

Reformed communiqué

Articles in ٱربى, Bahasa Indonesia, Deutsch, English, Español, Français and 한국어

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Consultation strengthens communion through diversity

The 2017 General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) recognized a variety of challenges to building a better communion, including linguistic and cultural tensions, as well as differences in theological and hermeneutical perspectives.

The Council committed the WCRC to “set the atmosphere for dialogue and discernment on communion and diversity – in a spirit of consensus building where there are no winners or losers, where no one is excluded, where all are protected and where mutual challenge, mutual accountability and grace become key values.”

A first step in this process was taken with a consultation held in late 2017 in Chennai, India, on the

theme “Strengthening the Communion: Communion and Human Sexuality.”

The consultation was hosted by the Church of South India and gathered member church representatives that reflected the diversity of perspectives on this issue. Attendees were invited to understand and address differences, seeking justice as an understanding of the communion that binds everyone together in mission and service.

According to Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and a WCRC vice-president, it was timely consultation.

“For many of us from Africa who haven’t sat in a consultation to discuss human sexuality before, that was a breakthrough meeting to strengthen communion and to open

up to different views on human sexuality,” said Ayete-Nyampong. “The consultation provided a friendly, non-intimidating space for discussion of the sensitive issues surrounding human sexuality.”

Robina Winbush, of the Presbyterian Church (USA), also found it to be a well-timed consultation: “It was a very important consultation at this moment in the history of WCRC and the member churches.”

After days of presentations, discussions and deliberations the consultation participants made six commitments seeking God’s voice and wisdom related to human sexuality:

1. Commit to the Bible
2. Commit to critical Reformed theological engagement

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Segundo diálogo “sobre ética y economía” previo al G20 en Argentina

A través de un segundo diálogo de alto nivel continuaron los preparativos para apoyar antes y durante la reunión del G20, que se llevará a cabo durante el 2018 en Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Líderes religiosos, teólogos, economistas, expertos en desarrollo de organismos multilaterales y académicos debatieron los tres temas principales que son el eje de la reunión del G20: finanzas sostenibles, trabajo digno y desarrollo inclusivo.

En la sesión de apertura, Chris Ferguson, secretario general de la Comunidad Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas (CMIR), criticó las teologías que favorecen un sistema que considera que no hay alternativas.

“Si creemos en el Dios de vida, tenemos que definirnos”, dijo Ferguson. “Debemos decir ‘no’ a cualquier sistema económico que pone la acumulación del capital por encima del valor de la vida”.

El diálogo generó material para la creación de un documento de incidencia previo a la reunión del G20 con recomendaciones y contribuciones para impulsar un modelo de desarrollo humano integral. El anterior incorporará el conocimiento y la experiencia que tienen las comunidades de fe, organizaciones basadas en la fe, así como otras organizaciones de fe en Latinoamérica y el Caribe que están trabajando para cumplir con la Agenda 2030 de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.

“Las finanzas se han deshumanizado”, dijo Javier González Fraga, presidente del Banco Nación. “No dejemos que los financistas y economistas decidan el valor del planeta, no podemos dejar que la lógica económica decida sobre el valor del



planeta porque esta lógica está alejada del enfoque del bien común”.

El encuentro contó con 4 paneles dedicados al análisis sobre los siguientes temas:

1. Finanzas sostenibles y desarrollo inclusivo;
2. Ética y economía. El desafío del desarrollo humano integral;
3. El futuro del trabajo y de los sistemas de protección social;
4. La agenda de desarrollo sostenible en la región: balances y desafíos;
5. El desarrollo sostenible: la Alianza Interconfesional y el G20 Interfaith Group.

“Buscamos colaborar con modelos alternativos de desarrollo”, dijo Augusto Zampini, director de Fe y Desarrollo del Dicasterio para el Desarrollo Humano Integral del Vaticano. “Para ello la Iglesia católica quiere tener alianzas con otras iglesias y grupos que promuevan un cambio sistemático y un modelo de desarrollo que sea capaz de generar caminos de paz”.

En la reunión ocurrida del 2 al 3 de noviembre asistieron otros líderes religiosos, entre ellos Dora Arce Valentín, secretaria ejecutiva de Justicia y Coparticipación de la CMIR,

Carola Tron Urban, presidenta de la Iglesia Evangélica Valdense del Río de la Plata, y Jorge Lozano, presidente de la Comisión Episcopal de Pastoral Social de Argentina (CEPAS).

El diálogo incluyó la participación del Secretariado para América Latina y el Caribe de la Pastoral Social- Cáritas (SELACC), del Departamento de Justicia y Solidaridad del Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (DEJUSOL-CELAM), del Programa Internacional sobre Democracia, Sociedad y Nuevas Economías de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (PIDESONE-UBA/Seube), del Centro Regional Ecueménico de Asesoría y Servicio (CREAS) y de la Red Mundial de Ética (GLOBETHICS).

También participaron representantes del *Think Tank* del G20 (T20), del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y de la Secretaría de Culto de la Cancillería Argentina, del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD) y del Instituto para la Integración de América Latina y el Caribe (INTAL) del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID). ●

“하나님은 계획을 가지고 계십니다” 라고 인턴들은 말한다.

서로 다른 두 문화권에서 온 세계개혁신교회커뮤니언(WCRC)의 새로운 인턴들이 이달 초 독일 하노버에서 새로운 여정을 시작했다.

한국에서 온 윤에리와 파키스탄에서 온 아남 길은 독일의 겨울이 예상한 것보다는 혹독하지 않다고 말했다.

WCRC 회원 교회의 청년들은 WCRC 인턴십 프로그램을 통해 1년 동안 WCRC 활동에 참여하고 기독교 일치와 에큐메니칼 운동에 대해 더 많이 배우게 된다.

아남과 에리는 WCRC 사무국에서의 새로운 경험을 통해 얻게 될 풍부한 지식과 지혜를 고국으로 가져가리라는 기대감으로 들떠 있다. 두 사람 모두 하나님께서 가장 좋은 계획을 가지고 계시다는 것과 하노버에 온 것이 우연이 아님을 확신하고 있다.

부산에서 목회를 하시는 아버지 덕분에 에리는 문자 그대로 교회 안에서 자랐다. 그녀는 아버지의 교회의 예배를 섬기기 위해 피아노를 치기 시작했으며 나중에는 주일 학교 교사로 봉사하다가 신학교에 진학했다. 그녀는 피아노 전공으로 학사 학위를 마치고, 교회에서 봉사하면서 아버지도 도와드리기 위해 목회학석사학위를 취득하기로 결심했다.

“교회 일치는 매우 중요합니다. 저는 성경을 읽을 때 그것을 발견합니다.”라고 에리는 말한다. “작년에 저는 WCRC 라이프치히 총회의 대표로 이곳에 왔습니다. 여기에서의 경험을 통해 저는 그리스도의 한 몸으로서의 교회에 대해 더 많이 배우고 싶어졌습니다. 하나님의 때라는 뜻의 '하나님의 카이로스'라는 용어가 있는데요, 앞으로 제가 무엇을 해야 할까 기도하면 할수록 이 인턴십을 지원해야 한다는 응답이 분명해졌습니다.”

에리는 인턴십 기간 동안 주로 커뮤니언과 신학, 정의와 증거에 주력하는 프로그램 사무국에서 일하고, 아남은 대부분 커뮤니케이션 부서에서 일하게 된다. 그러나 두 사람 모두 WCRC 기관 전체를 경험할 기회를 가지게 될 것이다.

저널리스트가 직업인 아남은 국내외 여러 일간지에서 프리랜서로 일해왔다. 그녀는 2006년 브라질의 포르투 알레그레에서 열린 세계교회협의회(World Council of Churches) 제9차 총회에 참가하면서 에큐메니칼 운동에 대한 관심이 커졌다. 나중에 그녀는 WCC의 'Living Letters' 대표단의 일원으로 라이베리아와 시에라리온을 방문했으며, WCC 커뮤니케이션 부서에서 프리랜서로 활동하면서 한국의 부산 WCC 제10차 총회를 취재하기도 했다.



아남은 WCRC에 오기 전에 다이얼로그 카페 라호레(Dialogue Caf. Lahore) 프로젝트에 참여했다. 이 프로젝트는 유지가능한 개발에 관한 문제를 논하는 대화에 세계와 지역의 청소년들을 연결시키는 자리이다. 그녀는 2016년에 이 자리를 마련하였으며 대화가 평화 구축과 분쟁전환에 필수적이라고 믿고 있다.

아남은 이 인턴십을 통해 교회와 에큐메니칼 운동과 WCRC 활동을 더 폭넓게 이해하기를 원한다. “기독교인이 매우 작은 소수자인 파키스탄 출신으로서 저는 기독교 공동체 내 혜택을 누리지 못하는 분파들과 특히 소수로 존재하는 상황에서 기독교 일치가 어떻게 힘을 더할 수 있는지 알고 싶었습니다”라고 그녀는 말한다.

아남은 독일에서 보내게 될 한 해가 매우 흥미롭고 풍요로울 것으로 기대하고 있다. “여기서 저는 매우 많은 아름다운 교회를 보았습니다. 또한, 제 고국과 달리 폭탄 테러를 염려하지 않으면서 교회 안을 걷는 것만으로도 매우 행복합니다. 그리고 언제나 제가 원할 때마다 평화롭게 기도합니다.”

WCRC 인턴십 프로그램은 Evangelische Missionwerk(EWM, 독일 개신교선교연대)와 베른-유라-졸로투른 개혁신교회 그리고 대한예수교장로회(PCK)의 후원을 통해 운영됩니다. ●

Dialogue explores communion as an “unbreakable gift and calling”

The International Reformed–Anglican Dialogue between the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Anglican Communion met for the third time in Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 31 August to 7 September 2017. The co-chairs are Elizabeth Welch (WCRC) and David Chillingworth (Anglican).

The current series of bilateral discussions is the first that the Anglican and Reformed communions have had globally since 1984, when the dialogue released the report, *God’s Reign and Our Unity*. In 2011, this new dialogue was mandated to study the nature of commu-

nion’s roles during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras. In particular, the group is extremely grateful to have heard the incisive analysis of Jerry Pillay, immediate past president of the WCRC, and professor of church history and church polity at the University of Pretoria.

Additionally, the group enjoyed the hospitality of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, at a seminar led by faculty members and students, reflecting contextually on the dynamic of *koinonia* and social transformation. En route, the group was privileged to pause for poignant reflection at the site of Nelson Mandela’s capture in August 1962.

The dialogue opened with a celebration of Holy Communion in the Anglican tradition and closed with a celebration of Holy Communion in the Reformed tradition. The members of the dialogue prayed together each morning and evening.

This third meeting of the Commission was generously hosted by the Anglican Communion. It was warmly welcomed by Bishop Dino Gabriel of Natal, and greatly encouraged by Bishop Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, bishop-suffragan of Natal. On Sunday morning, the group attended the Eucharist with the Anglican Parish of All Souls’, Umhlali.

The next WCRC-Anglican dialogue will take place at the end of August 2018.

Anglican Communion participants: David Chillingworth, Scottish Episcopal Church; Clint Le Bruyns, Anglican Church of Southern Africa; James Hawkey, Church of England; Renta Nishihara, Anglican Church in Japan; Helene T. Steed, Church of Ireland; staff: John Gibaut (co-secretary) and Neil Vigers, Anglican Communion Office.

WCRC participants: Elizabeth Welch, United Reformed Church in the UK; Peter Donald, Church of Scotland; Priscille Djomhoué, Eglise Protestante Unie de Belgique/Cameroon; Roderick Hewitt, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa; R. Gerald Hobbs, United Church of Canada; Aimee Moiso, Presbyterian Church (USA); Royce M. Victor, Church of South India; staff: Hanns Lessing (co-secretary), WCRC staff.

Observers: Nadia Marais, Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa; Thulani Zikhali, Anglican Church of Southern Africa. ●



nion (*koinonia*) and the pressing issues which emerge for both communions out of such reflection. During this third meeting, the group deepened its exploration of communion as an unbreakable gift and calling within the context of our diverse world communions.

Papers were prepared by members of the dialogue group over the last year as an initial contribution to the first draft of an statement. They were presented in plenary during this meeting. The group also noted their gratefulness for other papers from expert theologians in related fields. This work formed the basis of intense small group analysis, covering areas including the essence of *koinonia*, scriptural and historic testimony to its character, how communion is lived and responded to, as well as identifying and critically engaging with diversity in the church and the wider world. A drafting group has been tasked for the next stage of the group’s work.

The South African context offered a profoundly influential focus for the group’s reflection as it heard of the

Mission et Ecclésiologie au centre du Dialogue entre Réformés et Pentecôtistes



La quatrième session du dialogue entre Réformés et Pentecôtistes a eu lieu au Collège Alphacrucis à Parramatta, en Australie, sous le thème « Au Service des Besoins du Monde : Mission et Ecclésiologie ».

Les deux points de vue furent présentés par Gabriela Rácsok pour les Réformés et par Shan Clifton pour les Pentecôtistes. Les débats du matin et du soir étaient encadrés par un temps de prières, de chants, de lectures bibliques et de méditation qui faisait entièrement partie du dialogue.

Dans sa présentation « L'Église est Mission: une vue réformée sur l'Église et la Mission » Gabriela Rácsok commença par expliquer, comment la compréhension de Mission et d'Église s'est développé durant le 20^{ème} siècle. Des exemples concrets de l'Église Réformée de Hongrie contribuèrent à rendre sa présentation particulièrement pertinente pour le dialogue. Elle affirma que l'Église rassemblée autour de la Parole et des Sacrements est l'endroit où un avant-goût du Royaume de Dieu est vécu (*koinonia*). La force de l'Esprit munit les hommes et les femmes, pour qu'ils servent les autres dans tous leurs besoins (*diakonia*). L'Église est le lieu, où Jésus Christ est témoigné en paroles (*marturia/kerygma*).

Shan Clifton présenta les développements historiques de la relation

entre Mission et Église sous le titre « Au Service des Besoins du Monde : Mission et Ecclésiologie – Du point de vue des Pentecôtistes australiens ». Il expliqua que le mouvement pentecôtiste, en de nombreux endroits, n'avait pas voulu devenir une institution. Pourtant beaucoup ont formé des dénominations et certains devinrent les catalyseurs pour la formation de méga-églises. Clifton aborda aussi les défis que représente la croissance en matière de division et de diversité, le rôle des guérisons et la compréhension de la prospérité comme épanouissement. Pour conclure il expliqua que l'orientation pragmatique des Pentecôtistes et leur ecclésiologie fluide favorisent leur succès dans un monde diversifié soumis à un changement rapide.

Pendant leurs rencontres, les équipes ont discuté mutuellement leurs présentations en séance plénière et se sont posé des questions. Ainsi les différences et similitudes de leurs points de vue ont pu être analysées et précisées. Les questions concernaient surtout les relations entre Église et Mission, ainsi qu'entre Mission et Évangélisation d'une part et d'autre part la contribution chrétienne d'aide et de justice dans un monde nécessairement. Ce dialogue fut fertile et exigeant, parce qu'il a aidé les équipes à mieux comprendre les questions

d'unité et de diversité au sein de l'Église et sa vocation de participer à la mission de Dieu.

Le dimanche 3 décembre, les participants ont pris part à un culte à l'église Hillsong de Sydney, une méga-église pentecôtiste qui est membre de l'ACC (Australian Christian Churches). Le pasteur Brian Houston a prêché et ensuite les délégués furent accueillis par les représentants de la Uniting Church of Australia qui est membre de la CMER, à l'église Parramatta Centenary. Tara Curlewis fit le récit de l'union des églises de l'Union Congrégationaliste en Australie, de l'Église Méthodiste d'Australie et de l'Église Presbytérienne d'Australie qui formèrent la Uniting Church of Australia. Hemsworth-Smith fit part de ses expériences concernant l'engagement de sa communauté dans la mission et Terence Corkin expliqua la structure de la Uniting Church of Australia et l'importance du modèle de consensus dans le processus de prise de décision parmi les églises.

L'équipe pentecôtiste était composée des personnes suivantes:

Cecil M. Robeck, co-Président (Assemblées de Dieu, USA); Teresa Chai (Assemblées de Dieu, Malaisie); Shane Clifton (Australian Christian Churches); David Daniels (Church of God in Christ, USA); Jacqueline Grey (Australian Christian Churches); Harold D. Hunter (International Pentecostal Holiness Church, USA); Jean-Daniel Plüss (Mission Pentecôtiste Suisse) et Olga Zaprometova (Église de Dieu, Russie).

L'équipe réformée était composée des personnes suivantes:

Karla Koll, co-Présidente, (Église Presbytérienne USA/Costa Rica); Hanns Lessing (responsable théologique, Communion Mondiale d'Églises Réformées); Nadia Marais (Églises Réformé Néerlandaise d'Afrique du Sud); Setri Nyomi (Église Presbytérienne au Ghana); Bas Plaisier (Église Protestante aux Pays Bas) et Gabriella Rácsok (Église Réformée de Hongrie). ●

Di Zambia, investor asing mempersulit “ekonomi kehidupan”

Untuk menyaksikan dan berusaha memahami naratif yang kontras antara perkembangan terkait investasi asing dan ketidakadilan sosial-ekonomi, para peserta Sekolah Ekumenis untuk Kepemimpinan, Ekonomi, dan Manajemen Ekonomi Kehidupan (Governance, Economics and Management for an Economy of Life, selanjutnya Sekolah GEM) mengunjungi sebuah perusahaan pertambangan pada tanggal 22 Agustus.

Sekolah GEM 2017 diadakan oleh Dewan Gereja Sedunia dan World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) mulai tanggal 21 Agustus hingga 1 September di Lusaka, Zambia.

Dalam konteks negara-negara berkembang di Afrika, seperti Zambia, investasi asing memegang peranan penting sebagai sumber eksternal keuangan, perkembangan teknologi dan beragam kompetensi yang bertujuan membawa perkembangan ekonomi dan komunitas bagi negara tuan rumahnya.

Dalam peranan ini, investor-investor asing seringkali dipandang sebagai sumber investasi domestik, ekspor, pertumbuhan ekonomi, lapangan kerja dan transfer teknologi yang terus meningkat. Investor asing juga diharapkan untuk memberikan kontribusi terhadap sektor pendidikan, kesehatan dan infrastruktur melalui program-program tanggung jawab sosial perusahaan.

Sekolah GEM disambut oleh pihak manajemen dari PT Industri Pertambangan dan Kimia Universal (Universal Mining & Chemical Industries Limited/UMCIL). Perusahaan ini membagikan misinya untuk meningkatkan produksi baja Zambia dan mengatasi tantangan keterbatasan besi tua yang menyebabkan berkurangnya produksi di beberapa

pabrik baja mereka. Dengan dibukanya tambang bijih besi Sanje di Nampundwe, UMCIL bermaksud untuk menghasilkan produk-produk yang lebih berkualitas dan lebih terjangkau. Saat ini, baja dari pabrik di Kafue diekspor, dan hasil akhirnya,



Peserta Sekolah GEM dalam kunjungan ke perusahaan penambangan. ©Adrian Mendoza/CCZ

misalnya logam, diimpor atau dipasok ulang ke Zambia.

Kunjungan ini difasilitasi oleh Dewan Gereja-gereja di Zambia (Council of Churches of Zambia/CCZ).

Dengan puluhan, bahkan pada beberapa kasus ratusan tahun investasi asing di Zambia dan kontribusi yang diharapkan dari mereka, seringkali menjadi tantangan untuk memahami ketidakadilan sosial-ekonomi yang dihadapi oleh komunitas-komunitas di sekitar perusahaan-perusahaan tersebut. Dengan jumlah investor besar di sektor pertambangan yang memanfaatkan potensi dan mengambil keuntungan dari sumber daya alam Zambia, telah lama menjadi pertanyaan mengenai siapa yang sesungguhnya diuntungkan ketika tingkat kemiskinan lokal masih

tetap tinggi, situs peninggalan kebudayaan disalahgunakan, kesehatan dan keselamatan dikompromikan dan hak asasi manusia dilanggar.

Dengan bantuan dan perkenalan dari kantor Sumber Daya Manusia UMCIL, para peserta Sekolah GEM

juga disambut oleh penduduk disekitar bukit pertambangan Sanje. Pemimpin laki-laki dan perempuan, pemuda, serta beberapa anggota dari lima komunitas di Nampundwe berkumpul dan berinteraksi secara terbuka dengan para peserta dan penyelenggara Sekolah GEM.

Dalam diskusi-diskusi kelompok, mayoritas anggota komunitas tersebut, termasuk para kepala desa menyampaikan bahwa mereka tidak senang dengan keberadaan pertambangan tersebut. Mereka menceritakan bahwa banyak perjanjian yang telah ditandatangani yang tidak dipenuhi dan mereka tidak mengetahui tentang program-program pengembangan dan tanggungjawab sosial yang dibagikan oleh perusahaan pertambangan tersebut kepada Sekolah GEM.

Sekalipun beberapa anggota komunitas tersebut bekerja di pertambangan, mayoritas penduduk tidak menyadari lubang bor, klinik,

sekolah-sekolah, dan jalan setapak yang dibangun oleh pertambangan bagi mereka.

Ketika memproses pengalaman kunjungan mereka di pusat Sekolah GEM, para peserta menggarisbawahi cerita dari masyarakat mengenai bagaimana pertambangan tersebut telah memengaruhi mata pencaharian, kebudayaan, dan spiritualitas.

Bukit Sanje, tempat di mana perusahaan tersebut sekarang menambang bijih besi, dulunya merupakan tempat suci bagi komunitas setempat. Sementara generasi yang lebih muda menemukan hubungan iman di gereja-gereja Kristen yang mengambil alih peranan tempat suci tersebut, ini merupakan sebuah kehilangan spiritual yang besar bagi generasi yang lebih tua.

Ketika komunitas masyarakat ditanya mengenai apa yang dilakukan oleh gereja terkait isu-isu yang mereka ceritakan, khususnya terkait kehilangan tempat suci, mereka mengatakan bahwa mereka tidak berpikir bahwa hal tersebut merupakan peran gereja, melainkan harus menjadi peran para pemimpin tradisional.

“Komunitas masyarakat dan gereja-gereja harus satu suara dan mengangkat isu-isu ini sebagai isu gereja juga,” Wakil sekretaris umum DGD Pdt. Dr Isabel Phiri mengatakan kepada penduduk dalam diskusi kelompok mereka.

Perwakilan dari CCZ membagikan bagaimana mereka telah membantu gereja-gereja merespon terhadap isu-isu sosial-ekonomi, perkembangan dan kesatuan di tengah masyarakat dengan visi memiliki pengaruh transformatif bagi martabat manusia dan kesatuan Kristen.

Dengan isu-isu terkait penambangan, CCZ menghubungkan komunitas, perusahaan pertambangan, dan pemerintah untuk menciptakan sebuah ruang untuk dialog

damai di mana setiap pihak mengesahkan cerita-cerita yang berlawanan dan mengatasi masalah satu per satu. Komunitas setempat didorong dan dimampukan untuk ikut bertanggungjawab.

“Zambia adalah sebuah negara tambang. Sebagian besar pemasukannya berasal dari pertambangan

dan negara ini tidak akan berhenti menambang. Kita harus mencari tempat untuk membangun sebuah hubungan dan mengatasi masalah-masalah lingkungan, kebudayaan, sosial, dan ekonomi, khususnya terkait tambang ini,” kata petugas CCZ Andisen Zulu. ●

Hopes rise for Korean peace

The WCRC welcomes steps toward peace on the Korean peninsula that have been made in the first months of 2018.

Even as political progress for potential peace was happening the first week in March, an international group of ecumenical leaders was gathered in Seoul for a conference to mark the 30th anniversary of the “1988 Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace.”

“After a period of explosively escalating tensions, we have welcomed the PyeongChang Olympic Truce and the new steps towards dialogue between North (DPRK) and South (ROK) as an historic opportunity,” stated a communique issued from the meeting.

The WCRC was represented by General Secretary Chris Ferguson, while many WCRC member churches also sent participants. The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) hosted the event, and its general secretary, Hong Jung Lee, is a member of the WCRC Executive Committee.

“Peaceful resolution to the continuing crisis on the Korean peninsula can only come through authentic dialogue at the table to which the ROK and DPRK have now returned,” stated the communique. “We call on the United States of America to join them at the table of dialogue, so that hope for peace may be strengthened. We also call on China, Russia and Japan to work together with them for peace on the Korean peninsula, and to develop a Northeast Asian common peace and security system.”

The Korean peninsula is one of several areas of focus for the WCRC in its Global Peace Initiatives programme, and the WCRC Executive Committee will hold its 2018 meeting in Seoul in May. ●



WCRC engages with churches in South Sudan

Chris Ferguson, general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, witnessed first hand how the church is alive and active in the midst of turbulence and crisis during a recent trip to South Sudan.

The trip, coordinated by Debbie Braaksma, coordinator of the Africa Office for the Presbyterian Church (USA), included visits to an internally displaced person (IDP) camp, a primary school, the Juba campus of Nile Theological College and with leaders of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS) and the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SSPEC). The delegation included other PC(USA) mission co-workers.

The PC(USA) works in partnership with the PCOSS, a WCRC member, and the SSPEC, a young church considering applying for membership in the WCRC.

PCOSS Visits: IDP camp, primary school

Three different ethnic groups reside in Mahad, an IDP camp of over 7500 people outside of Juba. The camp administrator explained that in the camp the people are laughing together, while outside the camp in distant places, the same ethnic groups are fighting one another. The reason he gave that these people could live peacefully together in the camp was the power of the Word of God.

After touring the camp the delegation met with church elders from the PCOSS who currently live in the camp. An elder gave greetings, saying, "Even though we are living in a hard situation here in Juba, God who created us did not leave us. As Paul put it, even though all our body is suffering, but with the Holy Spirit, God will renew our spirit."

"We understand that in most places the people that God has placed to do ministry in the very local level are the best people to lead us to peace," said Ferguson. "You are the ones who can lead us."

"We need the church to be empowered," a PCOSS pastor responded. "Church leaders, women and youth, need to be empowered to advocate for the peace initiatives in South Sudan. The church has already started it, they have done a lot for peace, especially at the grassroots, at that level, they can play their role."

The Akatgol Presbyterian Church Primary School, in the Jebel area of Juba, was founded in 2011 in response to an influx of refugees. The Murle-speaking Akatgol PCOSS church community sought to provide spiritual, emotional and educational support to the 11,000 new arrivals to the area, many of whom were orphaned children.

The current enrolment is 150 (one third of whom are female) in nursery through grade 5 and grade 8. The enrolment is down from its high of 300 due to difficulties in paying school fees, the movement of populations to refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda and additional challenges for the school. The student population is made up of Murle, Dinka, Nuer, and Central, Eastern and Western Equatorians. In 2014, the school's medium of instruction changed from the Murle language to English as parents from other language groups saw the quality of the education and wanted to enroll their children.

"This school is considered a ministry of the church," the acting headteacher told the delegation. "Every day we and the children are faced with trauma, but we are able to counsel children after training, though we could use more support."

Peace building and education are top priorities for the PCOSS said John Yor, PCOSS general secretary, in a meeting with the delegation and members of the PCOSS education department and two ecumenical, South Sudanese partners, Across and RECONCILE International.

These organizations work together in South Sudan education and peacebuilding projects to strengthen the PCOSS education system by training teachers, mobilizing communities to support education, constructing schools and building a peaceful environment in which students can thrive.

In South Sudan, 87% of teachers are not trained, only 10% of children complete primary school, and girls drop out of school more than in any other place in the world. In the midst of incredible challenges, church partners in South Sudan labour tirelessly to change these heartbreaking statistics.

The deeply committed sisters and brothers were greatly encouraged by Ferguson's presence with them, which served as a reminder that the global church has not forgotten the children of South Sudan.

Nile Theological College

Nile Theological College (NTC) was founded in 1991 in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and established a second campus in Malakal, South Sudan, in 2011.

Malakal, being strategically located on the Nile River, was a contested city during South Sudan's civil war, which broke out in 2013. Much of the city was destroyed including the young college. Miraculously, 80% of the books of the institution were spared and housed by a local politician until Santino Odong, the college principal, was able to arrange transport of the books to the col-



lege's new location in Juba, South Sudan's capital.

Since moving to Juba in 2014, NTC has grown from five students to more than 70. One out of seven of these students currently live in IDP camps in or near Juba, and a strong majority of the students have been displaced from all over the country. Due to the compromised security situation in South Sudan, all of the families of the leadership of the institution live in other countries such as Egypt, Sudan and Uganda.

As this issue of displacement was discussed, Ferguson drew attention to Reformers such as John Calvin and John Knox who were themselves displaced from their homes of origin due to the political and religious upheaval of their times. Thus, much of Reformed thought and thinking germinated during a period of great national and international political and religious turmoil. Calvin even insisted to the city council of Geneva that they set a precedent for being a place which would welcome refugees.

The theme stressed by Ferguson in this discussion—God's providence

and sovereignty in the midst of turbulent times—felt not only like an important theological insight, but served as a means of pastoral care for these South Sudanese leaders who persevere in their service in the face of the multitudinous challenges in this war-torn nation.

Sharon Kandel, PC(USA) mission co-worker, described NTC as “a place of joy and hope.” Indeed, in the midst of the turbulence which has been endemic to this region for generations, NTC shines as a brilliant light to the goodness, faithfulness and glory of God. For the leadership of NTC and for those of us connected to this institution, it is always a welcome reminder to know that we belong to a worldwide community of faith who upholds us in prayer and encourages us as we press forward in faith, she said.

South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church

With its roots in the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church based in Khartoum, the SSPEC was established as a separate denomination in

2011 when South Sudan was created as an independent country, said Madut Tong, deputy general secretary of SSPEC. Currently, the young church has about 30 congregations, but because of the ongoing conflict many of those congregations are in IDP camps or comprised of people displaced from their home regions. Because of the instability and crisis in the country, the focus has been on planting churches and obtaining a basic building to worship in. Pastors and church leaders are bi-vocational—all of them have taken on jobs outside the church to support their families.

Ferguson shared experiences from some other churches in regions of conflict and encouraged the SSPEC leaders, saying that sometimes conflict and crisis provide a chance to re-evaluate systems and make changes.

Philip Akway, general secretary for SSPEC, said that their vision is to combine education with vocational skills to further build people's capacity and ability to thrive in ministry.

Ferguson encouraged the church with this vision, and said that sometimes the church is a person's only opportunity for education, and that the training provided can increase the capacity of the community as a whole.

There was also much discussion about doing such training with other Reformed partners, considering the current conflict-ridden situation that has made resources scarce.

“Women have been included as a key organ in the church,” shared Achol Majok, chairwoman of the SSPEC's women's desk. Women are active in the church, but because of the crisis in the country their activities are currently focused on promoting peace. Women of several congregations gather in monthly prayer gatherings and hold marches to promote peace.

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سلام للقدس، لا استفزاز

"وَفِيْمَا يَسُوغُ يَفْتَرِبُ نَظَرَ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ (القدس) وَبَكَى عَلَيْهَا قَائِلًا: "إِنَّكَ لَوْ عَلِمْتَ أَنْتِ أَيْضًا، حَتَّى فِي يَوْمِكَ هَذَا، مَا هُوَ لِسَلَامِكَ! وَلَكِنَّ الْأَنْ قَدْ أَحْفَى عَنْ عَيْنَيْكَ".

تلقت الشركة العالمية للكنائس المصلحة بيان الرئيس ترامب الذي يعترف بالقدس عاصمةً لإسرائيل، وتوجيهه وزارة الخارجية الأميركية لنقل السفارة إلى القدس، بتخوف وقلق على مسيرة السلام التي كان الكل يتوقون إليها ويجهدون لتحقيقها.

إن الهيئة العامة للشركة العالمية للكنائس المصلحة، في اجتماعها هذا الصيف في لايبزغ، كانت قد أكدت أنه "بما خصَّ حالة المظالم والآلام المستشرية في فلسطين، وصرخة الجماعات المسيحية الفلسطينية، فإن سلامة الإيمان المسيحي وفاعليته هما على المحكِّ"، وألزمت نفسها بأن "تسعى إلى تعزيز مبادرات الحوار، وخدمات السلام المدنية، والوساطات، وتجنب الصراعات والتهمير".

إن خطوة إدارة ترامب هذه تتعارض مع التوافق الدولي القائم والمدعم من الجمعية العمومية للأمم المتحدة ومجلس الأمن؛ كما أنها تتناقض مع سياسة الولايات المتحدة المتبعة لعقود، وتجعل أي اتفاق سلام تفاوضي أكثر صعوبة، وترفع منسوب العنف في المنطقة، وتزيد من التهديدات ضد المسيحيين هناك.

إن الحوارات، لا التصريحات الاستفزازية، هي التي تُمهّد طريق السلام والعدالة. إننا ندعو كنائسنا الأعضاء ليرفعوا الصوت ضد كل خطوة تولد العنف في الشرق الأوسط وتعرق الحوار.

إننا نُعلي أصوات أخواتنا وإخوتنا في القدس، الذين قالوا في رسالة مفتوحة إلى الرئيس ترامب ما يلي:

"كل الذين يحبون القدس يمتلكون الإرادة لجعلها مكاناً ومدينةً للسلام والحياء والكرامة لجميع سكانها. صلوات كل المؤمنين فيها. الأديان الثلاثة والشعبان، الذين ينتمون إليها. تُرفع إلى الله طالبة السلام، كما يقول المرتم: يَا إِلَهَ الْجُنُودِ، أَرْجِعْ. أَطْلِعْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَأَنْظِرْ وَتَعَهَّدْ هَذِهِ الْكَرْمَةَ (مزمور 80: 14). أَلْهِمَّ، قَادِتْنَا، واملأ أذهانهم وقلوبهم عدلاً وسلاماً."

تضامناً مع أخواتنا وإخوتنا في القدس والشرق الأوسط وحول العالم، ندعو إدارة ترامب لتعيد النظر في إعلانها الاعتراف بالقدس عاصمةً لإسرائيل.

يدعونا فصل المجيء للانتظار، كما للانخراط في مسيرة سلام متجددة في العدالة والاحترام والسلام لجميع البشر. ندعو كنائسنا الأعضاء للانضمام إلينا في هذه المسيرة والصلاة:

ربنا الكريم،

في هذه الأوقات العصيبة

تنطلع إليك برجاء.

إن راودتنا الشكوك في الأفعال،

نأتي إليك بايمان.

إن أحاطت بنا المظالم،

نعلم أنك تجلب الفرح

إن طغى العنف،

ننشد سلامك.

إعمل بنا، يا إلهنا؛ ولتدوم السلام في أرض السلام المقدسة هذه ويثبت الرجاء.

أمين.

Consultation strengthens communion through diversity

Continued from page 1

3. Journeying together seeking God's voice
4. Commit to the radical hospitality that Jesus called us to
5. Commit to continued conversation
 - respect
 - love
 - trust
 - listening to a variety of voices including those most affected
6. Commit to praying for and with one another

Regarding these commitments, Winbush said, "It was a very important first step with some clear next steps defined. The six commitments are a good starting point for further work. It is important that the WCRC honours these commitments."

"Generally, I was delighted that we have agreed on the six commitments," said Ayete-Nyampong. "From my African perspectives, the six commitments set the foundation for further dialogues, recognizing that we are all in communion and have roles to play to deepen our communion without rejecting individuals who express different opinions or have different expressions of sexuality."

"The Chennai Consultation should be recognized as a 'break-through' process that will positively impact our Communion as a Reformed family. The Chennai consultation has made a positive historic mark in our ecumenical history," Ayete-Nyampong concluded.

The work of the consultation will next be fed into the strategic planning process currently underway. It is anticipated that a new strategic plan will be adopted by the WCRC Executive Committee at its meeting in May and will provide the directions for the organization until the next General Council. ●

A Call to Prayer and Support for Taiwan

The heavens are yours [O Lord], the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them.

—Psalm 89:11

A 6.4-magnitude earthquake, one of the strongest in recent years, struck off the coast of Hualien City, Taiwan, at 11:50 p.m. the night of 6 February 2018.

Several people were killed and dozens remain missing as extensive damage was reported throughout the area. About 40,000 homes are without water, and many highways and bridges are closed. More than 100 aftershocks have been recorded since the earthquake, while 90 weaker earthquakes happened along Taiwan's east coast in the week prior to the quake.

Tan Beng-Chi, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), and Lyim Hong-Tiong, PCT general secretary, have said in a statement, "As is the norm in disaster response the initial critical focus is on the rescue efforts and care of the victims. In the coming days as thorough assessments are carried out it will become clearer as to the full extent of the damage."

The PCT is coordinating its relief teams through denominational offices, and a response and rescue centre was immediately established at Hualien Kang Presbyterian Church.

The statement issued calls for prayer and support:

Please pray for the victims and their families and the rescue workers especially their health and wellbeing; our country is experiencing a very cold spell and rain fall in many areas the recent weeks. Currently Taiwan's educational institutions are on winter vacation and the major Lunar New Year national holidays is fast approaching (15-20 February); the current disaster inevitably is impacting the tourists and hospitality industries in the affected area.

Please join us in praying for those impacted by the earthquake, both immediately and into the future. Please pray for those responding to the needs, especially those putting themselves in harms' way as the search for survivors continues.

An earthquake disaster response fund is already established. Donations can be made through the PCT website on this page: <http://english.pct.org.tw/enGnS.htm> ●

Iglesias comprometidas en la recuperación de Puerto Rico

Amás de dos meses de que el huracán María devastara Puerto Rico, la isla está lejos de recuperarse.

Miguel Rosa, pasante de la Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas este año, visitó su hogar en Puerto Rico hace dos semanas y pudo ver el panorama completo del daño causado por el huracán, y las tormentas subsecuentes, ya que tiene amigos y familiares dispersos en toda la isla.

“El único miembro de mi familia que tiene electricidad es mi abuela que vive en San Juan, la capital del país, lo cual tomó alrededor de seis semanas en restablecerse”, dijo Miguel.

“Pese a que el medicamento está llegando, la falta de energía y agua de manera regular está causando problemas; es difícil administrar y operar los hospitales. Y a partir del huracán, el crimen va en aumento”, dijo Miguel. “Se robaron uno de los generadores del hospital; los habitantes también son víctimas de los ladrones pues entran a sus casas a robar”.

“La mayor parte de Puerto Rico está aún en la fase de respuesta inmediata para recuperarse de un desastre”, Len Blauwkamp, director del World Renew’s Disaster Response Services, confirmó después de visitar la isla en noviembre. “Algunas organizaciones aún están distribuyendo comida y agua a los sobrevivientes. El servicio de energía

eléctrica es esporádico, especialmente en las zonas rurales. En la capital, San Juan, ningún semáforo funciona”.

Muchos residentes, entre ellos los padres de Miguel, están usando generadores pequeños para sus casas, puesto que la red eléctrica no regresará a la normalidad antes de marzo (si acaso). La familia de Miguel tiene agua, pero no es el caso de todos (la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias de los Estados Unidos reporta que el 83% de los residentes ahora tiene agua potable).

“Ir al lado oeste es estremecedor”, dice Miguel. “Hay algunos señalamientos de tránsito de los cuales uno funciona y los tres siguientes no; los restaurantes permanecen cerrados; las tiendas de comestibles no están bien abastecidas; hay deslaves en los caminos que atraviesan las montañas”.

El impacto que ha sufrido la vida cotidiana de los puertorriqueños es dramático. “Algunos miembros de mi familia tuvieron que mudarse debido a todos estos problemas”, dijo Miguel. “Así que están haciendo lo mejor que pueden con lo que tienen”.

Y aún en medio de la crisis permanente hay signos de esperanza, a medida que las congregaciones se convierten en centros de asistencia y las agencias eclesiales de ayuda humanitaria proveen ayuda de emergencia y trabajan en el plan de recuperación a largo plazo.

“En la iglesia del secretario permanente de mi presbiterio cocinaron, con la ayuda de otras iglesias del mismo lugar, 42 pavos y entregaron varias comidas al pueblo entero”, dijo Miguel. “Lo mismo pasó en Aguadilla, hay iglesias

recibiendo comida del gobierno y distribuyéndola. Las iglesias están activas y tratan de dar lo mejor; una iglesia dio una estación potabilizadora de agua a la comunidad”.

“Incluso después de 53 días sin electricidad, deberíamos preguntarnos qué hemos dado en lugar de qué es lo que hemos recibido, la generosidad es necesaria”, dijo Arelis Cardona Morales, ministra de la Iglesia Presbiteriana de Monteflores. «Nuestra generosidad nos hace sentir interiormente más ricos, la generosidad cambia todo. El desastre ha sido de alguna manera una bendición; en un inicio estábamos llenos de miedo, pero ahora vemos esto como una oportunidad para estar juntos, compartir y trabajar juntos entre todas las iglesias del presbiterio para proveer comida y agua, y también para intercambiar ideas”.

Hay muchas maneras de ayudar. “La Iglesia Presbiteriana (EE.UU.) está enviando ayuda a través de los presbiterios”, dijo Miguel. “Tenemos muchas congregaciones dando comida, refugio y agua”.

Varias agencias de ayuda humanitaria de iglesias miembro de la CMIR están involucradas y todas están solicitando donaciones.

Partes de este artículo provienen de noticias publicadas por la Iglesia Cristiana Reformada y por el Presbyterian News Service. ●

Reformed Church of East Africa approves ordination of women

After years of discussion the Reformed Church of East Africa's (RCEA) General Synod approved the ordination of women at its synod in November.

The current RCEA moderator, Musa Kipkorir Kapkong Maina, expressed his joy and thanked the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) for being a beacon of light.

"In this area, WCRC has walked with us for quite a while especially in support for women on the matter of theological education," says Rev. Musa Kipkorir Kapkong Maina, RCEA moderator. "Being at the General Council inspired us further and led the General Synod to pass the resolution to okay ordination of women."

Najla Kassab, WCRC president and the second woman ordained in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, expressed her joy on this occasion: "We rejoice with RCEA for the decision taken to ordain the first woman to the office of minister of Word and Sacrament and for the courage to listen to the Holy Spirit and stand for justice."

The WCRC's 2017 General Council adopted "A Declaration of Faith on Women's Ordination," the introduction of which states: "God, through the Holy Spirit, calls both women and men to participate fully in all the ministries of the church. ...In some of the cultural contexts in which our churches live today, this declaration goes against the prevailing ethos. Thus faithful Christians are often called to be countercultural."

Maina said that after vigorous debate and research findings tabled by Diphus Chemorion, the synod advisor, the decision was finally reached by the synod. The RCEA is hoping to ordain the first woman to the office of minister of Word and Sacrament later this year.

"The news was received with jubilation but we are also cognizant of the fact that we have many still conservative. One thing however we rejoice is that that decision has not divided the church through schisms. Please join us in prayer and also share this development with our other member churches that they may give us moral support and encouragement," says Maina.

"We stand in solidarity with the women who will be ordained for the path has challenges still, and also with all the churches that are still struggling with their journey," says Kassab, "but in hope we await a better future that reflects the love of God and the healing power for the body of Christ. This is empowering to us as a communion, as well, where our voice through statements and documents becomes a story about people, about change and a better world."

Since 2002 efforts have been made by RCEA in bringing forth this issue, giving theological direction and incorporating the opinions of RCEA's congregants to enable the synod to make a decision.

In the RCEA moderator's report during the 29th General Synod (20-23 November 2002), the moderator expressed the importance of working toward the possibility of admitting women to the ordained ministry: "I can assure you that your synod office is under pressure from our fraternal friends and especially partners whom we share common reformed heritage. Whether we accept or not we will not be the first to do so. Already PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) and other Reformed churches in the world has accepted..." ●

WCRC engages with churches in South Sudan

Continued from page 9

Several members have been trained in trauma healing and reconciliation at the RECONCILE Peace Institute, and workshops have been held to promote healing. Achol is keen on women being involved in the process when the church's constitution is reviewed and translated from Arabic into English.

The delegation visited the Jebel Market Congregation, which was proud to show off their newly constructed building with shiny red iron roof sheets and fresh-caked mud walls. Support for the roof sheets was given from the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Booth Foundation. The church, established in 2006, had been worshipping under tarps for three years since their temporary building collapsed in 2015. Most of the members live in an IDP camp at the edge of town and often are not able to make it to church because of lack of transport. The congregation worships in the Nuer language, one of several languages used in SSPEC congregations.

The leadership of SSPEC was encouraged to hear about examples of ecumenical efforts that the WCRC has facilitated. Ferguson emphasized that the strength of the WCRC is leveraging the experience and skills of churches to partner together to benefit each other. SSPEC is interested in exploring membership in the WCRC and to benefit from the experiences and connections with other churches in areas of conflict, crisis and displacement.

South Sudan is one of the areas of the world in which the WCRC is focusing its efforts to promote peace, justice and reconciliation. Other areas are Colombia, the Korean peninsula and the Middle East.

Thanks to the following PC(USA) mission co-workers who contributed to this article: Leisa Wagstaff, Nancy Smith-Mather, Kristi Rice, Bob Rice. ●

Feministische Theologin aus West-Timor mit dem Schweizer Sylvia-Michel-Preis ausgezeichnet

Am Sonntag, 4. März, ist in Bremgarten AG in einem festlichen Gottesdienst zum fünften Mal der internationale Sylvia-Michel-Preis zur Förderung der Leitungsfunktionen von Frauen in der Kirche verliehen worden. Preisträgerin ist Dr. theol. Mery Kolimon, Präsidentin der Evangelischen Kirche von Timor in Indonesien.

Die 1972 geborene Pfarrerin studierte Theologie in den Niederlanden und schloss ihr Studium mit einer Dissertation über die Theologie des Empowerments ab. Seither setzt sie sich für Opfer von Menschenrechtsverletzungen ein und kämpft in Indonesien gegen die Diskriminierung von Frauen. 2015 erschien ihr Buch «Forbidden Memories» über Schicksale von Frauen, die in Ostindonesien die antikommunistische Säuberungswelle von 1965 überlebt haben.

Seit 2015 ist Kolimon Präsidentin der mit zwei Millionen Mitgliedern zweitgrössten protestantischen Kirche in Indonesien GMIT Kupang (Evangelische Kirche von Timor). Dort hat sie das Netzwerk JPIT für Frauen aufgebaut und führt zahlreiche theologische Forschungsprojekte mit jungen Theologinnen durch. Obwohl in der GMIT Kupang in der Mehrheit weibliche Pfarrpersonen amten, ist sie dort die erste Frau in Leitungsposition.

Kirchenratspräsident Christoph Weber-Berg hob in seiner Laudatio den «eindrucksvollen Mut» hervor, mit dem Kolimon gegen Ungerechtigkeit und Diskriminierung und für Versöhnung kämpfe. Durch Vorbilder wie das Ihre würden Frauen weltweit ermutigt, Leitungsfunktionen in Kirchen zu übernehmen. Der Preis solle nicht nur eine materielle Würdigung sein,



Die Preisträgerin des Sylvia-Michel-Preises 2018, Mery Kolimon (2.v.li.), umrahmt vom Aargauer Kirchenratspräsident Christoph Weber-Berg, Theres Meierhofer-Lauffer (2.v.re.) und Verena Enzler, Synodalratspräsidentin Reformierte Kirche Kanton Solothurn (re.)

sondern «eine öffentlich wahrgenommene Botschaft der schweizerischen Kirchen an ihre Schwesterkirchen».

In ihrer Danksagung sagte die Preisträgerin, dass der Preis nicht ihr als Person zukomme. Sie nehme ihn trotzdem dankbar an, weil er «die Identität ihrer Kirche» sowie «ihre eigene Identität als Verteidigerin der Menschenrechte» stärke. Mit ihm werde nicht nur sie gewürdigt, sondern «viele, viele Freundinnen und Freunde, die, oft unter Einsatz ihres Lebens, für Gerechtigkeit kämpfen». Den Preis widme sie dem Andenken ihrer Mutter, die sich trotz beschiedener Verhältnisse dafür eingesetzt habe, dass auch sie als Frau in den Genuss einer höheren Schulbildung gekommen sei. Heute noch hätten sehr viele Frauen in Timor keine Chance auf Bildung, und viele würden Opfer von Menschenhandel. Ferner widme sie den Preis allen Frauen, Männern und Kindern die in prekären Verhältnissen leben oder Diskriminierung wegen ihrer sexuellen Identität oder Orientierung erleiden müssten. «Die-

ser Preis soll sie inspirieren, Träume zu haben und für ihre Rechte zu kämpfen», sagte Kolimon.

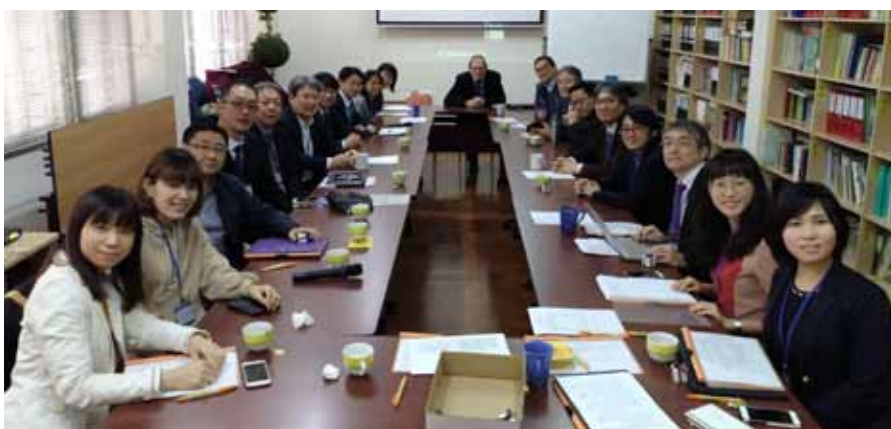
Theres Meierhofer-Lauffer, ehemalige Kirchenratspräsidentin des Verbands der reformierten Kirchengemeinden im Kanton Obwalden, erklärte als Vertreterin der «PanKS» die Bedeutung des internationalen Sylvia-Michel-Preises. Er wird seit 2009 an Personen und Projekte verliehen, die sich für die Förderung der Leitungsfunktionen von Frauen in der Kirche einsetzen. Er wird von den amtierenden und ehemaligen Präsidentinnen und Vizepräsidentinnen der Reformierten Landeskirchen der Schweiz (PanKS) zusammen mit der Weltgemeinschaft Reformierter Kirche vergeben. Das Preisgeld von 5000 US-Dollar wird von der Reformierten Landeskirche Aargau gestiftet. Der Name des Preises geht zurück auf Pfarrerin Sylvia Michel, die 1980 erste Präsidentin der Reformierten Landeskirche Aargau wurde und damit als erste Frau in Europa das Präsidium einer kirchlichen Exekutive übernahm. ●



A “Vision & Mission: Widening the Circle” consultation was held in Hannover, Germany, in mid-March. A diverse group of church leaders and activists were brought together to share their unique insights into the WCRC’s strategic planning process. “These stories are shared today so that they become our stories, too,” said one participant. The consultation’s recommendations will be incorporated into a draft strategic plan which, when completed by the Strategic Planning Committee and approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting in May, will guide the WCRC’s work in the next seven years.

The World Council of Churches’ Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, meeting under the theme “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship,” was held in early March in Arusha, Tanzania. The ecumenical conference included participants from Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and African Instituted churches.

The WCRC was well represented with more than 80 participants. This included President Najla Kassab, who led the opening worship service; Jerry Pillay, past president; Chris Ferguson, general secretary, and Hanns Lessing, executive secretary for communion and theology.



The Northeast Asia Area Council (NEAAC) met for their bi-annual meeting in Hong Kong at the end of January with General Secretary Chris Ferguson in attendance. They took up the theme from the 2017 General Council, “Living God, renew and transform us,” and asked, what is the call of the living God at the present time? A keynote address, presentations from each member church and an address by Ferguson were included in the programme. Joshua C.S. Lian, of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, was elected as NEAAC’s next moderator.

Sunk with Fear, Sent in Hope

Continued from page 16

getting new life as we signed the Wittenberg Witness with the Lutheran World Federation, pledging even closer common work between our communities.

In this tough year the dry bones have received the gift of life within our family of churches and beyond. We hear the rattling of Black Lives Matter moving for freedom. We hear the noise of holding hands across borders on the Korean peninsula. We hear Dalits and Adivasi peoples make common cause with all those who battle against exclusion and domination.

I saw the dry bones coming together and heard a rattling of life in a story from Florida, USA. A family was trapped by currents in the ocean as they tried to rescue their sons who had been pulled out by a rip tide. Each person trying to help was unable to do it alone. And worse, they themselves got trapped in the swirl and pull of the current.

A woman on the beach decided that she would go out and bring them back but knew that the disconnected bodies on the beach would have to come together. She mobilized 80 people on the beach to join hands and link arms to form a human chain to wade into the water and rescue the family.

She called the disconnected to reconnect for life.

Our Communion has received such a call. Called to communion, committed to justice, we are brought by the Spirit to the valley of the bones, sunk up to our neck in fear and then mobilized in hope by God’s Spirit through the living power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Amen. ●

Easter blessings so that all may have life abundant!



Chris Ferguson

From the General Secretary

Sunk with Fear, Sent in Hope

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

— Ezekiel 37:1-10 (NRSV)

This last year has been hard in the life of our world. All of us in this Communion of over 100 million faithful have gone with Ezekiel and encountered an endless valley filled with the bones of broken bodies—those destroyed and uprooted by war, violence, climate change, poverty, hatred and discrimination. Creation itself is wounded and in peril!

Through our prayers, we, like Ezekiel, have been led to valleys of bones, to broken places: to those pushed off their lands and denied livelihood; to those saying no to a culture of rape and violence against women; to those who struggle for life against a market economy that puts wealth in the hand of the few and bleeds the life from the many; to those who have simply lost hope and direction. The Spirit guides us to where life is threatened, where our churches seek migration justice for those forced to flee their homeland, where churches struggle for non-military solutions to war and conflict based on dialogue and reconciliation rooted in justice, to where people of faith join with all those who struggle against racism, casteism and white supremacy.

And the God of Life in the midst of the valley presses us with the hardest question: "Can these bones live?" We call on God for that answer, but the Spirit—through those who are most violated, oppressed and excluded—answers back: "Prophecy to the broken bodies. Breath will return, life will animate again that which has been put down." But we must be part of the picture! Life will mean joining bone to bone, body to body, mobilizing for life and transformation by the very ones most afflicted.

The women who went to the tomb to stand among the bones of the broken Jesus asked also and were also given a task: "Go and tell." Remember—remember Galilee where there is still a struggle for life and land—Jesus' body joins with others to breathe life into the struggle for life.

One of the ways that God has used our Communion in the last year is to bring us together through our General Council and lead us to the valley of bones, to see clearly the threats to life. We were then called to prophesy, to connect the disconnected, to move into solidarity from brokenness. And we will be, as Ezekiel learned, a great multitude, filled with the Spirit, and we shall live, and we will recover the land, and the Lord will act.

At the Council we felt the disconnected, dry bones begin to come together when we celebrated the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, saying that theological disputes of the past no longer have the power to divide us. We felt the rattle of bones

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