after five years, Franziska Surber after two years, as well as Heather Fouquet and Smaranda Dochia who were with us for just a few months each. We wish them all well in all their future endeavours.

### **The Office of Theology, Mission and Communion**

20. Soon after coming back from Grand Rapids, the office concentrated on finishing up work on the Global Institute of Theology (GIT), ensuring the right academic credits were awarded and reporting was done.
21. Since June 2010 two issues of *Reformed World* were published. The September issue was on the GIT and the UGC. In December



we published a theme-less issue. We received more positive feedback than usual for both issues. The first issue of 2011 is now about to be published. It will be on (gender) justice. As is known *Reformed World* is published three times per year. The editorial advisory board will be more involved in the publication and work will be done to get more paying subscribers.

22. Given the success of GIT 2010, it would not be wise to have a GIT only when there is a General Council. Therefore the next GIT is planned to take place in 2012 in Indonesia. The plan is to have it coincide with the Executive Committee meeting.
23. The first meeting of the Reformed-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue (round 2011-2017) took place from 3 to 9 April 2011 in Rome. The theme for this dialogue was: *Justification and Sacramentality*. The Officers meeting of November 2010 approved the composition of the Reformed team in this dialogue.
24. An exploratory meeting for a possible dialogue with the Anglican Communion will take place from 1 to 4 June 2011 in Geneva. Other dialogues that might be organized in the foreseeable future are with the African Instituted Churches, the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The dialogue with the Pentecostal community needs to be finalized but the challenge is to find a possible date for the meeting.
25. The Bilateral Forum is a meeting place where Christian World Communions share their experiences of their dialogues. A meeting is planned for April 2012 in Tanzania. The Theology, Mission and Communion Executive Secretary is involved in this.
26. One of the mandates of the UGC was to set up a network of theologians. A worldwide group of Reformed theologians will come together for a consultation in India in October 2011 to see how this network can be set up and how it can work in the coming years.
27. The Executive Secretary has been in conversation with the Reformierter Bund in Germany on commemorating upcoming significant anniversaries (the Heidelberg Catechism and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation).
28. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has gone through a process of reconciliation with the Mennonite churches in view of

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the suffering caused to the Mennonite Community in the Reformation era. The Reformed Communion had a good dialogue with the Mennonites in the 1980s with some concrete outcomes. A process has been set up in cooperation with the Mennonite World Council to follow this up and determine the next steps in reconciliation.

29. The Executive Secretary is part of the management board of the John Knox Centre on behalf of the WCRC. He is the President of the John Knox Programme Commission. This Commission organized a consultation on "Churches speaking Truth to Power" from 28 to 30 March 2011.
30. The Executive Secretary was present at a meeting of a network of Reformed theological institutions in Southern Africa in Lilongwe, from 12 to 19 January 2011. This meeting was about the development of a theological curriculum and the Executive Secretary was asked to lecture on this from a global Reformed perspective. The Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) will most possibly seek affiliated membership with the WCRC.

### **The Office of Justice and Partnership**

31. Together with the WCC and CWM, the Justice and Partnership Office was the main organizer for an Oikotree Global Forum, which was held in collaboration with Kairos Europa in Arnoldshain, Germany from 31 October to 5 November 2010. The Forum provided an opportunity for ecumenical and social movements to share, explore and deepen their engagement in covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth. Participants were involved in an immersion programme to experience the work of ecumenical and social movements in Frankfurt. Participants called on churches and other faith communities, ecumenical organizations, networks, and people's movements to promote life-sustaining alternatives to the prevailing death-dealing systems.
32. The Executive Secretary, as a member of the WCC Reference Group on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (PWE), participated in the Europe PWE Hearing and Consultation in Budapest, Hungary from 6 to 10 November 2010. They issued a call for climate justice and social and ecological values to be a central goal of policymaking. The opportunity was also taken to promote the Accra Confession Europe study guide. Bishop Bölcskei of the

Reformed Church in Hungary (one of the hosts of the event) introduced the book and said that it was a major contribution of European Reformed churches to economic and climate justice.

33. The Office developed and produced a church manual on men as partners: promoting positive masculinities in November 2010. The book, entitled *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership* is a resource to transform male perspectives and attitudes on gender in church and society. The concepts of masculinity and gender are aimed at enabling men to be more conscious of gender as a construct that affects their own lives as well as those of women. It includes theological, biblical and liturgical resources on men, masculinity and gender. Masculinity is explored from the experiences and teachings of social practices, behaviours and power constructions by which men become conscious of themselves as gendered subjects. It is designed for participants to critically and sensitively examine the socialization of men and boys and the influence of social, religious, economic and cultural contexts on this process. The book was launched in a few local churches and seminaries and there has been very good feedback on the manual from the ecumenical as well as NGO constituencies.
34. The Office organized a Justice Reading of the Grand Rapids UGC from 31 March to 4 April 2011 in Fort Myers, Florida, USA. The consultation was hosted by the North American Covenanting for Justice Working Group and the Presbyterian Church (USA). An immersion programme with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers was organized to connect with local struggles of agricultural workers, who are predominantly migrants from Mexico and Haiti. Participants affirmed and critiqued the work of the 2010 Grand Rapids UGC and its affirmation of the Accra Confession. They called for continuing work on economic and ecological justice, and gender justice for the global Reformed Communion and its member churches. The outcomes of the Justice Reading are contributing to the WCRC strategic planning process and the ongoing work of the regional Covenanting for Justice working groups.
35. A Caribbean women's Bible study book, entitled *Righting Her-Story: Caribbean Women Encounter the Bible Story*, is expected to be published in May 2011. It is a popularized Bible study resource that addresses key issues and concerns of women and promotes ways in which women are resisting and overcoming injustices, carving out paths towards partnership and

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wholesome communities. Topics and issues discussed in the book include theology of gender justice and partnership; sexuality; marriage and family; violence against women; women's resistance; leadership and power; women as channels of grace, caregivers and nurturers of life; women, beauty and personal empowerment; culture; healing and building community. The book contains a Bible study training guide, 21 Bible studies, and accompanying stories and poems. It also has liturgical resources and a glossary.

36. A Bible study workshop held in Grenada from 13 to 19 January 2011 provided a critical space to reflect on how Caribbean people understand the presence and work of God in their everyday reality, especially as they read the Bible and discern the signs of the times. The main aims of the workshop were to develop hermeneutical tools, skills and approaches that emerge from women's experiences, knowledge and ways of being church and community. Participants expressed the need for more Bible study workshops that address the role and situation of women in church and society.
37. There was a weekend retreat of young men to build awareness, reflect and take action on violence against women in Guyana. This was organized by a young male participant from the Guyana Congregational Union from 11 to 13 March 2011.
38. The Office continues to manage the Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women. The opportunity of the UGC brought new applications that are being processed for the next selection committee. For the reporting period three women were awarded scholarships and five applications are currently being processed. The total number of awardees since the launch of the fund in 2002 is 67 women with a total of CHF301,572.64. A survey of status and developments regarding awardees began in 2008 but still needs to be completed.
39. The Executive Secretary met with the Commission of the World Day of Prayer (WDP), Switzerland on 22 November 2010. She spoke about the new WCRC, its commitment to gender justice and projects supported by WDP Switzerland. There was a healthy discussion on the situation of women within the Reformed constituency and strengthening partnership of the WCRC and the Swiss WDP. The donor partnership that began in 2009 has been renewed with a new contract.

40. The Executive Secretary participated in the Sylvia Michel prize-giving celebration in the form of a worship service and ceremony, held in Fribourg, Switzerland on 20 March 2011. The prize of USD5000 was awarded to Agnes Lisulo from Senanga, Zambia, whose significant leadership has borne fruit in the construction of the Liyoyelo Batik Center, which educates women and enables them to assume leading positions in their churches, villages and communities. The international prize is a partnership of the WCRC and the Association of Swiss Women Presidents of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (PANKS).

### **Communications Office**

41. During this time the work of the Office of Communications has focused on promoting the newly created WCRC; managing internal and external communication; and providing communication support for fundraising initiatives.

42. The Communications Network that is being set up will have members representing Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific and North America. Their communications expertise covers web, social media, publishing, radio and print journalism. We are looking for someone with communications marketing skills to join the Network.

43. As the proposed Strategic Plan for the WCRC emphasizes working with member churches and regional groups, the Network will provide an important link with the WCRC membership and offer invaluable advice to the Executive Secretary and the Executive Committee.

44. The website *www.wcrc.ch* went live in October 2010 in four languages. Features include:

- Micro flash site for the UGC: Record of Proceedings, audiovisual documentation, and print resources in four languages
- Messages from member churches, such as prayers offered by PROK for Libya
- Link to the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle
- Online donations function; online sales
- President's blog
- Facebook link

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45. Future plans for website development include a twitter feed and multiple language capabilities that will allow the creation of web pages for each WCRC Area, managed in the regions.
46. From 1 July, 2010 to 15 March, 2011, the WCRC issued 13 news releases. Distribution lists for news releases have been reviewed and updated. All releases also appear on the WCRC website.
47. Publications facilitated by the Communications office include:
  - Creation of new quarterly newsletter, *Reformed Communiqué*, available in English and French, produced in print and electronic editions. Subscription policy reviewed and distribution lists updated. Three editions produced (September 2010, December 2010, March 2011).
  - Selected articles of each edition are published in German in *die reformierten* and in Spanish in *La Voz*.
  - Publication of "year-in-review report" for 2010.
  - UGC Record of Proceedings produced in four languages. 100 copies distributed in print (60 E; 15 F; 10 G; 15 S) to Executive Committee members, staff, and archives. CD copies distributed to each member church. CD contents posted to micro flash site on the WCRC website. Print copies available on request.
  - WCRC flyer produced in four languages.
48. The Executive Secretary has provided communication support for the North American Trustees of the WCRC Endowment Fund. Specific activities include raising the profile of the WCRC Endowment Fund, conducting a funding appeal and the development of a case statement for support of the WCRC.
49. The ecumenical news sharing service, Ecumenical News International (ENInews), was restructured and relaunched in January 2011. The new president of ENInews is Michel Kocher, a Swiss journalist. Both he and Frank Worbs, a journalist with a German-language Swiss cantonal church, are the WCRC representatives on the board.

## Finance Office

50. Since the UGC, we said goodbye to our last Finance Coordinator, Maureen O'Brien, at the end of October 2010. We appreciate her services to WARC/WCRC for the five years in which she was in office. We welcomed Yueh Cho at the beginning of October. He has been handling our finances with great competence. He had

to hit the ground running, and he has risen to the challenge. Among other things he is developing some new strategies for collecting membership contributions that will serve us well.

51. The WCRC finances have been a major challenge. Prior to the UGC it was envisaged that WARC and REC would fold their accounts by 30 June 2010, and a new WCRC accounting system would begin on 1 July 2010. This proved challenging to implement. By September 2010 both accounts were still active and were not ready for closing. Therefore the earlier plan was revised to operate the WARC accounts in Geneva and the REC account in Grand Rapids in parallel until the end of the year and begin the 2011 accounting year with the WCRC. With all the changes and transitions, this seemed the best course of action.
52. We were very much aware that both the WARC and REC accounts for 2010 were under great pressure. The plan to reduce staff so that we could avoid deficits was not expected to affect the 2010 accounting year. It was expected to affect the years 2011 and beyond. This meant we were expecting a deficit on the WARC accounts by the end of the year. The REC account was expected to simply break even without much of a surplus. The goal was to make sure that the new WCRC did not begin with a negative equity. The year end 2010 accounts show that while we have a deficit of CHF 226'716, WARC is bringing into the WCRC accounts a modest positive equity of CHF73'240.
53. As at 31 December, 2010, REC had in its accounts for general operations USD30,980. We can consider this what REC brings into the WCRC.
54. It is from this that we have to start to build the WCRC accounts. 2011 will be a tough year. We will hold ourselves to the budget and starting from this year are committed to making deficits a thing of the past. In our financial planning, we even expect from 2012 to begin building a reserve fund again, with a goal of building back up to around CHF500'000 by 2017.
55. A major challenge is currency fluctuations. In past years, it was only the US dollar that was weakening against the Swiss franc. In 2010, the Euro followed the same path. We receive most of our income in Euro or US dollars, and most of our expenditure is in Swiss francs. This underlies a good part of our financial challenges.

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56. We are doing everything we can to stay within the zero tolerance for deficit 2011 budget. We are confident that we will succeed, although this means we have a difficult year ahead. One of the measures that we have put in place is for programme funds to be raised bearing in mind a percentage for administrative costs. This will alleviate the pressure on the income for core costs.
57. We will be presenting a budget for 2012 to this Executive Committee for approval. It has the same principle of zero tolerance for deficit.
58. For our financial plan to be effective, we need the involvement of each Executive Committee member and advisor. Each Executive Committee member is called upon to share the vision and mission of the WCRC in a manner that can help bring in the necessary funds. Each needs to ensure that their own church and churches under their watch are faithfully making their annual membership contributions. Executive Committee members can also be key fundraisers for the WCRC. There are many contextually relevant forms of fundraising. Each Executive Committee member can find the best form of fundraising for themselves and build around themselves a support community for this purpose.
59. The WCRC has faced some extremely difficult financial challenges. Until 2010, we could not avoid deficits. With the structural arrangements put in place by the 2009 Executive Committee meeting we can put the regular deficits behind us with effect from the 2011 accounting year. It will be tough for this year and next year. However, as we all play our roles in the WCRC effectively, we are confident that the vision and mission of the WCRC, as well as the impact of the work we do, will attract the necessary funds we need. We are committed to being good stewards of the funds, to good processes of using the funds well, and to good accountability

### **Partnership Fund**

60. Our colleague Douwe Visser together with his wife, Antoinette Berkouwer (as a volunteer), have been coordinating the Partnership Fund. The coordinators process Partnership Fund applications for approval by the Partnership Fund Committee, handle requests for funding and are responsible for reporting to the donors. One of the sponsors, the Evangelische



Entwicklungsdienst (EED) in Germany substantially raised its contribution from EUR100,000 to EUR200,000 per annum. This goes, however, together with far stricter criteria for funding and reporting and the WCRC has to build its own capacity and the capacity of its member churches to be able to benefit fully from the funds available.

61. We are very grateful for the partnership that exists between the Partnership Fund and the Fondation pour l'Aide au Protestantisme Reformé (FAP) based in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.
62. Since June 2010, 15 applications have been processed. A good number still await approval by the Partnership Fund Committee.

### **Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council**

63. We are very grateful that the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) is now an integral part of the WCRC as an associate member. In February this year, my colleague Douwe and I had discussions with the General Secretary of DECC, Rev. Dr Robert Welsh and Professor David Thompson on understanding the meaning of the DECC associate membership. We came to many concrete expressions of this as we together continue our commitment to the unity of the church.

### **Regional councils**

64. The European region held its Steering Committee meeting in the Netherlands in October 2010 and its Council meeting in Prague in the Czech Republic in March 2011. They approved a new set of Bylaws that will be presented for ratification at this meeting. They also elected a new President and Steering Committee. The President is now Rev Jan-Gert Heetderks. The Caribbean and North American Council (CANAAC) held its Steering Committee meeting in Toronto, Canada in October 2010 and is planning its Council meeting in September this year. Our colleague Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth participated in this meeting. The Northeast Asia Area Council (NEAAC) had its Administrative Committee meeting in January 2011 and is planning a Council meeting in November this year. The Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America (AIPRAL) is planning its next Assembly for August 2011. And the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA) is likely to have a Steering Committee meeting in October 2011.

## Report of the General Secretary

65. Our vision of the structure of the WCRC and what is emerging in the strategic planning process is such that in this era the office in Geneva will be working much closer with the regional councils. A preliminary discussion paper was developed to this effect and sent to the leadership of each Area Council. This has been warmly received by all Area Councils. There are some discussions to have regional councils where they currently do not exist (for example in Indonesia or in South Asia). To further facilitate the process of working closely together, we have asked our Area Councils to include Officers and Executive Committee members more closely in their processes.

### **United Nations**

66. We continue to value the relationship we have with the United Nations. We exercise a part of this through the Presbyterian Church (USA) UN office in New York. We are grateful for the collaboration of Mark Koenig who represents the WCRC in the UN office in New York and keeps us informed about ways in which the WCRC and its member churches can be engaged.

67. We also make direct advocacy and interventions through other means (e.g. Human rights, Women, UNAIDS, etc.).

### **Ecumenical relations**

68. We are thankful for the journey we continue to make with different sister organizations in the ecumenical movement, including the World Council of Churches (WCC). I attended the 6th United Nations awareness week organized by the WCC – this time focusing on Palestine/Israel and Nigeria. The WCRC has member churches in Nigeria and has interests in peace and justice in Nigeria. It has also been concerned about peace and justice in Palestine/Israel for a very long time.

69. I attended the 11th General Assembly of the LWF in Stuttgart, Germany, in July this year, with the theme “Give us this day our daily bread”. Deliberations on this theme stressed similar issues to those we have been highlighting in our emphasis on justice. In November 2010, the Officers of the WCRC and the Executive Committee of the LWF had lunch together. This is a good sign of our growing closeness. While attending the Officers meeting in Geneva, Officers of the WCRC were also present at the installation of Rev. Martin Junge as the new General Secretary of the LWF.

70. I attended the General Assembly of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Atlanta, Georgia in the USA immediately following the UGC in Grand Rapids. This builds upon our dialogue that took place about seven years ago.
71. While at the LWF Assembly, I had some meaningful conversations with the leadership of the Mennonite World Conference. One of the outcomes of our dialogue in the 1980s was a call for repentance, which was concretely carried out, for example, by the Church of Zurich. Following the Lutheran actions of repentance, we talked about how the Reformed church movement can build upon its own processes of the past. My colleague Douwe Visser and I had discussions with the outgoing General Secretary of the Mennonite World Council and we are beginning to develop plans on how to build our relations with the Council.
72. Our President, Jerry Pillay attended the Lausanne Congress meeting in Cape Town on behalf of the WCRC.
73. We cooperated with the WCC in planning the interfaith consultation in Geneva in early November 2010.

### **General Secretary's visits to member churches and partners**

74. Shortly after the UGC in Grand Rapids, I visited the Protestant Church in West Indonesia (GPIB). This was in connection with the funeral of our sister Christina Mandang.
75. While attending the LWF Assembly, I preached in the Stuttgart congregation of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany. My presence as keynote speaker in the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW) Assembly in Emden, Germany in September 2010 gave me an opportunity to visit the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany again. I again visited the EMW for discussions on our emerging partnership in March 2011.
76. In August 2010, I attended the general assemblies of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana. I also attended the Synod of the Global Evangelical Church in Ghana. While in the region I paid a visit to the leadership of the Eglise Evangélique Presbytérienne du Togo. In addition to the ongoing political crisis in Togo we have

## Report of the General Secretary

had to walk with them as they tried to address a threatening rift between them and the Methodist Church of Togo.

77. Bread for All in Switzerland, which is part of the diaconal arm of the Swiss Protestant churches, organized an encounter with Swiss government authorities on the Millennium Development Goals, and I was invited to be part of that process. This was done with their Roman Catholic counterpart, the Lenten Fast, which also brought in a couple of African Bishops. It was a good encounter in which we challenged the Swiss authorities and other governments of the Global North on their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals.
78. Still in Switzerland I participated in the farewell activities in connection with the departure of Rev. Dr Thomas Wipf and the welcoming and installation of the new president of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches Council, our own general treasurer, Gottfried Locher.
79. I was part of a conference on the Korean peninsula from 31 October to 4 November 2010. Immediately before, I visited our member churches in Korea.
80. In January 2011, I visited and had discussions in the offices of the Reformed Alliance in Germany. I also was a guest lecturer at Gottingen University in Germany. I was the guest preacher at the 175th anniversary celebration of the Norddeutsch Mission in Bremen, Germany, in April 2011.
81. While attending the WCRC Europe Council meeting in Prague, I also had discussions with the leader of our member church, the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren in the Czech Republic.

### **Christian World Communions**

82. From 31 October to 4 November, 2010, the annual Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions was held in Geneva. Due to a clash in the dates with my visit to Korea, my colleague Douwe Visser represented me and the WCRC in this meeting.

### **Conclusion**

83. This has been a very challenging period. My colleagues and I have been continuing with ongoing programmes while attending

to transitions in the office as well as engaging in the strategic planning for the future. We have also been picking up the pieces of human feelings and reactions following the downsizing that characterizes the new staff structure.

84. I take this moment to give thanks to God for my counterpart, Richard van Houten, who worked formally for the WCRC until the end of July 2010. Since then, he continues to be active as a faithful volunteer for the WCRC since we have constantly called on him to do one thing or the other for us – even in his retirement, as we struggled to bring the UGC accounts to a close. We are very grateful to Richard for his dedication.
85. At the same time, we are building the new team, and there are already signs of a new team spirit, coherence and dedication emerging from it. For this I am very grateful to God and to all in the team. So my gratitude to Penny Blachut, Daphne Martin-Gnanadason, Yueh Cho, Kristine Greenaway, Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth and Douwe Visser and our faithful volunteer Hartmut Lucke for the team we are creating. We are grateful to God for the 11 years of faithful service that Patricia Sheerattan Bisnauth has offered to WARC and the WCRC. We are still working on identifying the colleague who will join us later this year for building upon the good work done in our Justice and Partnership office. This is our team – small but extremely dedicated and professional. Please join me in giving thanks to God for each one of them.
86. I am very grateful to our Officers for the spirit in which we have begun work in leading this organization. My gratitude goes to all Executive Committee members and all Area Council leadership. Thanks for accepting to be leaders of the WCRC at this time.
87. We pray for God's guidance for a fruitful Executive Committee meeting that will move this organization forward in everything, including making every effort to maintain and deepen our unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Theology, Mission and Communion Office

**REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THEOLOGY,  
MISSION AND COMMUNION**

Douwe Visser

The former Office of Theology and Ecumenical Engagement is now called the Office of Theology, Mission and Communion (TMC). It covers a wide range of work.

It took some time after the Uniting General Council (UGC) to follow up on the work done right before and during it and to set up new work. The Global Institute of Theology (GIT), especially, required a lot of follow up work. Essays had to be marked, academic credits had to be awarded and reporting needed to be done. The financial part of the reporting in particular took a long time due to the fact that GIT finances are part of the overall UGC financial reports.

Since June 2010 three issues of *Reformed World* were published. The September issue was on the GIT and the UGC. In December we published a theme-less issue. We received more positive feedback than usual for both issues. The first issue of 2011 has just been published. It is on (gender) justice and this special issue has been dedicated to Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth.

As is known, *Reformed World* is published three times a year. The editorial advisory board will be more involved in the publication, and work will be done to get more paying subscribers. The aim is still to publish *Reformed World* without any costs for the core budget.

Future plans are being developed in conjunction with the strategic planning process. Some of the work however could not be delayed. The ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church had to be set up. The Officers meeting of November 2010 approved the composition of the team and the first meeting of the dialogue round 2011-2017 has just taken place from 3 to 9 April 2011 in Rome. The theme for this dialogue round was: *Justification and Sacramentality*. Discussions in this meeting focused on "justification".

Two approaches to this theme played a role in the discussions. The first approach was an historic overview of 16th century theological divisions in particular, showing how in many aspects the differences between Reformed and Catholic theology on the doctrine of justification differ less than is often thought. The second approach was to look for the relevance of the doctrine of justification and how it plays a role in Christian life today. In this way the discussion was

very much about the relation between justification and justice: when God has justified us and we are precious in God's eyes, then we can only obey the call to do justice in the world. On the other hand, the call for justice will only have a deep foundation when we see this as anchored in God's work.

In the meeting there was also a discussion about a possible affiliation to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, a document Catholics and Lutherans signed in 1999. At its UGC in 2010 the WCRC decided to consult the member churches about such an affiliation.

See *Appendix 1* for a list of the Reformed participants in this dialogue. The next meeting will take place in April 2012, most likely in the USA.

A preparatory meeting for a possible dialogue with the Anglican Communion will take place from 1 to 4 June 2011 in Geneva. If this meeting comes to a positive conclusion a dialogue will need to be set up and the Executive Committee will receive a proposal for a dialogue team.

Other dialogues that may be organized are a dialogue with the African Instituted Churches and the Eastern Orthodox Church. The dialogue with the Pentecostal community needs to be finalized but the challenge is to find a possible date for the meeting.

The Bilateral Forum is a meeting place where Christian World Communions share their experience of their dialogues. A meeting is planned for April 2012 in Tanzania. The TMC Executive Secretary will be involved in this.

One of the mandates of the UGC was to set up a network of theologians. A worldwide group of Reformed theologians will come together for a consultation in India in October 2011 to see how this network can be set up and how it can work in the coming years. *Appendix 2* lists the theologians invited to this consultation.

The GIT 2010 was a great success. It would be unwise to hold GITs only when general councils occur, therefore the next GIT is planned for July 2012 in Indonesia. A preparatory meeting will take place in June 2011 most probably in Indonesia. The Executive Committee will be represented in this preparatory meeting since the Moderator of the TMC office, Bas Plaisier, is the *ex officio* President of the GIT.

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The TMC Executive Secretary is the President of the John Knox Programme Commission. This commission organized a consultation on churches speaking truth to power from 28 to 30 March 2011. Work for John Knox is now integrated in the job description of the TMC Executive Secretary.

The TMC Executive Secretary will also be involved in two consultations that will be organized by the Reformierter Bund in Germany. The first one is in 2012 on Reformed Spirituality, and the second in 2013 on the Heidelberg Catechism. It is important that the WCRC be part of this "joint venture".

The TMC Executive Secretary represented the WCRC during the annual meeting of the General Secretaries of the Christian World Communions (November 2010) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee (February 2011).

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has gone through a process of reconciliation with the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in view of the suffering caused to the Mennonite Community in the Reformation era. The Reformed Communion will not lag behind and therefore a process has been set up in cooperation with the MWC. The TMC Executive Secretary will be involved in this in preparing background material.

The TMC Executive Secretary was invited by the General Secretary to be part of a conversation with the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) to work out the concrete structure of its associate membership with the WCRC. Good progress was made, and the TMC Executive Secretary will meet with DECC Executive Secretary, Robert Welsh, to see how this can be further worked out.

The TMC Executive Secretary was present at the WCRC Europe Council meeting in Prague from 3 to 5 March 2011. The General Secretary and the WCRC President were also present. The latter gave a presentation about the WCRC and its future work.

The TMC Executive Secretary was present at the meeting of the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) in Lilongwe, from 12 to 19 January 2011. NetACT is a network of Reformed theological institutions in Southern Africa mainly set up by Stellenbosch University. This meeting was about the development of a theological curriculum and the TMC Executive Secretary was asked to lecture on this from a global Reformed perspective. NetACT is very likely to seek affiliate membership with the WCRC.



The TMC Executive Secretary also works as the Partnership Fund coordinator together with volunteer fund coordinator Antoinette Berkouwer. The coordinators process applications for approval by the Partnership Fund Committee, handle requests for funding and are responsible for reporting to the donors. One of the sponsors, the Evangelische Entwicklungsdienst (EED) in Germany, substantially raised its contribution from EUR100,000 to EUR200,000 per annum. This goes however together with far stricter criteria for funding and reporting and the WCRC has to build up the capacity of its member churches to be able to benefit fully from the funds available. Since June 2010, 15 applications have been processed. A good number still await approval by the Partnership Fund Committee.

Mission is now part of the TMC Office, in consequence of a decision taken by the Officers meeting in 2011. In conjunction with the strategic planning process the TMC Executive Secretary is working on a document that can serve as a basis for future work.

The TMC Executive Secretary is eagerly awaiting the final stage of the strategic planning process in order to do the work with full capacity. It is important, especially in relations to fundraising, not to lose momentum, as during and immediately after the UGC signs of substantial support were overwhelmingly visible.

The TMC office not only consists of the Executive Secretary: since 1 October 2010 Daphne Martin-Gnanadason provides 50% administrative support. Her work for the Office is essential and it is a joy to work with her.

### *Appendix 1*

## **Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue**

### **Reformed members:**

- Lindsay Schlutter – Church of Scotland – has an excellent knowledge of early medieval theology (PhD dissertation on the religious and ecclesiastical role of women in the 9th century in the city of Rome) – on the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the Church of Scotland and was a delegate in Grand Rapids.
- Reinerio Valentin Arce – Presbyterian Church of Cuba – PhD with Moltmann in Germany – acclaimed expert in the field.
- George Sabra – teaching at NEST Beirut, Lebanon – PhD in Germany on Aquinas – was involved in WARC dialogues.

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- Martha Moore-Keish – PC(USA) – was involved in US Catholic/Reformed dialogue and cooperated in its document on baptism (co-chair).
- George Hunsinger – PC(USA) – teaching at Princeton – wrote recently on sacramentality and has expertise in the theme of dialogue.
- Benebo Furbara – Presbyterian Church of Nigeria – has a high level of interest in ecumenical relations and is well known for his sharp analysis of what goes on in church and society.
- Marina Ngursangzeli Behera – Presbyterian Church of India – teaching in Bangalore (history of Christianity) – her list of publications shows an interesting expertise in the field.
- Douwe Visser – WCRC Executive Secretary for Theology, Mission and Communion (Co-secretary).

(5 men / 3 women)

### *Appendix 2*

#### **Theologians invited to the India Consultation, October 2011**

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| • Africa (Anglophone)     | Alan Boesak (South Africa)             |
| • Africa (Francophone)    | <i>Still open</i>                      |
| • Asia – South region     | Henry Wilson (India)                   |
| • Asia – Indonesia region | Zakaria Ngelow (Indonesia)             |
| • Asia – Northeast region | Kyung In Kim (Korea)                   |
| • Middle East             | Paul Hadostian                         |
| • North America           | Anna Case Winters (USA)                |
| • Latin America           | Adelaida Jimenez Cortes<br>(Colombia)  |
| • Pacific                 | Jason Goroncy (New Zealand)            |
| • Europe                  | Heleen Zorgdrager<br>(The Netherlands) |
| • IRTI                    | Eddy van der Borght<br>(Belgium)       |
| • WCRC Core Group         | Bas Plaisier (Hong Kong)               |
| • WCRC Staff              | Douwe Visser (Geneva)                  |
| • WCC                     | <i>Still open</i>                      |

(8 men / 4 women / 2 open)

## **REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP**

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

### **A Introduction**

The reporting period, July 2010 to April 2011, was one of completing projects, processing the mandates of the June 2010 Grand Rapids Uniting General Council (UGC) and participating in the evaluation and follow up of Grand Rapids, especially the strategic planning. The period was also a time of reconfiguring the operations of the WCRC international secretariat with a reduced staff. For me, it was also a time to begin to think of my onward move from the WCRC – making arrangements for handing over and leaving Switzerland.

The following projects were implemented for Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth and Gender Justice:

### **B Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth**

#### *1. Justice Reading of Grand Rapids UGC, Florida, 31 March-4 April 2011*

The Office held a Justice Reading event of the Grand Rapids UGC from 31 March to 4 April 2011 in Fort Myers, Florida, USA. The consultation was hosted by the North America Covenanting for Justice Working Group and the Presbyterian Church (USA). An immersion programme with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers was organized to connect with local struggles of agricultural workers who are predominantly migrants from Mexico and Haiti. This experience was critical to ground the justice reading event. The main objectives were to: reflect critically on the UGC with justice perspectives from key documents and also from what we heard, felt and what we didn't; share, explore and further deepen our reflection through discourse and discussion on how the WCRC may live out the vision of justice of the UGC and also from our local experiences; discern what is the key Reformed contribution to justice and connect with the WCRC strategic vision and what is being envisioned for justice and partnership; identify areas of convergence within the global secretariat, member churches and partners and how to build synergy in our work for justice; and outlining key directions, objectives, priorities and methodologies for the WCRC and how resources may be mobilized.

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See *Appendix 1* for the Outcome Document of the Justice Reading Consultation, which is a contribution to the WCRC strategic planning process. The document is also intended to be a resource to the WCRC's Executive Committee, networks and regional councils. It provides a good basis to translate policies into plan for action and strengthen the connections between global, regional and local; and also ecumenical.

### *2. Poverty, Wealth and Ecology – Europe hearing and consultation, Budapest, Germany, 6 -10 November 2010*

The Executive Secretary is a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Reference Group on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (PWE) and participated in that capacity in the Europe PWE Hearing and Consultation in Budapest, Hungary from 6 to 10 November 2010. Participants discussed the situation in Europe and heard from the Roma people as well as from the Conference of European Churches (CEC) dialogue partners from Latin America and Europe. They criticized the primacy of economy over people and creation as a whole and made a key point about the methods of wealth creation and the pursuit of unlimited wealth in rich industrialized countries of Europe, which often impoverish communities and harm creation as a whole. They issued a call for climate justice and social and ecological values to be a central goal of policymaking. The opportunity was also taken to promote the Accra Confession Europe study guide. Bishop Bolcskei, from the Reformed Church in Hungary (one of the hosts of the event), introduced the book and said that it was a major contribution of European Reformed churches to economic and climate justice. The statement from this Consultation is available.

### *3. Oikotree People's Forum, Arnoldshain, Germany, 31 October- 5 November 2010*

Together with WCC and the Council for World Mission (CWM), the office organized a Oikotree Global Forum, which was held in collaboration with Kairos Europa in Arnoldshain, Germany, from October 31 to November 5 2010. The Forum provided an opportunity for ecumenical and social movements to share, explore and deepen their engagement in covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth. Participants were involved in an immersion programme to experience the work of ecumenical and social movements in Frankfurt. Participants called on churches and other faith communities, ecumenical organizations, networks, and people's movements to promote life-sustaining alternatives to the prevailing death-dealing systems. The event included visits to

mission projects in Frankfurt. After the Forum, an Oikotree facilitating Group meeting was held to process the outcomes and organize for immediate follow-up.

#### 4. *Covenanting for justice global network*

The setting up of the Covenanting for Justice Network is in progress. While the May 2011 Executive Committee will make decisions regarding the network, the new Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership will also have the opportunity to contribute to the process of establishing the networks.

### **C Gender Justice**

#### 1. *Promoting positive masculinities – workshops and manual*

The Office developed and produced a church manual on men as partners: promoting positive masculinities. The project began in 2008 with positive masculinities workshops in Malawi, Thailand, Guyana and Kenya, which were done in collaboration with WCC, the Christian Conference of Asia, St Paul's University and churches in these countries. The book, entitled *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership*, was published in collaboration with the WCC in November 2010. It is a resource that enables the transformation of male perspectives and attitudes on gender in church and society. The concepts of masculinity and gender are aimed at enabling men to be more conscious of gender as a construct that affects their own lives as well as those of women. It includes theological, biblical and liturgical resources on men, masculinity and gender. Masculinity is explored from the experiences and teachings of social practices, behaviours and power constructions by which men become conscious of themselves as gendered subjects. The book is designed for participants to examine critically and sensitively the socialization of men and boys and the influence of social, religious, economic and cultural contexts on this process. The book was launched in a few churches and seminaries and there has been very good feedback on the manual from the ecumenical as well as NGO constituencies.

#### 2. *Reading the Bible through a gender lens – A Bible study book on women*

A Caribbean women's Bible study book, entitled, *Righting Her-Story: Caribbean Women Encounter the Bible Story* was developed as one of three components of a project on Reading the Bible together with

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stories of women from local churches and communities. The other components are: Contextual Bible Study workshops and the Violence against Women campaign. The Bible study book provides refreshing ways to read the Bible, enabling women and men to rediscover its richness and its ability to help them reflect theologically on their faith and experience. It is envisioned as an instrument that will contribute to building critical consciousness and fostering women's leadership. The book includes stories of women who have played significant roles in their churches and communities. It is a popularized Bible study resource that addresses key issues and concerns of women and promotes ways in which women are resisting and overcoming injustices, carving out paths towards partnership and wholesome communities. Topics and issues discussed in the book include theology of gender justice and partnership; sexuality; marriage and family; violence against women; women's resistance; leadership and power; women as channels of grace, caregivers and nurturers of life; women, beauty and personal empowerment; culture; healing and building community. The book contains a Bible study training guide, twenty Bible studies with accompanying stories and poems. It also has liturgical resources and a glossary.

The book is being printed and will be available in May 2011.

### *3. Reading the Bible workshop, Grenada, 13-19 January 2011*

A Bible study workshop held in Grenada from 13 to 19 January 2011 was the first of its kind for Reformed Christians in the Caribbean. It was a critical space to reflect on how Caribbean people understand the presence and work of God in their everyday reality, especially as they read the Bible and discern the signs of the times. The main aims of the workshop were to develop hermeneutical tools, skills and approaches that emerge from women's experiences, knowledge and ways of being church and community. Participants included ecumenical partners and UN Women who reviewed six of the draft Bible studies that were prepared for the Bible study book on women. They made helpful critical comments that were aimed at making the Bible studies more engaging, culturally authentic and challenging to women, men and young people. Participants expressed the need for more Bible study workshops that address the role and situation of women in church and society.

### *4. Campaign to end violence against women*

There was immediate follow up to the workshop by Reformed churches in Guyana. There was a symposium on domestic and

sexual violence organized by participants who attended the workshop in collaboration with Red Thread, an NGO. This was held on 26 March 2011. There was also a weekend retreat of young men to build awareness, reflect and take action on violence against women. This was organized by a young male participant from the Guyana Congregational Union in partnership with youth groups of the three Reformed churches in Guyana. The retreat took place from 11 to 13 March 2011. Reports of the events are available.

*5. Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women (TESF)*

The Office continues to manage the Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women. The opportunity of the UGC brought new applications that are being processed for the next Selection Committee meeting in April. For the reporting period three women were awarded scholarships and five applications are currently being processed. The total number of awardees since the launch of the fund in 2002 is 67 women with a total of CHF301,572.64. A survey of status and development regarding women who benefitted from the scholarship programme began in 2008. It needs to be completed.

*6. World Day of Prayer, Switzerland*

The Swiss World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a major supporter of the former WARC, now the WCRC, gender justice programme. The Executive Secretary met with the Commission of the World Day of Prayer, Switzerland, on 22 November 2010. She spoke about the new WCRC, its commitment to gender justice and projects supported by WDP Switzerland. There was a healthy discussion on the situation of women within the Reformed constituency and strengthening partnership of the WCRC and the Swiss WDP. The donor partnership which began in 2009 was renewed and a new contract established between Swiss WDP and the WCRC.

*7. Sylvia Michel Prize for women and leadership*

The Executive Secretary participated in the Sylvia Michel prize-giving celebration in the form of a worship service and ceremony, held in Fribourg, Switzerland on 20 March 2011. The prize of USD5000 was awarded to Agnes Lisulo from Senanga, Zambia, whose significant leadership has borne fruit in the construction of the Liyoyelo Batik Centre, which educates women and enables them to assume leading positions in their churches, villages and communities. The international prize is a partnership of the WCRC

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and the Association of Swiss Women Presidents of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (PANKS). The prize was launched at the WARC Consultation on Gender, Leadership and Power in Limuru, Kenya, 2007 and awards USD5,000 every two years to outstanding women from the WCRC constituency who have made significant contribution to church and society. The first award was made in 2008 to two Kenyan women theologians, Professor Dr Esther Mombo, Deputy Vice Chancellor of St Paul's University and Ms Dorcas Chebet Wamalwa, of the Reformed Church of East Africa, who was one of the first recipients of the (former WARC) TESH.

### *8. Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC)*

The Executive Secretary participated in the CANAAC Steering Committee meeting in October 2010 in Toronto, Canada. The main purpose of the meeting was to review key outcomes from the 2010 Grand Rapids UGC, to propose priorities for CANAAC and plan for its 2011 joint assembly with CANACOM in September 2011 in the Dominican Republic. Discussions were also held regarding fundraising in North America. A report of this meeting is available and is also included in the CANAAC report.

In addition to the above, the Executive Secretary has completed several written and speaking assignments during the reporting period.

## **D Conclusion**

The WCRC has begun with a clear message of its commitment to justice and communion, which are interdependent. It builds on a legacy of critical and profound work for justice – gender justice and covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth – and works with member churches and partners to strengthen prophetic witness, mission of churches in partnership and action towards change and transformation.

This report marks the end of my contract with the WCRC after serving for 11 years, of which ten years were with WARC. This has been the most amazing journey, with great learning and serving opportunities that would not have been possible without a great group of friends worldwide, within the ecumenical community, networks of support, including the covenanting for justice working groups, my family and men and women who are passionate about gender justice who have all been of tremendous support and guidance on my journey with WARC and the WCRC. I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation for the support and good



guidance of Setri Nyomi, Clifton Kirkpatrick and my former and current colleagues. Special thanks to my 40+% assistant, Daphne Martin-Gnanadason for her good work, support and willingness to do what is required, stretching beyond the constraint of time and daily schedule. Such cooperation has been vital to the efficiency of the Office.

May God continue to bless you and the worldwide family of the WCRC.

*Appendix I*

**Justice Reading of Grand Rapids Consultation  
31 March-3 April 2011, Estero, Florida**

**Outcomes Document**

**1. Stating the justice imperative that shapes and sends us**

*We believe in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. We live under the promise that Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in fullness (Jn 10.10). Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit we open ourselves to the reality of our world.*

*We believe that God is a God of justice. In a world of corruption, exploitation and greed, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, the exploited, the wronged and the abused (Ps 146.7-9). God calls for just relationships with all creation.*

*We believe that God has made a covenant with all of creation (Gen 9.8-12). God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. The covenant is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the market place (Is 55.1). It is an economy of grace for the household of all of creation. Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are preferential partners and calls us to put justice for the "least of these" (Mt 25.40) at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hos 2.18ff).<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Accra Confession: *Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth* (17, 24 and 20)

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God calls us as a Communion to seek right relations amongst peoples and all of creation; build sustainable, inclusive, just and life-enhancing communities; resist systems of oppression; create and strengthen alternatives; and strive to witness through our accompaniment and actions the dignifying fullness of life as exemplified in Christ. Justice is the visible expression of our commitment to live together in communion.

We will live out this holy work of justice-making by creating right relationships with the created order, right relationships within the economic order, right relations among people of all genders and races including Indigenous Peoples, and right relations within the political sphere.

We commit ourselves to this vision and to our journey together, recognizing and reconciling through our diversity, and holding each other mutually accountable, in love, to be the Body of Christ in the world before God.

### **2. Celebrating our communion through justice, we commit to these priorities**

- a. Live out the Accra Confession in our diverse contexts, sharing experiences and learnings among networks and regions, and working with partners to build covenanting-for-justice communities.
- b. Share the journey and stand in solidarity with people within and beyond the church who are struggling for justice and attempting to defy empire, including people marginalized for reasons of gender, race, caste, class, ability, orientation, religion and other factors.
- c. Welcome the rich contribution women make to the life, witness and theology of the church. We do not limit our vision of gender justice to equal representation in bureaucratic terms. We seek the full scope of gender justice integrated into policies and practices of the church and the wider world. In this we are enabled to live out more faithfully our communion with each other and our commitment to justice.

### **3. Key methodologies and functions at various organizational levels:**

#### *Global (Geneva) level*

- a. At the WCRC Geneva secretariat level, this “living out” may be unified by one or more core, global, programmatic themes

(uniquely appropriate to the WCRC) that are deeply rooted in the Accra Confession, and which critically address threats to life at both global and local levels, for example, the global economic system, food, water and/or workers justice.

- b. Theological reflection and educational programmes across the church on the core concerns of economic, ecological and gender justice – especially at the congregational level – to develop models of justice-aware leadership, developing resources as needed. This could be done in collaboration with seminaries with the aim of building capacity of clergy and lay leaders.
- c. Plan and implement with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other partners a Global Ecumenical Conference to propose a framework and criteria for a new international financial and economic architecture that is based on the principles of economic, social and climate justice; serves the real economy, accounts for social and environmental risks and sets clear limits to greed.
- d. Develop and promote strategies to ensure mutual accountability for the core justice priorities.
- e. Identify or create materials and methods of formation (training) for church leaders – especially at the seminary level – to better understand the justice imperative within our communion. This includes support for regional efforts.
- f. Develop more effective means to articulate and demonstrate the integration of communion and justice in theology and praxis.

### *Regional councils*

- a. A primary task of regional bodies is to contextualize and make practical WCRC priorities.
- b. Facilitate regional theological reflection involving member institutions (especially seminaries) on core themes – such as justice and communion.
- c. Develop Covenanting for Justice Groups – facilitating dialogue and exchange regarding difficult issues and working towards solidarity and cooperation as ways of building up the Communion.
- d. Build effective regional relationships with ecumenical partners and faith communities.

### *Member denominations and their congregations*

- a. Promote cooperation with WCRC regional and global efforts of formation (training) for church leaders – especially at the seminary level – to better understand the justice imperative

## Justice and Partnership

within our communion. This includes active support for and participation in regional efforts.

- b. Identify successes and develop more effective ways to encourage and guide congregations to live out the Accra Confession in communal relationship with other members of the body of Christ – particularly other WCRC member bodies.
- c. Build accountability for delegates/representatives to events, including clear expectations for and commitment to follow-through actions after they return home.

### *Ecumenical and other partners*

- a. In addition to the joint work with WCC to prepare a Global Ecumenical Conference in (above – Geneva Level c.), continue to participate in the WCC's Linking Poverty, Wealth and Ecology and the joint WCRC/CWM/WCC movement building efforts in Oikotree.
- b. Build effective regional relationships with our regional ecumenical partners and institutions.
- c. Promote and facilitate regular interchange between and among seminaries and theological faculties in each region.
- d. Identify existing cross-member congregational relationships built around thematic issues, for example: water, food, worker, trade justice and other critical issues facing communities, including addressing challenges to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals.
- e. Develop more effective ways to encourage and guide congregations in these efforts to live out the Accra Confession in communal relationship with other members of the body of Christ – particularly other WCRC member congregations and bodies.

### **4. Affirmations, observations, issues still outstanding, and concerns of the group:**

- Celebrate and acknowledge the ongoing work to integrate justice and communion.
- We affirm the gifts and inspiration given to us at the UGC by Native peoples.
- We affirm the inspiration given to us and the initiatives of those struggling for justice, especially the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.
- A major and general task for the WCRC is capacity and resource development and helping denominations understand what "communion" means when seen through a justice lens.

- Improve communication methods and content, for example, stories which bring to life the WCRC's work and which inspire churches and people to action.
- Develop resource to aid in the formation of right relations at the congregational level, that is, how to develop partnerships in justice, rather than relationships based in hierarchy or self serving charitable handouts.
- In order to build on what is already happening in living out the Accra Confession at the congregational level, it may be helpful to survey what is already happening among our congregations and denominations in terms of connecting across social and cultural boundaries to work for justice, and highlight those things that could be shared.
- As part of the WCRC strategic planning process, identify and clarify the functions of the various structural components that make up our communion.
- The "Key Directions Document" of the Draft Strategic Planning Paper should include a section on economic justice.
- Create a library of regional/denominational/congregational resources and practical materials.

## **REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Kristine Greenaway

This report covers the period from June 2010 to May 2011. During this time the work of the Office of Communications has focused on promoting the newly-created World Communion of Reformed churches (WCRC); managing internal and external communication; and providing communication support for fundraising initiatives.

### **Staffing**

The office is staffed by an Executive Secretary and an Administrative Assistant. The administrative position was reduced from 80% to 50% in October 2010.

### **Governance**

The Core Group for Communication, chaired by Yvette Noble Bloomfield, will hold its first meeting during the May 2011 Executive Committee meeting. As was the practice with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), a group of communication advisors connected to member churches will join in discussion with the core group by conference call. The core group plus the advisors form what is referred to as the Communications Network.

Communications Network members, together with core group members, represent Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific and North America. Their communications expertise covers web, social media, publishing, radio and print journalism. We are looking for someone with communications marketing skills to join the Network.

As the proposed strategic plan for the WCRC emphasizes working with member churches and regional groups, the Network will provide an important link with the WCRC membership and offer invaluable advice to the Executive Secretary and the Executive Committee.

### **Communication**

1. *Website [www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch) went live in October 2010 in four languages*

Features include:

- Micro flash site for the Uniting General Council: Record of Proceedings, audio-visual documentation, and print resources in four languages.
- Messages from churches, such as prayers offered by PROK for Libya.
- Link to the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle.
- Online donations function; online sales.
- President's blog.
- Facebook link.

## 2. *News releases*

- From 1 July 2010 to 15 March 2011, the WCRC issued 13 news releases.
- Distribution lists for news releases have been reviewed and updated. All releases appear on the website.

## 3. *Publications*

- Creation of new quarterly newsletter *Reformed Communiqué* available in English and French, produced in print and electronic editions. Subscription policy reviewed and distribution lists updated. Three editions produced (September 2010, December 2010, March 2011).
- Selected articles of each edition are published in German in *die reformierten*, and in Spanish in *La Voz*.
- Publication of "year-in-review report" for 2010.
- UGC Record of Proceedings produced in four languages. 100 copies distributed in print (60 E; 15 F; 10 G; 15 S) to Executive Committee members, staff, and archives. CD copies distributed to each member church. CD contents posted to micro flash site on the WCRC website. Print copies available on request.
- WCRC flyer produced in four languages.

## 4. *Looking ahead*

- Plans for website development include a twitter feed and multiple language capabilities that will allow creation of web pages for each WCRC area, managed in the regions.
- The WCRC expects to be included in communication plans for ecumenical celebrations of the Reformation in 2017.

## **Fundraising support**

Work has focused on communication support for the North American Trustees of the WCRC Endowment Fund. The Endowment President is Stephens Lytch. Peter Borgdorff is the North American Representative to the WCRC Executive Committee. Specific activities include:

1. *Raising the profile of the WCRC Endowment Fund*
  - New website for the USA and Canada office promotes the Endowment Fund.
  - North American flyer and stationery produced.
2. *Funding appeal*
  - Late in 2010 a fundraising package was mailed in North America with a letter, flyer, programme highlights one-pager, and pledge card.
  - An online donations function, adapted to charitable tax donations requirements in Canada and the United States, has been developed.
3. *Looking ahead*
  - NA Trustees will meet during the Executive Committee to review advice from a fundraising consultant.
  - A "case statement" has been prepared for use in the next phase of fundraising initiatives in North America.

## **ENInews**

The ecumenical news sharing service, Ecumenical News International (ENInews), was restructured and relaunched in January 2011. The new president of ENInews is Michel Kocher, a Swiss journalist who manages the radio and television religious news service for the French-language Swiss Protestant Churches.

The WCRC's board member is Frank Worbs, a journalist with a German-language Swiss cantonal church. In 2011, ENI's board will oversee ongoing restructuring with an emphasis on more management of the news production service in the regions.



## **REPORT OF THE FINANCE COORDINATOR**

Yueh Cho

### **Accounting close for 2010**

By decision of the WCRC Officers, the accounting merger between WARC and the REC was changed to take place on 1 January 2011 instead of 1 July 2010. As a result, the 2010 accounts of WARC and the REC were closed separately.

The WARC 2010 Annual Report showing a deficit of CHF226,716 was audited in April 2011 by the Geneva-based auditor, la Compagnie Fiduciaire de Révision S.A. The auditor has signed off the full report and recommends its adoption.

Two changes on accounting practices were implemented in 2010:

- Programme net income other than the approved subsidies (representing CHF172k in 2009) was taken out of Core Profit & Loss (P&L), as per United General Council (UGC) finance recommendation No. 1.
- The accumulated deficits up to and including 2010 of WARC were all absorbed into the balance sheet at year's end so as to clearly demonstrate the net equity (CHF73,240) of the organization as of 31 December 2010.

The 2010 core budget (approved by the Executive Committee in April 2009) only included the expense part (CHF1,774k) and has been met (2010 actual expense came in CHF159k under budget).

The statement of changes in the REC US-based bank accounts showing a net balance of USD51,251 at 31 December 2010 was positively reviewed by US-based Monroe, Sweeris & Tromp Plc.

### **Financial perspectives for 2011-2012**

Achieving break-down in 2011 for Core P&L and thus putting an end to our six consecutive years of deficit-making remains a tall order: it requires vigorous financial discipline on expenses and, more critically, the leadership team taking personal commitment on assuring revenue.

In line with the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the budget for 2012 is maintained mostly unchanged.

## **Recommendations**

- Adopt the audited 2010 accounts.
- Approve the 2012 core budget.
- Retain la compagnie fiduciaire de révision s.a. as wcrs auditor for 2011 and beyond until the executive committee decides otherwise.

## **Remarks**

- We pride ourselves on being a faith-based association that operates professionally. We should then be open to all proven organizational governance and business processes that would enhance our operational accountability, transparency and efficiency.
- As per the Constitution, the WCRC is headquartered in Switzerland, which has an established set of legal, fiscal and social regulations. We should remain vigilant with regard to compliance and endeavour to act as a socially responsible employer.
- Planning the future with a different time horizon is an important task for any organization. But given our current financial situation, we need to focus on actions and plans that will immediately help to pull the WCRC out of financial crisis mode and achieve our financial stabilization in the first place.
- A small group of 20 member churches are the financial cornerstone of WCRC. In 2010, they contributed 88% of our membership fees income, or 94% of all revenue to the core budget. They have shown their commitment to the WCRC through actions and their voices on the future direction of the WCRC, at both strategic and operational levels, should not be overlooked.
- As of 1 May 2011, we have 60 member churches who have failed to pay their invoiced membership fees for three consecutive years. Choosing between suspending a quarter of our member churches and disobeying our own Constitution (Art. VI / J / 6) is certainly a difficult decision but is nonetheless one that the governing body needs to consider in this meeting.
- As we meet now, we also have some current Executive Committee members whose home churches have failed to pay up their invoiced membership. We would like to ask the governing body to take seriously their role in how their own churches honour their financial obligations towards the WCRC.
- We noticed that imposing USD500 as a minimum membership fee in all circumstances has not been necessarily constructive

when engaging member churches. Considering the General Secretary is accountable for meeting the overall revenue target on membership fees, we feel it would be good to allow the General Secretary a certain well-defined negotiating flexibility (such as joint decision with the Finance Coordinator or the General Treasurer).

- Our assets have been mostly placed in a current account with little or no return for an extended period of time, partially due to the lack of ownership on investment portfolio management. We would like to ask the Executive Committee body to constitute the Investment Committee, as per UGC finance recommendation No. 9, by the end of this Executive Committee session.
- Mostly driven by our own operational needs, but also in anticipation of implementing UGC finance recommendation No.2, we have published our newly updated guidance on Executive Committee expenses to all Executive Committee meeting attendants. We will collect feedback from them on the first practice of this guidance and will submit a revised version for the consideration of the Finance Committee.

### **Key actions**

- As a main internal control measure, we have continued to implement the joint-approval requirement for all disbursements.
- The Finance Coordinator will be conducting a full assessment or internal audit on WCRC operations (statutory & financial risk as well as operational efficiency) and reporting to the General Secretary and the General Treasurer with potential mitigation and improvement recommendations by 31 August 2011.
- The Finance Coordinator will continue his work on streamlining and documenting the various business processes (vendor management, staff expense, accounting operations, etc.) and complete a comprehensive set of finance and operations guidelines by 30 September 2011.
- The Finance Coordinator will monitor the status of the North American fundraising campaign, and all other fundraising campaigns continuously and report to the General Secretary and the General Treasurer.
- The General Secretary, with the assistance of the Finance Coordinator, will present a 2011 forecast attainment to the Officers at their conference call scheduled on 1 September 2011 that will include:
  - Membership fees attainment (commitment vs collected), identified risk of uncollectible fees.

## Finance Office

- Present action plans to enforce collection (Executive Committee member assignment).
- Present emergency financing plan as appropriate.
- The General Secretary, with the assistance of the Finance Coordinator, will present a 2011 final P&L update to the Officers at their conference call scheduled on 1 December 2011 that will include:
  - Estimate of 2011 Core P&L.
  - Update on the North American fundraising campaign.
  - Possible additional actions to close 2011 books.

**WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED  
CHURCHES**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**AUDITED ACCOUNTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2010**

Place des Philosophes 10  
CH-1205 Genève

Tél. +4122/705 15 50  
Fax +4122/705 15 16

Av. Général-Guisan 64  
CH-1009 Pully

E-mail: [info@cfssa.ch](mailto:info@cfssa.ch)  
Site: [www.cfssa.ch](http://www.cfssa.ch)  
N° TVA: 304 437

CHAMBRE  **FIDUCIAIRE**  
MEMBRE

*Appendix 1*

**AUDITOR'S REPORT**

To the Executive Committee of the

**WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES**  
Geneva, Switzerland

As statutory auditors, we have examined the financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches for the year ended 31 December 2010.

The financial statements are the responsibility of the governing board. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination of the financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements stipulated by Swiss law.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the Swiss Standard of limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of organisation personnel and analytical procedures, as well as detailed examination of organisation documents considered necessary in the circumstances. It should be noted that the examination of operational procedures and internal control systems, as well as inquiries and in-depth examination to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

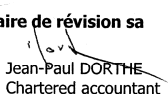
Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with Swiss law and the company's articles of incorporation.

As a result of our examination, we recommend that the accounts for the year ended December 31, 2010, presenting a loss of CHF 226'716.-, be approved.

Geneva, 20 April 2011 / 10 - 2

**Cf compagnie fiduciaire de révision sa**

  
Patrick MONNEY  
Chartered accountant

  
Jean-Paul DORTHE  
Chartered accountant  
Auditor in charge

Enclosures:

- Financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes)

**BALANCE SHEET**

	<b>Dec. 31, 2009</b>	<b>Dec. 31, 2010</b>
	CHF	CHF
<b>ASSETS</b>		
IN-HOUSE CASH	28,378	8,958
LA POSTE-FINANCE CHF (C/C)	144,397	237,940
BNP PARIBAS EURO (C/C)	99,329	19,040
BNP PARIBAS CHF (C/C)	633,449	118,577
BNP PARIBAS USD (C/C)	1,797,570	1,324,007
BNP PARIBAS GBP (C/C)	40,377	6,070
LODH USD (C/C)	4,721	4,261
RBS WORLDPAY CHF (On-Line Acc.)	778	1,070
WCRC EUROPE	2,545	0
	<u>2,751,544</u>	<u>1,719,922</u>
INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO	430,053	430,509
ACCRUED ASSETS	158,366	212,485
UGC-2010-EXPENDITURES	138,361	
LOAN	6,168	6,168
WCRC-IN-FORMATION	5,168	0
WITHHOLDING TAX	1,059	0
REC-EXPENDITURES	6,117	0
	<u>315,239</u>	<u>218,654</u>
TOTAL	<u>3,496,836</u>	<u>2,369,085</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
WCC	0	13,044
UGC-2010-INCOME	337,755	1,368,050
UGC-2010-EXPENDITURES *		-1,307,790
ACCRUED LIABILITIES	169,251	48,626
INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO FLUCTUATION	285,872	205,999
	<u>792,878</u>	<u>327,930</u>

Finance Office

**CUSTODIAN FUNDS**

MADIP	42,239	41,900
KCTE-KOREAN CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EUROPE	28,678	18,678
UCC DEATH PENALTY CONSULTATION MISSION PROJECT	6,331	6,331
GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY (GIT)	31,110	14,310
LA PENSEE ECONOMIQUE	90,536	91,962
YOUTH SECRETARY	20,622	20,622
COVENANTING FOR JUSTICE	858	910
GEORGES LOMBARD PRIZE	103,832	106,110
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	23,549	20,682
THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUES	5,160	5,160
GENDER JUSTICE	41,646	9,156
EUROPEAN AREA FUND	201,475	179,760
PARTNERSHIP FUND	304,749	258,885
FUND DIVERS COOP & WITNESS	692,551	644,322
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FUND FOR WOMEN	22,038	22,038
CALVIN PUBLICATIONS FUND	213,282	209,993
PUBLICATIONS FUND	32,286	32,585
REC-INCOME	7,589	7,589
	311	0
	<u>1,868,841</u>	<u>1,690,995</u>

**OWN FUNDS**

ALLIANCE FOR LIFE FUND	3,637	3,637
THE 21ST CENTURY REFORMATION FUND	4,849	4,849
ENDOWMENT	30,025	0
IT	12,757	14,757
GENERAL SECRETARY PROGRAM	24,062	22,679
RESERVE FUND *	107,782	73,240
GENERAL COUNCIL FUND	652,004	230,998
	<u>835,117</u>	<u>350,160</u>

TOTAL

3,496,836	2,369,085
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**INCOME STATEMENT**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
	CHF	CHF
CORE EXPENSE		
SALARY	973,538	987,121
SOCIAL CHARGES	300,338	282,429
RENT	88,648	88,295
IT	52,812	29,442
OFFICE EXPENSE	24,087	15,700
COMMUNIQUEE	59,968	34,744
REFORMED WORLD	31,086	42,146
ENI	30,512	30,236
WCRC IN – FORMATION		30,136
GENERAL SECRETARY		
CONSULTATION	24,210	24,130
OFFICERS MEETING	1,113	14,703
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING	63,630	6,827
SEARCH & SETTLEMENT	24,110	6,191
MISCELLANEOUS	8,475	2,353
FINANCIAL	15,500	20,275
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,698,027</b>	<b>1,614,726</b>
CORE REVENUE		
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1,052,640	1,012,890
– TRANSFER TO WCRC EUROPE	-28,426	-25,602
DONATIONS	213,075	177,769
OTHER REVENUE *	363,813	222,953
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,601,103</b>	<b>1,388,010</b>
	<b>-96,924</b>	<b>-226,716</b>

MOVEMENTS OF CUSTODIAN FUNDS	Dec. 31, 2009		Dec. 31, 2010	
	CHF	Debit CHF	Credit CHF	CHF
MADIP	42,239	14,555	14,217	41,900
KCTE-KOREAN CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EUROPE	28,678	10,000	0	18,678
UCC DEATH PENALTY CONSULTATION	6,331	0	0	6,331
MISSION PROJECT	31,110	173,716	156,916	14,310
GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY (GIT)	90,536	179,740	181,167	91,962
LA PENSEE ECONOMIQUE	20,622	0	0	20,622
YOUTH SECRETARY	858	0	52	910
COVENANTING FOR JUSTICE	103,832	42,913	45,191	106,110
GEORGES LOMBARD PRIZE	23,549	2,866	0	20,682
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	5,160	0	0	5,160
THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUES	41,646	44,049	11,559	9,156
GENDER JUSTICE	201,475	87,482	65,767	179,760
EUROPEAN AREA FUND	304,749	71,467	25,602	258,885
PARTNERSHIP FUND	692,551	216,146	167,918	644,322
FUND DIVERS COOP & WITNESS	22,038	0	0	22,038
CALVIN PUBLICATIONS FUND	32,286	139	438	32,585
PUBLICATIONS FUND	7,589			7,589
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FUND FOR WOMEN	213,282	35,488	32,199	209,993

**DONATIONS**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
	CHF	CHF
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>		
SEK – FEPS		54,000
Ev-Ref Kirche Zürich	60,000	34,000
Ev-Ref Kirche Aarau	48,016	46,535
Ev-Ref Kirche Bern-Jura-Solothurn	33,215	3,000
Ev-Ref Kirche St Gallen	3,000	3,000
Ev-Ref Kirche Basel	2,000	
Congregation – Bremgarten / Mutschellen	7,750	5,685
Congregation – Flawil	1,000	1,184
Congregation – Holderbank- Moeriken-Wildegg	505	
Congregation – Baden	500	500
Congregation – Erlinsbach	500	500
Congregation – Ins	500	2,090
Congregation – Münchenbuchsee / Moosseedorf	500	
Congregation – Opfikon / Glattbrugg	500	
Congregation – Herisau	330	
Congregation – Neuhausen am Rheinfall	325	520
Congregation – Sta Maria-Müstair	200	200
Congregation – Winterthur	100	
Congregation – Brunnen	93	
Congregation – Matthäus	91	
Spitalpfarramt Aarau	75	
Congregation – Baden Kappelerhof	43	
Congregation – Merishausen	25	
Congregation – Wuennew-Flamatt- Ueberstorf		134
PFARRAMT – Thunstetten		120
Congregation – Andreas Gemeinde		122
Congregation – – Guemligen		500
General Donation / Zurich		250
General Donation / Bern		26

Finance Office

**Korea**

Presbyterian Church in the  
Republic of Korea 5,780

**USA**

Individual donors 6,518 5,153  
First Church 554

**UNITED KINGDOM**

The Hope Trust  
Presbyterian Church of Wales 5,276 4,721  
First Presbyterian Church 1,998  
Church of Scotland 3,398

**GERMANY**

Lippische Landeskirche 5,621 4,999  
Hansisches Druck & Verlagshaus 307  
Ev Kirchgemeinde Elbefeld 100

**NETHERLANDS**

VEG Netherlands 800

**AUSTRALIA**

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship 737

**KOREA**

Myung Sung Presbyterian Church,  
Korea 32,391

**SINGAPORE**

Presbyterian Church of Singapore 839

**Individuals – various /  
unknown**

20

**TOTAL 213,075 177,769**

**INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO**

	Accounting Value	Market value	Provisions
	(Purchase price)	31.12.10	
	CHF	CHF	CHF
Oikocredit Ecumenical Development	1,295	1,865	570
Rentenanstalt Swiss Life Holding	475	1,622	1,147
Prudential Plc (7600) + 78 shares rec'd in place of DIV	82,427	74,849	-7,578
Lloyds TSB Group plc	80,029	7,862	-72,167
ING Group NV	125,723	31,861	-93,862
Royal Dutch Shell (conversion Shell Trans shares)	81,930	77,780	-4,150
LODH Obliflex USD Short Term Bond Fund RA	18,889	13,037	-5,852
Deutsche Post	29,956	12,228	-17,728
United Utilities	9,784	3,404	-6,380
<b>TOTAL PORTFOLIO VALUE</b>	<b>430,509</b>	<b>224,510</b>	<b>-205,999</b>

Finance Office

**FOOTNOTE & DISCLOSURE**

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) merged with The Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in June 2010 to form the new World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

The current financial statement contains WARC data up to 30 June 2010 and WCRC data between 1 July 2010 and 31 December 2010 for those transactions that were handled through the former WARC bank accounts.

The official ledger currency is CHF and the book-keeping method adopted is cash-based accounting.

Donations in kind (e.g., a WCRC guest voluntarily waiving entitlement for expense reimbursement) are not recorded on the present statement.

The incurred expense and realized revenue for the Uniting General Council (UGC) are maintained on the balance sheet with a modest surplus balance, which will be booked into the 2011 ledger definitively upon the decision of the Executive Committee meeting in May 2011. As the UGC event was mostly completed, the "UGC-2010-EXPENDITURES" are placed as liabilities on the balance sheet, in order to preserve the appropriate size of the balance sheet at 31 December 2010.

As of 31 December 2010, there were no legal cases pending against WCRC.

As of 31 December 2010, no financial guarantee or any other type of off-balance sheet financial obligation towards third parties was undertaken by WCRC.

WCRC is the designated beneficiary of US-based endowment fund, the Barnabas Foundation. All endowment funds held by WCRC were transferred to Barnabas in 2010.

As of 31 December 2010, WCRC has bank accounts at BNP Paribas (Suisse) SA, La Poste Finance and Lombard Odier Darier Hentsch (LODH).

As of 31 December 2010, the legal compliance with social insurance as well as pension fund for Swiss-based WCRC staff members was assured by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to which WCRC outsources its payroll function.

The historical value of Rentenanstalt Swiss Life Holding share was readjusted as the result of 2009 audit.

The "OTHER REVENUE" item on 2010 Income Statement is made up by

CHF 107,953	Salary support & Misc.
CHF 60,000	Service charge from UGC
CHF 25,000	Service charge from PS Fund
CHF 10,000	Service charge from GIT
CHF 20,000	Service charge from Justice & Partnership programmes
<hr/>	
CHF 222,953	

The combined reserves at Dec. 31, 2009 stood at CHF 107'782 and was made up by

CHF 252,520	Provisions for contingencies
CHF 215,072	Provisions for future expense
(CHF 262,886)	Pre-2009 losses
(CHF 96,924)	2009 loss
<hr/>	
CHF 107,782	

Finance Office

*Appendix 2*

	<b>Core P&amp;L</b>				
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
	K CHF	K CHF	K CHF	K CHF	K CHF
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Forecast	Budget
CORE EXPENSE					
SALARY & SOCIAL CHARGES	1,274	1,270	990	949	969
RENT	89	88	86	82	92
IT	53	29	45	36	35
SEARCH & SETTLEMENT	24	6	40	40	15
ENI & OTHER COMMITMENTS	31	30	30	32	32
OFFICERS MEETING	1	15	0	1	1
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING	64	7	50	72	70
OFFICE EXPENSE	24	16	25	15	15
WCRC PROMOTION	0	30	0	10	10
GENERAL SECRETARY CONSULTATION	24	24	25	25	25
OFFICERS & ExCom MEMBERS EXPENSE					10
PRESIDENT'S EXPENSE	0	0	15	15	15
MISCELLANEOUS	8	2	39	5	6
FINANCIAL	16	20	23	20	10
COMMUNIQUE	60	35	50	46	46
REFORMED WORLD	31	42	35	35	35
TOTAL	1,698	1,615	1,453	1,382	1,386



## Document 6.1

CORE REVENUE						
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1,053	1,013	1,258	1,060	1,060	
- TRANSFER TO WCRC EUROPE	-28	-26	-30	-25	-25	
GENERAL COUNCIL FUND	0	0	-95	-80	-80	
DONATIONS	213	178	225	230	230	
OTHER REVENUE *	364	223	95	197	200	
TOTAL	1,601	1,388	1,454	1,383	1,386	
	<b>-97</b>	<b>-227</b>	0	0	-0	

**2011 CORE BUDGET**

**K CHF**

**INCOME:**

Membership Fees	<b>1,258</b>
Donations	<b>225</b>
Salary support	<b>40</b>
Partnership Fund – Administrative support	<b>50</b>
Theological Education Fund – Administrative support	<b>5</b>
<b>TOTAL GROSS INCOME:</b>	<b>1,578</b>
<b>Deduction</b>	<b>-124</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME:</b>	<b>1,454</b>

**EXPENDITURE:**

**PERSONNEL COSTS**

Salaries	<b>777</b>
Social Charges	<b>213</b>
Search & Settlement	<b>40</b>
Grand Rapids office	<b>5</b>
Outside Consultants	<b>4</b>

**TOTAL – Personnel Costs** **1,039**

**OTHER OFFICE COSTS**

Rent	<b>86</b>
IT support (number of staff + 1)	<b>36</b>
Database (number of staff)	<b>4</b>
Tel, Mail, Stationery & other office expenses	<b>25</b>

**TOTAL – Other Office Costs** **151**

**OTHER CORE COSTS**

Reform Communiquée	<b>50</b>
Reformed World	<b>35</b>
Provision for computer equipment	<b>5</b>

General Travel & General Hospitality	<b>15</b>
Finance	<b>23</b>
Church Visits/Consultations General Secretary	<b>25</b>
President's travel	<b>15</b>
Ecumenical News International	<b>30</b>
Contingencies / Diverse	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL – OTHER CORE COSTS</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>TOTAL – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>TOTAL – EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,453</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>0</b>

**Assumptions**

7 Staff (GS, 2 program staff, Finance,  
Communication, 2 Admin)

FX Rates: 1\$= 1Frs;1 Eur= 1.4 Frs

2 extra offices

All other infrastructure costs unchanged

**UGC Consolidated View**

CHF

**REVENUE**

Income – that has been received	
Registration Fees	54,367
NAAC Funds	131,183
Participant Sponsorship	39,278
Member Church Pledges	518,699
Funds for Communications	3,926
Special Fundraising	397,576
Keynote Speaker	19,000
Caribbean Churches	18,050
WARC Contribution from General Council Provision	380,000
Income – pledged – that we are certain to receive	
Income – received for special events	
GIT	81,637
WPC	2,038
RYF	8,582
Banquet Night	45,561
Native American Event	13,052
Income – received from Delegates	
Travel	39,077
Exhibition Stands	1,990
Lodging	46,020
Meals	25,837
Mission Institute – reimbursement of costs of our delegates	4,794
Miscellaneous	831
Funeral	3,083

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,834,579</b>
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**EXPENSE**

Travel	437,263
Lodgings	206,686
Meals	193,961
Breaks	32,934
Communications (excludes travel/lodging/meals for all communications personnel)	405,080
Local Transportation Costs	81,733
Special Events	141,680
Council Infrastructure	82,276
Pre-council – Planning & Admin (includes Communications Planning)	101,559
Non-Budgeted Items	31,147
2010 Core Service Charge	60,000
Accrued Expense & 2011 Core Service Charge	60,260

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,834,579</b>
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**REPORT OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES PARTNERSHIP FUND**

Douwe Visser and Antoinette Berkouwer

**Projects 2010-2011**

*0110B: Theology and agro-ecology in Uruguay*

Status: receipt of funds received

Information on the project:

Theology: To meet the needs of the churches. Training laypersons: women, youth and children. Recovering the centrality of Jesus Christ and strengthening Reformed theology. Stimulating a sense of community based on the Gospel. Developing independent thinking. Education programme in the long term in agreement with the University.

Agro-ecology: Promotion and sensitizing on environmental issues. Training in agro-ecology techniques. investigation, production and diffusion. Strengthening of agro-ecological network. Implementing and promoting agro-ecological production in agriculture and animal farming.

*0210A: Community welfare and toilet in Ghana*

Status: receipt of funds received

Information on the project: Organizing workshops on woman's rights and responsibilities, domestic violence law, education on HIV/AIDS and family life.

Building toilets near a cluster of schools to improve the sanitary and health conditions of the community.

*0310B: Global Institute of Theology (GIT) WARC*

Status: report received

Information on the project: 44 students from different countries from all over the world attended.

Objectives:

- To build a community of learning and faith as students and faculty work together on vital themes in Bible and theology.
- To reflect biblically and theologically on the theme of the Uniting General Council, "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace".
- To encounter contemporary biblical and theological approaches in their inter-confessional, intercultural and interreligious dimensions; including the study of lived and living missiologies and the ongoing WCRC study on Reformed identity and mission.
- To introduce varying contextual perspectives on Christian witness of the global Reformed family.
- To strengthen global networks of sharing and reflexion; thus contributing to the ecumenical formation of a new generation of church leaders.

All students completed an evaluation form in which the responses show that the objectives of the GIT were met

*0410A: Reformed Presbyterian Community Congo*

Status: still waiting for receipt of funds (due to some problems with the bank)

« Le bureau d'assistance gratuite à la femme victime de la violation de ses droits ou, La Clinique Juridique »

Women in Eastern Kasai are confronted by the following problems: they are not considered human beings but are treated as objects, they are there to provide children to preserve mankind, they are instruments of sexual satisfaction for men, and men have the right to take more than one, often younger, woman. Women are often victims of abuse and violence.

The main reasons behind this are: very young women are already part of this tradition, women are often illiterate, financially dependent on men and ignorant of normal human treatment. The church wants to offer them a place where they can come with their problems and be advised on how to solve them.

Main objectives: Register (all) cases of violence against women's rights. Receive and listen to victims. Help women to find a solution to their problems. Help them with judicial and legal assistance.

Ultimate aim: that more women are restored in their rights, more women are helped with legal assistance and see their offenders

## Reformed Churches Partnership Fund

condemned and that more women be able to regain a normal human family life.

### *0510B: Uniting Church of Southern Africa*

Status: receipt of funds received

CAP is an international ecumenical youth project. Young Christians meet other young Christians from different cultures. They work together on social projects and study the Bible together. They talk about church and society-related themes and share recreational pastimes together.

The aim is to make "partners for life", crossing borders for the church to benefit in the future.

The ACCRA Confession and BELHAR Declaration are their bases. After the camp they will have learned to be aware of important issues in their churches and shared know-how and knowledge of how to deal with these; in doing so, hoping to develop a global Christian view, i.e., CAP camps try to help young Christians to think globally, act locally.

### *0610B: Presbyterian Church in Rwanda*

Status: receipt of funds received

Theological education for pastors and lay people, open to members of different churches in Rwanda. Financial help is sought due to the situation in Rwanda, as after the 1994 genocide it has become almost impossible to implement programmes like this without financial help. At the moment there are about 1285 participants. Resources of quality need to be provided and some larger brochures have been printed on the Old and New Testament, church history, Christian ethics, as well as some smaller ones on different subjects. They aim at promoting dialogue to resolve inter-religious conflicts as well as language conflicts (Kinyarwanda and French). They promote justice and human rights, advocating peace, reconciliation, women's rights in fighting against poverty, and ethnicity, in the hope of making people aware of these problems and supporting them.

Actions for 2011 and 2012: Publication of brochures in French for churches to use for basic training. Development and publication of a brochure concerning spiritual life for youth. Training groups,



facilitators and animators. Organizing meetings for evaluations. Distributing didactic materials. Production of a commentary on a book of the Bible. Global evaluation of the basic theological training.

The project recommends encouraging women to participate in the programme, currently there are 689 women participating in the course.

The goal is to form well qualified pastors to strengthen cohesion and collaboration between churches in an ecumenical spirit.

The centre also has a programme for Islam/Christian relations in which the Muslim Association and the Catholic Church participate.

*0710B: Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa*

Status: funds transferred

The project involves members of at least seven churches in South Africa. They plan to meet for three days to discuss the issue of "what does it mean to be a Reformed African" or, "what does it mean to be African and Reformed".

Their objectives are to:

- Gather for worship, fellowship and celebration.
- Celebrate and highlight their Reformed heritage.
- Ask and deliberate on the question, "what does it mean to be African and Reformed".
- Encourage Reformed churches which generally seem to be struggling to grow.
- Help Reformed churches establish a network of close relationships with possibilities of working together on different levels and projects.

*0810A: Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria*

Status: funds transferred

Many young people are not able to finish school. They have nothing to do and become a problem for society. Widows often have children to care for and no income.

The objective is to train both groups according to their capabilities.

## Reformed Churches Partnership Fund

The project aims at teaching them computer skills, carpentry, sewing, mechanics, masonry and knitting. When they have learned one of these skills, they have a better chance to find a job. Therefore, CRC would like to renovate the existing space to make it suitable for classrooms. They need to buy computers, sewing machines (they have three), and other materials to make it function, and work produced has to be paid.

*0910A: Christian Reformed Church in Sri Lanka*

Status: receipt of funds received

Summary of project: Reconstruction of the Community Hall because it has become too small. The building is used by different groups: a Montessori school, teaching of children, youth and adults, a medical clinic, an eye clinic, blood donation campaigns and English and vocational lessons.

The beneficiaries are involved in the planning process. Women's concerns are very much part of the agenda, especially with respect to leadership development.

There is also ecumenical cooperation: children come from different denominations among others, Buddhist and Muslim.

*Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise* (membership no. 1030) has sent an application for funding, but there are some problems. Needs to be discussed.

*P1010: Evangelical Reformed Church in Angola*, (membership no.1015). Complete documentation received on 29/04/11.

*P1110: Reformed Church in Zimbabwe*, (membership no. 1260), in January. Email sent with some questions, so far no response.

*P1210: Presbyterian Church of India*, (membership no. 4051) the project will take more than two years and is a bit too expensive; an email was sent to them in January.

The P projects will be carried on to the next year.

### **Projects for the year 2011**

*0111B: Cuba* (3300) currency problems, but will work out fine.

*02111B, 02211B, 02311B, 02411B, AIPRAL*, under voting.

*P0111 Grenada* (3310) sent an application with dates in the past.

*0311A Congo* (1240) still have to pay three years of membership fees, in discussion with them.

*P0211 Burkina Faso* (1025) just received.

*P0311 Liberia* (1090) new application form and rules sent. Their project is for five years.

*P0411 Myanmar Christian Reformed Church*. Finishing building a Prayer Centre, so they have already started. Need to decline the project.

*P0511 Myanmar Evangelical Church*. Discussing the budget.

*P0611 Malawi* (1110). In process.

*P1210 India* (4051) Presbyterian Church, new project received, in process.

*P0711 Kenya* (1071) Building a church, budget still being discussed with them. They have already started.

*P0811 Greek Evangelical Church* (6320) application form sent to them.

*P1110 Zimbabwe* (1260) sent another project, ask for an explanation.

*P0911 Eastern Africa* (?) just applied.

Reformed Churches Partnership Fund

*Appendix 1*

<b>WCRC Partnership Fund: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS 2010</b>				
<b>Project No</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Member No</b>	<b>Project name</b>	<b>amount, date and currency</b>
0110B	Waldension Evangelical Church Uruguay	2110	Theology and agro-ecology 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase	3 times USD 9.400 29/09/10, 08/03/11
0210A	Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana	1060	Community Welfare and toilet	USD 18.000 30/03/10
0310B	WARC	n/a	Global Institute of Theology	CHF 31.968 23/04/10
0410A	Reformed Presbyterian Community Congo	1246	La Clinique Juridique	USD 16.486 29/09/10
0510B	Uniting Church of Southern Africa	1202	CAP Camp	EURO 15.000 15/05/10
0610B	Eglise Presbyterienne Rwanda	1170	Formation Theologique de base pour laics et pasteurs	EURO 23.947 15/02/10
0710B	Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa	1210	African Reformed Celebrations	USD 17.500 08/03/11
0810A	Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria	1155	Youth and Widows Development Centre	USD 10.000 04/04/11

0910A	Christian Reformed Church in Sri Lanka	4380	Community Hall	USD 25.000 05/03/11
P1010	Evangelical Reformed Church in Angola	1015	Woman Vocational Training	still in process
P1110	Reformed Church in Zimbabwe	1260	Poultry Farm	still in process
P1210	Presbyterian Church of India	4051	Improving Employment Opportunities	still in process

**REPORT OF THE LATIN AMERICA ALLIANCE OF  
PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES (AIPRAL)**

January 2010 to April 2011

Clayton da Silva

**Publications**

1. *Calvin's Jubilee* – To mark the 500th year celebration of the reformer John Calvin's birth, two books were published. The first is entitled *Calvin 500 years. Celebrating his life and legacy*; it contains Bible studies, liturgical resources, material for children and others, related to Calvin's thought and biblical reading outlook. The second book came out in October 2010 and is entitled *Calvin and the Reformed Theology in Latin America – Panorama*. It contains articles presented at the gathering organized by AIPRAL's Bible and Theology Department in October 2009 in Barranquilla, Colombia. This brought together delegates from theological institutions with the aim of re-approaching Calvin's contributions and legacy from a Latin American perspective. To these articles, others were added in this joint publication of AIPRAL and the Reformed University Corporation (RUC). We received for this the support of the Fondation pour l'aide au protestantisme réformé (FAP).
2. *Process of the Alliance for Justice and Life on Earth (Accra)*. In May of 2010, a book for divulgation and study of the Accra Confession and its consequences was published, entitled *Desafiad@s...Desafiando*, (challenged) *Churches of Latin America Committed to the Accra Confession: Alliance for Economic Justice and Life on Earth*. It was prepared by Robert Jordan, WARC consultant for Covenanting for Justice in the region up until the end of 2007, and it includes stances and documents of the churches of the region and of AIPRAL, as well as some articles, Bible studies and liturgical resources. It was presented during the Uniting General Council (UGC) in Grand Rapids in June of 2010. It was co-edited by AIPRAL, CUPSA (Mexico) and the WCRC.

**Events organized by AIPRAL in 2010**

1. The Department of Cooperation and Testimony is following up on the Accra process during its meetings and workshops held with delegates of the churches from the region. In November 2010 it organized an event on "Care of the Environment and Supportive Economy Experiences", which took place in the city of Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, in which delegates from member churches of the sub-regions Conosur and Andina participated.

2. The departments of Bible & Theology and Mission & Evangelization organized together a new event on "Identity and Mission", held in San José, Costa Rica, in which delegates from member churches of the Mesoamerica and the Caribbean regions participated.
3. The Liturgical Animation staff organized an event on "Spiritual Renewal and Liturgical Updating". It was held in San Salvador, El Salvador, in November 2010 and delegates from member churches of the Mesoamerica and Caribbean regions participated. Liturgical resources and songs were produced and these will be incorporated in the Resource Booklet of the XI General Assembly of AIPRAL, which will take place in Guatemala in August 2011. The Liturgical Animation staff is organizing a second event aimed at member churches of the Conosur and Andina regions, to be held in the month of June in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They are also planning on developing some resources to be shared in the next General Assembly of AIPRAL.

## **XI General Assembly of AIPRAL**

The XI General Assembly will be held from the 12 to 14 August 2011 in Guatemala City, with the theme "The Fruit of Justice is Sown in Fellowship and Peace", inspired by the biblical text of James 3.18, which reads "*And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*" The National Presbyterian Church of Guatemala will host this event, which will place us in a country of Central America whose history in the past years has been stained by armed conflicts, violence, death, iniquity, injustice and the destruction of the creation. Surely, it is not the only country with these characteristics in the region.

The aim is to continue our reflection and joint action as an Area Council of the WCRC and as churches that are committed to the Accra Confession seeking to promote God's gifts for life in fullness for all creation. AIPRAL has sought to face the challenge of achieving a balanced and representative participation in the General Assembly that may do greater justice to the diversity in our Presbyterian and Reformed communities in the region. In order to achieve a greater gender-age, ordained-lay balance, for the second time in a row, we are organizing two pre-assemblies before this huge event: "Women's Continental Forum" and "Latin America and Caribbean Reformed Youth Forum". These will take place from 8 to 10 August. By supporting the participation of women and youth, we will be helping member churches to consider integrating them into their official delegations to the General Assembly which, depending

## AIPRAL

on the quantity of registered churches, varies between 2 to 4 delegates that can take an active part in discussions and voting. On the other hand, it is important to have moments of sharing both in reflection and in the pursuit of our mission as churches that allow us to take committed action together both in our countries and in the region. With this purpose in mind, we are organizing a full working-day trip, which will be held on 11 August, during which a Consultation on the theme "Water, Gift of God and Human Right for Life in Fullness on Earth" will take place. All General Assembly delegates, participants in the women and youth pre-assemblies and fraternal and ecumenical representatives will participate in this activity. The goal is to deepen the commitment of the Latin American churches to the Accra Confession and to care towards creation and life on earth.

Delegates from member churches, WCRC Executive Committee members and the WCRC General Secretary are expected. The presence of Setri Nyomi, who will be preaching during the closing service, is already confirmed. Carola Tron Urban, Helis Hernán Barraza Diaz and Clayton Leal da Silva will also be present.

### **Office of the AIPRAL Secretary General**

The WCRC has decided to work closer with the Area Councils, with some of the tasks and programmes having to be undertaken and developed by the regions. A problem, however, that Area Councils struggle with (at least in Latin America) is how to finance the expenses of the regional secretary's office, which must dedicate time and work to planning, monitoring, assessing and making flyers and reports for the global organization that is its centre? As far as AIPRAL is concerned, we must point out that until the year 2010, we counted on the precious and supportive collaboration of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Now this church has indicated that it is no longer possible to ensure its help from 2011 onwards.

We believe that to ensure efficiency and coordination, it is necessary that the WCRC help us finance a part-time clerical staff, since it will be impossible to develop both the proposed targets and the activities planned by the WCRC and the Area Councils only with volunteers. This point is crucial for the future and should be focused on and closely considered during the meeting of the 2011 WCRC Executive Committee. A part-time clerical staff would cost about USD15,000 a year. A sum for expenses should be added to the honorarium.



## Communications

Several issues of the magazine *La Voz* (The voice) have been published in this period, namely:

- Issue 51-52 May 10 – *World Fellowship of Reformed Churches* – issue devoted to the preparations for the UGC.
- Issue 53 December 10 – *Called to Communion, Committed to Justice* – issue dedicated to the new WCRC
- Issue 54 May 11 – *The Fruit of Justice is Sown in Fellowship and Peace* – issue devoted to the preparation of the XI General Assembly of AIPRAL to be held in August 2011 in Guatemala City.

In regard to the website [www.aipral.org](http://www.aipral.org), we must emphasize that we've been working on its updating and renewal, so that it may continue to be a link for the churches and a means of communication to share our activities and events.

## Regional and global delegations

AIPRAL was invited to participate and/or appoint delegates in the following events:

- *Final Consultation about Communion and Justice*, organized by WARC with one delegate from each region to draft the document to be presented at the UGC in Grand Rapids. It took place from 4 to 8 March 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland, with the participation of Carola Tron Urban from Uruguay.
- *Conference for the Edinburgh Centenary 2010: Witnessing for Christ today*, which took place from 2 to 6 June 2010 in Edinburgh, Scotland, Great Britain, with the participation of Ms Adelaida Jiménez Cortés, from Colombia.
- *Oikotree, the movement of the Alliance for Justice integrated by WARC-CMI-CWM*. It met in Amazonas-Brazil in May 2010. It was an event organized by AIPRAL (Clayton Leal da Silva).
- *UGC*, from 18 to 25 June 2010 in Grand Rapids, MI, USA. There, was formed the new organization "Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas" (WCRC in English). Germán Zijlstra participated for AIPRAL, as well as a representative group of delegates from the member churches of the region.

Once again, we give thanks to the Lord of Life for the challenges and possibilities offered to carry on programmes and activities for the work of the churches in the region.

## **REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AREA COUNCIL**

Neal D. Presa

### **Major initiatives of CANAAC from 2009-2011**

- CANAAC, together with representatives from CANACOM, hosted a successful Pre-Council Reformed Youth Forum (RYF) that brought about 50 young people from various countries for worship, Bible study, theological reflection, networking, fellowship, and prayer. The RYF brought to the Uniting General Council (UGC) an important message about the generational hermeneutic which the Generations Y, Z and Google Generation bring to the ecumenical table, and the call for greater visibility and participation of young people (under the age of 30) to leadership positions in the new Communion.
- CANAAC provided significant scholarship funding for the UGC and the Global Theological Institute (GIT) in the summer of 2010, specifically enabling participants from the Caribbean to attend.
- CANAAC sponsored a theological consultation on the relationship between the Accra Confession and the Belhar Confession at the Stony Point Conference Centre in New York in the winter of 2010.
- CANAAC will continue working with CANACOM in launching a Reformed Youth Network for the region. The launch date has been postponed until the summer of 2012.
- Completed and approved 2008, 2009 and 2010 Audited Financial Statements. These have been transmitted to the WARC/WCRC General Secretary's office as mandated by the WARC/WCRC Constitution.
- The CANAAC website [www.canaac.org](http://www.canaac.org) continues to provide an excellent gateway, offering basic information on the Area Council, helpful resources and links, and, in the spirit of transparency and accountability to all member churches and partners, all audited financial statements have been posted there.
- CANAAC sent a task force to Stellenbosch, South Africa in Fall 2010 to engage in discussions with officials from the University of Stellenbosch theology faculty and the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa as to their learnings of the successful Globalization Project between the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa URSCA and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany in contextualizing and institutionalizing Covenanting

for Justice in the Economy and the Earth, as a way for CANAAC to discern next steps for Covenanting for Justice in this region.

- CANAAC's Steering Committee met in Toronto in October 2010 to follow-up on items from the UGC and to prepare for the CANAAC Assembly in September 2011.
- Plans are well underway with CANACOM for a Joint CANACOM-CANAAC Assembly in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic from 24 to 30 September 2011, under the theme, "Who is my Neighbour?" The CANAAC Assembly will consider *inter alia* proposed Strategic Initiatives and Budget for 2011-2013 biennium, amendments to the By-laws, reviewing the programme priorities of the new WCRC as it impacts the Area Council, determining next steps of the Covenanting for Justice movement in the region, and the purpose/role of the Area Council and the Steering Committee. A new steering committee will be elected and installed.

On a personal note, it, indeed, has been an immense pleasure and humbling experience to have served two terms as Convener of the Area Council over the last five years since the reorganization of CANAAC in 2006, and of representing the Area Council at WARC/WCRC Executive Committees, and through these experiences have had the privilege of representing WARC in various arenas, and have met so many dedicated people who are and will continue to be lifelong friends and colleagues in the ministry and the ecumenical movement. I am deeply grateful to God for this common calling which we share.

- Plans are well underway for a CANAAC Theological Institute to be held concurrent with the CANACOM-CANAAC Assembly in the Dominican Republic this September 2011. The Institute will consist of 15 seminarians/young pastors from North America and the Caribbean, led by deans Ofelia Ortega (IPRC) and Paulette Brown (PCC), and other adjunct faculty, as they explore the Assembly's theme, "Who is my Neighbour?" contextually through immersion visits, classroom lecture, discussion, worship, and Bible study.

The following strategic initiatives will be considered by the CANAAC Assembly this September:

**Proposed 2011-2013 Strategic Priorities of the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)**

## CANAAC

*"From Grand Rapids to our Churches in North America and the Caribbean: Living Communion for God's Justice"*

As the regional expression of the WCRC in the Caribbean and North America, CANACC adopts the policy organization of the 25th General Council (UGC Grand Rapids) along the lines of the Sections of General Council, integrating related programmatic priorities as follows:

- Justice
- Mission and theology
- Youth and education
- Worship and Reformed identity

Some of the core priorities with related programmes can be implemented immediately or in short order. Other core priorities will require further discussion and approval of the CANAAC Assembly when it next gathers in the Dominican Republic on 24-30 September 2011.

### **1. Priorities for justice**

#### *a. Caribbean Bible study*

- CANAAC support Caribbean churches to develop bible study materials.
- CANAAC support and engage with the Caribbean Women Theologians for Transformation for engaging the Bible through justice lenses.

#### *b. Forums on gender justice for women with disabilities*

- CANAAC work with member churches to establish one forum a year on gender justice for women with disabilities.

#### *c. Gathering of "Covenanting for Justice" working groups and Feasibility Task Force*

- CANAAC convene a gathering in spring 2011 of representatives from the Steering Committee, the North America Covenanting for Justice Working Group, the Caribbean Covenanting for Justice Working Group, the Globalization Project Feasibility Task Force, and any other invited stakeholders to discern the pathways for the next stages of Covenanting for Justice in this region in the years ahead.

*d. Solidarity with Haiti*

- CANAAC Assembly in the Dominican Republic (September 2011) find tangible ways for CANAAC delegates and observes to be in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Haiti.

**2. Priorities for mission and theology**

*a. Interreligious/interfaith organizations/councils*

- CANAAC work with interfaith organizations and, where none is present, work with member churches to establish interfaith councils to inform and shape discussions around what it means to have a Reformed ecumenical witness in pluralist contexts.

**3. Priorities for youth and education**

*a. Converse/collaborate with CANACOM*

- CANAAC continue work with CANACOM for the launch of a Caribbean and North America Reformed Youth Network in 2012.

*b. Link the Networks of Theologians with the seminaries in the regions*

- CANAAC facilitate the linkage of the networks of theologians with the theological colleges and institutions for common witness, collaboration, and dialogue over issues affecting the region and the wider Communion.

*c. Caribbean and North America Theological Institute*

- CANAAC will continue and enhance the presence of a theological institute at CANAAC assemblies that bring together seminarians and young pastors for theological reflection, Bible study, discussion, mission site visits, actions for solidarity, and networking.

**4. Priorities for worship and Reformed identity**

*a. Regarding the resource "Worshiping the Triune God"*

- i. The introduction be re-written as a cover letter and an introduction that will be attached to the body of "Worshiping the Triune God." Care should be taken to contextualize the communication for the Caribbean and North America region.

## CANAAC

- ii. That the introduction and body of “Worshiping the Triune God” be put into a PDF format that can be attractively reprinted.
  - iii. That the document, with a cover letter, be sent electronically to all the denominations in CANAAC, asking that they send the document to all the congregations and that they consider using this document in the ways explained in the current introduction. Further, we ask that the churches provide feedback to the Steering Committee, including suggestion revisions.
  - iv. That the Steering Committee share the insights gained through this process with the Executive Committee of the WCRC.
- b. Send the UGC Message to all the churches, and request distribution to congregations.

### **5. Priorities for theological engagement**

Establish a Network of Theologians, including a Network of Younger Theologians, to support and offer sustained theological reflection and recommendations for engagement, advocacy, and action.

## **REPORT OF WCRC EUROPE**

Sandy Horsburgh

This report covers the period from the joint meeting of the WARC and REC Executive Committees in Geneva in May 2009.

### **Wuppertal 2009**

The WARC Europe Area Council met in Wuppertal, Germany, in October 2009. At that meeting, consideration was given to various matters.

The Mission in Unity project is concerned with the particular needs of churches in post-communist Europe. It has proved difficult to undertake this work on a Europe-wide basis and leadership of it has effectively been taken up by the Reformed Church in Hungary, which has excellent contacts and networks.

The Area Council again expressed the view that the way the Alliance (now Communion) is financed should be harmonized. The system of remitting 5% of member church contributions to the Area Council was commended as a satisfactory way of working. The Council felt that financial information coming from Geneva was not always as clear as it could be and noted that member churches in Europe, many of which are facing severe financial difficulties, need absolute fiscal transparency from Geneva to assure member church treasurers that assessments are fairly made.

The book *What is Justification? Reformed Contributions to an Ecumenical Theme* was presented to the Council. It was the result of work undertaken by members of the WARC Europe Theological Subcommittee.

The Council discussed preparation for the Uniting General Council (UGC) in Grand Rapids, in particular the preparation of the book *Europe Covenanting for Justice*. Martina Wasserloos reported on her work as the WARC Europe consultant on Covenanting for Justice.

The Council also resolved to hold a special meeting in Brussels to deepen preparation for the UGC.

Donald Watts resigned as Secretary and was replaced by Sandy Horsburgh.

WCRC Europe

## **Brussels 2010**

The next meeting was in Brussels in April 2010, on the very day that the Icelandic volcano started to close European airspace. Despite the sense that many delegates had that they would be unable to leave Brussels anytime soon, the meeting gave deep and careful consideration to the twin themes of the UGC – Communion and Justice – and sought to discern how best European delegates could contribute to debates in Grand Rapids.

The other main focus of that meeting was on the elections for the new Executive Committee. Considerable frustration was expressed at the lack of clarity within the procedure for electing new committee members, in particular with regard as to when nominations could be made. After considerable effort, the Council agreed upon whom the churches in Europe wished to nominate for election to the Executive Committee. It is worth stating that the procedure adopted in Grand Rapids, whereby the Nomination Committee queried the Council's nominations and sought to overturn some, and produced an interim report, was felt by the Council to have been flawed. Representations have already been made on revising the nomination and election procedure in time for the next General Council.

## **UGC**

The European delegates met at the specified times for regional meetings during the course of the UGC. The majority of their time together was spent on the matter of elections but discussion was also held on the ongoing business of the UGC. The Council would like more thought to be given by those planning future General Councils as to the purpose of regional meetings and more preparation to be given to those charged with leading them so that they may be a more useful component of the General Council.

## **Prague 2011**

Following the formation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, work began at the European level to reflect the new reality. Accordingly a new Constitution and Bylaws were prepared and this was put to the first meeting of the Council of WCRC Europe in Prague in March 2011.

This was the first Council since the UGC. It began with the adoption of the new Constitution and Bylaws.



Space was given to reflection on the Uniting General Council. Both the President of the WCRC and the General Secretary were present and listened to the discussion. Comments were both supportive and critical of aspects of the event. Disappointment was expressed that the European contribution to the discussion on economic justice went largely ignored leaving a feeling that the European voice had gone unheard.

Most of the business of that meeting was taken up with consideration of the part that the European Region could play in the new WCRC. The Council was addressed by the President, Jerry Pillay, on his vision for the WCRC and by Guy Liagre of the United Protestant Church in Belgium on future Reformed theological work in Europe. Both speakers drew out a number of themes and it is the task of the Steering Committee to develop a programme of work arising from them.

Jerry Pillay set out the vision, mission and values of the WCRC which it is hoped the Executive Committee will endorse when it meets in May. He offered the following vision statement: To live out the Communion of Reformed Churches, fulfilling God's mission of salvation, renewal, justice, peace and reconciliation in the world, so that all may experience the fullness of life in Christ.

He then went on to speak of values, which he summarized as follows:

- mission (to pervade everything we do).
- communion (how to connect with people in the pews).
- justice (closely linked to communion).
- theology (one of the gifts of the Reformed tradition).
- ecumenical engagement (not in competition with one another).

He indicated that the methodology to be adopted will depend on networking, leadership development, regional engagement and empowerment, sharing resources, adequate funding and good communication. It was acknowledged that much needed to be done to take these ideas forward. Programme priorities needed to be established, an operational structure was required as well as a budget and the raising of funds.

Jerry Pillay concluded with ten ways in which he felt the Europe Area could be involved and which were discussed in small groups afterwards:

## WCRC Europe

1. embrace the vision and mission as “our” vision and mission.
2. share vision and mission with member churches so that they become their vision and mission.
3. engage in a dialogue on communion and justice.
4. understand and live out the Accra Confession.
5. share experiences and stories with other regions (with suggestion that a representative from another region on a rota basis attends each meeting of the Council).
6. share information and insight on regional empowerment.
7. help in leadership development in other regions (exchange of people between regions).
8. sharing resources, not just money.
9. help connect with other ecumenical organizations and build on strategic partnerships (some of which will only be found in Europe).
10. raise funds for work of the WCRC beyond membership fees.

Finally, he thanked the Europe Region for the work it has done.

Discussion centred around the all-encompassing nature of the presentation and the need for prioritizing and sharpening the focus on a few things that could be done well within the resources available.

The second keynote address was given by Guy Liagre on the future of Reformed Theological Work in Europe. This led to an interesting discussion about when it was appropriate to seek a distinctively Reformed theological voice, as opposed to a Protestant or even simply a Christian voice.

In line with the policy of the Council of WCRC Europe of deepening the engagement member churches with the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) and developing a Reformed voice within the wider European protestant context, the Council received a report drawn up by a small group of theologians in response to the CPCE document on Ministry-Ordination-Episkope. The response was broadly supportive but there were some critical points noted where they felt the document could be strengthened from a Reformed perspective.

The Council of WCRC Europe is keen to see itself and the other regional councils as key components of the WCRC. In the past, there has been a feeling that what was done at regional level had little impact globally. The Council would like to see a more devolved structure with responsibility for particular concerns of the

Communion as a whole being undertaken by regions, in cooperation with others, for the benefit of the whole Communion and it commends this to the Executive Committee for consideration. In this regard, the Steering Committee warmly welcomed the Draft Working Paper on regional councils of the WCRC.

In Prague, a new Steering Committee was elected. Jan-Gerd Heetderks (Protestant Church in the Netherlands) will serve as President; Martina Wasserloos (Reformed Alliance in Germany) and Balazs Odor (Reformed Church in Hungary) will serve as Vice-Presidents; and Sandy Horsburgh (Church of Scotland) and Kerstin Koch (Church of Lippe) will serve as Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

### *Appendix*

## **WCRC Europe Constitution and By-laws**

### **WCRC EUROPE**

### **CONSTITUTION**

The Purposes of WCRC Europe shall be as set out in Articles III, IV and V of the Constitution of the World Communion of Reformed Churches adopted in Grand Rapids on 18th June, 2010.

#### **ARTICLE III – IDENTITY**

Drawing on the heritage of the Reformed confessions, as a gift for the renewal of the whole church, the World Communion of Reformed Churches is a communion of churches through

- A. Affirming the gifts of unity in Christ through the mutual recognition of baptism and membership, pulpit and table fellowship, ministry and witness.
- B. Interpreting Reformed theology for contemporary Christian witness.
- C. Encouraging the renewal of Christian worship and spiritual life within the Reformed tradition.
- D. Renewing a commitment to partnership in God's mission, through worship, witness, diaconal service, and work for justice, so as to foster mission in unity, mission renewal, and mission empowerment.

## WCRC Europe

- E. Encouraging leadership development and nurture of the covenant community.
- F. Engaging other ecumenical organizations and churches of other traditions in the ecumenical movement through dialogue and cooperation in ministry.

### **ARTICLE IV – VALUES**

- A. The World Communion of Reformed Churches strives to demonstrate and live the oneness in Christ we profess, to carry out its ministry in ways that enable all member churches to share their gifts, and to honour and be committed to God's saving purposes for the transformation of the world. The World Communion of Reformed Churches serves its members with love and care, encouraging their mutual support and nurture of one another.
- B. The World Communion of Reformed Churches in its order and actions is called to respect, defend, and advance the dignity of every person. In Jesus Christ all human differences must lose their power to divide. No one shall be disadvantaged for, among other reasons, race, ethnicity, or gender, and no individual or church may claim or exercise dominance over another.
- C. The World Communion of Reformed Churches embraces God's covenant promises for the redemption, restoration and renewal of the whole creation through Jesus Christ. In doing so, it affirms the biblical calling of the members to recognize the gift of baptism in one another, and the call to be unified in ministry, and together to bear witness to God's justice and peace and to the integrity of creation.

### **ARTICLE V – MISSION AND PURPOSES**

- A. The World Communion of Reformed Churches shall assist its member churches by
  - 1. widening and deepening understanding and community among the member churches and helping them to fulfil their own responsibilities in the service of Christ;
  - 2. facilitating the transformation of the member churches into interdependent missional communities that support, empower and challenge each other as partners in the one mission of God;
  - 3. promoting the full and just participation of all members, of all ages, in all aspects of the church's life and its public witness;

4. promoting the full and just partnership of women and men in church and society;
  5. encouraging and promoting diaconal service in the church and society.
- B. The World Communion of Reformed Churches shall also contribute to the ecumenical movement and the transformation of the world by
1. promoting economic and ecological justice, global peace, and reconciliation in the world;
  2. promoting and defending religious, civil, and all other human rights wherever threatened throughout the world;
  3. encouraging and promoting relief and sustainable development in the world and focusing on the eradication of poverty;
  4. providing Reformed perspectives on church unity.

In addition to the purposes set out above, WCRC Europe shall work to:

- Strengthen cooperation and fellowship amongst WCRC member churches in Europe;
- Strengthen the involvement of European member churches within WCRC worldwide;
- Strengthen the involvement of WCRC member churches in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE);
- Foster studies in Reformed theology.

All member churches of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Europe belong to WCRC Europe.

WCRC Europe will be governed by the Council of WCRC Europe, which is constituted according to these Bylaws.

### **COUNCIL OF WCRC EUROPE BYLAWS**

1. The Council of WCRC Europe will consist of one representative, normally from the leadership level of each member church.
2. All those elected to the WCRC Executive Committee from European member churches will be invited to be observers at the Council of WCRC Europe.
3. At the Council of WCRC Europe, the following shall be entitled to attend as observers:
  - a. the President of the WCRC or an alternate;

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- b. the General Secretary of the WCRC or an alternate.
4. The Council of WCRC Europe shall normally meet annually.
5. Meetings shall normally be hosted by a member church.
6. The Council of WCRC Europe will have a Steering Committee. This will consist of the President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer. The WCRC Vice President from Europe (whom failing, a European member of the WCRC Executive Committee) will be a non-voting member.
7. The task of the Steering Committee shall be to provide strategic direction to the Council of WCRC Europe, to organize meetings of the Council, to initiate business and to carry out the policies and decisions of the Council.
8. The Council of WCRC Europe and its Steering Committee may:
  - a. appoint Standing Committees;
  - b. appoint Task Groups for specific issues;
  - c. appoint specialists as Consultants to assist in its deliberations or to undertake specific pieces of work.

Standing Committees, Task Groups and Consultants shall be responsible to and report to the Steering Committee which shall ensure that the Council of WCRC Europe is fully informed about and, as appropriate, involved in their work. The Steering Committee may, in consultation with the Council, discharge them at any time.

Members of the Standing Committees and Task Groups need not be members of the Council. However, the Council of WCRC Europe shall appoint one of its members as chairperson for each Standing Committee and Task Group.

9. a. The Council of WCRC Europe will elect the following office holders: the President, the two Vice Presidents and the Secretary. Each shall hold office until the end of the third meeting of the Council of WCRC Europe following her/his election. Elections for office holders will be held during the meeting of the Council at which the term of office of one or more office holders will come to an end.
  - b. Office Holders may serve for up to two consecutive terms.
  - c. Normally the office holders will come from different regions of Europe.
  - d. Any member of the Council of WCRC Europe present at any meeting at which elections are held is eligible to be elected. All candidates must have the support of their own church.

- e. Member churches may, if they wish, nominate a person who is not a member of the Council at the meeting at which the election is to be held to serve as a member of the Steering Committee. Any such nominee should be present as an observer.
  - f. Member churches will be invited to submit nominations before the election takes place, either before or at the meeting of the Council.
  - g. Upon election, each Office Holder becomes a member of the Council ex officio. Member churches from which office holders are drawn may, at their own discretion, appoint another suitable person to be their representative.
  - h. The President shall, with the Steering Committee, be responsible for providing strategic direction to the Council of WCRC Europe and for representing the Council to the World Communion of Reformed Churches Executive Committee and General Council. In collaboration with the Secretary, she/he shall develop the agenda for meetings of the Council and the Steering Committee. The Vice Presidents shall support the President in the discharge of her/his duties and may deputize for her/him. The Secretary shall be responsible for all internal communications with member churches and with the WCRC office in Geneva; shall keep the minutes and distribute all necessary papers in advance of meetings; and shall be responsible for the practical arrangements for meetings.
10. The Council of WCRC Europe will appoint a Treasurer. S/he need not be a member of the Council. Upon appointment, the Treasurer will become a member of the Council ex officio. The Treasurer will serve for a four year period. The Council may renew the appointment.
11. The Steering Committee shall normally meet twice between each meeting of the Council of WCRC Europe.
12. The date of the next meeting of the WCRC Council shall normally be determined by the Council before the close of business of the preceding meeting. In exceptional circumstances, an extraordinary meeting of the Council of WCRC Europe may be convened if this is sought by:
- a. the Steering Committee;
  - b. a majority of the member churches in WCRC Europe making their wish known in writing to the Secretary.

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13. The Council of WCRC Europe, in liaison with the WCRC Executive Committee, shall determine the amount to be allocated from the contributions of the European member churches for the work of the European Area. The Steering Committee shall have charge of liaison with the WCRC Executive and staff in Geneva, always under the direction of the Council of WCRC Europe.
14. The treasurer appointed by the Council of WCRC Europe shall deal with the financial matters concerning the Council, and will report to each Council meeting and each meeting of the Steering Committee.
15. The costs of attendance at meetings of the Council of WCRC Europe, of the Steering Committee, Standing Committees and Task Groups shall normally be borne by the member churches to which those attending such meetings belong. Arrangements for subsidies for those in financial need may be agreed by the Steering Committee.
16. The By-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the delegates in attendance at any session of the Council of WCRC Europe. Proposed amendments must be communicated to the member churches and the Council three months in advance.
17. The English text of these By-laws shall be binding.



## **REPORT OF THE NORTHEAST ASIA AREA COUNCIL (NEAAC)**

Yang-en Cheng

### **1. Organization and activities**

Since its foundation in 1996, the Northeast Asia Area Council (NEAAC) has held its council meetings biannually and theological consultations annually. Currently, NEAAC consists of member churches from Taiwan – Presbyterian Church in Taiwan; Korea – Presbyterian Church in Korea (TongHap), Presbyterian Church in Korea (DaeShin), Presbyterian Church in Korea (HapDongJeongTong), and Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea; and Japan – Korean Christian Church in Japan and Church of Christ in Japan – though two of the churches in Korea rarely send their delegate to the Council meeting.

The theological consultations serve as a preparation and follow-up for each General Council meeting. The main purpose is twofold: first, to elaborate and contextualize the theme and mandate of the General Council in our social, cultural and historical situations; second, to raise and explore new issues and concerns that are relevant to our local contexts. In addition to theological discussions, we also ask member churches to introduce any of their concrete activities and efforts relating to the theme.

### **2. New member churches**

The NEAAC has two new member churches – the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China and the Reformed Church in Japan, and one possible observer – the Japan Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

### **3. Administrative meeting in February 2011**

On 20 January 2011 an administrative meeting was held at the Presbyterian Bible College, Hsinchu, Taiwan with representatives from Taiwan, Japan and Korea attending. During the meeting the following decisions were made:

- a. The proposal made by the PCT regarding the change of officer and appointment of Dr Cheng Yang-en as Moderator of the NEAAC was accepted.
- b. It was agreed that following the WCRC Constitution some changes, such as name and boundaries of Area in the NEEAC

## NEAAC

Bylaws, needed to be made. This will be finalized at the next Area Council meeting.

- c. Regarding the current status of the China Christian Council, it was decided that an official letter of inquiry should be sent to Setri Nyomi, General Secretary of the WCRC, in order to clarify membership of the China Christian Council in the WCRC. In the prompt reply received from Setri Nyomi, it was affirmed that "the CCC was deemed a member church of the WCRC."
- d. It was agreed that in the future, as a general principle, administrative meetings should be held every year, nevertheless, Area Council meetings and theological consultations, every other year.

### **4. Next Area Council meeting**

The previous WARC-NEAAC meeting and theological consultation were held in Seoul from 9 to 13 November 2009, hosted by Korean member churches. The next Area Council meeting and theological consultation will be held from 7 to 11 November 2011 in Taiwan. The two proposed themes for the theological consultation are: Ecology, and Hospitality towards Immigrants. It is also proposed that the General Secretary or one of the senior staff of the WCRC should be invited to the November meeting in Taiwan.

### **5. NEAAC web page**

Mr Yoshi Fujimori of the Church of Christ in Japan offered to create a website for NEAAC. The website will include information and messages of NEAAC and help improve mutual communication between all member churches.

### **6. Administrative Committee members**

The following are the current members of the Administrative Committee of NEAAC (2009-2011).

Moderator (*ad interim*): Rev. Dr Yang-en Cheng (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)

Vice Moderator: Mr Yoshi Fujimori (Church of Christ in Japan)

Yet to be decided: (Korean member churches)

Area Secretary: Rev. Dr Chiu Shu-pin (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)

Treasurer: Rev. Subinaz (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)

Administrative Member: Rev. Kang Yong-Kyu (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea)

Rev. Shin Seung-Min (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea)

## **ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES IN AFRICA (ARCA)**

Baffour Dokyi Amoa

### **New Name**

The Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA) will soon change its name to the Communion of Reformed Churches in Africa (CRCA), in line with the WCRC.

### **Financial challenges**

The major challenge facing ARCA is finances. Without financial resources, it has been difficult to carry out any meaningful activities and to build relationships within Reformed churches in Africa.

### **Activities**

ARCA has not had a lot of activities in the period under review but it is worth mentioning that a brief meeting of representatives of ARCA member churches took place in Ho, Ghana, in August 2009.

### **Renewal of ARCA**

The leadership of ARCA has moved on and hence efforts are being made to inject some funds into ARCA or CRCA to make it more functional and we are on track to call an Executive Committee meeting in October 2011 in order to revamp ARCA and also to elect a new interim president.

### **Conclusion**

ARCA is grateful to the WCRC for electing its President as President of the WCRC. We count on your prayer support and resources to help ARCA to lift itself up.

## **REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS MINISTRY**

Mark Koenig and Ryan Smith

1. The report of the Ministry at the United Nations to the 2011 Executive Committee meeting of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) highlights aspects of the ongoing witness that a presence at the UN in New York makes possible. This report is not exhaustive. It suggests places and points to moments where the ministry has been engaged.
2. The past year, 2010-11, was a time of transition for the Ministry at the United Nations. Following a period of discernment, the vision for the Ministry was reaffirmed and rearticulated. The work of the Ministry falls into two broad areas: to equip individuals and communities to engage in global discipleship and to advocate for justice and peace in the name of Jesus Christ.
3. The Ministry's staffing pattern was reconfigured to include a director and a representative to the UN. Mark Koenig was called as the director in October 2010; Ryan Smith was called as the representative on 28 February 2011. Thus this report covers the time period from October 2010 to April 2011.
4. Rooted in the Reformed tradition, we affirm that God, Creator and Sovereign of all, so loved the world that Jesus the Son was sent with a message of justice and peace, redemption and reconciliation. God calls us to serve as ambassadors for Christ seeking God's peace and reconciliation in a world where humanity and creation are wounded, broken, and in need of healing.<sup>2</sup> Together we seek life in all its fullness by:
5. Addressing the issue of Environmental Justice through participation in the process to implement recommendations of the UN climate change conference.
6. Helping host a delegation of church leaders from Sudan prior to the January 2011 referendum on self-determination in southern Sudan. This was an ecumenical effort. The Sudanese leaders included two Roman Catholic bishops, an Anglican bishop, and the Rev. Ramadan Chan, General Secretary of the Sudan Council of Churches. The delegation met with missions to the

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor 5.18-20.

UN, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other UN Secretariat staff.

7. Coordinating a Season of Prayer with the People of Sudan. Through this international ecumenical effort, Christians from a number of churches joined sisters and brothers in Sudan in weekly prayer in the month before the referendum on self-determination. Interfaith prayer services were held at the UN in New York.
8. Engaging the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This year's theme was "Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work." Over 30 women from the Presbyterian Church (USA) participated in formal sessions, side events and advocacy on the agreed conclusions document. The women worked in partnership with Ecumenical Women. Efforts will be made to increase international participation at the 56th session of the CSW in 2012.
9. Working with Presbyterian Women to bring Milcah Lalam, Programmes Manager for Resource Centre for Civil Leadership (RECONCILE) in Sudan, to participate in the CSW and to help lead a side event on post-trauma healing, transformation, and reconciliation. Arranged a meeting for Milcah with a representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
10. Working with the NGO working group, Ecumenical Women to address women's concerns in the UN Community.
11. Participating in conversations around the Coalition for a UN Decade for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace.
12. Creating opportunities to advocate for peace in Libya and the Ivory Coast. These ecumenical resources were created during the CSW and disseminated electronically.
13. Arranging a forum for Rev. Adelaida Jiménez and Rev. Gloria Ulloa from the Presbyterian Church of Colombia to address the NGO community about the situation in Colombia from a church perspective. They met with a representative of the Department of Political Affairs. A follow-up meeting with the Colombian Mission to the UN is planned.

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14. Expressing concern for religious freedom and the protection of religious minorities, this included a meeting with the Mission of Iraq to the UN.
15. Participating in the NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine. This group is in the process of reforming. It advocated for the Security Council to adopt the proposed resolution on the settlements and is monitoring the discussions around the question of statehood for Palestine.
16. Participating as an NGO observer to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Met with the Department of Political Affairs on the question of Israel and Palestine.
17. Providing a forum to call attention to the ongoing political crisis in Madagascar. Dan Turk, Presbyterian Church (USA) mission co-worker in Madagascar, and Douglas Tilton, Presbyterian Church (USA) regional liaison for Southern Africa, spoke to the NGO community and met with the United States Mission to the United Nations.
18. Participating in the NGO Working Group on Food & Hunger. The group sponsored a forum series on issues related to the global food crisis for the NGO and diplomatic communities.
19. There continue to be needs and opportunities for the Reformed family to work and witness for peace and justice within the context of the UN.
20. We give thanks for all who have been partners in the work described above and who support the ministry through prayer, participation and financial gifts. We are particularly grateful for the ecumenical community at the UN.

## **REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

### **Churches that applied in 2011**

1. International Confederation of Reformed Orthodox Churches of Eastern Confession of Christian Faith of the Patriarch Constantinopol Kirillus Lucaris (ICROCECCFPCKL), Omsk, Russia
  - Filled the questionnaire, sent short history
2. Christian Reformed Presbyterian Churches, Kenya
  - Questionnaire sent, no reply
3. Biblical Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, Myanmar
  - Questionnaire sent, no reply.
4. Reformed Christian Church in Croatia, Croatia
  - Questionnaire sent, no reply

### **Application for affiliate membership**

1. Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT), Stellenbosch, South Africa
  - Application complete

### **Church that applied in 2010**

1. Église Réformée de Christ de Côte d'Ivoire (Reformed Church of Christ in the Ivory Coast)
  - Questionnaire sent, no reply

## **WCRC STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Envisioning the WCRC Rooted in Communion and Justice**

#### **1. Introduction**

As Reformed Christians, we believe that we have been called by the triune God into a new fellowship, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) – for a purpose. God has united us in a global Reformed family to be a living expression of the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4.3) in order to share in God’s mission in the world.

At this time as we reflect on our strategic plan for the World Communion of Reformed Churches for the next six years, we pledge ourselves and our churches to be bonded together in communion and God’s justice in the world, as we covenant together for justice in the economy and the earth. As a family of Reformed Christians we are committed to demonstrate through our life together the unity that God intends for all humankind. We are committed to live out this reality not for ourselves alone, but rather for the whole created order as a united fellowship that exists be a living witness to God’s intention of justice, in all of its dimensions, for our world.

We believe in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. The WCRC finds itself in a new/renewed movement, with a rich heritage and facing critical challenges not only financially but also in terms of climate change, global injustices and needing spiritual renewal. The WCRC is called to prepare new wineskins into which the promised new wealth of our communion can expand. The following strategic plan with its emphasis on mission, communion, justice, theology and ecumenical engagement outlines where we are and where we hope to go as a communion.

#### **2. Process**

2.1. Following the birth of the WCRC in Grand Rapids, a strategic planning sub-committee of the Executive Committee was set up to discern the mandates of the WCRC from the UGC and to develop the following:

2.1.1. A vision and mission statement together with the core values of the organization.



- 2.1.2. A Strategic Plan with priorities has been established, among other things, using the following process:
  - 2.1.2.1. A SWOT analysis that enables stakeholders to build on the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
  - 2.1.2.2. Examining the organization's nature and self-description, including organizational structure.
  - 2.1.2.3. Looking at the major programme areas, goals, implementation mechanisms, methodologies, and (broad) expected outcomes/impact.
  - 2.1.2.4. Drawing a budget, resourcing requirements and key elements for its fundraising strategy, including existing partners and new strategies.
- 2.2. The Strategic Planning committee, with the facilitation of Omega Bula, met in Geneva in November 2010 to work together with the responses of member churches, regional councils, strategic partners, executive committee members and staff to questionnaires about the purpose and calling of the WCRC. In addition the committee reflected on the UGC Policy Committee Report, Public Issues Committee Report, the Constitution, and performed a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the WCRC and addressed the identified threats and weaknesses. Staff also contributed their programmatic interpretations of the Grand Rapids Policy Report.
- 2.3. Below is a statement of: the WCRC's vision and mission; an affirmation of the values guiding the WCRC's work; and presents options for the proposed strategy for engaging our mission sustainably and inspiringly, towards the next General Council in 2017.

The appendices contain

- a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the WCRC,
- a financial forecast to inform the plan,
- a synthesis of emerging consensus gleaned from the questionnaire responses.

Throughout the report, "the WCRC" refers to the WCRC as a whole, its members, governing body, and staff, i.e. the WCRC in its entirety. Its component parts will be named or described

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as such, e.g. member churches, Secretariat, regional councils, etc.

### 3. **Vision**

To live out the Communion of Reformed Churches, participating in God's mission, that all may experience the fullness of life in Jesus Christ.

### 4. **Mission**

Drawing on the heritage of the Reformed confessions as a gift for the renewal of the whole church, the World Communion of Reformed Churches is committed to communion and justice and, in partnership with other ecumenical bodies and organizations, we participate in God's mission in the world as we proclaim the saving grace and love of our Triune God by mutually working for: Christian unity and renewal in worship, theology and spirituality; justice; eradication of poverty; building right relations; integrity of creation; interfaith relations; reconciliation, healing, peace and the transformation of both churches and society.

### 5. **Values**

In a spirit of openness and transparency, and speaking the truth in love to ourselves and the world, we affirm the values described in Article IV of the WCRC Constitution:

- A. The World Communion of Reformed Churches strives to demonstrate and live the *oneness* in Christ we profess, to carry out its ministry in ways that *enable all member churches to share* their gifts, and to honour and be committed to God's saving purposes for the transformation of the world. The World Communion of Reformed Churches serves its members with love and care, encouraging their mutual support and nurture of one another.
- B. The World Communion of Reformed Churches in its order and actions is called to respect, defend, and advance the *dignity of every person*. In Jesus Christ all human differences must lose their power to divide. No one shall be disadvantaged for, among other reasons, race, ethnicity, or gender, and no individual or church may claim or exercise dominance over another.

- C. The World Communion of Reformed Churches embraces *God's covenant promises for the redemption, restoration and renewal of the whole creation* through Jesus Christ. In doing so, it affirms the biblical calling of the members to recognize the gift of baptism in one another, and the call to be unified in ministry, and together to bear witness to God's justice and peace and to the integrity of creation.

## 6. Key directions

- 6.1. The WCRC aims, by the end of 2017, to be known as a Communion that unites Reformed churches in God's mission in the world. Our internal relationships will evidence the oneness for which Jesus prayed. The WCRC will have significantly contributed to the world church's awareness of and ability to address theologically and practically, issues of justice, equality, reconciliation and peace-building. The WCRC will be the place to go for theological and practical resources on these issues. The WCRC will be an interwoven network committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world, and will be widely acknowledged as an effective convener of significant training and resourcing for leaders and future leaders so that they may contribute theologically and practically to the mission of the member churches. The core of the network will be sustainable with core functions funded with revenue from member churches. The WCRC, at every level, embarks on this journey using the following key directions (not in rank order):

### 6.1.1. *Mission*

The WCRC is called into God's holistic mission and commissioned to seek new ways of engaging in mission. As a communion, the WCRC strengthens doing mission in unity and stimulates reflections that make our churches' mission effective and relevant to the 21st century. The call to proclaim the saving grace and love of the triune God and to be God's agents of transformation in the world places mission at the heart of everything the WCRC and its member churches do.

### 6.1.2. *Communion*

The WCRC is deeply committed to the life of the whole Communion. As a Communion the WCRC is based on the understanding of *koinonia*. Jesus Christ has revealed that *koinonia* is the reality of the participation of his sisters and

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brothers in his body. This reality is clearly visible in our life when we share bread and wine at Christ's table, when in fact we share the body and blood of Christ, and when through this *koinonia* "all kinds of injustice, racism, separation and lack of freedom are radically challenged".<sup>3</sup> Therefore the WCRC affirms that there can be no communion without justice and no justice without communion. Any separation between the call to communion and the commitment to justice would ignore the basis of *koinonia*. And so we affirm the gifts of unity in Christ through a full communion where all of our churches recognize each other's baptism, invite one another to the table, and affirm the integrity of one another's ministry.

### 6.1.3. *Justice*

The WCRC will actively engage in biblically and theologically grounded justice and be aware of its implications. This includes building right relations among all people, justice in the economy and the earth, economic justice, eradication of poverty, gender justice, integrity of creation, reconciliation, interfaith engagement, healing, and working towards the transformation of both churches and society. The theological self-understanding of who we are as a Communion undergirds the commitment to being a prophetic voice for justice on the part of the WCRC and its member churches and regional councils.

### 6.1.4. *Theology*

The WCRC envisages bringing together seminaries, theologians, leaders and potential leaders from different contexts, to find, within and beyond the WCRC, fresh understandings of Reformed theology and new expressions of Reformed identity, doing what we can together, and drawing on the resources of theological centres and individuals. The WCRC intends to knead its values and beliefs into the dough of the church, doing contextual theology to reflect current realities.

### 6.1.5. *Ecumenical Engagement*

Called to be part of God's wider family working with others in response to the line in the high priestly prayer "... that they

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<sup>3</sup> Lima text on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

may be one”, the WCRC is committed to working closely with other ecumenical bodies, as well as in commissions and dialogues with other world communions as expressions of this key direction. Our understanding of being in communion is both for the Reformed family and for the whole church. To be Reformed is to be ecumenical; therefore the WCRC will continue to be engaged actively in endeavours that foster Christian unity and ecumenical mission.

## **7. Our renewed way of working (methodologies)**

- 7.1. In working towards our key directions we will use fresh methodologies to serve the whole communion: regional bodies, national churches, and with a particular eye to relating to local congregations. The aim is to incarnate our beliefs, so that our methodologies are the expressions of our values.

Young people are key in the life of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The new way of working places youth at the heart of each commitment of the WCRC. This will be particularly visible in the areas of leadership development, capacity building and communications. In all the networking, regional work, consultations, partnership fund and other engagements of the WCRC the question will always be raised in terms of the role of young people and the impact on youth.

The WCRC intends to engage in a new way of working. The WCRC will give a primary emphasis to working closely with regional councils and to networking in order to build capacity in member churches and the whole Communion.

Recognizing the distinctive contribution we bring as the WCRC, we will work, where possible, with our ecumenical partners both in our current programmes and in establishing new ones.

### **7.1.1.      *Networking***

Networking is vital for effective communication, mutual enrichment, and for equipping and empowering local churches and the regional councils; all of which is required if we are to become a true Communion. Resources of member churches can be made available to the whole. The WCRC secretariat can serve as a clearing house that puts regions and member churches in touch with each other. The staff of the global secretariat should contribute in broad programmatic areas. The

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WCRC will develop and use the communication and networking capacities of the global secretariat and regional councils to engage in such a way that the WCRC resources go to both member churches and through them to their local congregations.

Networking is necessary with relevant offices of member churches, regional councils, and partners as reflection opportunities, consultations and actions are organized around the various key directions including

- a) in consultation with regional councils, engaging them in specific tasks for which they are responsible. This may include both resourcing and implementation.
- b) helping to develop dialogue opportunities or multiple discussion partner opportunities for member churches. For example the covenanting for justice community developed between the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA) and the Evangelische Reformierte Kirche (ERK) in Germany.

### 7.1.2. *Leadership development*

Leadership development is essential for integrating the values, learnings and work of the Communion into the life of the church, and so to build the capacity of the member churches as well as the whole Communion. This is also an important element in sourcing theological, advocacy and other practical resources we need to relate to each other. As a Communion, the WCRC will mature by incarnating the values it espouses.

Developing the leadership of the WCRC includes accompaniment and continued development of existing leaders, developing mentoring and other servant leadership instincts in them, while paying attention to youth empowerment, gender justice, and the inclusion of those with disabilities.

Development of leaders involves inspiring leaders with vision to engage with and learn from the broader ecumenical movement, while integrating the mission and values of the WCRC into all that they do.

Leadership development and capacity building instruments include:

- a) Workshops, internships, scholarships, and participation in programmes such as the Global Institute of Theology

- (GIT) that build the capacity of young people (age 30 and under).
- b) Opportunities for new young leaders for the WCRC and its members to develop global ecumenical perspectives on issues, and to encourage integration of young leaders into member-church decision making structures as well as their nomination to international delegations or elected positions.
  - c) Developing the capacity of member churches to create and manage life-giving projects, implement, monitor and report them to insure impact. One instrument for this is the Reformed Churches Partnership Fund. Another is the collaboration with the Fonds d'Aide au Protentantisme (FAP) in Geneva. In these projects, young people will have a priority.

#### 7.1.3. *Regional engagement and empowerment*

"Regional councils should be the locus of much of the WCRC's work, and thus the Executive Committee and staff should develop methods for empowering regional councils." (Policy Committee Report, p.4) Regional engagement and empowerment is essential to building the theological groundwork and implementing the WCRC vision, mission and actions (that includes reflection and aspirations for action) in order to embed the WCRC experience in the real experience and context of regions. Efforts will be made to ensure regions are adequately funded to participate in the whole. Regions will be encouraged to establish regional councils where they don't exist. Where possible, this should be done in partnership. There are also particular needs, resources and skills in the regions that can be mutually enriching. We need a process of dialogue among Executive Committee, staff and the regions in living out the communion.

#### 7.1.4. *Sharing resources & ensuring adequate funding of the whole*

To strengthen our communion, we need to ensure that all are contributing, and that resources are shared equitably and invested well: fruitfully and ethically. This includes financial, human and other resources. While the resources exist for the WCRC to be the Communion God wants us to be, resources need to be identified and accessed for the life and work of the Communion. As a family the WCRC needs to be sharing

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resources with each other, and to be creating a culture of sharing. "Where our treasure is, our heart will be also", therefore every part of the Communion should be strongly encouraged to contribute financially as well as in other valuable ways.

### 7.1.5. *Communication*

The WCRC's ability to live out God's mission, true communion and justice, and to develop leaders, networks, regions and sharing, requires us to develop communication channels and reflexes. These need not all be centralized, and indeed must not be exclusively dependent on the secretariat. The whole Communion in every part of the globe receives its life and energy from God, and so each part has something to offer, something to share with, and something to receive from, the rest of the body. The church has the opportunity to use new and developing technologies to communicate. The WCRC will invest in doing this well, being aware that not all have the same access to these technologies.

Communicating the WCRC's vision, mission and key directions, and mobilizing involvement in the Communion's commitments and relationships is important. There is need to use electronically based social media, conventional media, and face-to-face encounters at the regional and global levels to:

1. Make visible the key five directions
2. Make visible the opportunity for youth to be involved at the level of the regions and in member church activities related to the five key directions.
3. Attract the support of new donors and retain the commitment of current donors interested in supporting the vision, mission and key directions of the WCRC.

### 7.1.6. *Partnership*

The WCRC will strengthen partnership both as methodology and as engagement in our work. We are not alone. The WCRC values its partnership with church, ecumenical and mission bodies as well as movements with which it shares common aims and commitments. This includes ecumenical and social justice movements working with common values and goals with the WCRC. We understand that we are better together. The WCRC therefore builds effective relationships with our



ecumenical and regional partners and institutions. The WCRC also builds working relationships around thematic issues (e.g. mission, church renewal, water, food, trade, justice, communications, and other critical issues facing communities.) In attempting anything new, we will first explore the possibility of partnership.

Partnerships will empower the WCRC member churches and help foster creative ways of sharing resources for mission, and identifying strategic alliances with other agencies, particularly for its programmatic work, that strives to express its identity as a World Communion of Reformed Churches in mission. This includes working with the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network (EDAN) to ensure that the WCRC and its member churches take into account persons of disability and disability issues in all its endeavours.

## **8. Programme Priorities**

### *8.1. The challenge of prioritizing*

The UGC gave many programme suggestions for the WCRC. We need to focus on what the organization as a whole can do and do well within our resources. The programmatic priorities outlined here are linked with the five strategic directions identified in the Strategic Planning process. This is what gives shape to the priorities identified. The priorities listed here take into account what is possible to be facilitated through the WCRC Secretariat working with the regions given human and financial resources available.

Member churches will be able to pick up some of the programmes not covered here. The WCRC Secretariat will appreciate receiving information from member churches that are engaged in these, and will help disseminate such information. The General Secretary's office will from time to time review actions mandated by the General Council which are not included in these priorities and where possibilities exist, lift them up for some churches to act on, or bring them to the Executive Committee for further policy decisions.

### *8.2. The programme priorities*

Inspired by this vision and mission, and in tune with the key directions and methodologies outlined here, the WCRC has

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adopted the programme priorities below. The programme priorities clearly support the manner in which the WCRC and its member churches understand our overall mandate as the shared participation in God's mission so that all activities and programmes strengthen the mission praxis of its member churches in their own contexts as well as regionally and globally. WCRC members are missional churches responding to the contextual changes and challenges of the world in which we live. Therefore the WCRC as a communion called to justice regards mission as its heart.

The specific programmatic priorities flow from the decisions made in the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids and the consultations with member churches, regional councils, Executive Committee members and Strategic partners as processed by the Strategic Planning Team. It is this process that led to the Vision and Mission Statements as well as the Key Directions and Methodologies outlined here.

Consolidating the World Communion of Reformed Churches also includes prioritizing resource development. The Vision and Mission of the WCRC inspire the whole Communion to make a difference in the world. Appreciating member churches who through contributions invest in this vision and mission as well as developing new sources of funding are therefore important priorities in the next six years.

### *Building Communion – the overarching priority*

All the priorities are aimed at building the Communion. Therefore each of the priorities have some linkage with our self-understanding as Communion, as well as building the Communion, and will be carried out within that framework. Thus each of the priorities is linked with the Communion key direction.

#### 8.2.1. *Mission empowerment*

With mission being at the heart of the life and actions of the WCRC, this priority enables us to strengthen the mission of member churches and provide space and facilities for new thinking and responding to contemporary mission issues.

	<i>Programme priorities</i>	<i>New ways of working</i>	<i>Links with key directions</i>
1	Strengthening the mission of the WCRC member churches	Network with churches, regional councils, theological institutions and a broad-based participation of partners (e.g. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC, and the Council for World Mission, Evangelische Missionswerk etc.)	Mission Communion
2	Global religious awareness - Interfaith dialogues - Immigrant churches - By and among indigenous churches	National processes facilitated by consultants  Regional councils will be asked to lead some initiatives	Theology Communion Justice Mission Ecumenical engagement

8.2.2. Developing *theological reflections and strategies for church renewal* that build up the Communion and strengthening churches, theological institutions, in this regard, within the Communion.

	<i>Programme priorities</i>	<i>New ways of working</i>	<i>Links with key directions</i>
1	<i>Reformed World</i> -publishing articles that bring fresh understandings of Reformed theology and new expressions of Reformed identity	RW working with a global editorial advisory board drawn from different regions taking turns to be co-responsible for the contents of different RW issues	Theology Communion Justice Mission
2	Global Institute of Theology (GIT) – GIT equips potential leaders	A GIT, although global, will each time be done in a different region; the regional council and its member churches will be	Theology Communion Justice

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	with fresh understandings of Reformed theology and new expressions of Reformed identity;	involved in the process of setting up the GIT; all regional councils will be part of the selection process of students and GIT staff  A major means of leadership development for the churches	Mission Ecumenical engagement
3	Set up and facilitate the Network of Theologians  Includes reflecting on meaning of Communion and Reformed theology	Network composed after consultation with the regions; members come from the different regions and work from their context; the members commit themselves to work out the findings of the network within their own region  Some themes will be referred to regions to work on	Theology  Communion

8.2.3. *Building up the communion* through empowerment of churches to act for justice and right relations. The major areas of focus will be Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth, Gender Justice, and Justice, Peace and Reconciliation.

### **Covenanting for justice – Living out the Accra Confession**

	<i>Programme priorities</i>	<i>New ways of working</i>	<i>Links with key directions</i>
1	Dialogue and joint mission projects on key justice issues – (critical reflection and action)	Developed and implemented jointly by regional councils, member churches and partners organizations. Using tools of education/ conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects – all interconnected towards the same goal	Justice  Communion  Mission  Theology
2	Advocate for	Led by the WCRC	Justice

	new financial architecture and strategies to address climate change – through a global (UN) platform	secretariat, WCC, specialized core group in consultation with member churches and regional councils  Networking with other key stakeholders	Communion
3	Education and awareness on economic and climate justice	Developed and facilitated through regional councils, member churches and partners, especially with a focus on alternatives; coordinated by core group  Using tools of congregational resource and exchange and solidarity initiatives	Justice  Communion  Theology

### **Gender justice**

	<i>Programme priorities</i>	<i>New ways of working</i>	<i>Links</i>
4	Gender, leadership and power	Led by the WCRC secretariat, specialized core group and GJ network Using tools of critical analytical and multidisciplinary study, education/conscientization, support/accompaniment, lobby, advocacy, and campaign	Justice  Theology  Communion
5	Ordination of women – Encourage more churches to approve the ordination of women and to include women in leadership positions in the church	Led by the WCRC secretariat, core group and all members of the Executive Committee and regional councils  Involves scholarship fund, team visits – accompaniment and support	Communion  Theology  Justice
6	Address key	Developed and implemented	Communion

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	gender issues – especially men and gender justice, violence, poverty, adverse impact of climate change and health and wholeness	jointly by regional councils, network, member churches and partners organizations. Using tools of education/ conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects – all interconnected towards the same goal.	Justice Mission
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### **Justice, peace and reconciliation**

	<i>Programme priorities</i>	<i>New ways of working</i>	<i>Links</i>
7	Indigenous peoples (First Nations/American Indians in North America and Indigenous people all over the world)	In the first instance, North America is tasked with developing this for First Nations/American Indians.  Other regions to take the lead in their own indigenous people relations	Justice Communion
8	South Africa – Overcoming the legacies of apartheid	The task force has persons from different regions  People in South Africa will be at the forefront	Justice Communion
9	Accompanying churches in difficult circumstances through prophetic solidarity, advocacy, conflict mediation and education.	The difficult situations occur in every region  We will network with different ecumenical bodies, civil society and government agencies to address the situations.	Communion Justice

#### 8.2.4. *Ecumenical engagement (the Communion within the Oikoumene)*

Through dialogues the WCRC shows its commitment to work closely with other ecumenical bodies and shows that indeed, to be

Reformed is to be ecumenical. The dialogues focus on a better understanding of communion.

	<i>Programme priorities</i>	<i>New ways of working</i>	<i>Links with key directions</i>
1	Bilateral dialogues and bilateral working groups	Dialogue teams are composed in consultation with the regions; results of the dialogues should be made concrete within their contexts.	Ecumenical engagement  Theology  Communion  Justice

### *Appendix 1*

## **Fundraising Strategies**

The fundraising strategies here are aimed at strengthening the resources of the WCRC for the following:

1. Developing resources that fund the WCRC vision and mission. This affects the overall fundraising efforts of the WCRC.
2. Locating resources for the programmes. This is what ensures that the WCRC makes the impact it is poised for. Programme Executive staff.
3. Strengthening resources for the core budget. The member churches provide the bulk of this.
4. Seek life gifts and other long-term gifts for the WCRC and its endowment fund.

The following sets out some of the means of gathering resources for the life and work of the WCRC.

### **I. Member churches**

Given all the information available and based on past history of faithful giving, from 2011, 18 to 25 member churches will contribute about CHF840,000 per year. Another 100 plus member churches are faithful in giving and their contributions will amount to another CHF180,000.

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An additional 40 churches have been giving irregularly, and especially do so in a General Council year. About 60 churches have not been contributing. Each of these categories needs to be approached differently.

1. The meaning of being communion needs to be made clearer. If we are communion, then each member faithfully playing its role to keep the whole healthy and effective is not an option or a giving to a body outside itself. The fact of being communion gives members the joy, gift and responsibility of participating in every form of contribution to make the whole healthy.
2. The fair contributions grid will be reworked to show clearly the basis of invoicing.
3. More efficient and timely invoicing, as well as other more efficient collection devices to be developed.
4. Letters will be written to the churches in the three categories as follows:
  - a. The 18-25 churches that give substantially will be written to with appreciation. In that letter, some may be approached to consider giving more than they currently do.
  - b. The 100 other faithful givers will also receive letters of appreciation and encouragement to consider giving more, in addition to their 2011 invoice.
  - c. Those who have not been contributing at all will be written to with an invoice of how much they owe and information on the last time they contributed. They will be informed about the WCRC constitutional provision on non-payment of contribution, and given a date by which to respond on their intention to remain members of the WCRC and pay up or to be suspended by the WCRC Executive Committee. This issue has been referred to the Finance Committee.
5. If 50 out of the non-payers give CHF500 each, this will be an additional income of CH25,000.
6. The requests for increases is aimed at raising the amount expected from member churches to CHF1,200k.

## **II. Non-member churches**

The WCRC is a Communion that values its current members and also looks forward to welcoming other members. Traditionally, it has valued united and uniting churches for the gifts they bring in reminding us of the call for Christian unity. There are a few united churches that have not been able to join. We will value their membership anytime they decide to join, not because of their money, but because of what united churches represent among us. Meanwhile, two of the united churches in Germany have been



faithfully supporting WCRC programmes. Given their faithfulness, we will continue to engage them in discussions on how they can become even closer to the communion. We will explore with them how they can support the vision and mission of the WCRC financially. There is need for further discussions with other united churches. This approach will be made both in writing and through visits.

### **III. Donations**

Over the years, a number of Swiss cantonal churches and other faithful partners have been contributing funds for the WCRC core budget. These average about CHF220,000 per year. This has been very helpful. There will be an effort to increase this by working with the General Treasurer in asking Swiss cantonal churches that do not contribute in this way to consider doing so. Other potential donors will need to be identified in different parts of the world.

### **IV. Governing body commitments**

Officers and Executive Committee members voluntarily bring many gifts to the WCRC which are much appreciated. In addition, they spend much time attending meetings and contributing to decision-making to keep the WCRC effective and operating within sound policies. They do all these as volunteers. An additional contribution which represents the kind of commitment that speaks loudly and clearly to potential donors is the direct financial and/or fundraising contribution. An organization which can demonstrate that its governing body members believe in its vision enough to give time and resources to it has a good ground for attracting donors. Officers and Executive Committee members have a responsibility for the first point below and are being requested to consider doing what is in points two and three below.

1. Each Executive Committee member has a number of churches for which she/he is responsible to make sure they are making their membership contribution regularly. Executive Committee members will be key to ensuring their own churches set the example.
2. Each officer and each Executive Committee member or advisor is being requested to make an annual pledge of whatever they feel able to give. Nothing is too small – nothing too big.
3. Each is also being requested to be at the forefront of fundraising in their own contexts. They can rally around themselves five to ten persons who are willing to contribute annually to their membership of the WCRC governing body. For example, an Executive Committee member in Africa or Latin America with ten friends each willing to give CHF50 per year will be bringing

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500 Swiss francs each year for the next six years. An Executive Committee member in an affluent country may be able to do more.

### **V. New funds development**

New fundraising initiatives have begun for different contexts.

1. The WCRC Endowment Fund has been re-established with WCRC-USA as its centre. A Board of Trustees has been created with a President (Stephens Lytch) and co-chairs (Cliff Kirkpatrick and Peter Borgdorff), with all North American Executive Committee members as members of the Board. An annual fundraising campaign will be conducted. The first took place in the last quarter of 2010. This initiative is meant to bring in funds both for undesignated expenditure and for an endowment fund from which WCRC gets only dividends. In the annual campaigns and in other fundraising activities of the fund, attention will be drawn to current needs of the organization – programmes and core. The Annual Reports to be issued every year that will serve as an instrument for this initiative will also draw attention to current needs. Therefore some contributions are expected for the operations and programmes of the WCRC through this initiative. While this may not yield immediate results, it has a potential of yielding at least CHF20,000 per year for operations between 2012 and 2016.
2. For Europe, there is need to develop something that links the key directions of the WCRC with living out the legacies that we are celebrating between 2009 and 2017 (Calvin, Heidelberg, Reformation 500, etc.). These need to be presented in a manner that draws in congregations, individuals with means and businesses to invest in the vision and mission of the WCRC. In addition, we could also explore possibilities of businesses associated with Reformed families (e.g. approaching Geneva banks or the owners of Peugeot, etc.).
3. Asia is multifaceted. What may work for Northeast Asia may not work for South Asia. Therefore one may need to develop different approaches for different countries or subregions.
  - a. In Korea we could explore the concept of ecumenical tithing. Can we find 20 congregations who are willing to contribute CHF1,000 to 10,000 per year?
  - b. In other places, can we find a few individuals with means or congregations willing to make an annual donation?
4. Africa, Latin America, Pacific, the Caribbean, and the Middle East can each develop their own fundraising strategies. They may need to be built around building communities of people willing to

set aside CHF10 per month or year or asking a few persons with means to make an annual pledge.

5. These new fund development strategies can target CHF200,000 to be generated from 2012 onwards.
6. Reformation Birthday Gift Fund – From 2009 to 2017, the Reformed family is celebrating a number of significant milestones. 2009 was the Calvin 500 Birthday anniversary. 2010 was the birth year of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. These two are in the past. 2013 will be the 400th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. 2017 will be the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. All churches, congregations, and individuals are invited to consider giving a birthday gift connected with any of these events. This will strengthen the ability of the WCRC to live out its vision and mission in the long-term.
7. WCRC Officers, Executive Committee members, staff and friends need to work hard at developing new potential donors for its core funding. This could include congregations and individuals in different parts of the world willing to make commitments for the vision and mission of the WCRC to be carried out.
8. These strategies will be greatly enhanced if the WCRC engages one or two fundraising strategists (part time).

## **VI. Regional councils**

1. The WCRC methodology of working takes account of regional councils in a meaningful way. WCRC programming will be more closely linked with regional councils. Therefore the way of financing will also need to take this into account. Here are a few examples.
  - a) When the Caribbean region plans programmes within the WCRC vision and mission and directly linked with the WCRC key directions, CANAAC funding needs to make this a priority.
  - b) When AIPRAL or CRCA or the grouping of all churches in Indonesia applies for Partnership Fund support that is linked with a programme that fulfils any of the priority programmes of the WCRC, the Partnership Fund committee will give it a priority.
2. In a critical assessment of how member churches of the five existing regions of the WCRC currently contribute to the WCRC and their regional councils, the following emerged:
  - a) WCRC Europe – All European member churches send all their contributions directly to the WCRC; 5% of this is set

## Strategic Plan

aside as income for WCRC Europe. This is a good model and can be offered as an example to other regions.

- b) CANAAC – CANAAC region member churches contribute directly to the WCRC. Then they also contribute directly to CANAAC. About six of the 20 CANAAC member churches are generous about how much they give directly to CANAAC. The others do not contribute much. This is also a good model which has been effective for CANAAC.
- c) AIPRAL – All Latin American churches contribute directly to the WCRC. Then they also contribute a small amount towards AIPRAL annually.
- d) NEAAC – The member churches of NEAAC contribute directly to the WCRC. They do not have any member church fees for NEAAC. The member churches cover their own costs when they have meetings and at the meeting make a small contribution each towards overhead.
- e) CRCA – All African WCRC member churches contribute directly to the WCRC. Then they are also expected to contribute a small amount towards CRCA annually. However, they have not been able to do this yet.

It is clear that the two areas which handle some substantial resources per year are WCRC Europe and CANAAC. The WCRC will continue to work with CANAAC to make sure that the funds promote the vision and mission of the WCRC. It may be necessary to challenge churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia to increase what they currently give by 10%, and to explore their use of the Europe model – giving 5% back to work in the regions. The WCRC appreciates the example of Europe. It may become necessary to renegotiate with WCRC Europe to bring the amount that is set aside for WCRC Europe down slightly especially in these difficult times.

## **VII. Discussions with strategic partners**

Networking and partnership are critical both to working together on WCRC programmes as well as to funding of programmes. As part of the strategic planning process, the WCRC is currently engaged in intensive discussions with three partners in order to build strategic partnerships.

1. CWM has been a long term partner in the WCRC's mission and justice work. The mission statement and the theological statement of CWM mirror the WCRC's commitment to mission and justice. 27 of the 31 member churches of CWM are also members of the WCRC. Therefore partnership can be a win-win situation. Programmes enhanced by this partnership will benefit

a wider constituency than what CWM has. The WCRC held good discussions with CWM to this end.

2. EMW has been a long time partner of the WCRC's mission, theology and gender justice work. In recent months there have been intensive discussions which are leading towards signing a partnership agreement in a few months time.
3. The conversations with EED have led to the granting of 200,000 Euro per year to support the Reformed Churches Partnership Fund. The WCRC through this process is being trained and mentored to be able to receive government funds for development projects in a few years. We are currently exploring the possibility of EED finding a staff person who will be devoted to capacity building in the area of development and justice projects.

In all these, the discussions include partners agreeing to a percentage of the programme funds going to support the core budget of the WCRC. This represents the human resources costs involved in running the programmes.

## *Appendix 2*

### **SWOT analysis**

#### **Strengths**

1. The capability to work for the unity and overcoming divisions among Reformed churches.
2. The presence of Reformed churches all over the world and in almost every region.
3. The ecumenical identity of the Reformed tradition.
4. The heritage of Reformed theology, especially of John Calvin, is characteristic for the WCRC in a very specific, biblical, spiritual theology which combines life and work; justification and sanctification; personal faith and collective design in the society and the churches.
5. The excellence of the Reformed theological seminaries and their close relations to the Reformed churches.
6. The WCRC has a special position in the ecumenical world and plays an important role in the dialogues with other ecumenical bodies.
7. Engagement on gender justice issues.
8. Strong commitment to social justice and transformation.
9. The involvement through social issues and a great influence in the network of the ecumenical movement.

## Strategic Plan

10. The WCRC includes a big number of small and vulnerable churches and provides networking and capacity building and helps them in their calling for mission and testimony.
11. The communication between the WCRC secretariat and regional councils and member churches.
12. The work in the regional councils and its relationship with member churches and the WCRC.

## Weaknesses

1. The isolation of many Reformed churches and congregations.
2. The lack of balance and interrelationship between communion and social justice issues.
3. Due to the weak awareness of the importance of visible unity, it is difficult to ecumenical bodies such as the WCRC to have credibility to speak in society on behalf of the churches.
4. The tension between "called to communion" and "committed to justice" makes progress difficult.
5. The work in the regional councils is still undeveloped. The communication and joined regional projects are not yet seen as an important aspect of the WCRC ministry.
6. Two thirds of the members live in the Global South, but the languages are European, the office is in Europe and the resources are mainly from the Global North.
7. Organizationally mission work has lost its specific place in the WCRC, which could lead to statements without implementation. The close relationship with the CWM is not yet used for the supporting of the mission work of the WCRC.

## Opportunities

1. Communication: internet and modern technology provides a channel to bring the churches and the organization together and mobilize the churches and members.
2. The WCRC plays a role in facilitating networking, sharing and connecting the church members.
3. The WCRC is a new ecumenical body, founded on the tradition and work of the WARC and REC. This combination of old and new gives color to this organization.
4. To take advantage of the fact that "Being Reformed" is becoming very attractive in a lot of countries (especially in Asia), where churches are involved in a movement of growth.
5. To develop closer relationships and partnerships with charismatic and Pentecostal churches as related churches.

## **Threats**

1. Lack of interest of the churches in the work and themes of the WCRC.
2. Staff reduction at the WCRC secretariat.
3. Weak infrastructure of some of the churches.
4. A lack of financial resources is threatening the being and future of the WCRC.

### *Appendix 3*

## **Emerging consensus from questionnaires**

### **Expectations of the WCRC**

Member churches expressed a longing for the WCRC to be a communion where Reformed churches meet each other as family, to facilitate reconciliation, koinonia, and unity, sharing gifts and resources, doing theology and spiritual renewal together, and speaking prophetically as the voice of Reformed churches in the world.

Regional councils affirmed their relationship with the WCRC, not calling for independence, but for more focus on regional councils, and deepening fellowship and commitment to justice issues, some calling for enhanced South-South relationships (Africa, Latin America, Asia).

Strategic partners expected that the WCRC would keep its focus on core values such as justice, communion and partnership, "working together in transforming the world". "The WCRC is a gift for the renewal of the whole church." Whilst seeing the new body as bold and pioneering, some feared a loss of brand.

*Member churches found the WCRC critical to them in the following areas:*

Leadership development, including training and scholarships, Reformed theology, unity and diversity, justice (in the economy and the earth, gender, age, disability), peace and reconciliation, sharing, networking, mission, renewal and relevance, ecumenical engagement and interreligious dialogue, communion. There was diversity in emphasis between regions, and an expression of frustration caused by language barriers and inaccessibility.

## Strategic Plan

Being a **Communion committed to justice** was broadly affirmed by member churches, regional councils and strategic partners, as well as staff, particularly in relation to gender justice, economic justice and justice in all of creation; as well as the establishment of Communion's theological basis, and the relation of justice to peace.

The **identity and purpose of the WCRC** as expressed in Articles III and V were affirmed widely, while critiqued as concerning how we hold together as a Communion rather than how we reach the pew, or the world, and that we should express a passion for evangelism. There was room for the role of the regions to be developed. Regional councils highlighted worship renewal, partnership and solidarity with a clear theological identity capable of being a reliable partner in ecumenical engagement and to build strategic alliances. Strategic partners affirmed the WCRC's ecumenical identity and renewed commitment to Mission.

When asked for **one priority** for the WCRC, the following emerged: Unity, ecumenical engagement, Reformed theology, Reformed identity and renewal in worship and liturgy, mission, capacity building, and peace, justice and reconciliation (within nations and globally). Regional councils and staff placed high priority on justice, leadership development, particularly in relation to theological identity, developing theological resources (paper and people), and providing training. They also prioritized networking, Christian unity, and mission. Stories of accomplishments past should be told to envision for future investment. Staff drew attention to the potential for 2017 Reformation celebrations as an opportunity for growth. Leadership development, through GIT and scholarships were appreciated, as were resources and training for justice.

Strategic partners and staff highlighted the theological reflection and dialogue on justice and the economy, the WCRC's partnership role in public witness, and in connecting churches which are not members of WCC to the broader world church. Partners encouraged growing cooperation with the WCRC, prioritizing partnership and clearly articulated common goals. Financial and communication challenges need to be addressed, in order to continue the commitment to Communion and Covenanting for Justice.

### **Expectations of the WCRC secretariat**

*Member churches expect the Geneva office to "implement UGC mandates". Other expectations: communication, leading in*



theological education and training, including on equality and justice issues, gender and age; solidarity and programmes on justice; convening and fostering relationships, accompaniment in difficult circumstances, mediation; ecumenical engagement, unity of churches in communion, regional empowerment.

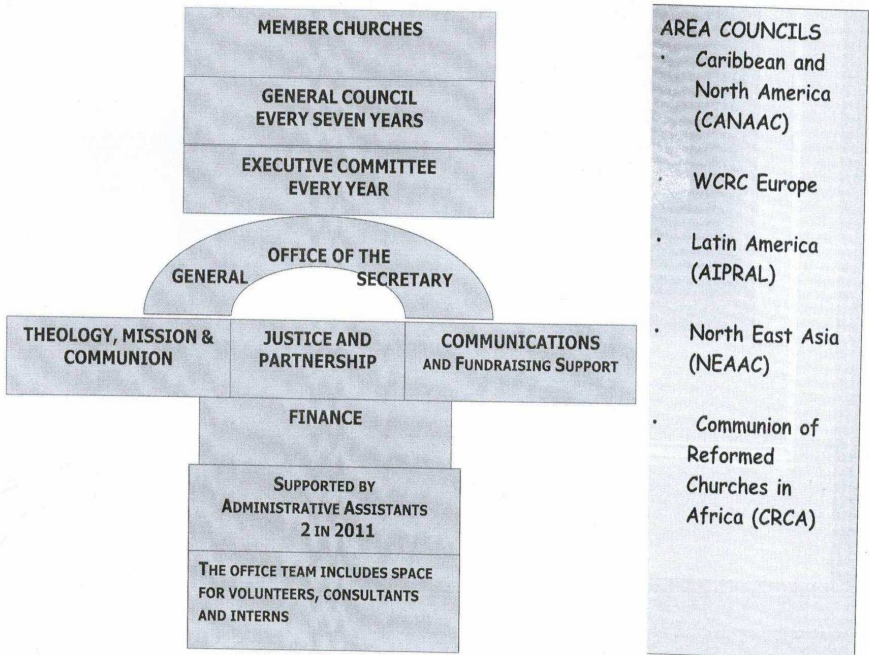
*Regional councils expect the WCRC secretariat to work with the regions, to convene gatherings to promote partnership, reflection on Reformed theology and symbolic actions expressing fellowship; providing theological and educational resources. They persistently requested more communication and co-ordination to support existing work. On the best ways for the WCRC Secretariat to work with the regions, they suggested better communication, joint meetings and joint staff, closer working relationships, "mandatory meetings", working together on networking, fundraising and programming. Executive Committee members should have specific involvement within their region.*

There was the suggestion that regions could take a lead on certain issues, that responsibility being devolved from the WCRC secretariat. There were frustrations expressed regarding the General Council, more thought given to its purpose and place and in particular to the agenda.

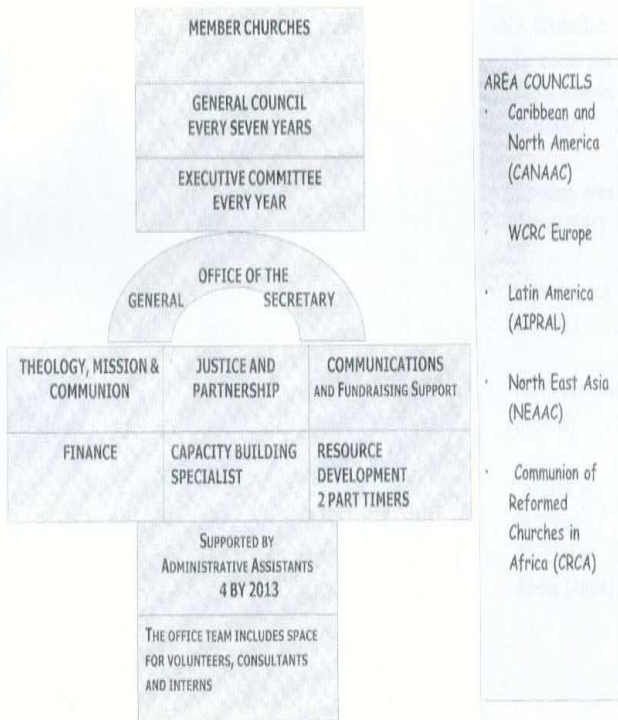
Strategic partners desire continued partnership, and rely on the WCRC Secretariat to maintain effective communication, to avoid duplication of work, and to address increasingly restricted finances. In particular, the WCRC was seen as strategic in developing theological dialogue with Charismatics and Pentecostals. There was a perception among strategic partners that the WCRC is weak because of its limited staff and its financial constraints. While there was a strong affirmation of our relationship with our strategic partners, the WCRC needs to work on perceptions, to strengthen its commitment to justice, and to bring more churches into the ecumenical arena.

## WCRC STRUCTURE

### ORGANIGRAM (Current)



## ORGANIGRAM (with Strategic projection)



## **COMMUNION AND JUSTICE**

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

Justice is a fundamental dimension of human life – the life of women and men, of society, of humanity and all creation. It is based on the belief that every human being is created in the image of God and thus has intrinsic value. Justice is a fundamental principle of the existence and coexistence of people, of communities, of societies, of nations and the earth. It is therefore also a principle of the existence of the church, as it is fundamental for life, humanity and creation.

Without justice there can be no peace. Some time ago I was facilitating a multi-faith domestic violence workshop in Guyana. A woman who shared her story said that her spiritual leader told her that when her husband was being abusive she should stuff a wad of cloth in her mouth to prevent herself from speaking or making any sound. This would minimize his anger and the level of violence perpetrated by him. It means that she accepts the power construction – his dominance and control – and keeps the peace by keeping quiet.

During the era of slavery, under the various European empires in the West Indies, the Bible was introduced as a tool to “civilize” enslaved Africans and maintain the status quo of the plantation. The hierarchical segregation of race, economic and social classes was the accepted order. Christianity was preached as a “pie in the sky” religion, with a separation of people’s lived realities from the spiritual. Keeping the peace meant being complaisant, accepting the hierarchical structure and systemic injustice as the given order. However, the indigenous spiritualities and biblical resistance reading of the enslaved enabled them to promote their own liberation – to claim their dignity and God-given worth, resisting and revolting against the oppressors, thus finding the way to peace with justice.

Since the early days, justice has always been at the heart of the mission of the church. In Luke’s gospel, Jesus admonished the Pharisees: “For you tithe mint, rue and herbs of all kinds and neglect justice and the love of God: it is these you should have practised, without neglecting the others.” (Luke 11.41-43) By giving a tenth of their mint and other herbs to God they showed themselves scrupulously faithful. But two large relational imperatives were ignored – justice and love for God. It is no accident that these two ideas are linked, as they are also linked in

Luke 10.25-28 (Jesus' response to the lawyer). A fundamental call of God is to love God and respond likewise to others (Micah 6.8; Zech 7.8-10; Col 3.12-13).

Reformed theology has consistently understood justice as the chief attribute of God, with biblical justice inextricably tied to Yahweh's mercy and compassion and grounded in the God-humankind relationship. The church is called to affirm the sovereignty of God through its witness for justice. Those who follow Yahweh are compelled to practise justice. In situations of oppression and injustice, God's people in biblical times were charged by the prophets to "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5.24). Micah summarizes the prophetic message: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6.8)

Like the ancient prophets, John Calvin argued that worship and justice, piety and righteousness belong together. The proper fear of God manifests itself in the practice of justice and mercy. One of Calvin's sayings is: "Where God is known, there humanity is also cared for." He affirmed the vocation of Christians to struggle so that the "crying difference between rich and poor" ceases and the body of Christ (the community) remains in good shape. Christians see this vocation expressed in the biblical claim that God is *not only* the "helper of the helpless", "parent of the orphaned", "God of the widow" but also a God of justice who calls us to be instruments in righting wrongs. Thus Calvin insisted that Christians should always be a disturbing element in society, resisting all forms of injustice.

The gospels point to a way of living in a world, which weaves justice and love in a powerful way. Jesus gave his life to heal the brokenness of our world and restore God's reign of love and justice. The church of Jesus Christ is God's light and justice in this world. Jesus' crucifixion was an imperial execution, carried out by the authorities against one whose teachings went against the grain of their institutions, as he stood firm for justice. Jesus resisted the death dealing ways of empire; he crossed the boundaries of propriety in the imperial culture of his day, speaking the truth to power and bringing about God's reign on earth.

The resurrected Christ is known in the body of Christ – a believing community of faith that demonstrates the integral bond between faith, justice and action. The church cannot afford to sit comfortably in chapels and cathedrals while people are engaged in a struggle for

## Communion and Justice

survival against heavy odds. It needs to be conversant with the meaning of struggles of people and to find its way to a greater connection with people and communities, in their search for meaning in life. When the church takes to the streets like Jesus did, connecting with people and their struggles, its liturgical acts become a street theatre for communion and justice.

Justice as essential to being in communion is a significant focus for the newly established WCRC. In a message from the Global Dialogue on the Accra Confession held in Johannesburg in 2009, participants said, "On the one hand, we give thanks for the gift of reconciliation in Christ, and on the other, we understand that authentic faith cannot be divorced from actions for justice (Isa 28.16-17). We come together in unity for the sake of justice (1 Cor 12.26)... This is reflected in trinitarian communion as the love of God, the grace of Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit, based on 2 Cor 13.13."

The WCRC's emphasis on communion and justice provides a way forward for the global Reformed family to become a living sign of the oneness for which Jesus prayed, in fulfilment of his mission to bring all creation to the fullness of communion with God and with one another. This new nature of our being a communion of churches cannot be built on one-sidedness, power relations, denial of disparities, or pretence of reconciliation. The oneness for which Jesus prayed – a model of ecclesial and human communion – must be rooted in the Spirit and manifested concretely as member churches live in relationships of integrity, mutual accountability and solidarity.

Being a communion requires engagement in the ongoing transformation that will signal the full realization of this vision of communion in its broadest and most inclusive manifestation in our world. Humanity is one and, as Martin Luther King said, no one is liberated until all are liberated. We were created by God to live in community with each other and not against each other. We must therefore break down the barriers that separate people from one another (starting, perhaps, with ourselves) because true community is only possible if it is founded on justice, peace and right relations.

The call to communion resonates with our witness and mission for justice. We cannot enter into full communion if the body is marked by indifference, exclusion and blindness to injustice. The WCRC needs to hear the voices of the many oppressed people – from people who do not speak the dominant language, from women and

from people from the south and also the north who live with the daily reality of hunger, violence and a culture of death, under systems created by dominant powers and characterized by the poverty of unemployment and unending debt, political and economic corruption, degradation of the earth, racial, gender and cultural discrimination, lack of education, personal devaluation and marginalization.

Being a communion requires that we take each other seriously. It means walking in the shoes of those who are different from us – who have different experiences of life, different perspectives, different worldviews. It requires naming the sins of injustice and recognizing our complicity, asking and granting forgiveness, and reaching out to one another in a spirit of solidarity and reconciling love. This means that the WCRC and its member churches must break silent complicity with empire – with centres of power and systems of injustice that perpetuate oppression and inequality. This call to be one requires the WCRC to strengthen its prophetic witness, confronting systemic injustices that lead to the current patterns of unjust social and ecclesial relationships that contradict God's call to communion.

Women who gathered in Grand Rapids for the Women's Pre-Council reflecting on the UGC theme, "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" (Eph 4.6), asked questions about communion and justice for the newly formed WCRC: "How will the Communion navigate the multiple and overlapping diversities that constitute its body, given its biblical and theological rootedness in Ephesians? How will the Communion treat alternative visions? How will the Communion determine the lens from which it decides on or negotiates what does not fit?"<sup>4</sup>

What does this mean for the WCRC? For you, your church and for your region?

### **Questions for discussion**

1. How can the WCRC become a living sign of the oneness for which Jesus prayed, in fulfilment of his mission to bring all creation to the fullness of communion with God and with one another? Give some concrete examples from your context.
2. Reflect on the questions asked by women in Grand Rapids. What are challenges to being a communion and what steps need to be taken to address these?

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<sup>4</sup> Statement from the Women's Pre-Council, Grand Rapids, MI, June 2010

## Communion and Justice

3. What does being a communion mean for churches in your region? How do you envisage living out the communion and how can the global family and its means support this process?
4. What are the gifts of communion that the WCRC can offer to the ecumenical movement and to the world?
5. What are the gifts that you, your church and your region can offer to build up the communion?



## **BEING PART OF A MOVEMENT**

Douwe Visser

When I came back in November 2009 from Seoul, Korea, after the final consultation in a series of eight on Communion and Justice, I felt exhausted. In five weeks I had attended three consultations almost in a row: USA, New Zealand and Korea. Around 80,000 km of air travel. With the five other consultations in the year 2009, Europe, Middle East, Latin America, Indonesia and Africa, the worldwide community that would become the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) had more or less been covered.

Coming back from Korea I had a stop-over in Paris before finally going home to Geneva. I was, as I said, exhausted, but I also felt very impressed by what I had learned and discovered in that worldwide community. In each consultation we had a round of reports from the churches. I made notes on what I heard. In preparation for this presentation I once again went through them. The picture looks varied: our churches are living in very different contexts. If I learned one thing, it was that even the most basic confessional and theological truths need a contextual resonance that deeply influences the way these truths are expressed. We may all confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, which is the basic statement of Reformed theology, but saying this in Indonesia in a context of an overwhelming majority of Islamic believers will have different implications than in an African context where traditional religion is still vital. However, a difference in contextual reflection and expression does not exclude a global understanding of each other. Despite speaking different languages we are also speakers of that Pentecostal language of the Spirit whereby we all can recognize the other as a brother or sister in Christ.

But I want to focus further on the dynamic interaction between the global and the local. In the eight regional consultations the Accra Confession, adopted at WARC's General Council in 2004, played a substantial role, especially when we focused on matters of justice. The Accra Confession is a text adopted at a global gathering with a global outreach. The basis of the confession is a series of universal truths, from biblical, social, economic, ecological and political perspectives. It is meant to be applicable in every context in our worldwide Reformed community. I have discovered, however, that its reception differs greatly according to differences in local contexts. Difference does not mean contradiction. But the implications of adopting the Accra Confession are different for

## Being Part of a Movement

Europeans than for Africans, although even this is too general, as if the division between the global North and South were only geographical. It was said in the Caribbean and North American consultation that there is a global South in the North and a global North in the South. However this difference in implications will not hinder us from a global call to be committed to justice.

Looking back at my notes I noticed that a lot of problems, even a lot of pain and suffering, were expressed. In Rüdlingen, Switzerland, they told me about the rapid decline of churches in a post-Christian, highly secularized society. They also told me about a fragmented society, where lifelong bonds and relations are less and less secured. In Beirut they told me much about the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. They also told me how agonizing it had been for the Christian community when the former US President George Bush called for a crusade against terrorism. In Sao Paulo they told me about the enormous challenge of the rapidly growing neo-Pentecostal churches, with their attractive but misleading message of the prosperity gospel. They also told me about the social and ecological destruction of life on the South American continent. In Yogyakarta they told me about the destructive influence of part of the daily culture in Indonesia, where corruption is pervasive part of life. They also told me about the tension that goes with a sometimes deep involvement of pastors in local or regional politics. In Ho, Ghana, a participant from Rwanda told us about the deep wounds the still recent massacres has left behind and how difficult it is to work for reconciliation. I was also informed about South Africa and its struggle for church unity. In Pittsburgh we participants in the consultation on Communion and Justice went on Sunday morning to a local church where all was bright and beautiful but where quite a few of us felt excluded and not really welcome. One can focus so much on heaven above that the brother or sister sitting next to you is invisible. I was also told how complicated it can be to speak out against injustice when communion is being used as an argument against that. In Dunedin, New Zealand, a participant from Tuvalu told us about evacuation plans for the whole island population because of the rising sea level. The participant from Western Samoa told us about the situation after the recent tsunami. In Gyeongju, South Korea, we saw pictures from Taiwan and the destruction after the floods. I heard once again stories about the difficult situation of life in North Korea.

My notes on what I heard during the eight consultations cover almost 100 handwritten pages. So I shared with you just the tip of the iceberg, and I shared with you just one part of it: the dark side. This, I must admit, is the lengthiest part. Maybe it is typically

Reformed to focus on the dark side. A popular expression in the WCRC's vocabulary is "reading the signs of the times": this reading almost never gives a sunny picture.

But who am I to criticize the fact that I heard worldwide so much of the dark side of life? Many of the Christians in our worldwide community of Reformed churches experience a daily *struggle* of life. But in what sense is that my struggle? Why is the life of my sister from Kenya also part of my life? Why is the life of my brother from India also part of my life? I will come back to that.

But first the other part of my notes: the sunny side – maybe not the lengthiest part, but in all aspects as substantial as the dark side. Those are the stories of our churches not only surviving but often full of life. Of churches not only speaking out against injustice but living out justice. Of churches that develop contextual reading of the Bible, contextual Reformed worship and new ways of expressing Reformed identity. Of churches who make a difference in their societies. Of churches contributing to interreligious understanding. Of churches that are peacemakers. Of churches that have overcome destructive racial or gender discrimination. Of churches not overwhelmed by the enormous powers of evil but convinced that Paul speaks the truth also for us when he says, "If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness" (2 Cor 11.30). But what relevance do these stories have for me if I only feel overwhelmed by the powers of evil? Why is the story my sister from New Zealand can tell also my story? Why is the story my brother from Lithuania can tell also my story?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian killed on 9 April 1945 by the Nazis, wrote in *Life Together* the following interesting words:

By reading the Bible we become part of what once took part for our salvation. Forgetting and losing ourselves, we, too, pass through the Red Sea, through the desert, across the Jordan into the promised land. With Israel we fall into doubt and unbelief and through punishment and repentance experience again God's help and faithfulness. ...We are torn out of our own existence and set down in the midst of the holy history of God on earth.

Here is a statement that the biblical story becomes your and my story. How can that happen? How is it possible that notwithstanding the enormous distance in time and place we can be one in sharing the most important story of life? Why is the prophetic fight against

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injustice in fact my story when I fight against injustice? Why is the victory on the powers of evil on the first Easter morning a victory you have been promised fully to share, notwithstanding the fact that you may still feel more part of the story of Christ's suffering?

In chapter 11 of the letter to the Hebrews there are the famous examples of faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses... Rahab is the only woman mentioned, so we may feel the lack of gender balance, but the list is impressive. However the nicest part comes in chapter 12:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12.1-2)

The author of the letter to the Hebrews uses here an image of athletes running in a stadium; a well-known picture throughout the Roman empire where sports were almost as important as nowadays. The athletes are surrounded by the spectators or, better, the supporters. The race is a metaphor for the perseverance of faith. Our life of faith is a life of joy and grief, of defeat and victory, of perseverance and having reached the finish! We are not alone in that race; we are not the first ones running that race. We have our supporters, those who have run that race before us. We have our great coach, Jesus the pioneer, who all the time encourages us.

As with every metaphor, so also with this one we should not go too far. The race in the stadium does not mean that we as individual believers are competing against each other. There is competition, but it is against all evil powers that would work against our reaching the goal. In the struggle against these we have our supporters and we have Jesus, the perfecter of our faith. The whole picture of the race in the stadium is a metaphor for the communion of saints. Precisely because of this we are part of biblical salvation history. Precisely because of this our present time is part of the ongoing salvation history. The communion of saints is a matter of communion throughout the ages. But it is also a matter of communion of all places. Communion, *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*) in Greek, is first of all this all-encompassing communion of saints, of women and men, of all ages and of all places.

Koivovia, however, can only be visible when the church of Jesus Christ lives in communion. We all know that the concrete picture of churches in the world does not reflect full visible unity. Notwithstanding the enormous efforts and results of the ecumenical movement the overall community of churches is fragmented and far from a visible full communion. Even the smaller community of Reformed churches is divided, maybe even more than any other community of churches. But within that community – not shared by all Reformed churches, I know, but still shared by many – a call to be a communion of churches is being heard. We cannot say it too often: the birth of a World Communion of Reformed Churches is an important step in the history of Reformed churches. Why have we taken this step?

We would never have taken the step to be a Communion if it had been said that suffering under apartheid was a local affair and of no consequence for the whole World Alliance of Reformed Churches. We would never have taken this step if we had accepted the injustice of an economic system that benefits only a small part of the world. We would never have taken this step if we had not overcome a confessional rigorousness where every contextual living out of the confession was suspicious. We would never have taken this step if we had not had women and men go before us, inspiring us in a search for unity that is vital in confessing Reformed identity in today's world. We would never have taken this step if we did not realize how fruitful the dynamic interaction is between listening to the common call and showing this in our own context. And we would never have taken this step if we had not found ourselves part of a move towards Communion. Because we have not taken this step after careful but distanced theoretical reflection and agreement, we have taken this step because there was a move towards it, and an ongoing movement that will continue as long as we as a Communion follow Jesus Christ.

## **REPORT OF THE CORE GROUP ON JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP**

### **1. Introduction**

The Office for Justice and Partnership serves to build communion through empowerment of churches to act for justice and right relations. The Core Group on Justice and Partnership is tasked with three programmatic priorities: 1) Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth; 2) Gender Justice; and 3) Justice, Peace and Reconciliation.

The core group recognizes that the programmatic priorities 1 and 2 (above) have been developed with the direct involvement of the Office for Justice and Partnership. These have been taken up thoroughly by the core group. The group recognized that priority 3 (above) has specific aims that are best dealt with directly by the General Secretary's office in collaboration with specialized task groups but that the core group receives reports and updates on the work. The core group will support, encourage and connect where possible efforts to support on-going relationships with Indigenous peoples for healing, reconciliation, ministry and partnership.

#### **1.1 Core group membership**

Two changes to the proposed core groups were made. Peter Bukowski asked to move to the Theology Core Group and arranged to swap with Jan-Gerd Heetderks. Mary Fontaine is co-serving on the Theology Core Group and was thus not present at all meetings. The membership of the core group comprises the following persons:

Moderators: Yueh-Wen Lu (Asia) and Helis Barraza Diaz (Latin America)

Membership: Clifton Kirkpatrick (North America), Majaw Singh (Asia), Veronica Njoki Muchiri (Africa), Robyn Goodwin (Pacific), Clayton Leal De Silva (Latin America), Jan-Gerd Heetderks (Europe), and Mary Fontaine (North America) – part time.

Staff: Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Programme Executive and Daphne Martin-Gnanadason, Assistant.

*Key Direction for Justice and Partnership – 2011 to 2017 (Strategic Plan)*

The WCRC will actively engage in biblically and theologically grounded justice and be aware of its implications. This includes building right relations among all people, justice in the economy and the earth, economic justice, eradication of poverty, gender justice, integrity of creation, reconciliation, interfaith engagement, healing and working towards the transformation of both church and society. The theological self-understanding of who we are as a communion undergirds the commitment to being a prophetic voice for justice on the part of the WCRC and its member churches and regional councils.

## **2. Priority programmes (Strategic Plan)**

Overall aim: Building communion through empowerment of churches to act for justice and right relations. The major areas of focus will be Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth – Living out the Accra Confession; Gender Justice; and Justice, Peace and Reconciliation.

### *2.1 Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth – Living out the Accra Confession (CfJ)*

- a) Dialogue and joint action projects on key theological issues developed and implemented jointly by regional councils, member churches and partner organizations, using tools of education/conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects.
- b) Advocate for a new financial architecture and strategies to address climate change – through a global (United Nations) platform: led by the WCRC secretariat, the WCC, specialized core group in consultation with member churches and regional councils, and networking with other key stakeholders.
- c) Theological education, including Bible studies on economic and climate justice: developed and facilitated through regional councils, member churches and partners, especially with a focus on alternatives; coordinated by the core group; using tools of congregational resource, exchange and solidarity initiatives.

### *2.2 Gender Justice (GJ)*

- a) Gender, leadership and power: led by the WCRC secretariat, specialized core group and GJ Network; using tools of critical, analytical and multidisciplinary study, theological

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education/conscientization, support/accompaniment, lobby, advocacy and campaign.

- b) Ordination of women – encourage more churches to accept the ordination of women and to include women in leadership positions in the church: led by the WCRC secretariat, core group and all members of the Executive Committee and regional councils, utilizing the theological scholarship fund and team visits of accompaniment and support.
- c) Address key gender issues – especially men and gender justice, violence, poverty and adverse impact of climate change: to be developed and implemented jointly by regional councils, network, member churches and partners organizations; using tools of theological education/conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects.

### *2.3 Justice, Peace and Reconciliation*

- a) Indigenous peoples (North America First Nation/Native American peoples and Indigenous peoples all over the world): in the first instance, North America is tasked with developing a process for First Nation/Native Americans; other regions to take the lead in their respective Indigenous people communities.
- b) South Africa – overcoming the legacies of apartheid: through a renewed task group process.
- c) Accompanying churches in difficult circumstances through prophetic solidarity, advocacy, conflict mediation and education: networking with ecumenical bodies, civil society and government agencies to address the issues and situations.

## **3. Recommendations for programmes for 2011–2013**

Based on the Strategic Plan which processed the UGC mandates, the current resources and capacity, the core group decided on four programmatic priorities as the focus for the next two years. The group acknowledged that all six of the programmatic priorities within each of the areas of CfJ and GJ are intertwined and that action on individual priorities would not necessarily be independent.

### *3.1 Ordination of women*

In addressing the situation of women in the ordained ministry, church leadership positions and the concern that many WCRC member churches are yet to accept women in the ordained ministry, the core group decided to focus on this issue. The proposal was made to develop a strategy to actively promote the ordination of



women with an intentional project aimed at closing the gap between women and men as well as to accompany women and member churches in advancing the situation of women in ministry.

*Recommendation 1*

That the Justice Office develop a map of member churches, indicating where there are issues relating to both women's ordination, women in leadership positions as well as issues of gender, power and leadership within member churches, at the same time enabling churches to critically address other gender justice issues.

*Recommendation 2*

That WCRC leaders include the issue of women's ordination and leadership roles on their agenda when visiting member churches, in order to promote and to encourage churches to address this issue. This will be included as a contribution to the mapping initiative in *Recommendation 1* by submitting reports to the Justice Core Group.

*Recommendation 3*

That the Justice Office continue the Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South, especially young women, taking a proactive role through members of the Executive Committee to promote the fund among churches that do not have women or have only few women in the ordained ministry.

*3.2 Human trafficking*

Addressing key gender issues with critical theological perspectives, especially men and gender justice, violence, poverty, adverse impact of climate change and health and wholeness, the core group decided to focus on the issue of human trafficking and slavery. Particularly, in light of the fact that this is an issue that predominantly affects women who are forced into sexual servitude.

*Recommendation 4*

That the Justice Office in collaboration with regional councils, Network, member churches and partners develop and implement a project on human trafficking and slavery, utilizing the tools of theological education/conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects.

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### *Recommendation 5*

- a) That the regional councils in coordination with the Justice and Partnership Office and Network continue the work on the promotion of positive masculinity, using the WCRC men and positive masculinity manual, *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership*.
- b) That the manual *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership* be translated into Spanish with the collaboration of AIPRAL and the WCC.

### *3.3 Theological dialogue and joint action projects on key (and difficult) justice issues regarding economic and climate justice.*

This aims to advance the *Living out of the Accra Confession* and building up the Communion by sharing different perspectives, realities, analysis and theological reflection of critical economic and ecological issues, especially focussing on alternatives. The general aim is to bridge the gap between churches and supporting their empowerment for solidarity and mutual support. This project will be developed and implemented jointly by regional councils, member churches and partner organizations, using the tools of theological education/conscientization, study, advocacy, campaign and practical projects – all interconnected towards the same goal.

### *Recommendation 6*

- a) That Justice Office continue the work on theological education and biblical studies on justice in the economy and the earth, and that further popular education resources be developed with and for churches and seminaries.
- b) That the theological dialogue and joint action project begins by linking with the similar process initiated by CANAAC and that this be also developed with other regional councils.
- c) That CANAAC includes the participation of Indigenous North Americans, recognizing the unique and important voices to be heard from this constituency.

### *3.3 Advocate for a new financial architecture to address economic justice and climate change*

This project is intended to function through a global (UN) platform. The process will be led by the WCRC secretariat, the WCC, a multidisciplinary core group in consultation with member churches, regional councils and other key stakeholders. This process will be

supported by a Global Ecumenical Commission, linking to initiatives with other faith communities and critical experts worldwide as well as with the UN expert commission for a new world economic and financial architecture, headed by the Nobel laureate, Joseph Stiglitz.

### *Recommendation 7*

That the Justice Office and Network in cooperation with the World Council of Churches and the Council for World Mission establish a global ecumenical and multidisciplinary commission to develop a process for a Global Ecumenical Conference to propose framework and criteria for a new international financial and economic architecture that promotes justice in the economy and the earth.

### *3.5 Justice Networks*

In order to develop and implement the programmatic priorities, a Justice Network is being established. It comprises resource women and men of diverse age groups, cultures and social location who are committed to the WCRC and its vision and mission. The Justice Network will have two components: Gender Justice Network and Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth Network. These networks will be responsible for creating specific objectives and action plans related to the programmatic priorities.

In order to establish a good start, it is important to build relationships amongst members and to involve them in the strategic direction, programme goals, objectives and developing methodologies, and mobilizing resources.

### *Recommendation 8*

- a) That the following persons be approved to serve as members of the following Justice and Partnership Networks:

*Gender Justice:* Benebo Fubara Fubara Manuel (Nigeria), Dora Arce (Cuba), Eva-Maria Fontaine (Switzerland), Simone Singh (Trinidad), Philip Peacock (India), Isabel Phiri (Malawi/South Africa), Ann Ferguson (USA), Middle East representative, Pacific Island representative/CWM regional representative, and Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth (Guyana)

*Covenanting for Justice:* Christie Neufeldt (Canada), Septemmy Lakawa (Indonesia), European Area Council representative, Representative of FEPS (Switzerland), Northeast Asia representative, Puleng LenkaBula (South Africa), Rose Teteki

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Abbey (Ghana), CWM representative, Peter Vander Meulen (USA), and Rogate Mshana (WCC).

### *Oikotree – Covenanting for Justice Movement:*

1. Helis Barraza, Colombia, CfJ Moderator
  2. Indigenous person (church related social justice activist)
  3. Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership
- b) That a face-to-face meeting of the Justice Network be held to develop the action plan, including expected roles of members and ways in which the regional councils, seminaries and member churches will participate in developing, implementing and evaluating projects and mobilizing resources. And that this meeting be held before the end of the first quarter of 2012, providing the new Executive Secretary is in office.

## **REPORT OF THE THEOLOGY, MISSION AND COMMUNION CORE GROUP**

### **Overview of work since June 2010**

The Executive Secretary for Theology, Mission and Communion reported his activity since the meeting at the UGC in Grand Rapids, June 2010. The core group expressed its gratitude and appreciation for the excellent work of the Executive Secretary. The core group looks forward to a good partnership in accomplishing the goals of the strategic plan.

#### *Recommendation 1*

The TMC Core Group recommends that the WCRC will encourage the theological and missional capacity of the Communion by inspiring and equipping the regions through networking with theologians and through organizing regional consultations.

### **Global Institute of Theology (GIT)**

The GIT is a major event for leadership training and mission empowerment.

#### *Recommendation 2*

The TMC Core Group recommends that the GIT take place every two years, with the next one scheduled in Indonesia in July 2012.

### **Reformed World**

*Reformed World* is published three times per year. The editorial advisory board of the journal will be more involved in the publication.

#### *Recommendation 3*

The TMC Core Group recommends that *Reformed World* focus on regions once a year, with the core group sending suggestions for themes and theological authors, especially young people.

### **Ecumenical dialogues**

For the still ongoing Reformed-Pentecostal dialogue a meeting has been planned to evaluate a possible continuation of this dialogue.

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### *Recommendation 4*

The TMC Core Group recommends that the evaluation of the Reformed-Pentecostal meeting be reported to the core group for approval for the next dialogue.

At its Uniting General Council in 2010 the WCRC decided to consult the member churches about an affiliation to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justice. The JDDJ is a document Catholics and Lutherans signed in 1999.

### *Recommendation 5*

The TMC Core Group recommends planning the consultation process of member churches of the WCRC for the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification.

## **Cooperation with the John Knox International Reformed Centre**

The Executive Secretary of TMC is the President of the John Knox Programme Commission. This commission organized a consultation on churches speaking truth to power from 28 to 30 March 2011. Work for John Knox is now integrated in the job description of the TMC Executive Secretary.

### *Recommendation 6*

The TMC Core Group recommends that the Executive Secretary continue to be involved in the John Knox Programme Commission.

## **2017 Jubilee**

### *Recommendation 7*

The TMC Core Group recommends the Executive Secretary of TCM and the General Secretary the WCRC begin planning and consultation with partners the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

## **Network of theologians**

One of the mandates of the UGC was to set up a network of theologians. A worldwide group of Reformed theologians will come

together for a consultation in India in October 2011 to see how this network can be set up and how it can work in the coming years.

*Recommendation 8*

The TMC Core Group recommends the development of a network of theologians active within the Reformed Community. This network should consist of persons who are involved in theological reflection in a challenging and contextual way. And some of them should have an expertise in missiology. The TMC Core Group also recommends that the core group itself will become a virtual member of the theological Network and serve as an advisory group on TMC programs and priorities.

*Recommendation 9*

The TMC Group recommends that exploration be given as to how the voices of indigenous people can be included in the theological and missional discourse of the programmes of the WCRC.

Mission is now of first priority for the Office of Theology, Mission and Communion.

*Recommendation 10*

The TMC Core Group recommends organizing mission consultations in certain regions with member churches concerning mission in their contexts.

## **REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS CORE GROUP**

Present: Peter Borgdorff, Moderator; Allan Buckingham; Kristine Greenaway, staff; Steve Lytch, recorder; Cheryl Meban; Cheh Liang Mok

Absent: Allen Nafuke, Salome Twum, Yong Kyu Kang

The core group moderator, Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, was unable to attend due to ill health. In her absence, Peter Borgdorff took her place. Yvette sent her regrets to the core group that she was not able to be with them and wished them well in their work. She was to join in the conference call with advisors and the core group but technical difficulties prevented her participation.

Members of the Communications Advisors Network were scheduled to join the meeting via conference call for one hour, but we were unable to connect with them. The meeting proceeded without the advisors and without Yvette.

Those who have agreed to serve as advisors are: Judi Fisher (Australia), former WARC communications moderator; Achowah Umenei (Cameroon), church journalist for radio and print; Jerry van Marter (USA), director of PCUSA News Service; Rasoavelonirine Vololoniaina (Madagascar), radio journalist; Lydia Ma (Taiwan), web and print journalist, youth; Yael Eda Hadiputeri (Indonesia), youth committed to making the WCRC better known in Indonesia; Yushi Fujimori (Japan), blogger and former NEAAC vice-moderator; Thomas Flügge (Switzerland), communications specialist in marketing.

Kristine Greenaway reviewed the agenda. Cheryl Meban led an opening meditation. Kristine reviewed the role of the core group and the Communications Advisors Network. She clarified the role of the core group as:

- oversee communications about the work of the WCRC within its membership
- oversee communication about the work of the WCRC to the broader public

The core group meets once a year to look at communications patterns in relation to the strategic plan. It evaluates the quality and effectiveness of communications over the preceding year and sets direction for the coming year.



The Communications Advisors Network is a group of people who work as communicators in churches or church-related agencies worldwide. They meet once a year with the Communications Core Group via conference call to review the work of the WCRC Office of Communications and to advise the Executive Committee on communications priorities in coming years. In addition, advisors are asked to respond to occasional e-mail requests for input on issues related to communications.

Each core group member stated his or her interest and expertise in communications. Kristine reviewed the expertise and background of the advisors.

There is still a need for an advisor with background and skills in marketing. It was noted that it would be especially valuable to have someone from East Asia who is affiliated with one of the member churches but not a church professional. Mok will pursue his connections with public relations and marketing professionals in Malaysia in order to identify potential candidates.

Kristine reviewed the Report of the Office of Communications. She pointed out that she has received invaluable technical help at little or no cost through networking at the Ecumenical Centre and contacts in the Geneva NGO community. The Uniting church of Australia seconded a person to work with Kristine to develop the WCRC website. She observed that due to the difficulty that many of our constituents have accessing the Internet, there is still a strong preference to receive *Reformed Communiqué* in hard copy.

The Annual Report was reviewed. Copies will be sent to Cheryl for distribution at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in Ireland, to Peter for distribution at the General Assembly of the WCRC, and to Steve for distribution at the PCUSA Big Tent Event.

The *Proceedings of the Uniting General Council* were reviewed. It was pointed out that many prefer to receive the *Proceedings* in hard copy because of limited Internet access. Allan suggested that we move toward distribution via smart phone or similar media, since in many areas of the world that technology is more widespread than Internet access.

*Website:* Kristine presented information about plans for developing the WCRC's website. These include plans for each region to have its own page with someone in each region (and possibly sub-region) designated to post stories in the appropriate languages.

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### *Several challenges were discussed:*

1. It involves considerable expense to post stories in languages that do not use Roman characters. Kristine may have sources of possible funding to address this issue.
2. Each region would need someone responsible for managing the regional site. A region like Asia would need sub-regions to accommodate the variety of languages.
3. We will probably need funding or a secondment in order to do cross-language translation.

Kristine Greenaway has been in conversation with a Swiss foundation about funding for developing the website and she was encouraged to submit a proposal.

Allan Buckingham suggested a "Wiki" translation approach using an open site to allow anyone to translate portions of a document at will. The translation would be vetted before being posted on the WCRC website. Kristine Greenaway expressed reserve at this option noting the poor quality and confusing results of such translations.

Douwe Visser is working with Sabine Dressler-Kromminga in Germany to produce on-line liturgical resources.

Kristine Greenaway is involved in plans for developing web-based radio in an initiative led and financed by the Council for World Mission and the World Council of churches.

There have been problems with Google linking to the old WARC website instead of the WCRC site. Allan Buckingham and Kristine Greenaway will meet to discuss remedies.

ENI UPDATE: News stories from ENI have been picked up widely in the church and the secular media because it is seen as an independent news agency, not a source of in-house releases. WCC drastically reduced its funding and ENI has been reduced to one staff member working in New York. The Reformed churches in Switzerland, the PCUSA and the WCRC have advanced ENI money to continue operating, but the WCC and the LWF have not paid their share. Unless they do, ENI will have to close.

The core group *recommends* that the Executive Committee, through the General Secretary, ask the WCC and the LWF to provide the funding needed to sustain ENI.

Procuring stories: Kristine reminded the group of the importance of procuring stories from member churches that tell how they are carrying out the work of the WCRC. The core group will ask members of the Executive Committee to encourage their churches to send stories to her. Cheh Lian Mok will send news releases from the Malaysian church. We need to find a way to find stories from churches that do not have a website or publications.

Fundraising: Peter gave background information about North American fundraising efforts and about the Native American initiative that is underway in western Michigan.

There was discussion around ways the strategic plan can support fundraising.

There was discussion about ways communication items can be developed for fundraising initiatives.

Peter advocated balancing communion and justice in our communications. Allan pointed out that responses to the strategic planning questionnaire put a strong emphasis on mission. The question was raised as to how we can frame our work in a way that invites people into fellowship with Christ while we serve human need in his name. It was suggested that we use testimonials that utilize text and video links.

There was a discussion about ways to encourage online giving. It was suggested that bar codes be included in the annual report or other publications to link smart phone technology to our website and possibly a donor page. One idea: Make post cards using the stories in the annual report and include bar codes that link to a page where the reader can contribute a suggested amount to that particular project.

Kristine reviewed items for information:

- 250 copies of the annual report are available for members of the Executive committee to take with them and distribute in their churches. Kristine will take orders from those who want bulk amounts.
- Articles from *Reformed Communiqué* are reprinted in the German and in Spanish in the journals of regional groups.
- Princeton Theological Seminary has been asked to archive the records of WARC, REC and the WCRC. The WCC archivist, Hans von Rütte, has had conversations in

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Princeton and reports that the signs are encouraging. The project will develop over the next 18 months with a survey conducted by Hans of the extent and condition of the archives. Princeton would then consider investing an estimated USD\$50,000 in micro-fishing and digitalizing the collection.

The core group reviewed the action plan below as amended.

The core group *recommends* a policy of using clear and widely understood language to communicate the objectives and programmes of the WCRC.

<b>WCRC Executive Committee – Communications Core Group</b>					
<b>Office of Communications Action Plan 2011 – 2013</b>					
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Activities + Strategies</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Partners + Staffing</b>
Communicate the WCRC's vision, mission + key directions	Share news of five key directions in Strategic Plan	1) Series of articles in clear, widely-understood language about 5 key WCRC words published in 5 issues of <i>Ref Com</i> 2) Publish 5 articles on web	Sept 2011 – Dec 2012	TBC	Staff
	Develop expressions of Reformed identity	Share expressions of Reformed identity on home page; articles in <i>Ref Com</i> ; blog; stories on web radio network	Ongoing	TBC/ project	Staff  Partners for web radio CWM + WCC
	Share info about Mission	News releases, <i>Ref Com</i> , Facebook,	Ongoing	TBC/ project	Staff, partners (CWM, WCC,

		blog, stories on web radio network			Partnership Fund, FAP), regions, member churches
	Share info about Justice	<p>News releases, <i>Ref Com</i>, Facebook, blog</p> <p>Development and distribution of case studies, models and liturgical material related to advocacy themes such as series of booklets on models for working with Indigenous peoples</p> <p>Material available in the four WCRC working languages and in the key regional languages used in the regions most affected by the justice issues targeted for focused advocacy initiatives</p>	Ongoing	TBC/ project	Staff, regions, networks, partners (OIKOTREE, WCC, CWM, FAP), regions, member churches
	Share info about Theology	Share theological resources,	Ongoing	TBC/ project	Regions, Staff, theologic

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		<p>liturgical models on the web and in print</p> <p>Share info about development of <i>Worshiping the Triune God</i></p>			<p>al networks , denom. worship offices, WCC F+O, intern</p>
<p>Contribute to youth leadership development</p>		<p>Post information about scholarships, internships, and GIT on website</p> <p>Develop social media networks</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Reformed youth</p>	<p>Staff, Coms Core + Advisory Group, intern</p>

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Activities + Strategies</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Partners + Staffing</b>
Build and strengthen the organization (Communion)	Make visible the involvement of regions and member churches through production of print, electronic, webcast and website information in four WCRC working languages plus key languages used in the WCRC regions. (Such as telling stories of church initiatives in interfaith dialogue.)	1) Create website function that allows text to be posted in Korean, Chinese, etc. 2) Create regional web pages coordinated in the regions 3) Work with regions to develop material in regional languages 4) Develop web radio	2011-2012	TBC/project	Staff, regions, member churches, partners (FAP, CWM, WCC), Coms Core + Advisors Group, intern
Support fundraising	Promote NA Endowment Fund	Create promotional information such as annual report, news releases and web stories that highlight the WCRC accomplishments	Ongoing	North American WCRC members + foundations	Staff, Lytch, Endowment Trustees
	Enhance online giving	Identify online	2011	WCRC members	Staff and Coms

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		<p>giving specialist to assist in developing campaign for online giving</p> <p>Test online donations function by asking Ex Com members to each contribute CHF100 (or whatever they can) via response to North American Fundraising Challenge</p>		worldwide	Core + Advisory Group, member churches
	Attract support of new donors and retain commitment of current donors	Create promotional information such as annual report, news release and web stories that highlights the WCRC accomplishments	Ongoing	Existing and potential partners and donors	Staff



## **REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Gottfried Locher, Moderator

### **Introduction**

Convening for the first time, the Finance Committee has reviewed the reports from the staff team and has laid down the framework for its future operations. The committee is pleased with the professional expertise its members have brought. The committee wants to specifically express its appreciation of the valuable support from the Finance Coordinator.

It is the opinion of this committee that the financial situation of WCRC has remained precarious. It must remain the operational priority for the General Secretary, the Executive Committee and indeed the whole Communion, to focus on actions that will immediately help to pull WCRC out of our current financial crisis.

Financial transparency, in particular with regards to membership contributions, will be important for a shared identity of our Communion. In that sense, this committee supports implementation of Art. VI / J / 6 of the WCRC Constitution.

This committee has taken notice of the firm pledge of the General Secretary to deliver a balanced core budget in 2011.

### **Recommendations to the Executive Committee**

- *Adopt the audited 2010 accounts*

The committee believes the audit and the review of both WARC and REC accounts have been performed in due diligence and thus recommends their adoption.

- *Approve the 2012 core budget*

The committee had required the initially submitted 2012 WCRC core budget be revised. The committee is now satisfied with the necessary budgetary prudence of current version and recommends its approval.

- *Retain la Compagnie Fiduciaire de Révision S.A. as WCRC auditor for 2011*

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The committee is satisfied with services rendered by the current external auditor and recommends its reappointment for 2011.

- *Authorize the Officers to constitute an Investment Committee*

The committee recommends that the Executive Committee direct the Officers to constitute an Investment Committee.

- *Authorize the Officers to define investment guidelines*

The committee recommends the Executive Committee to mandate the Officers to define WCRC investment guidelines.

- *Assign Clifton Kirkpatrick to be the additional authorized signatory for WCRC account at 5th 3rd Bank*

The committee supports designating additional authorized signatory for WCRC account at *5th 3rd Bank* on practical grounds.

- *Direct the General Secretary to conduct an internal audit and report on WCRC comprehensive risk profile*

The committee believes it is of critical importance, given the fragility of our finances, to obtain a comprehensive view of WCRC risk profile including financial, operational, legal and operational aspects by the end of 2011. The resulting report will then be distributed among the members of the Executive Committee.

- *Instruct the General Secretary to submit a comprehensive budget including both core and programme sections starting next accounting year*

The committee believes exercising its duty of supervising WCRC finances should also include review of the financial forecast of the programme and what is required for its implementation.

- *Endorse the Fundraising strategies as outlined in Document 11 / Appendix 1*
- *Instruct the General Secretary, under the guidance of the Finance Committee, to implement the Fundraising strategies as outlined in Document 11 / Appendix 1*

- *Appeal to the members of the Executive Committee to make a personal pledge to WCRC (ref. document distributed)*

### **The functioning of the Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee has held discussions on its future operating mode and would like to share the following with the Executive Committee.

- It has decided to reconvene the Finance Committee meeting remotely and on a quarterly basis, with the first meeting being scheduled for 25 October 2011.
- It requires the General Secretary to update it on the WCRC's financial status and the progress of the key actions (as outlined in the staff report it has received from the Finance Coordinator) in October 2011.
- It requires the General Secretary to present a report on the pledged WCRC 2011 membership fees commitment by 1 September 2011.
- It supports an upward revision of the 2012 core budget during the next Executive Committee session in case significant improvements in our financial strength are to be observed.
- It requires the Finance Coordinator to review the accounting treatment of the endowment fund and to report back to the committee.

**REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION, MEMBERSHIP  
AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE**

Moderator Cheryl Meban

Members: Gradye Parsons, Peter Borgdorff, Carola Tron Urban, Yael Hadiputeri, Yang-en Cheng, Elisée Musemakweli, Neal Presa, Setri Nyomi (staff).

The committee was oriented in its work by the General Secretary. There are no constitution or bylaw amendments for the WCRC proposed at this time. The committee heard a report on the status of churches making application to the WCRC. Those can be found in Document 10.

*Membership recommendations*

**Application for affiliate membership  
(Constitution Article VI E.)**

1. The committee recommends the approval of the application for affiliate membership by the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT), Stellenbosch, South Africa.

NetAct is an organization that works with theological institutions to gain accreditation for their degree programmes. It works with many schools that are related to member churches in Africa.

2. The committee recommends the following actions in regard to the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa:
  1. Express thanks for its decision at its 69th General Assembly to admit it was wrong to defend apartheid.
  2. Acknowledge the difficulties currently experienced in the church and convey the WCRC's commitment to pray for them.
  3. Encourage them to invite Jerry Pillay and Kobus Gerber (and a third from the South Africa Task Force if needed) to be present at the called General Assembly in the fall of 2011 to serve as advisors and facilitators.
  4. That the results of that assembly be reported to the South Africa Task Force for any further follow-up.

5. That the Task Force report to the Constitution and Membership Committee at its next meeting.
3. The committee recommends
  - a. that the three year time requirement base line of communication from member churches that have neither paid dues nor corresponded with reasons for not paying dues be established as 18 June 2010, the date of the original General Assembly of the WCRC. (Constitution VI J. 6.)
  - b. That the USD500 be considered the minimum membership dues and that any exemption to the minimum be negotiated with a team consisting of: the president of that regional council, the WCRC vice president of that region and the General Secretary. Any disagreement among the team is to be negotiated by the President of the WCRC.

(The committee discussed the serious implications of membership and the financial responsibilities of membership. The churches in arrears to WARC are still in arrears to the WCRC. The committee strongly affirmed that the USD500 minimum should be applied to all churches.)

*Constitution recommendations*

The committee recommends

4. That the Constitution and Bylaws of WCRC Europe be approved with the following suggestions for inclusion to be reported to the committee next year.
  1. That language be added to submit the annual audits to the General Secretary WCRC (WCRC bylaws III I.)
  2. That language should be added to state that the election of the Secretary and the Treasurer are subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee of the WCRC.
  3. (WCRC Constitution XVI E.)
5. That all current persons elected as secretaries and/or treasurers of regional councils be confirmed. The General Secretary will communicate to all regional councils their responsibility to submit names as elected. (WCRC Constitution XVI E.)

## **REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIP FUND COMMITTEE**

Members present: Kobus Gerber (Moderator); Bas Plaisier; Najla Kassab; Salome Twum; Clayton Leal da Silva; Majaw Singh  
Absent: Yvette Noble Bloomfield

1. The Partnership Fund is of vital importance for supporting projects within the Communion and for the sake of member Churches and regional bodies.

The Partnership Fund Committee received the report of the work done by the Partnership Fund coordinators Douwe Visser and Antoinette Berkouwer. It was accepted with great appreciation, especially towards Antoinette Berkouwer who did this work on a volunteer basis.

The committee spent time in discussing a way forward with regard to a) the procedure of applications; b) the management of money from the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) in the light of the strict regulations with regard to projects for which it is available (no religious projects), the applications, control and reports; c) the staff position with regard to the functioning of the Fund.

### *2. Recommendations*

- 2.1 The Executive Committee approve that the limit of the grants be raised from CHF 20 000 to CHF 30,000
- 2.2 The Executive Committee approve that the limit for the Emergency Fund be raised from CHF 5000 to CHF 10,000 and that the beneficiaries will in future be required to submit a report on how the money was used.
- 2.3 The Executive Committee note that the Partnership Fund Committee has asked Douwe Visser and the General Secretary to do research on how other ecumenical bodies use money from the EED. The Executive Committee also note that the Partnership Fund Committee is very cautious about the fact that the use of EED money could bring the WCRC at a point where a development department will need to be registered if this process gets too big.
- 2.4 The Executive Committee affirm that the percentage of the EED grant for administrative purposes must be used by the Partnership Fund to cover costs in Geneva and with regard to applications from member churches or regional bodies.

- 2.5 The Executive Committee task Douwe Visser, the General Secretary and the moderator of the committee to monitor the workload of Antoinette Berkouwer.
- 2.6 The Executive Committee task the General Secretary to formalize a volunteer contract with Antoinette Berkouwer.

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Personnel Committee received a report of staff evaluations, and registered their appreciation for the high level of professional gifts and dedication that the WCRC staff place at the disposal of the organization. It recommends that the Executive Committee notes with appreciation the work of the WCRC staff.

The Personnel Committee further *recommends* the following:

1. That Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth be thanked for eleven years of faithful and effective service to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
2. That the General Secretary works with the co-moderators of the Justice and Partnership Core group in putting in place interim arrangements that get the work of the office done until a new Executive Secretary comes into office.
3. That the contract of Kristine Greenaway be renewed for a five-year term.
4. That in view of the current needs of the WCRC, the office that takes care of the finances be redesignated "Finance Director". This takes care of the need for a highly skilled technical staff given the right status to work with the General Treasurer, the General Secretary, and the staff team in stabilizing the finances of the WCRC. A new job description has been drawn to this effect.
5. That Yueh Cho be appointed to the Finance Director position.



## **OFFICERS REPORT**

The Officers are grateful to God for this first full meeting of the Executive Committee after the General Council. The report from the first Officers meeting in November 2010 was circulated to all Executive Committee members.

In this Executive Committee meeting, the Officers had two meetings. The following are some of the actions from the Officers' meetings:

1. The United General Council mandated a number of letters to be sent by the Executive Committee. The following letters have been written on behalf of the Executive Committee and will be sent soon after this meeting.
  - Letter to the Conference of European Churches (CEC) on the situation of Spanish Protestants
  - Letter to member churches on issues of religious freedom in the Middle East, as well as an climate justice
  - Letters to the United Nations Organization and the World Health Organization (WHO) petitioning on Taiwan's membership.
  - Letter of solidarity to member churches in Pacific Islands
2. The Officers acted on the proposal at this Executive Committee to write a pastoral letter to the WCRC member church in Egypt, the Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile as a sign of solidarity in the wake of the recent clashes and deaths and burning of churches as a result of the religious violence.
3. The UGC mandated a number of statements to be issued by the Executive Committee
  - Foreign military presence and intervention in Columbia
  - Statement on weapons proliferation
  - Statement on military occupation in Myanmar

The first two are ready. The statement on military occupation in Myanmar was suspended because the situation is in the process of changing.

The Officers recommend that the Executive Committee adopt the statement on foreign military presence and intervention in Columbia

## Officers

The Officers recommend that the Executive Committee adopt the statement on weapons proliferation

4. The Officers noted that the General Secretary is making the appropriate consultations in order to write a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations on the situation in Korea, and also the action of letters to address the suffering of the people of Cuba.
5. The UGC mandated pastoral visits to the following places – Madagascar, Pacific Islands, and North Korea. These visits will likely occur in 2012.
6. The Officers affirmed their role in providing leadership, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This will feature strongly in their meetings – including their telephone conference calls.
7. The Officers noted that the strategic plans approved will need a staff complement higher than what exists now. However, given the current financial status of the WCRC, no action can be taken on such increases until the financial status stabilizes, and the WCRC begins rebuilding its reserves to a good level.
8. The Officers will receive a full financial report at every meeting and telephone conference and will carefully monitor the financial situation of the WCRC.
9. The President will work with the General Secretary and General Treasurer and the Finance Coordinator in naming the Investment Committee as soon as possible. The General Treasurer and the Finance Coordinator will take the lead in this.
10. The Finance Director will consult the Ethical Investments Guidelines document of WARC, and the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the Protestant Church of the Netherlands in drawing the first draft of a new investment guidelines document. This draft will then be finalized in consultation with the General Treasurer, the General Secretary and the President.
11. The Officers propose that the 2012 Executive Committee meets from 2 August (arrival date) to 10 August (departure date) hosted by the Batak Karo Church in Sumatra, Indonesia.

12. The Officers affirmed the venues chosen by the Officers for 2013-2016 and requested that the President and General Secretary propose appropriate dates for those meetings as well as consider the request of changing one of those venues to be Lebanon or somewhere in the Middle East as requested by a member of the Executive Committee. The original dates proposed by the Officers are as follows:
  - 2011 Switzerland
  - 2012 Indonesia
  - 2013 Ghana.
  - 2014 El Salvador
  - 2015 Cayman Islands or Jamaica
  - 2016 Canada
13. The Officers appreciated the information from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) that they will hold their Executive Committee meeting in the context of the World Council of Churches Assembly in Busan, Korea, and will consider having the WCRC Officers' meeting in Korea also. They noted that the LWF Executive Committee is the equivalent of the WCRC Officers.
14. The President will consult with the co-moderators of the Justice and Partnership Core Group and name two additional members of the Justice and Partnership Search Committee members in addition to the five original members.

On Columbia (Document 22.1)

### **STATEMENT ON COLOMBIA**

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (Isaiah 58.6)*

*Those who desire life and desire to see good days, ... let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3.10-11)*

As members of the Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) we express concern about the protracted internal conflict that has caused the death of thousands of people in Colombia, while some four million have been internally displaced and continue to be displaced. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethen Pillay, in her 2010 report of the situation of human right defenders in Colombia, also manifested deep concern over the increased threat to human rights defenders by public officials and non-state actors.

In this context, the Executive Committee of WCRC calls on the Colombian government to take specific measures to ensure the prosecution of those state and non-state actors responsible for human rights violations. It also asks the government of the United States to implement an immediate cessation of Plan Colombia, dismantle its military bases, and redirect its foreign assistance to Colombia from military to humanitarian purposes.

We strongly commend the work of the Colombian churches in their efforts to promote peace and justice in the country and reiterate WCRCs prayers for the people of Colombia and its government.

## **STATEMENT ON THE PROLIFERATION OF ARMS**

The proliferation of arms is a major problem for the world today. The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) has a long history of drawing attention to the evil of amassing weapons of mass destruction. We continue to deplore the ways in which military force and weapons of mass destruction are deployed in attempts to address global challenges today. We also deplore the havoc wreaked by landmines in many parts of the world. In recent years, it has come to our attention that the proliferation of small arms in the hands of many is a major threat to the world.

The WCRC Executive Committee joins other colleagues in the ecumenical movement and among faith-based organizations to call for an end to this aspect of the arms race. WCRC joins the call from Religions for Peace to abolish nuclear weapons, stop the proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons, and redirect 10 per cent of military expenditure to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

The peace that our Lord Jesus Christ left us calls us to seek peace always and pursue it. We urge all our member churches to be vigilant against this vicious evil in order to expose its danger. We urge governments to take measures to ban such dangerous weapons.