

GRAND RAPIDS 2010

**PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
UNITING GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE
WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES**

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN USA
JUNE 18-28, 2010**

**REV. DR. SETRI NYOMI
GENERAL SECRETARY**

**WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES
150 ROUTE DE FERNEY
1211 GENEVA 2, SWITZERLAND**

THE WCRC LOGO

The symbol designed by Judith Rempel Smucker identifies the family of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. When dismantled into four key elements, its visual theology reinforces verbal theology and invites prayerful reflection. The elements are: vessel, circle, interwoven threads, and cross.

ISBN 978-2-9700686-8-6

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P.O. Box 2100, 150 Route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

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The text was edited by Setri Nyomi, with the assistance of Penny Blachut, Hartmut Lucke and Elizabeth Visinand. The recorder was Carol Veldman Rudie.

Cover, layout and design: Judith Rempel Smucker

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PREFACE

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.
(Ephesians 4: 1-6)

June 2010 will be etched forever in the history of the Christian church. Here Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Disciples, Waldensian and some United and Uniting Churches came together in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the USA to affirm their reception of the gift of unity given by God. The unity of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) into the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the reception of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) as an associate member mark an agreement with these words in the letter to the Ephesians – that we know we are one body and one Spirit, just as we were called to the one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. We responded to the calling to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Reformed unity is a contribution to the unity of the entire church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we appreciate the presence among us of ecumenical colleagues from different church families and organizations. We are not alone or united in order to strengthen just one part of the Christian family – this would constitute isolationist denominationalism which would be in contradiction to a living church willing to live in obedience to its Lord Jesus Christ who prayed that we might be one.

The Uniting General Council (UGC) in Grand Rapids was a celebration of this unity. These proceedings document that celebration. We share it within the WCRC community as well as with the wider Christian family. It records the last Assembly of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) and the last General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) – both of which took place in the morning of June 18, 2010. Both WARC and REC then took actions which gave them a new life together in the WCRC. This book is therefore mainly the record of the proceedings of the UGC of the WCRC which took place from June 18 to 26.

We offer the Record of Proceedings to our constituency and our partners with great gratitude to God for the gift of unity. The records show that the delegates affirmed a strong vision for the Reformed family of churches ready to live out that union in a manner that brings us closer together in a Eucharistic covenant and makes us even more committed to justice in the world.

We are very grateful to God for the two presidents of the UGC, Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick and Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff. They were the retiring Presidents of WARC and REC and therefore also led the two organizations in the last couple of years of working towards unity. For their vision and leadership, we are grateful to God. We are grateful to God for Dr. Richard van Houten, the last General Secretary of REC, for his leadership and commitment to unity within the Reformed family. In addition to his being my counterpart in this process, he was also the Coordinator of the UGC and worked tirelessly towards a successful General Council. We again give thanks to God for Dr. Peter Borgdorff and the entire North America Arrangements Committee for their diligence in preparing to host the UGC.

We give thanks to God for the staff teams of both WARC and REC which made it possible for the General Council to take place successfully. We were joined by a whole network of volunteers and coopted staff in Grand Rapids – for these we are grateful to God. My special appreciation goes to Ms Carol Rudie who was our meticulous minute taker in Grand Rapids. I appreciate our entire WCRC staff team in Geneva for working hard to follow up on UGC mandates and to bring out these proceedings. Two of them, Kristine Greenaway and Penny Blachut, have worked especially hard on the Record of Proceedings. They have enjoyed the support of our faithful volunteer, Hartmut Lucke and a whole host of translators and colleagues who have helped to make sure we have the proceedings in different languages.

As you read these proceedings, we call on you to give thanks to God for the WCRC, and to pray for us. Pray that we may stay faithful to the vision in carrying out programmatic directions mandated by the UGC. Pray that we will have the resources to carry them out. Pray that our communion will stay committed to unity and to justice. Let us all renew our commitment to leading lives worthy of our calling and to making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Setri Nyomi, WCRC General Secretary

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNITING GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES**

**Grand Rapids, Michigan USA
June 18-28, 2010**

FRIDAY, 18 JUNE 2010

REC GENERAL ASSEMBLY: 08:00-09:00

Peter Borgdorff, President of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) called the Assembly of REC to order. He welcomed delegates and led a brief devotional based on Psalm 145, calling attention to moments of gratitude for significant events. He led the Assembly in prayer. The General Secretary, Richard van Houten indicated that 28 of the 41 member churches were represented by delegates and three more churches were expected later, therefore the Assembly had a quorum. Delegates of the REC Assembly rose and affirmed the REC Constitution thus constituting the Assembly.

The General Secretary informed delegates that three churches had been admitted into REC since the last Assembly in 2005 and would need to be confirmed by the REC Assembly. They were: The Presbyterian Church of Vietnam, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Myanmar and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Myanmar. Each admission was accepted by a unanimous vote.

The President, Peter Borgdorff then moved the delegates to the agenda item of the Articles of Union between REC and WARC – the agreement binding the two organizations into one. He called on the General Secretary to introduce the Articles of Union to the delegates. Delegates voted one by one on the points in Section B. Points 1a and 1b received a unanimous affirmative vote. All the other points in B were affirmed by the delegates in the Assembly. The General Secretary further explained Point 5 as one organization expressed in two entities. Point 9 on the presidents of REC and WARC until June 2010 continuing on as members of the new Executive Committee until the next General Council was voted on. It received an affirmative vote. Point 10 also received an affirmative vote. There was then an umbrella motion to approve the Articles of Union. It was unanimously agreed by vote. There was a spontaneous applause.

The President recognized past Presidents and past Executive Committee members of REC. He recognized Henk DeWaard, Kadarmanto Hardjowasito and Douwe Visser, the past Presidents who were present. He also remembered Paul G. Schrottenboer, the

work of the first General Secretary of RES and then recognized Richard van Houten, the second General Secretary who has served for more than 22 years in that capacity. He also called on all to appreciate the work that Susan van Houten has done in supporting Richard in this service.

The President called on Margriet Gosker to make a presentation. Margriet unveiled the book that was written in honour of Richard van Houten – *A Man for All Seasons*. About 15 persons contributed to this book edited by Margriet Gosker. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Susan. All delegates applauded with great appreciation.

The President expressed gratitude to all who made this historic moment possible. Kobus Gerber took the floor and expressed appreciation for the work that Douwe Visser and Peter Borgdorff did in leading the organization as Presidents since the last Assembly in 2005. Six other delegates gave thanks to God for the work of REC and congratulated REC for the hard work that went into the process of unity, and expressed hope for the World Communion of Reformed Churches to bind member churches of the new organization together in a close family.

Kobus Gerber offered the closing prayers.

WARC 25TH GENERAL COUNCIL: 9:00-10:00

The President, Clifton Kirkpatrick called the 25th General Council to order. He quoted Psalm 133, stressing that it is God's intention for Christians to dwell together in unity. He called on one of WARC's Vice Presidents, Lilia Rafalimanana to lead in the opening prayer.

The General Secretary, Setri Nyomi, noted that 132 member churches were present and more were expected. Therefore there was a quorum. The President duly constituted the General Council and noted the pain of many delegates who were denied visas, and therefore were not present.

The General Secretary pointed to the brief agenda of the General Council. The agenda was adopted.

The first item to be acted on was the Articles of Union. The General Secretary introduced the document. He noted that this document had earlier been circulated to all member churches in REC and WARC and placed on the UGC website. He described the first part as giving thanks to God for the history of the antecedent streams that are now uniting. The delegates then considered the resolutions in

Part B one by one. Each was adopted unanimously. Point 5 was further explained by the President, indicating that the new organization was one but with two corporate entities – one registered in Switzerland and the other registered in the USA.

On Point 10, President Clifton Kirkpatrick explained this included an affirmation that staff contracts would be honoured until their expiration. He also noted that that meant the current General Secretary of WARC would continue as the General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches until his term expired in 2014.

During the discussion on the Articles of Union, four interventions strongly urged that WCRC should take gender justice seriously. Other questions raised included the role of Area Councils, such as AIPRAL, in the new WCRC, whether or not the name “Evangelical” should be included in the list of names in Point B2 of the Articles of Union and other documents, and what happens in the case of incapacity of any of those covered in the transitional provisions of the Articles of Union (Points B9 and 10). These were all responded to. In response to a question, the President called on Stephen Kendall, as the chair of the WARC Finance network to provide brief information to delegates about the current financial challenges of the organization. He did so, noting that there were major challenges facing both WARC and REC, and expressing the hope that the UGC would not run a deficit. He stressed that the real resource of the organization were the annual membership contributions of member churches.

There was also a question that called for reassurance that the new organization would take into account the woundedness experienced particularly in South Africa and would be a beacon of justice in that regard. The President responded and indicated that actions will come through this UGC to strengthen those commitments. The General Secretary informed delegates that a sign of this commitment is demonstrated in the fact that one of the churches suspended by the 1982 Ottawa 21st General Council remains suspended until visible change occurs.

At the end of the votes on each point in the Articles of Union, the President called for a vote on the entire Articles of Union. This was unanimously approved as delegates stood up and voted. The joy of the moment was captured by delegates singing the Caribbean Hallelujah.

The President took time to express gratitude to staff – past and present, noting how staff have, like the Israelites in Egypt, been making bricks without straw. The President then expressed gratitude to officers and Executive Committee members. In his concluding remarks the President celebrated the history of WARC noting the milestones of 1875, 1891 and 1970 when the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding on to the Presbyterian Order and the International Congregational Council merged in Nairobi, Kenya. He appreciated the gifts offered by the last three General Secretaries of WARC – Edmond Perret, Milan Opocensky and Setri Nyomi.

The President expressed special appreciation to Professor Darrell Guder who had been at every General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches since 1964, and has particularly served to facilitate the language and documentation services. He called on him to give some words of reminiscence. Professor Guder noted that the 46 years in which he served have been enormously enriching. He echoed the shifts in the Christian community and the fact that the WARC had been a community of churches and people offering mutual services and that WARC had been very modest about itself and what it offers the world. He named the most memorable of experiences being the women and men who have served WARC as interpreters and translators. President Clifton Kirkpatrick gave a card of recognition to Professor Guder as a token of the appreciation of the Reformed family worldwide.

The President gave thanks to God for the three living past Presidents of WARC – Allan Boesak, Jane Dempsey Douglas and Choan-Seng Song.

Jane Dempsey Douglas offered the closing prayers.

WCRC OPENING WORSHIP

The Uniting General Council began with an uplifting opening worship. Leaders of member churches of both WARC and REC from different regions of the world entered in a procession from four different corners of the arena. The two outgoing presidents, Clifton Kirkpatrick (WARC) and Peter Borgdorff (REC), preached the sermon.

WELCOME BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE/NATIVE AMERICANS

To welcome the Uniting General Council and its participants to the land, a team of leaders from the First Nations of Canada and Native Americans from the USA warmly and traditionally welcomed the Uniting General Council. The entry was led by Elder George Martin of the Ojibwe people carrying the Eagle Staff. He welcomed the

Uniting General Council on behalf of the Ojibwe, Potawatomi and Odawa people. They presented a meaningful symbol of welcome to the leadership of the soon to be formed World Communion of Reformed Churches. Presidents Peter Borgdorff and Clifton Kirkpatrick received the gift and in turn on behalf of the UGC delegates gave to the American Indian leaders a symbolic sword beaten into a ploughshare – symbolizing a commitment to moving beyond the era of injustice supported by weapons of destruction into a common journey of justice and reconciliation.

In a spontaneous action, Elder Mike Peters gave a Peace Medal that has been in his family and which is a significant symbol of the 1850 peace treaty signed with his people. It was received very gratefully with recognition of the meaningfulness of the gift.

PLENARY SESSION I: 14:15-17:20

Moderator Clifton Kirkpatrick opened the session and called on Dr. Allan Boesak to offer the opening prayer. Gaylen Byker, president of Calvin College welcomed the delegates. President Kirkpatrick requested approval for the Public Issues Committee to determine an appropriate response concerning the absence of 74 delegates due to visa denial.

None objecting, the matter was referred to the Public Issues Committee.

Adoption of Rules of Procedure (UGC Handbook, Appendix A, page 63)

The Moderator requested a show of cards to indicate the assembly's feeling toward the Rules of Procedures. After discerning the body, the Moderator called for a vote by a show of cards.

The Rules of Procedure were unanimously adopted.

Approval of the Provisionally Amended Constitution (DOC 8)

Peter Borgdorff introduced the document by describing the process that led to its construction. Although already a consensus document, additional amendments have since been provisionally incorporated into the Constitution; these are listed in DOC 8.1 and require separate action. The Council will consider the Constitution in theme-related sections.

I. Articles I-V of the Constitution

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

- By a show of cards, Amendment 1, changing Article II, was unanimously approved.
- By a show of cards, Amendment 2, changing Article III C and D was unanimously approved.

Articles I-V as amended: by a show of cards Articles I-V were adopted unanimously.

II. Article VI

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

After a process of discernment, it was decided that, for the sake of clarity, the word "Composition" should be used as a sub-heading rather than the word "Membership". The suggestion that Article VI's heading should be "Membership and Procedures" was deemed by the Moderator to be a possibility for further editing later. Article VI as amended: the discussion of the meaning of Article VI-F concerned the difference between "alliance" and "communion". The concluding process of discernment approved the original language.

By a show of cards: Article VI was adopted without objection.

III. Articles VII-IX

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

By a show of cards Recommendation 4, changing Article IX, was approved unanimously. Articles VII-IX as amended: after much discussion and many uses of the discernment method – including the use of small group discussion and prayer around the issue of gender justice for women in delegations of four or more as described in Article IX-C, the Moderator defined the four dominant strains of thinking as follows:

- The original wording
- The addition of "one third men" so that the language would read "...at least one third of the delegates shall be women and at least one third men..."
- The requirement that "at least one half of the delegates shall be women..."
- The use of the word "normally": "normally at least one half of the delegates shall be women..."

By a show of cards, the Moderator determined that the third and fourth alternatives were favoured. While initially delegates were evenly divided between the two, a helpful comment that "shall" is not "must" but means "normally", the Moderator called for a second

test of the body. By a show of cards, it was determined that at least 60% of the delegates favoured the wording "at least one half of the delegates shall be women..."

The Moderator declared that wording approved.

A second concern arose around the delegation size for the smallest churches. Because these churches are allowed only two delegates, they may have difficulty in having youth attend as delegates. After a process of discernment, and by a show of cards, it was decided that Categories 1 and 2 should be combined so that even the smallest churches can send three delegates.

Additional comments made during the discussion:

- While baptism is (and should be upheld as) the condition of membership, many today are not "members" of the church; they should not therefore be overlooked.
- Churches are reminded that they can also send observers to General Council meetings.

By a show of cards, Articles VII-IX were adopted unanimously.

IV. Articles X-XI

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

None objecting and by a show of cards, Recommendation 5, changing Article X, was approved. Articles X and XI as amended: on a question of gender balance in the composition of the Executive Committee the Moderator determined that the Bylaws were the correct place to address that concern. On a question of adequate local input into the admission and suspension of membership in Article X-F-7, and by a show of cards, the additional wording "in consultation with local member churches" was approved. In response to a query, the Moderator noted that the question of the distribution of regional representation would be addressed in election rules.

By a show of cards, Articles X and XI were adopted.

VI. Article XII and XIII

By a show of cards, Articles XII and XIII were adopted unanimously.

VII. Article XIV

By a show of cards, Article XIV was adopted unanimously.

VIII. Article XV-XVI

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

By a show of cards, Recommendation 6, changing Article XVI, was adopted unanimously. Articles XV-XVI as amended: in response to the comment that area secretaries are part of the area executive, so that the wording needs to change for the description of the area committees, the General Secretary explained that areas can have as many officers as they need as listed in their own Bylaws.

Clarification of Article XVI-A and the difficulty that two decision-making bodies seem to exist reminded delegates that the Executive Committee acts only when the General Council is not in session. The purpose of XVI-E is to make the area's officers "staff" of the WCRC so that the work is integrated. After a process of discernment, the Council affirmed that these provisions clearly apply both to the existing Area Councils and to new ones that might be established. By a show of cards, Articles XV-XVI were adopted.

IX. Article XVII

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

Note was made of the fact that this recommendation re-works the original Article XVII and exists to facilitate tax-exempt contributions from the US.

By a show of cards, the new Article XVII was adopted.

X. Article XVIII

Concern was expressed that the General Council should take seriously its need to approve Bylaw amendments made by the Executive Committee. After a process of discernment and by a show of cards the following substitute wording was approved: "Such changes shall be submitted to the next General Council for ratification." This wording replaces the last sentence of Article XVIII-C.

Additional requests for action were made:

- By a show of cards, the request for gender equity in the secretariat was referred to the Policy Committee.
- The Business Committee will look at the Constitution's headings so that they flow logically.

By a show of cards, Article XVIII was adopted.

Adoption of the Bylaws (DOC 8)

Recommendations for amendments to the WCRC Draft Constitution (DOC 8.1)

None objecting to the clarifying recommended change of Article II, the recommendation was declared passed.

Bylaws as amended

The proposal made in the previous discussion on the Constitution now requested an additional sentence in II-A-1: "Half of the members of the Executive Committee and half of the officers of WCRC shall be women." After a process of discernment and by a show of cards, the Council did not accept this proposed change.

By a show of cards the Bylaws as amended were adopted.

The Moderator asked for a standing vote on the adoption of the Constitution as amended and the Bylaws as amended. All rose. The motion carried unanimously. All participants sang the Doxology in praise of God for the action just taken on the Constitution of the World Communion of Reformed Churches as a major symbol in the formation of the Communion. (See Appendix 37 for Constitution as adopted).

Final Business for the day

- The General Secretary extended a warm welcome to the ecumenical delegates.
- Section and Committee leaders have already been chosen although a few leaders will need to be replaced. The General Secretary asked the Council to approve the list of leaders and to give the Business Committee the authority to make replacements where needed. With a show of cards, approval was given.
- A request was made for the future inclusion of a categorization of "ordained/laity" to the criteria for section and committee member selection.
- Heads of each delegation were requested to come forward to sign the first four articles of the Constitution.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

The Plenary Session was followed by a cookout on the lawns of Calvin College.

EVENING SERVICE

The Asia/Pacific regions led the evening devotion in the Calvin College Chapel.

SATURDAY, 19 JUNE 2010**BIBLE STUDY AND MORNING WORSHIP: 08:00–09:30**

Participants took part in Bible study groups under the theme "Unity under the sign of the Cross" in different classrooms all over the Calvin College campus. This was followed by the morning worship for the day with the theme "Remaining in God, Becoming One". The preacher was Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

PLENARY SESSION II: 10:30–12:30**Quorum and agenda**

President Peter Borgdorff called the session to order. After some announcements, he called on General Secretary Richard van Houten to inform the house on whether or not there was a quorum. He indicated that it takes the presence of 116 member churches to constitute a quorum. By the beginning of the Uniting General Council delegates of 148 member churches had arrived and more were expected. The Moderator of the session Peter Borgdorff confirmed that the UGC was duly constituted because there was a quorum. General Secretary Richard van Houten also introduced the Timetable and agenda of the Uniting General Council for adoption. The agenda and Timetable were duly adopted unanimously by a show of cards.

Admission of DECC as Associate Member

General Secretary Setri Nyomi introduced the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) as a close partner with which one of the antecedents of the WCRC has been in close relationship for years. He proceeded to inform the house that DECC desires to be an Associate member. The Moderator, Peter Borgdorff placed it before the delegates who unanimously voted to admit DECC into WCRC as an associate member. The General Secretary of the DECC, Robert Welsh, addressed the UGC bringing greetings and appreciation that they are part of WCRC.

Keynote Event

Sharon Watkins, of DECC was introduced as the moderator for the keynote event. Sharon Watkins is also the General Minister and President of the Church of Christ, Disciples in the USA. She introduced the theme "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace", taken from Ephesians 4: 3, and introduced the four keynote speakers: Sabine Dressler-Krominga of Germany, Ayana McCalman of Guyana, Ruth Padilla DeBorst of Argentina and Seong-Won Park

of Korea. The full texts of their addresses are in Appendices 21-24. A lively discussion followed their presentations.

Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), brought greetings. Greetings were also brought on behalf of the Seventh Day Adventist Church by John Graz, and on behalf of the Anglican Communion (ACC) by Alyson Barnett-Cowan, who read a letter from Kenneth Kearon, General Secretary of the ACC.

PLENARY SESSION III: 14:00-16:05

Moderator Ofelia Ortega Suarez opened the meeting and outlined the agenda.

Reports of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Reformed Ecumenical Council Presidents

The President of WARC, Clifton Kirkpatrick, addressed the delegates with his report (Appendix 3).

By a show of cards, the report of Clifton Kirkpatrick (Appendix 3) was received.

The President of REC, Peter Borgdorff, addressed the delegates with his report (Appendix 4).

By a show of cards, the report of Peter Borgdorff (Appendix 4) was received.

The two presidents recognized the extraordinary efforts of the two general secretaries, Setri Nyomi and Richard van Houten in the work of creating WCRC.

Reports of the General Secretaries of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and World Alliance of Reformed Churches

REC General Secretary Richard van Houten addressed the delegates, thanking Douwe Visser for his leadership of the committee that resulted in WCRC and Clifton Kirkpatrick for contributing the concept of "communion" to the naming and gave his report (Appendix 6).

By a show of cards, the report of General Secretary Richard van Houten (Appendix 6) was received.

WARC General Secretary Setri Nyomi, addressed the delegates with his report (Appendix 5).

By a show of cards, the report of General Secretary Setri Nyomi (Appendix 5) was received.

In celebration of Clifton Kirkpatrick's leadership and work with the Presbyterian Church (USA), World Alliance of Reformed Churches and World Council of Churches, General Secretary Setri Nyomi announced the publication of the festschrift *That They May All Be One*.

PLENARY SESSION IV: 16:30-18:30

Moderator Judi Fisher called the meeting to order. Because of lack of time for questions and reactions to the reports of the presidents and general secretaries, delegates were invited to a one-hour open forum on Wednesday afternoon at 14:30 with the Policy Committee. All four presenters would be present to discuss the reports in more detail if delegates so desired.

In the time allowed, the following comments were made:

- Self-criticism is important and should be retained by the new organization.
- The two organizations are really two cultures coming together and that may cause some practical difficulties.
- It is exciting to see how Calvin's heritage is important globally, especially in justice and economic issues.
- Upcoming anniversary celebrations across the Protestant world should also lead to joint meetings with a variety of church bodies.
- The history of the organizations working together really goes back to the 1990s.
- Talks with Muslims begun by REC are important and should be continued in WCRC.
- WARC's work on justice as described in its General Secretary's report should also be continued by WCRC.
- In response to the word "communion" WCRC should see that it doesn't imply cheap grace: it is a gift from God but also a judgment. The Reformed community should see it as a struggle for which we need to work, its global contribution.
- Although the reports discussed much of the past, WCRC needs to see the future with optimism about the partnership. Cooperation needs to be broadly ecumenical as well as within the Reformed community of churches.
- The renewal of the Holy Spirit in the church needs to be stressed.

Report of the Reformed Youth Forum Meeting, June 14-17, 2010

Ayana McCalman introduced the Reformed Youth Forum report (Appendix 8) and its messaging team with the following concerns:

- That several of the youth had been denied visas.
- That the forum went forward without funding.
- That small churches will probably not have youth representation.

By a show of cards, the report was received.

Report of the Women's Pre-Council Meeting June, 14-17, 2010

Paulette Brown introduced the report of the Women's Pre-Council (Appendix 7) and its messaging team. In addition to its written recommendations, the Women's Pre-Council also requested that a monitoring committee be formed to track the progress of gender justice through all parts of WCRC and to report to the next General Assembly on the progress made.

By a show of cards, the report was received.

Introduction to the Section and Committee Work

Following the viewing of a twelve-minute video documentary on the themes to be covered in the sections, General Secretary Setri Nyomi explained the work of the sections and committees, pointed out their agendas in the Handbook. He urged delegates to read the materials in *Study Papers for Sections*.

Two public hearings are scheduled:

- Monday: public hearing in the Public Issues Committee.
- Wednesday: 14:30 in the Policy Committee to discuss the reports from presidents and general secretaries.

Clifton Kirkpatrick and Steven Kendall, Finance Moderator, described the structure of WCRC and its financial situation. Both cautioned sections and committees to keep fiscal realities in view when making proposals. Specific budget proposals will be discussed at a future plenary session.

General Secretary Setri Nyomi informed the delegates of the need to add a person to the Finance Committee. The name of Alice Hageman was proposed.

By a show of cards, Alice Hageman was approved as a member of the Finance Committee.

The Moderator allowed time for some of the guests:

- Dr. Cyril Ritchie, President of the John Knox International Reformed Centre, Geneva was welcomed and addressed the delegates.
- Dr. Larry Miller of the Mennonite World Conference was welcomed and addressed the delegates.

Announcements:

- The Business Committee: Although the Council did not change the Bylaws to include the requirements that the Executive Committee have half of its members women, the Business Committee referred the matter to the Nominations Committee to do everything it can to honour the intention.
- The request that staff be hired in a gender justice manner will be dealt with later in the Business Committee.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Gottfried Locher.

EVENING DEVOTION

An evening devotion took place in the Calvin College chapel led by the Africa region.

SUNDAY, 20 JUNE 2010

Participants in the UGC worshipped in different congregations of WCRC member churches in and around Grand Rapids, bringing greetings from their different churches. Many of them preached in their host congregations. The Congregations welcomed them with much hospitality.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon participants and about three thousand others from the congregations in Michigan and close by States came together in a very meaningful Eucharistic Worship to celebrate the union of REC and WARC and the formation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Rev. Yvonne Delk preached the sermon (see Appendix 31). The two presidents presented the symbol of WCRC to children who symbolize both the present and the future of the communion. Participation of children in leadership of the service was an important part of the service. Holy Communion was celebrated.

EVENING DEVOTION

This was led by the Europe region in the Calvin College chapel.

MONDAY, 21 JUNE 2010**BIBLE STUDY AND MORNING WORSHIP: 08:00–09:30**

In the Bible study groups the theme for the day was "For What do we Thirst?" The preacher in the daily morning worship was Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the WCC. The theme "The Spring of Living Water" focused the worship.

COMMITTEES AND SECTIONS

The rest of the day, Monday June 21 was spent in various committees and sections.

EVENING DEVOTION

This was led by the Latin American Region

TUESDAY, 22 JUNE 2010**MORNING WORSHIP**

There were no Bible studies. Morning worship had the theme "We Are One in Christ".

PLENARY SESSION V: 09:15-10:30

Moderator Clifton Kirkpatrick opened the meeting. He announced that the schedule would be adapted to accommodate the late start. Regional meetings would be held in the evening rather than after the morning's plenary session.

Moses Mwale opened the session with prayer.

Because of a visa denial, the youth delegate from Asia was not able to serve on the Nominating Committee. The Business Committee provisionally nominated Kim De Wan from Korea to serve. The General Council must confirm that appointment.

By a show of cards, Kim De Wan was approved as a member of the Nominating Committee.

Announcement of Meetings to be held on Wednesday:

- Policy Committee at 13:30 on Wednesday: Reports from Reformed Youth Forum, Women's Pre-Council, general secretaries, and presidents will be part of the one-hour public forum.
- Message Committee holds a public hearing at 14:00. Written submissions welcomed.

- Regional meetings will happen Tuesday evening after the Powwow.
- Public Issues public hearing on Wednesday at 14:00.

General Secretary Setri Nyomi asked the stewards to come forward to be recognized, said a few words about their work and expressed appreciation for what they were doing.

Preliminary Report of the Public Issues Committee (Appendix 10)

Lydia Veliko presented the Committee's report. She began by putting the list in context, noting that this report simply lists the issues that will be prioritized and developed further in future committee meetings. If delegates desire to comment, they can do so at the public hearing.

The final report will have a preface to set the issues in context. That content is summarized below:

- All of these issues relate to justice and relate to the theme "Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace".
- It will explain that the church is concerned about these issues because they threaten abundant life.
- The categories correspond to the values in the Constitution, emphasizing that justice is integral to the church's work.

The report will be brief and so will not address everything. Staffing structures do not allow for complex follow-up on all issues, so the report will make recommendations about how each issue should be handled.

An unintended omission in this report is the crafting of a statement about the 74 denied visas.

By a show of cards, the preliminary report (Appendix 10) was received.

Presentation of the Structure of the Message (Appendices 1 and 2)

The two moderators presented the Committee's report. They are following the instructions of the Handbook that describe the Committee. The message will be brief, succinct and compelling. They will use the structure of Reformed worship in crafting the message.

By a show of cards, the report of the Message Committee was received and its general direction affirmed.

Preliminary Report of the Nominating Committee

Co-moderator Judy Fisher reviewed the procedures for nominating the election quotas as guided by the Bylaws and outlined in appendices B and C of the Handbook. Qualifications for the General Treasurer need to include:

- Financial acumen.
- Fundraising ability.
- Ability to live in easy access of Geneva office.

The ballot box for any cross nominations is at the information desk. Those will be collected at 10:30 on Wednesday. The procedures are in the Handbook (Appendix B and C).

Questions of clarification were received from the floor:

- Specific concerns about representation for churches should be addressed to the Nominating Committee at its next meeting.
- A question was raised as to why the President and General Secretary come from the same continent.
- There is a need to look at the male/female ratio again.
- Latin America and Africa have no young people, an oversight that needs remedy.
- The Committee needs to add denomination and country to nominee information.
- The names of the Asian nominees are not from the regional list. This is a sensitive issue. What was the process to create the list of Asian nominees?

The Moderator clarified the process by reminding the group that regions were asked to present a second list of nominees to insure that all criteria are met.

Additional concerns from the floor:

- In a suggestion on the number of young persons (should be 2-3 according to the system adopted) the Nominating Committee should opt for 3 young persons in the future.
- There is a desire to have a young person in the presidium.
- In the future there should be a quota between lay and ordained persons; this is a proposal for the next assembly.
- There is a tendency to give some sub-regions more importance; small churches should not be ignored.
- There should be 50% women on the Executive Committee.
- Is it possible to send this back to the region to see if more justice can be done?
- A request came to make sure that the names come from the Asian region's list.

- More weight seems to be given to suggestions from the regions than to those from individual churches. Small churches get overlooked in regions.

Responses from the Moderator:

- All but two names were from both churches and regions.
- Note that this number of executive members is a reduction from WARC's numbers, increasing the difficulty of criteria balance in the slate.
- Note that the cross-nominations have to fill the criteria already established.

By a show of cards, the report was received.

Greetings from Ecumenical Visitors

- Kathryn Johnson from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) addressed the delegates and brought greetings.
- Samuel Kabue and Carolyn Thompson, from the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network brought greetings and summarized the work of the Network. The request came to the Council that it include the criterion of disability in its consideration of nominees for committees and delegates.

PLENARY SESSION VI: 11:15-12:30

General Secretary Setri Nyomi made announcements, including the information that one delegate from India, originally denied a visa, did obtain one at the last moment and is here.

Moderator Peter Borgdorff reminded the delegates that the two former presidents of WARC and REC would be on the Executive Committee until the next General Council. Also, the areas will each have a representative on the Committee. These are not listed on the slate.

Steven Kendall gave an overview of the rest of the day.

Lori Ransom described the meaning behind the events of the day and introduced Richard Twiss, the keynote speaker. He delivered a powerful address that was well received by the delegates.

POWWOW

The UGC was the guest of Native American/First Nations' leaders for the rest of the day in a very meaningful get-together. The ceremonial entry, the dances, the worship, the challenging addresses, the time of sharing in meals, friendship and fellowship

together and the friendship dance all made the afternoon and evening an event to remember.

WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2010

BIBLE STUDY AND MORNING WORSHIP: 08:00-09:30

In the Bible study groups the theme for the day was "Peace, Justice and Unity". The theme "Walking in the Light of God" focused the daily morning worship.

COMMITTEES, SECTIONS AND WORKSHOPS

The rest of the day, Wednesday June 23 was spent in various committees and sections. During the committee meeting times other delegates and participants participated in workshops.

EVENING DEVOTION

This was led by the Middle East and North Africa region in the Calvin College chapel.

THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2010

BIBLE STUDY AND MORNING WORSHIP

The morning group Bible studies continued as usual under the theme "Accepting the Gifts of Christ". This was followed by the morning worship which had the theme "The Gifts of Christ". The preacher for the morning was Dora Arce-Valentin from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Cuba.

COMMITTEES AND WORKSHOPS: 10:30-12:30

The General Council met in committees while many delegates and other participants went to workshops.

PLENARY SESSION VII: 14:20-16:00

Moderator Peter Borgdorff called the UGC to order. The Opening prayer was offered by Lilia Rafalimanana.

Report of the Global Institute of Theology (GIT)

Peter Wyatt, academic dean, and three student participants reported that GIT is designed to encourage the next generation in the ecumenical Reformed movement and has been in classes for three weeks. Students introduced themselves and the faculty was thanked.

The Moderator acknowledged and thanked those who made this council possible. Richard van Houten thanked Peter Borgdorff for his leadership of the Local Arrangements Committee, the committee members and the volunteer staff. He also recognized those stewards who were not able to be in the introductions on Tuesday.

Setri Nyomi recognized co-opted staff and consultants. He introduced Gregory Fairbanks of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, who delivered greetings to the General Council from Pope Benedict XVI.

Moderator Peter Borgdorff outlined the agenda for the reports, indicated that the cards should be shown so that delegates can approve the general direction of the reports.

Introduction to the Reports

By a show of cards the General Council approved the Introduction's general direction.

Report from Section 1: Reformed Identity, Theology and Communion (Appendix 12)

William Koopmans presented the report. No questions and by a show of cards, the report was received and its general direction affirmed.

Report from Section 5: Layperson Development, Youth Development and Formal Theological Education (Appendix 16)

Esther Ofei-Aboagye and a team of presenters received the following items for clarification:

- Is the use of laypersons for baptism exceptional for the churches or a normal way of church life? Why just baptism and not the other sacrament as well? Otherwise why have pastors at all?
- What is meant by "a profile of a minister"? Is that a profile on each minister in the churches or one general profile of a desirable type? Who would judge the competency of the pastor on Reformed matters?
- How much thought has been given to matters of finance and resources?
- What do we mean by "lay" people? As Reformed people we don't have the ontological difference between clergy and lay. Should we not use the terms "ordained" and "unordained"?
- Can we translate the encouragement of laity into practical terms such as salary? How can we minimize disputes

concerning resources between lay workers who do lots of work and pastors who do little?

- Why is age discrimination left out of consideration?
- How do we need to train people so that they know how to live out faith in society?
- What is meant by a “friendly environment” for women?
- How can theological reflection take place? How can it be done in a way that would be effective for member churches?
- Do we see the work of the lay people as just supporting the work of the ordained or supporting the work of the church?
- Could the contradiction between the preamble (lay people can do some things that ordained can do) and the later notion that the laity is to support the ordained be harmonized? Could the amount of support for the ordained be reduced?
- If seminaries can't make the distinction between lay/ordained in training, why insist on it elsewhere?

The committee responded to the questions as follows:

- The use of laypersons for official acts happens often especially in rural areas because of lack of ordained people. WCRC needs to develop minimum criteria, education, etc., for this need.
- With regard to ordained and lay, there are different gifts and all are a priesthood of believers. These gifts help the body.
- The report did not give recommendations for a staff but recommended that much of the work happen by way of networks, technology and with an emphasis on local and volunteer involvement.
- Because WCRC members share different understandings, churches need to discuss what a minister does. The churches should also share what each believes “Reformed” means.
- The programme for youth should be holistic.

By a show of cards, the delegates accepted the report to be revised according to the comments and questions made.

Report from Section 7: Youth Empowerment (Appendix 18)

Aaron Stauffer presented the report.

No questions and by a show of cards, the report was received and its general direction affirmed.

PLENARY SESSION VIII: 16:40-18:30

Moderator Clifton Kirkpatrick opened the session, declaring that there will be a special 20:00 plenary session this evening. After a show of cards, this extra session was approved.

Moses Mwale opened with prayer.

Nominations Committee Report

The Moderator briefly reviewed the procedures for the elections and thanked the Committee for its difficult work. Judi Fisher presented the Committee's report. Bob Faris introduced the nominees.

By a show of cards, Jerry Pillay was overwhelmingly elected to be the first President of WCRC.

By a show of cards, the four vice presidents and the Treasurer were overwhelmingly elected as follows:

- Lu Yueh Wen, Vice President
- Yvette Noble Bloomfield, Vice President
- Bas Plaisier, Vice President
- Helis Barraza Diaz, Vice President
- Gottfried Locher, General Treasurer

By a show of cards, the following were overwhelmingly elected to the Executive Committee as follows:

- Kobus Gerber
- Veronica Muchiri
- Elisee Musemakweli
- Salome Twum
- Yael Eka Hadiputeri
- Subha Singh Majaw
- Cheh Liang Mok
- Peter Bukowski
- Cheryl Meban
- Clayton Leal da Silva
- Carola Tron
- Najla Kassab
- Allan Buckingham
- Mary Fontaine
- Gradye Parsons
- Allen Nafuki

In addition, the former presidents of WARC and REC will also serve as members of the Executive Committee by appointment of the Uniting General Council in accordance with the Articles of Union.

They are as follows:

- Peter Borgdorff, President of REC
- Clifton Kirkpatrick, President of WARC

Moderator Kirkpatrick offered a prayer for this group of WCRC leaders.

Judi Fischer presented the remainder of the report, including its four recommendations:

Recommendation 1 was proposed.

After no discussion and by a show of cards, the recommendation was adopted.

Recommendation 2 was proposed.

After no discussion and by a show of cards, the recommendation was adopted.

Recommendation 3 was proposed.

After no discussion and by a show of cards, the recommendation was adopted.

Recommendation 4 was proposed.

After the addition of the words "with appreciation" and by a show of cards, the recommendation was adopted.

Intervention: It was not clear how staff should be included or excluded in the nominating processes. The Moderator clarified that the involvement of the general secretaries of REC and WARC was a request of the Joint Working Group.

After a process of discernment and by a show of cards, the decision was made that WCRC General Secretary should not be serving or give the perception of serving the Nominating Committee in the future.

The first President of WCRC, Jerry Pillay, was introduced and addressed the General Council.

Report from the Finance Committee (Appendix 11)

After the presentation by Charles Jansz, the Moderator moved the recommendations in the following groups:

Recommendation 1

With a show of cards, Recommendation 1 was adopted.

Recommendations 2 and 3 were treated together.

With a show of cards, Recommendation 2 and 3 were adopted.

Recommendation 4

A question arose as to whether or not consultation had taken place with the European area council on this recommendation. The Committee noted that the agreement with the European council

remains in place as stated in the preamble. By a show of cards, Recommendation 4 was adopted.

Recommendation 5

Because churches often make contributions in kind, the Policy Committee is coming with a recommendation that these in-kind contributions be credited as contributions. That creates a problem with the wording in this recommendation. The second bullet wording was changed to add "finances and other in-kind contributions". By a show of cards, Recommendation 5 with its new wording was adopted.

Recommendation 6

By a show of cards, Recommendation 6 was adopted.

Recommendation 7

To the question why the position should revert to an executive secretary level, the committee responded that the recommendation is a suggestion that the position be reviewed, not an actual change. By a show of cards, Recommendation 7 was adopted.

Recommendation 8

By a show of cards, Recommendation 8 was adopted.

Recommendation 9

By a show of cards, Recommendation 9 was adopted.

Recommendation 10

Advisor Steve Lytch explained that an organization needs to show that those in governance are in financial support of the work. The suggestion was made that offerings be taken at WCRC services. By a show of cards Recommendation 10 was adopted.

Discussion of Further Issues raised the following concerns:

- Concern was raised about the lack of funding of a youth programme.
- There was concern that the composition and location of the small investment committee in Geneva doesn't enable the Executive Committee to determine the committee's size and may exclude expertise in emerging markets. The Committee explained that the reasons are practical and not intended to exclude broadly based expertise.

After a process of discernment the addition of the following wording to the recommendation on investment strategy was requested: "We

will seek skills from around the world as we move forward with the investment strategy". By a show of cards, this revision to recommendation 8 was adopted.

Comments on the expense of having offices in Geneva were made and a request that the Executive Committee in their meeting of 2012 consider this matter for the following reasons:

- Stewardship.
- Integrity to issues of justice.
- Solidarity.

WCRC should be the first to move out of Geneva and into the global South. The Moderator confirmed that the Executive Committee has already put a process in place to consider the possibility of such a move. By a show of cards, this process was affirmed.

A concern was raised that there not be a budgeted loss for the Uniting General Council. The Committee affirmed that the Joint Working Group has come up with a balanced budget, with the expenses for the United General Council as yet unknown.

By a show of cards, the report was received with appreciation expressed to the Committee.

Intervention: A delegate proposed a reconsideration of the action to remove the General Secretary from serving on future Nominating Committees. By a show of cards, the request for reconsideration was overwhelmingly approved.

During the process of discernment the following comments were made:

- There should be both a mutual accompaniment and a sufficient independence of action between Nominating Committee and General Secretary.
- The clarity of process can be difficult if the General Secretary intervenes and works within the process.
- The Nominating Committee responded by saying that the Committee tried to be open and honest. The two general secretaries were staff advisors for procedures because the system was so new and at the request of the Joint Working Group. Of the names that were raised within the Committee, no name came forward that was not already raised by churches or regions. The Committee went back to regions repeatedly; the General Secretaries were asked for advice on

qualities of candidates, dynamics in regional groups, and procedural questions.

- The possibility was raised that the General Secretary be available just for advice if the Committee asked.
- The Committee clarified the dual processes by which names came to the Nominating Committee and reminded the delegates that it has already asked for a process to deal with this dual process. The Nominating Committee found that names on both lists were the same except for two names, which were then added to the long list.
- The Moderator requested that the Moderator of the Nominating Committee discuss personally with the delegate who wanted clarity on the relationship of names from regions and churches.

The process of discernment concluded with the desire that the previously approved wording excluding the General Secretary completely from the Nominating Committee process be replaced with something less restrictive.

By a show of cards and with more than two-thirds of the delegates approving, the following replacement wording was adopted: "The General Secretary will not be a member of the Nominating Committee but will be available to the Nominating Committee for advice and counsel."

The session was adjourned.

SPECIAL PLENARY SESSION IX: 20:15-21:40

Moderator Peter Borgdorff called the session to order.

Report from Section 4: Worship and Spirituality (Appendix 15)

John Witvliet presented the report.

No questions forthcoming and by a show of cards, the delegates received the report and affirmed its direction.

Report from Section 2: Christian Unity and Ecumenical Engagement (Appendix 13)

Recommendation 1

No questions and by a show of cards, Recommendation 1 was affirmed.

Recommendation 2

After a question about the meaning of this recommendation, the Committee explained that the methods for ecumenical engagement begin at all levels and are not limited to the top.

Through a process of discernment, the words "construct a framework for ecumenical engagement" were added to the recommendation. By a show of cards, Recommendation 2 with its addition was affirmed.

Recommendations 3-6

No questions and by a show of cards, Recommendations 3-6 were individually affirmed.

Recommendation 7

In answer to a question, the Committee said that the consultation is open and without predetermined outcome, but the language intentionally allows for more openness on that issue. By a show of cards, Recommendation 7 was affirmed.

Recommendation 8

Noting that while the divisions in the Reformed communities are deep and need to deal with issues that divide, it is important to look at what is happening in the Protestant churches as a whole. The jubilee celebrations should be seen not as confessional but should give opportunity to show how strongly the Reformed community is attached to the Lutheran Reformation. WCRC should have a broad meeting of the churches. By a show of cards, Recommendation 8 was affirmed.

Recommendation 9

By a show of cards, Recommendation 9 was affirmed.

The Moderator asked for additional questions of clarification on the report.

- On a request to explain "in the horizon" in Recommendation 9, the Committee responded by saying that the Accra Confession is the framework.
- In a request for an example of faith-based organization, the Committee mentioned groups not defined as communions but otherwise rooted in Christian faith (i.e. World Vision).
- The Committee was asked to explain the Leuenberg Agreement and did so.
- There was encouragement for WCRC to consult with all membership churches on Recommendation 7 before taking a

stand on this issue. The Committee thought the issue needed to be studied first so that WCRC could take a stand on it.

- After a question about the meaning of “in agreement with the direction of the reports”, the Moderator affirmed that the actions today are not directive but will guide further work.
- In further comment on the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification”, there was a consultation among Lutheran and Methodist churches which resulted in their acceptance of this declaration. The question of justification needs to be worked on; previous hesitations need to be taken into account; however the weight of this declaration is sometimes overestimated.
- Also noted is that five churches in Latin America have already signed the “Joint Declaration” (Recommendation 7) and found it a place for dialogue. It offers a path to the future for the Protestant movement.
- The request for an explanation of the Lund Principle 1952 was given by the Committee.
- As to what authority is meant in Recommendation 5, the Committee responded that the local and regional churches do work in their areas but that internationally WCRC will also have sufficient delegated respect and authority to do its work as well.

By a show of cards, the report was received and its general direction affirmed.

Report from Section 3: Justice in the Economy (Appendix 14)

By a show of cards, the report was postponed until the next session.

By a show of cards, the meeting recessed.

The session constituted itself briefly into the Michigan Corporation of the WCRC Assembly and approved the By-Laws of the WCRC (Michigan Corporation) and the WCRC restated articles of Incorporation. See the minutes of the WCRC (Michigan Corporation) Assembly for details (Appendix).

Following the recess, a minor editorial change was suggested to the previously adopted Constitution: The proposal was that the German acronym for the organization’s name in German be in compliance with the rest of the acronyms in the other languages and include the letter “G” for the German word “gemeinschaft” (communion). By a show of cards, the change from WRK to WGRK was made.

The session was adjourned.

General Secretary Setri Nyomi closed the session in prayer.

EVENING DEVOTION

The Caribbean and North America region led the evening devotion in the Calvin College chapel.

FRIDAY 25 JUNE 2010

BIBLE STUDY AND WORSHIP

The UGC met in Bible study groups with the theme "Living together in Unity". After the Bible studies participants gathered in the morning worship which had the theme "Longing for Blessed Unity". The preacher for the day was Sujanna Raj Seelam, a young pastor of the Church of South India (a student with the Global Institute of Theology).

PLENARY SESSION X: 10:30-12:45

Moderator Clifton Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order. General Secretary Setri Nyomi welcomed the head of the Organization of African Instituted Churches, Nicta Lubaale, who greeted the delegates. The Fellowship of Middle Eastern Churches sent written greetings. A letter of support and the gift of DVDs from the Reformed Church in Geneva were presented.

Report from Section 3: Justice in the Economy, on the Earth and for all of God's Creation (Appendix 14)

Bill Thomas explained that paragraph 9 is in parenthesis because the Committee was divided in its opinion about including it. This paragraph is retained as part of a reflection to the Executive Committee.

New wording was proposed for an additional recommendation with which the Committee concurred: "calls upon WCRC and its member churches in cooperation with WCC and other ecumenical bodies, networks and organizations to prepare a global ecumenical conference to propose 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.

- Is accounting for social and environmental risks.
- Sets clear limits to greed that is unfortunately present in the world today.

It shall be explored how in the follow-up such a process can be supported by a Global Ecumenical Panel, 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.”

After a process of discernment and by a show of cards, two-thirds of the body approved this wording as a new Recommendation 3 to the report.

The following points were made:

- Decisions should not be imposed on the churches.
- Paragraph 9 seems to contradict the need to affirm two pillars of communion and justice.
- A concern was expressed that WCRC is limiting mission to justice; there should be a balance of emphasis with an understanding that the church also is called to the spread of grace to all nations.
- In a response to a question of procedure it was emphasized that the Policy Committee’s recommendations will actually have the force of policy.
- Paragraphs 7, 8, and 9 are either not needed or too detailed. These should be eliminated.
- Renewal in awareness, not restatement, of the Accra Confession is needed at this time.

After the process of discernment, the Moderator summarized the discussion as follows:

- The body favours the general direction of all but paragraph 9.
- WCRC needs to think of resources needed for Recommendation 1.
- WCRC needs to consider conference participation.

In the continuing process of discernment, the following comments were made:

- The Moderator was reminded of the need to hear from more than one region during a discussion.
- The language in this document is nebulous and makes it difficult to know how to talk to business people. Fighting

injustice is required but not at the cost of speechlessness to others.

- To achieve communion WCRC needs to have a common interpretation even though it has various languages and identities. An option must be chosen. In Latin America the choice has been to speak to and for the poor.
- There is a desire to have a cultural coherence in the discussion; WCRC needs to find a more effective way to work together at these meetings.
- As a point of order, the editing of reports is out of order.
- The document should be accepted as naming the problem.
- Paragraphs 8 and 9 define "empire" in two different ways and should be eliminated.

After much discernment and by a show of cards, the direction of the paragraphs in the report was affirmed.

A show of cards demonstrated that support for Paragraph 9 was equally divided, reflecting the division among the members of the section. The Executive Committee will interpret the paragraph in this light.

By a show of cards, the report as a whole was received and its general direction affirmed.

Report from Section 8: Mission (Appendix 19)

The report was presented by Hunter Farrell who noted that a few mistakes were made in the typing and formatting which will be corrected in the reading.

Recommendation 1

No discussion and by a show of cards, Recommendation 1 was affirmed.

Recommendation 2

No discussion and by a show of cards, Recommendation 2 was affirmed.

Recommendation 3

No discussion and by a show of cards, Recommendation 3 was affirmed.

Recommendation 4

Through a discernment process, the following comments were made:

- WCRC should not initiate another process when this work is already going on in the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME).
- This recommendation seems to be out of step with previous reports that emphasize a more universal understanding of church.

By a show of cards, the delegates received the report and affirmed its general direction.

Report from the Policy Committee (Appendix 9)

Gradye Parsons introduced the report. He referenced the instructions to the Policy Committee as stated in the Handbook and explained the framework of choosing the recommendations being moved forward. The recommendations in this report need to be adopted (not just affirmed) and will become the policy of WCRC. The recommendations were moved by section.

Recommendations regarding Reformed Identity, Theology and Communion

The process of discernment resulted in the following:

- After a request for clarification on the meaning of “theology of religions”, the Committee explained that WCRC needs a context to understand its work in its dialogue with world religions.
- The wording in paragraph 4 in the introduction should include “...the vision and *the mission* of the...”
- In Recommendation 1 the statement about theological identity is thin and has not really been developed or discussed.
- Recommendation 1 opens the theological discussion, but the discussion is not actually being carried out.

A suggestion was made to place a period after “...member churches.” By a show of cards, this suggestion was not affirmed.

A suggestion was made to add the words “and other Reformed theological statements” to Recommendation 1. By a show of cards this change in wording was adopted.

After discussion as to how member churches can support training when they can't support the theology that is undergirding it, new language was proposed: “WCRC emphasize the importance of theological conversation within the WCRC family and engage in theological training and in light of this theological conversation.”

By a show of cards, the required two-thirds did not affirm the change and the original wording was retained.

New wording proposed "Reformed approaches" replace "a Reformed approach". By a show of cards this wording change was adopted.

Additional wording was proposed: "...interfaith dialogue *and relations*" at the end of Recommendation 1. By a show of cards, the wording was adopted.

By a show of cards the three recommendations regarding Reformed Identity, Theology and Communion were adopted.

Recommendations regarding Christian Unity and Ecumenical Engagement

A request was made to add the wording: "both ecological debate and life-giving civilization". By a show of cards the change was not adopted.

A request was made to eliminate Recommendation 3 as a priority. A show of cards demonstrated less than the required two-thirds majority so Recommendation 3 remains as written.

The Committee noted that this topic seemed to be on the ecumenical horizon and therefore decided that WCRC needs to be part of the discussion. Also, the discussion is needed because of current relationships with Methodists, Catholics and Lutherans. The recommended discussion will happen within WCRC and without prejudice as to outcome.

Recommendations 1 and 2

By a show of cards, Recommendations 1 and 2 regarding Christian Unity and Ecumenical Engagement were adopted.

Recommendation 3

Because of the previous discernment process, Recommendation 3 was proposed separately. By a show of cards, Recommendation 3 regarding Christian Unity and Ecumenical Engagement was adopted.

PLENARY SESSION XI: 13:45-15:15

Moderator Peter Borgdorff called the session to order and offered the opening prayer.

(Continuing the recommendations of the Policy Committee in its report under the Section headed Justice in the Economy and the Earth)

In a process of discernment about the nature of the Accra document, the following questions and concerns were raised.

- Is Accra a confession or a declaration? The Committee understands that it has been referred to as a confession.
- A suggestion was made that Accra be called a declaration rather than a confession as it is on the WARC website.
- In Accra it was a document. Now it is referred to more and more as a confession. However, the word should be in brackets.
- Accra is not a confession in the light of the traditional confessions and the document says that explicitly. Different kinds of confessions are possible and are seen differently by churches.
- The Accra Confession has been accepted as that and the name can't be changed.
- The document should be designated by the name given it at Accra.

A suggestion was made to add quotation marks to "Confession". By a show of cards, this addition was not adopted.

In a further discernment process it was noted that Recommendation 1 describes the two priorities without relating them. There are many ways in which these two interact and can be related and previous versions specified only one. By a show of cards the current language was retained.

Two questions were posed: Where is the recommendation of engaging the powers in these recommendations? Where has the discussion about a new cultural architecture been incorporated? The Committee acknowledged that these points were not incorporated into this section.

A request was made that Recommendation 2 in the Section Report on Justice in the Economy and the Earth (Appendix 14) be adopted as Recommendation 4 in this section of the Policy Committee report. Its wording is substantive and relates to wider relationships and the wider society. The new Recommendation 4 would read as follows: "This Uniting General Council calls upon WCRC to promote and work towards the realization of the vision of life-giving civilization as an alternative to the neoliberal economic paradigm,

introducing new metrics that reflect God's intention for the flourishing of creation, and humankind within creation, that will include engaging the powers in the world economic system."

By a show of cards, the wording for this Recommendation 4 was adopted.

A request came to add the following wording to Recommendation 2: "Bible studies, including indigenous perspectives". Through the process of discernment the question was asked whether this new wording meant accommodation or engagement for a new perspective altogether. The interpretation is open.

By show of cards, the additional wording was adopted.

By a show of cards the assumption that the new Recommendation 4 includes discussions with such organizations as the World Bank was affirmed.

By a show of cards the four recommendations regarding Justice in the Economy and the Earth were adopted.

Recommendations regarding Worship and Spiritual Renewal

The Committee was asked to edit out "the revision of" in Recommendation 1. By a show of cards, this wording change was adopted.

A working group named by the Executive Committee was proposed. By a show of cards this request will be conveyed to the new Executive Committee.

By a show of cards, the two recommendations regarding Worship and Spiritual Renewal were adopted.

Recommendations regarding Leadership Development and Nurture

A complex discernment process uncovered and resolved several issues around the words "hierarchies" and "un-ordained".

A suggestion was made to change the wording of Recommendation 2 from "all forms of hierarchies" to "all misuse of hierarchy". By a show of cards, this change was adopted.

In Recommendation 1 a request was made to remove the wording: "grounded in the theological basis of the priesthood of all believers". By a show of cards this wording change was adopted.

A proposed language change was made to insert "both ordained and non-ordained" in Recommendation 1. By a show of cards the wording was affirmed.

In the discussion that followed, a request was made that the inclusion of "ordained and non-ordained" be eliminated. By a show of cards the wording was removed and the original wording retained.

Further discernment on the issue of the inclusion and meaning of hierarchies occurred:

- To the suggestion that Recommendation 2 be struck entirely the delegates were unclear as shown by cards.
- The following wording change was proposed: "inappropriate and personal hierarchy". By a show of cards, the language was rejected.
- To substitute "power" for "hierarchy" created fear that too many people would not see that power is imbedded in hierarchy. A broad concept of hierarchy needs to be understood.
- The following substitute wording for "hierarchy" was proposed: "all forms of authority and structures of power in the church and in this communion." By a show of cards, this wording was adopted.
- Another request was made to re-insert "both ordained and non-ordained." into Recommendation 1. By a show of cards, this wording was adopted.

By a show of cards, the three recommendations regarding Leadership Development and Nurture were adopted with the changes.

Recommendations regarding Gender Justice

Through the process of discernment, several suggestions were made. There was a suggestion that Recommendation 1 use the wording in the Section Report: "promote ordination of women and work toward a time when the ordination of women will be binding on communion". After further discernment it was recommended that Recommendation 2 be divided. The two recommendations would read as follows:

Recommendation 1: "WCRC affirm its commitment to full partnership between women and men by effecting a 50%

representation of women on the Executive Committee and Presidium”.

Recommendation 2: “WCRC will promote ordination of women and work toward a time when the ordination of women will be binding on communion”.

By a show of cards, this division of Recommendation 1 into two separate recommendations was approved.

Proposed wording on new Recommendation 2 would change “binding” to something softer. By a show of cards, this wording change was not adopted.

The process of discernment showed several perspectives on this recommendation: Communion is a slow relationship and patience is necessary. The best way to convince people is to give them opportunity to experience and walk with people. However, there is also a need for solid ground to go home with on this issue that the original wording gives.

New wording was suggested: “WCRC promote the ordination of women amongst its member churches.” By a show of cards, this wording was adopted.

By a show of cards, the recommendations regarding Gender Justice were adopted with their changes.

Recommendations regarding Youth Empowerment

The process of discernment disclosed a discomfort with the Committee’s definition of the age of “youth” and the numbers required to be in the Executive Committee and Presidium as mentioned in Recommendation 3. It was noted that only in the Nominating Committee membership does the Constitution spell out numbers.

- Youth is defined differently in different cultures.
- The point is that there are various ages below 35.
- Need to keep the definition to true “youth” to affirm young people.
- Need to take seriously succession planning so that we really value young people.
- Young people needed to bring new ideas.

Recommendations 1 and 2

By a show of cards Recommendations 1 and 2 regarding Youth Empowerment were adopted.

Recommendation 3

A suggestion was made to change the age from 35 to 30. By a show of cards, this change was adopted.

By a show of cards Recommendation 3 regarding Youth Empowerment was adopted with its change.

Recommendations regarding Mission

No comments and with a show of cards, the three recommendations regarding Mission were adopted.

Recommendations regarding Peace and Reconciliation

An additional sentence was requested for Recommendation 1 (now 2): "This will include a commitment to not participate in violence against one another." By a show of cards, this addition was adopted.

During a process of discernment the following changes were made to Recommendation 2 (now 3):

- Additional wording was requested: "...engagement and inter-religious dialogue". By a show of cards, this addition was adopted.
- An additional sentence was requested: "We feel solidarity with Christian brothers and sisters in a difficult situation." By a show of cards this wording was adopted.
- Additional wording that would empower Christian presence in the Middle East was requested: "This conflict brings instability to the wider region, and indeed has global implications. The situation in the Middle East and other Muslim countries where the presence of Christian minorities is seriously threatened requires an effective programme including a facilitator to empower Christian presence in the Middle East, and Christians as agents of peace and reconciliation." By a show of cards this addition was adopted.

After the process of discernment, the Committee agreed to the elimination of Recommendation 3 altogether because the issue is addressed later in the document.

After further suggestions about including other specific conflicts, the Moderator noted the impossibility of including all and requested that

no others be suggested. Those requests regarding Korea and the Middle East will be addressed by the Public Issues Report.

It was noted that the correct wording in the new Recommendation 3 (now 4) should be: "WCRC continue the work begun by WARC in Croatia." This wording would also apply to the adoption of previous WARC work in South Africa. By a show of cards, this wording was adopted.

To the new Recommendation 3 (now 4) was proposed the additional words: "on peace and reconciliation". By a show of cards, this addition was adopted.

A request to add South Africa to the new Recommendation 3 (now 4) was made. By a show of cards, this addition was adopted.

A request was made to name the World Council of Churches specifically in Recommendation 2 (now 3) so that it would read as follows: "...member churches, WCC..." By a show of cards, this addition was adopted.

A request was made that Recommendation 3 as stated in the Public Issues Report (Appendix 10) be included. A show of cards determined that such wording did not have the support of two thirds of the delegates.

The session was adjourned so that delegates could attend the banquet.

BANQUET

The churches in the Grand Rapids area hosted all the participants of the UGC to a Banquet at the DeVos Place in downtown Grand Rapids.

SATURDAY 26 JUNE 2010

PLENARY SESSION XII: 08:00-10:30

Moderator Clifton Kirkpatrick opened the session and outlined the agenda.

Report from the Message Committee (Appendices 1 and 2)

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson introduced the report from the Message Committee. Any changes to the report should be brought

in writing to the Committee during the meeting for inclusion in the final report.

As part of the need for agenda modification, the Moderator called a pause in the discussion on the Peace and Reconciliation Section of the Policy Committee Report. That discussion will be completed after the Public Issues Committee Report, where several of the issues are represented by recommendations, is taken up for consideration.

Additional Recommendations from the Policy Committee in the Policy Committee's report (Appendix 9)

Gradye Parsons introduced this section by explaining how these recommendations happen to be included:

- The Committee was charged with reviewing REC and WARC work from the last assemblies until now.
- The Business Committee also charged the Committee with items to consider.
- Others arose out of plenary session discussion.

Recommendation 1

By a show of cards, Recommendation 1 was adopted.

Recommendation 2

By a show of cards Recommendation 2 was adopted.

After the comment that not all regions have councils and so effort must be made to develop councils where none exist, the Committee suggested that the issue of new area councils go to the Executive Committee. By a show of cards, this suggestion was approved.

Recommendation 3

By a show of cards, Recommendation 3 was adopted.

Recommendation 4

By a show of cards Recommendation 4 was adopted.

Recommendation 5

To a comment of concern on the integral linkage of justice and communion and that separate staff will not be hired for each, the Committee replied that this recommendation is an effort to make sure that both staff persons and their work have equal access to funds. General Secretary Setri Nyomi assured the General Council that such was his intention as well. By a show of cards, Recommendation 5 was adopted.

Recommendation 6

By a show of cards, Recommendation 6 was adopted.

Recommendation 7

By a show of cards, Recommendation 7 was adopted.

Recommendation 8

A request to change "...for the Dutch Reformed Church family in South Africa taking into account the decision of Ottawa (1982) and Debrecen (1997)" was adopted by a show of cards. By a show of cards Recommendation 8 with its change was adopted. Requested was a fuller consideration of this issue in relationship to other places in Africa when the Peace and Reconciliation Section in the Policy Committee Report was again taken up.

Recommendation 9

It was noted that this is a Bylaw change and that sufficient notice of the change has been given.

After a question about why "ordinarily" was added, the Committee responded that it felt the Nominating Committee needed more latitude in cases of uneven numbers and other possible difficulties in balancing so many values through representation on the Executive Committee. By a show of cards, the word "ordinarily" was dropped from the recommendation.

To a comment that youth numbers should also be changed, it was noted that such a change has already been made.

A suggestion was made to add "and 50% men". By a show of cards, this change in wording was approved.

By a show of cards, Recommendation 9 was adopted.

Recommendation 10

By a show of cards, Recommendation 10 was adopted.

Recommendation 11

By a show of cards, Recommendation 11 was adopted.

Recommendation 12

A comment was made that there is a need to review the mode of doing business at General Councils. By a show of cards the suggestion was referred to the Executive Committee for consideration.

By a show of cards, Recommendation 12 was adopted.

Recommendation 13

By a show of cards, Recommendation 13 was adopted.

Recommendation 14

A desire was expressed to add "and Joint Declaration, *Dreaming a Different World Together* by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany." After the existence of several declarations was acknowledged, the question was asked as to why adopt just this one in particular. The reasons are two:

- This is the first and only time that the Accra process was actually carried out by developing a statement created by a church in the South and one in the North.
- This document found a new definition of "empire" that has been used in subsequent discussions.

By a show of cards, Recommendation 14 was adopted

Recommendation 15

By a show of cards, Recommendation 15 was adopted.

Recommendation 16

After a discussion of what is meant by "truth", and through a process of discernment, delegates agreed that the Executive Committee will deepen the discussion of the meaning of "truth". By a show of cards, Recommendation 16 was adopted.

A request was made to add a Recommendation 17 to read: "To affirm and refer to the Executive Committee the Partnership Fund that has been serving churches' mission for such a long time." By a show of cards, this Recommendation 17 was adopted.

A proposal was made not to take action on the rest of the Public Issues Report but to just affirm the report. By a show of cards, the proposal was not affirmed.

Report from Public Issues Committee (Appendix 10)

Johann Weusmann reviewed the purpose of the Public Issues Committee. He proposed that the report be received and that the General Council move to the recommendations. The Moderator directed the delegates, concerned about the need for other African countries to be included in peace and reconciliation processes, to meet with the Policy Committee to answer their concerns.

By a show of cards, the report was accepted.

Recommendations addressed to Member Churches

(Recommendations 1-6)

After a process of discernment and by a show of cards, Recommendations 1-6 were collectively adopted.

Recommendations addressed to the Executive Committee

(Recommendations 7-17)

Each recommendation was acted on individually.

Recommendation 7

By a show of cards, Recommendation 7 was adopted.

Recommendation 8

By a show of cards, Recommendation 8 was adopted.

Recommendation 9

By a show of cards, Recommendation 9 was adopted.

Recommendation 10

By a show of cards, Recommendation 10 was adopted.

Recommendation 11

By a show of cards, Recommendation 11 was adopted.

Recommendation 12

By a show of cards, Recommendation 12 was adopted.

Recommendation 13

By a show of cards, Recommendation 13 was adopted.

Recommendation 14

By a show of cards, Recommendation 14 was adopted.

Recommendation 15

By a show of cards, Recommendation 15 was adopted.

Recommendation 16

By a show of cards, Recommendation 16 was adopted.

Recommendation 17

By a show of cards, Recommendation 17 was adopted.

*Recommendations addressed to the General Secretariat
(Recommendations 18-19)*

Each recommendation was adopted individually.

Recommendation 18

By a show of cards, Recommendation 18 was adopted.

Recommendation 19

The Committee asked that the General Council deal with this section by section. The complex process of discernment was as follows:

- The human rights problem in Cuba should be included.
- Because a process between the churches and government is already occurring, there is a desire not to destabilize the situation. The Cuban church is prophetically active and asks that human rights issues not be included.
- Historically the world churches did not speak out about human rights in Eastern Europe and for the same reasons. History shows the results of such silence.
- The churches in Cuba do not want a human rights resolution; WCRC must have confidence that the churches in Cuba know best.
- The statement about the blockade needs to be less emotional and more factual.
- Paragraph b should be eliminated because it doesn't address the other empire that is present in Cuba right now.
- There should be a desire not to be political in orientation; for this reason paragraph b should be eliminated.

A suggestion was made to delete 19b as a whole. By a show of cards, the deletion was not adopted.

A suggestion was made to add "prisoners of conscience" to 19d.

By a show of cards, the addition was adopted.

By a show of cards, Recommendation 19 with its change was adopted. The Moderator led the General Council in prayer for the results of this section.

Interventions:

1. There was a request to reconsider the action on Recommendation 18. By a show of cards, this request was accepted. A suggestion was made to add wording in Recommendation 18 so that the present wording is included as sub point "a" and the rest reads as follows:

- b. That the General Secretary with the Presidium visit Seoul and Pyongyang to have prayer meetings for the reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula.
- c. Recommend to change from the Armistice Agreement to the Peace Treaty between the two Korean nations as requested by the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

By a show of cards, the wording was added.

2. A suggestion was made to delete "(in the form of a press release)" from Recommendation 16 so that the General Secretary can decide the method of communication.

By a show of cards, the deletion was made.

Other (Recommendations 20-24)

Recommendation 20

The Committee noted that this recommendation had already been acted on in the Policy Committee Report.

Recommendation 21

The Committee noted that this recommendation had already been acted on in the Policy Committee Report.

Recommendation 22

By a show of cards, Recommendation 22 was adopted.

Recommendation 23

By a show of cards, Recommendation 23 was adopted.

Recommendation 24

Frustration with the speed of decision-making was voiced. To do justice to issues in a short period of time is difficult. There needs to be a different process.

By a show of cards, Recommendation 24 was adopted.

Requests for Prayers

After a process of discernment and by a show of cards, the following changes were made to the prayer list:

- Add "In their efforts at working toward reconciliation and a lasting peace".
- Add: "peace" to religious freedom in prayer for the Middle East.
- Include: Sudan and Somalia in the prayer list.

- Add: "We pray for the rich that they should be aware of their responsibilities".
- Add: "We hold in prayer each other where our histories, cultures and contexts create different perspective and a struggle to live in mutual respect and the spirit of communion".
- Include: religious conditions in Indonesia.
- Include: prayer for Belgium's church and society.

Statement on Relationships with First Nations Peoples and Native American Peoples in North America

A suggestion was made to include "...Inuit and Metis" for the Canadian context. By a show of cards, this inclusion was adopted.

A suggestion was made to add: "respond to opportunities to participate in dialogue with Indigenous people in Canada and throughout the world". By a show of cards, the addition was adopted.

By show of cards the Statement on Relationships with First Nations peoples and Native American Peoples in North America was adopted.

In further discussion the following was noted:

- Although the United Church of Canada apologized in 1982, it is still growing in what that means. A simple apology will not suffice.
- As in Argentina, outstanding debts are due to the original people.
- Land rights and human rights need to be included.
- The Committee discussed restorative justice but did not have sufficient information to say more. This recommendation is just a first step and anticipates future action. The need for a peace and reconciliation process applies to all the first nations around the world.
- General Secretary Setri Nyomi suggested that the final paragraph be seen as a first step and that the Executive Committee develop the next steps.

By a show of cards, the statement was adopted with its changes.

The Moderator allowed the following additions to the previous section on prayer:

- Inclusion of human rights issues in Columbia.
- Situation in Lesotho.

Other prayer requests should be taken directly to the General Secretary in writing to be added to the list.

Statement on the Denial of Visa

The suggestion was made to add the following wording to paragraph 1: "...return all applications and processing fees to those who have been denied visas". By a show of cards, the addition was adopted.

To a concern that the facts in the statement be checked for accuracy, General Secretary Richard van Houten assured the Council that he would do so.

A request was made to remove paragraph 3 because it relies on emotion and not fact. By a show of cards, this request was not granted.

By a show of cards, the Statement on the Denial of Visa was adopted.

A request was made that the Executive Committee work with the leadership of other ecumenical bodies to communicate this issue to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. By a show of cards this action was adopted.

Resolution

Peter Borgdorff presented the resolution as a response to the gift of the treaty medallion to WCRG. He assured the body that this use of the medallion met with the approval of the givers.

A request was made to strike "owned" and substitute the wording: "land originally inhabited". An objection was made to the notion that this would be the Presidential medallion. A suggestion changed "Presidential medallion" to "held in trust". By a show of cards both changes were adopted.

By a show of cards, the Resolution was adopted.

Report of the Policy Committee (Appendix 9)

The Moderator returned to the Policy Committee Report.

Recommendations regarding Peace and Reconciliation

Recommendation 1

There was a request to add the following wording: "In countries such as Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, there are moves to introduce *Sharia* law which will create inequality before the law and disadvantage

Christians and other minority religions and perpetuate the deepening religious division. Since there is a strong Christian presence in those countries, WCRC has particular responsibility to work there towards peace and reconciliation...This will include a commitment to not participate in violence against one another". It was editorially agreed that these should be two separate items

By a show of cards, Recommendation 1 and new Recommendation 2 were approved.

Recommendation 2, 3 and 4

It was noted that "WCC" should be added to new Recommendation 3 (old Recommendation 2) because this addition had been previously approved and now needed to be incorporated. The General Council granted the Executive Committee and the General Secretary the authority to deal with any editorial difficulties regarding general and specific concerns.

By a show of cards, Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 (new 3, 4 (a merge of former 3 and 4) and 5 were adopted.

Recommendation 5 (new 6)

The suggested addition of "and asylum seekers" was adopted by a show of cards.

By a show of cards, the entire report was adopted.

The Moderator suggested that Executive Committee deal with the rest of the reports. The following reports would be included in that group: Section Report on Gender Justice (Appendix 17) and Section Report on Working for Peace and Reconciliation (Appendix 20).

By a show of cards, this action was adopted.

Message Committee Report (Appendices 1 and 2)

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson introduced the final report and acknowledged that four changes were submitted and incorporated. The final version of "A Message to the Children" was also included.

During a process of discernment, the following comments were made:

- To a request that the term "triune God" be used on page 1, the Committee pointed out its use later in the document.
- A concern was raised about the absence of the voice of the non-ordained.

The following wording suggestions will go to the Committee for editorial inclusion:

- The document needs to affirm the priesthood of all believers.
- The document needs to lament the absent sisters and brothers not just their absence.
- "Baptism" should be accompanied by "God's Word and Spirit" in all documents.
- "Unity and Justice" and "Communion and Justice" should always be used together throughout the documents.
- The word "party" in the children's message doesn't really capture a church meeting properly.
- All documents will have the accurate number of the missing delegates.

The Committee will take all of the suggestions received at this meeting.

By a show of cards, the Message (Appendices 1 and 2) was adopted.

Announcements:

- Thankfulness was expressed for sparing the life of a GIT student in a car accident.
- Weekend arrangements were announced.
- Secretary General Setri Nyomi announced that the George Lombard Prize would not be given here. Two of the recipients were not able to come because of visa denials.
- There will be an opportunity to give an offering to offset travel climate damage. This offering will go to the Native American/First Nations Community for use in a project of their choice.

Presidents Peter Borgdorff and Clifton Kirkpatrick gave closing remarks. Peter Borgdorff offered prayer. A drumming farewell led by Native Americans ended the plenary session and the Uniting General Council.

CLOSING AND INSTALLATION SERVICE WORSHIP

The Uniting General Council closed in a very meaningful worship service during which the new President, Jerry Pillay preached the sermon. The President, Vice Presidents, General Treasurer and Executive Committee members were installed in office and prayed for. The General Secretary of former WARC was affirmed in office as the General Secretary of WCRC in the closing service.

*Appendix***Assembly of WCRC Michigan Corporation
June 24, 2010**

Moderator Peter Borgdorff convened the Assembly.

General Secretary Setri Nyomi presented the Restated Articles of Incorporation of WCRC and the By-Laws of WCRC (Michigan Corporation). He summarized the previous creation of WCRC as an international corporation in Geneva, Switzerland and indicated that these documents incorporate an identical corporation in Michigan.

The moderator indicated that if the meeting approved, the By-Laws of the Michigan Corporation will be modified to by the Executive Committee to reflect all the changes in the Constitution and By-Laws of the International Corporation made on June 18, 2010.

After a show of cards, this understanding was approved.

The recommendation was made to adopt the document Draft By-Laws, with the understanding that its language would be updated to reflect changes in the International Corporation Constitution.

The moderator opened the floor to discussion:

- A question came up about the meaning of the restriction of "influence legislation" in Article 1, Section 1.2; several clarified that this simply prevents WCRC from becoming in essence a political pressure or lobby group in the U.S.A. along political party lines.
- There was also a question on why the name is WCRC and not the full World Communion of Reformed Churches? The explanation pointed out a legal need to differentiate the two corporations a bit. Both are registered names for the corporations.

After a process of discernment and with a show of cards, the By-Laws of the Michigan Corporation were adopted.

The Restated Articles of Incorporation was recommended for adoption.

No questions were asked. After a show of cards, the articles were accepted and adopted.

The moderator proposed adjournment.

After a show of cards, the WCRC (Michigan Corporation) Assembly was adjourned.

Appendix 1



Message from the Uniting General Council 2010

Grand Rapids, United States

Called to communion, committed to justice



Communion cup of fellowship, unity, togetherness

God gathered us

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, we gathered in hope, from the world-wide family of Reformed Churches, representing 230 denominations and 80 million believers, bound to God and to one another through our baptism and called into unity as disciples of Jesus Christ. We united in praise of God.

Yet we lamented the absence of 74 sisters and brothers from around the world who should have been with us but were prevented from sharing our fellowship because they were denied visas to enter the USA.

Confessing our past divisions, and rejoicing that, by the grace and forgiveness of God, we are not bound by our past, we participated

in the birth of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, a testimony to our thirst for unity.

We, in all our diversity, acknowledged with thanksgiving our opportunity to meet in the traditional territory of the Odawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi Native American peoples. Despite a history of devastation and loss, in which the Church was complicit, they extended a gracious welcome to us and gave honour to those visiting their land. Through the drum, dance, and song of their culture, we listened to their confession of Christ. There were those among us who heard echoes of their own stories. Their witness called us to confess how we too are broken and in need of healing. Our understanding of mission was challenged to accept different ways of expressing our faith. And we were inspired and filled with hope by their longing to share their distinctive insights into the faith we share as we seek reconciliation as peoples of God, the Creator.

We sought the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as we continue our journey together.



Confessional Identity

God's Word addresses us

We were moved by the Word of God which came to us in many ways as we explored our theme: "making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph 4.3) It came through our worship in music, dance, drama and sermon; through dialogue and conversation as we found connections across cultures; through reading and studying the Scriptures together.

We heard and were touched by how the overflowing communal nature of God draws us into communion with God, with one another and with all creation. We celebrated this communion at the Lord's Table. We recognized that this communion is for the sake of the world's transformation. We heard that our identity as God's people commits us to the work of God's justice.

In the face of the global divide between rich and poor, and the suffering of the earth, we heard the gospel of reconciling love and prepared ourselves to respond in joyful hope.



Woven together for greater strength

We respond to God's Word

Called to communion and committed to justice:

- We pray for those living in divided communities who long for reconciliation; for those whose voices go unheard, whose gifts are not valued, whose humanity is not respected; those subjected to humiliation and violence; those under oppression and persecution:

We pray for the earth, the water and the air as they suffer from human exploitation of natural resources, and for all those who suffer from the devastating effects of climate change. (Rom 8.21-22)

Called to communion and committed to justice:

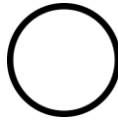
- We give thanks to God for the rich experience of being in communion in the World Communion of Reformed Churches and of being drawn together as partners in God's mission to the world.

Called to communion and committed to justice:

- We have come to recognize in the youth among us a new fire for ecumenism and we commit ourselves to work together in this new communion as equals, remembering that God values and welcomes people of every age:
- We promise our children that we will listen to them, honour their questions and celebrate their voices, understanding that they are part of the church of today with gifts that enrich the family of God.
- We will strive to care and be fair to every generation and to all of God's creation, listening to God's instruction like children, so that we might all be partners in God's plan for unity in the world and the kingdom to come.

We, in all our diversity, will seek to equip one another to participate in the mission of the triune God in ways:

- that strengthen our spirituality and worship as the means by which our communion is nourished, refreshed and renewed,
- that strengthen our sense of being united in one church family, including a commitment to gender equality and to respect for the environment,
- that strengthen our passion for justice, including in the global economy and in the creation of reconciled communities.



A circle of unity with justice for all

We are sent into the world by God

We are sent out in peace, ordained and non-ordained alike, equals in the priesthood of Christ and in the unity of the Spirit, to love and serve the Lord, called to communion and committed to justice.

Appendix 2



**Message for children from the Uniting General Council 2010
Grand Rapids, United States**

A Message to the Children

We were invited by God for a meeting with new friends in Michigan, USA, for a church family party.

God knows your name and our names and that's what makes us a family. That's why God invited us to a big family meeting in Grand Rapids to get to know each other better. The family members came from all over the world!

It was a shame that 74 family members couldn't come to the party. They were not allowed to cross the borders into the United States. It made us sad and mad so we thought about them a lot while we were together and we prayed for them.

As in every family there have been problems between sisters and brothers, and aunties and uncles, and parents and children, and cousins too. But one of our wise uncles welcomed us with a smile and told us stories about the first peoples who lived here and about our family history and he said "some things have gone terribly wrong in the past because you didn't know how to listen and how to share. But now I will reach out to you and I hope you to me, and let's do better in the future." You should have seen his face when he said this to us. It made us believe that we really can!

We had meals together, and lots of good food. We sang songs and danced together, the young ones and the old ones in our family. We even ate at Jesus' table. And God said "Oh, I LOVE this family!!"

The family members laughed and cried and sang and prayed together early and late every day. It was really cool!

Some people told us about bad things that have happened in their neighbourhoods, so we prayed for them and for the earth, and the air, and the water, and the animals, and everything that God has created.

It was so wonderful that we would have liked to stay at the party ALL the time. But we had to say good-bye and return to our own homes. Some of the family members will go home to fancy places. Others will go home to places where there is war and hunger. It's so unfair! Even though we know that God will go with us to all places, there is a need for something more – that's what this family is for!

Before we said good-bye we made promises to each other, saying "I will not forget you. I will listen to you. You will be my friend. I will be fair to you, care about what happens to you, and if you need me I will be there for you. We will work together for everyone in our church family and for all other families too!"

And when it was really time to say goodbye, we hugged each other. And in doing so, we felt the warmth of God who loves us, who invited us to this party, reminding us that we are a family. This is the story I want to tell you. Can you imagine what this was like? This is our family, the family we are called to be.

Appendix 3

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF WARC

Clifton Kirkpatrick

A Future for the Reformed Movement?

1. Serving as President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches for the past six years has been one of the greatest experiences of my life! I give thanks to God, to our Executive Committee and dedicated staff, and to all of you for granting me this great blessing. I also give thanks for all you have done to make the witness of the Reformed movement vital in our time. And it is truly “icing on the cake” to have this time of blessing culminate with the birth of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
2. It didn’t start out all that easy. A couple of weeks before the General Council in Accra, where I was elected President, I broke my ankle and that raised real questions as to whether I would be able to travel to Ghana as one of the delegates of the Presbyterian Church (USA). After promising my doctor and my wife that I would not climb any stairs but would only use elevators, I set off to Ghana only to find that there was not a single elevator on the whole campus at the University of Ghana, where we were meeting. To top it all off, just after arriving a snake came up through the drain in the shower and bit the other foot! I was sure that God either had something very special in store for me—or didn’t intend for me to be there! It was then that I was elected, to my surprise, as President of WARC—and I do count that as one of the *kairos* moments of my life, where God entrusted to me a great responsibility on behalf of this worldwide Reformed movement and gave me the blessing of seeing God at work in the world where, against great odds, Christians are making a remarkable witness to the reign of God in our time.
3. Along the way there were many questions and doubts about the strength of our movement and the power of our witness in the world. I remember well on a visit to Germany soon after the Accra General Council in 2004 when a young woman, who had little use for the church, asked me in some exasperation, “Do you really think there is any future for the Reformed movement worldwide?” While I instinctively said, “Of course,” her inquiry caused me to think much more deeply about our movement and its future. For surely she was not alone in questioning whether

the Reformed tradition's best years may have been in the past. I have spent the last six years, among other things, seeking to answer for myself at some depth her question. As most of you have seen, I have shared my reflections on this question with you in the advance papers for this meeting and want to use this President's report to summarize those reflections and give you my perspective on the "state of the Reformed movement" in our time

4. There are indeed good reasons to question whether we have a future. In our radically changing postmodern world, Reformed churches all over the world often seem strangely anachronistic. It took 1,500 years from the beginning of the Common Era to double the sum of human knowledge, but now we double the sum of human knowledge every year. But for way too many Reformed Christians, rather than embrace change, new technology, and new forms of cultural expression, we resist change. Our watchword is way too often, "We've always done it that way!"
5. Throughout the global north our movement is in decline numerically and far too many of our congregations are living on the edge of survival. In much of the global south our movement is still growing, but in place after place it is being eclipsed by rapidly growing Pentecostal movements, by mega-churches, and by communities that have gathered around the "prosperity gospel." In other parts of the world churches of the Reformed tradition are being eclipsed by a renaissance of other religions or of secular society. Rarely are we seen as the dynamic, growing church of the future in any part of the world.
6. Among ourselves, we are the tradition that is most likely to divide. Whether it is because of doctrinal differences, questions of social and personal morality, mission heritage, language or culture, or just plain obstinacy, in almost every nation the church tradition that is most likely to be divided into many different churches is the Reformed tradition. On a global basis we struggle to keep alive a World Alliance or a Reformed Ecumenical Council because having a united and effective common voice for our communion seems way down on the priority list of our churches.
7. There is reason to doubt the future of the Reformed movement, and we desperately need repentance and renewal, but we are not without resources or without hope. There is another side of

this story! That is the side that has, at the end of the day, given me deep hope and a strong confidence in the future of our Reformed tradition—and that gives us a basis for our life together in the World Communion of Reformed Churches. These last six years have given me countless opportunities, as I have visited among you, to see “life in fullness” (John 10:10) in the great strengths of our Reformed tradition, and I want to share those with you as well.

8. First, the Calvin Jubilee, which we celebrated last year, was a time when the Reformed community reclaimed its core theological values and the vision of our common calling. Reformed churches around the world proclaimed three aspects of Calvin’s legacy:
 - The gift of communion.
 - A commitment to justice.
 - A passion for life and for the creation.

The core elements of Calvin’s legacy are at the heart of our Reformed theology, which is life giving, is the source of our strength, and serves as the basis for faithful mission in our time. This is a great strength for us all.

9. Second, everywhere I have visited, I have found our member churches actively engaged in the struggle for justice, often at the risk of their own lives. I give thanks to God for the witness for justice, peace, and human rights through our churches in Colombia, in the Philippines, in Taiwan, in Romania, in the Sudan, in South Africa, in Madagascar, in the Middle East, and in so many other parts of the world. On a global level, we have made a major contribution to the future of the world and to the church ecumenical by our joining together in Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth. This call to challenge the empires of our time to build an economic system that lessens rather than increases the gap between the rich and the poor, that ends grinding poverty for billions of people, and that creates a more just and sustainable world—is at the heart of the gospel for our time. This is the urgent ethical challenge of our time, and Reformed Christians are uniquely positioned to be God’s agents of justice in our time.
10. Third, we have had a sea change in the reality of women being recognized for ordained leadership in our churches. While we still have a few churches that do not yet ordain women and many that do not yet have ordained women in equal numbers to

men, the vast majority of our churches welcome both women and men to all ministries of the church. This is a major step forward and an important witness to the church ecumenical, embodying the promise of Galatians 3.28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Following Calvin's example, Reformed churches in many of our countries have also sought to show signs of being an inclusive community in many other ways.

11. Fourth, we know at the core of our being that to be Reformed is to be ecumenical. We are a community of churches that has naturally entered into union with other churches, and today we count among our members a good number of national churches that are actually union churches. It is no accident that so many of the great ecumenical leaders have arisen from the Reformed tradition. We live in a time in which unity and reconciliation with other religious communities (both Christian and of other faiths) is urgent for the peace of the world, which makes our propensity to be ecumenical all the more important.
12. Fifth and most important, our churches are alive with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that is our greatest strength. It is amazing how different our congregations are from one another yet how, even in their diversity, they show the strengths of the Reformed tradition in their life and witness. Churches as different as the Yolo Church in Kinshasa, Congo; the Presbyterian Church in Lar in the Sudan; the Myung Sung Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea; the women's church among the Maya Quiche Indians in Guatemala; the First Presbyterian Church in Havana; the Great Church in Debrecen, Hungary; and my local congregation, Springdale Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky—all seem, on the surface, to have hardly anything in common. But if you probe a little more deeply, you will find that they all share a love for Christ and neighbour, a vision of the best dreams of Calvin, a commitment to justice, a sense of being an inclusive and welcoming community, an ecumenical spirit, and a sense of the Holy Spirit at work among the people.
13. We are at a defining moment for the Reformed tradition. We are launching a new chapter in our life together as we become the World Communion of Reformed Churches. At the same time, we have reached an important historical milestone, the 500th anniversary of our movement. This is the time for us to no longer be an "alliance" or a "council" but to truly be a

communion, to claim the best of our heritage, and to be open to the radical new things that God may have in store for us in the years ahead. There is a future—a vital and exciting future—for the Reformed movement in the twenty-first century. However, we cannot overlook that there are serious problems in our common life that we must address with repentance and commitment to change. God does intend for us to master the technology, culture, and ethos of our time as we reach out to a new generation. God intends for our churches to be vital and growing churches. And God surely intends for us to give up our divisive and fragmenting ways and join the movement for unity and reconciliation in the church and the world.

14. As we do that, we have major strengths and resources in our life together that we need to reclaim to “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17.6) for the gospel in our time:
 - A theological vision, growing out of Calvin’s legacy, that is second to none.
 - A passion for God’s justice in the world as part of our Reformed DNA.
 - A desire to be a truly inclusive and welcoming community of all of God’s people.
 - An ecumenical spirit that seeks reconciliation with all people of faith, and
 - Thousands of vital congregations where the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments are rightly administered.

15. We have challenges to face, but God has given us incredible gifts and strengths in the World Communion of Reformed Churches on which to build, and we need to be doing just that—building on these great gifts of our Reformed tradition to shape our churches for the twenty first century as communities truly “reformed and always reforming, according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit”.

Appendix 4

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF REC

Peter Borgdorff

Reflections on the Journey to Communion

This feels like an auspicious moment in the history of ecumenical relations. Just yesterday we voted to redirect the river of relationships within the global Reformed and Presbyterian family—and now today we close the book on two organizational entities that together have ministered for a combined total of more than 200 years. We must not pass by this moment too quickly. There is a lot of history associated with both the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)—a history filled with evidence of commitment and good will—blessing and testing—stories of leaders, general secretaries, long and difficult meetings, conflicts and resolutions, debates and controversies—and in and through it all—evidence of God’s faithfulness to his people as they lived life and walked the ecumenical journey together.

In recounting some of that history I need to focus on REC since it was formed in 1946. Oh, how different times were then. Some might think that those were golden years and like the people of old some long “for the fleshpots of Egypt.” REC had its beginning in the ferment of ecumenical formation. Yes, it brought a small group of confessional Reformed churches into a unifying organization—but if we are fully honest about that period—such formation was also a way of differentiation—of drawing boundaries—of setting ourselves apart “from those other—more liberal—more free thinking—and maybe less confessional” churches that also considered themselves to be part of the Reformed and Presbyterian family. The early years of REC’s existence were based on the premise that unity and uniformity were high values—and the confessional-integrity requirement (as judged by the collective membership of REC) was the cornerstone of credibility.

For many years REC functioned in the model of a synod—holding discussions—defining positions—establishing theological boundaries—offering advice to the member churches. In more recent history the organizational model was altered from a synod to a council but its functioning remained essentially unchanged. As history has recorded, REC faced some significant challenges during its years of existence. It experienced the same challenges as did the other ecumenical organizations (e.g. the World Council of Churches

(WCC) and WARC) in that the environment within which ecumenical relations were practiced was rapidly changing. The changes we can observe today took the better part of 50 years to emerge. Such changes will continue—and more challenges lie ahead—but we do have the benefit of lessons learned from mistakes made—new insights gained—and the blessings of fellowship received.

Perhaps the two most significant issues that the REC has faced—and which have impacted its direction—deserve further comment. The first dealt with the right of an ecumenical organization to demand theological compliance from its member denominations. While this is neither the time nor the place to consider all of the details of that discussion, it was the position taken by the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN), a founding member of REC and now part of the union that formed the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN), that caused REC to re-examine its basic assumptions about what it means to be an ecumenical organization. The GKN objected to the authoritarian ecumenical model and in doing so helped REC to change its manner of functioning from a (presumed) authority of a synod to an ecumenical council. This self-examination allowed REC to continue with broader boundaries and greater tolerance for the diversity of perspectives within and among its membership. Internal to REC, this was perhaps the first step toward what we are now calling a communion.

The second significant issue is related to the way REC responded to the Apartheid discussion of the 1980s and beyond. It should be noted that REC—along with other ecumenical organizations including WARC—declared the biblical and/or confessional defence of apartheid to be a “theological heresy” and considered the rejection of “the forced separation of people on the basis of race” to be a matter of confessional integrity. Appropriate action was taken to call the South African Reformed members of REC to repudiate the theology that supported apartheid practice. REC’s actions were consistent with the positions taken by other ecumenical bodies. All of that discussion and action is part of the official record. But then there is more.

One South African denomination—a church under suspension by WARC because it has not officially rejected the theological defence of apartheid—applied for membership in REC in 2005. REC was assured that an action by the applicant’s synod to meet the conditions stated by WARC was forthcoming. The 2005 general assembly of REC approved the admission of this church into membership with the understanding that this church would soon

meet the conditions placed upon it by WARC for suspension to be lifted. As you all know, the synod of that member-church failed to pass the recommendation to comply with WARC's requirement for the suspension to be lifted. Not only did this create a difficult and awkward issue for WARC—but also for REC and its decision to admit this church into an ecumenical relationship.

Concern about this particular development has lingered for some as "the elephant in the room" and, for a time at least, threatened to overshadow the Uniting General Council meeting. For some it may be a lingering concern even now. So, allow me to speak to the issue directly one more time.

In retrospect REC erred in admitting a church to membership based on a promise for changed behaviour rather than on the evidence that that such change in behaviour had actually been demonstrated. At a public meeting in Johannesburg last September I, as president of REC, acknowledged that error and offered an apology. In addition, two letters were sent to the churches in South Africa (and posted publicly) expressing REC's regret and to assure everyone that the REC fully supports the position taken by WARC to suspend the membership of the church in question. REC also agreed that the suspension remain in force until such time that the synod of that church comply with the conditions imposed by WARC. As a consequence of this council's actions taken yesterday, the stated conditions for the lifting of suspension are now those of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Together, as members of the WCRC, we speak with singular voice and with a heart-felt commitment to stand for what is right and true, just and obedient, biblical and Reformed. Let there be no doubt that together we will heed the message of the scriptures to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God".

Of course, whatever concerns linger among us, not all of them are on only one side of the two traditions we have now forged into a singular stream. I'd be less than honest if I did not acknowledge that some REC member churches (and, I am told, some WARC member churches as well), are cautious about the future of WCRC and the capacity of the communion to hold in creative tension the emphases represented in both traditions. This cautious attitude is based, at least in part, on the fear that the sheer numbers of WARC member churches will overwhelm and marginalize the smaller number of REC member churches. Perhaps, an even more deeply-seated fear is that the values held dear by some of the WCRC member churches, values that are confessional in character and evangelical in fervour, or values that relate to the issues of justice

and equity in the world, will be pushed aside in the eagerness to advance other agendas that will demand the attention of WCRC. In the best of the Reformed theological tradition, WCRC needs to be concerned about biblical/confessional proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, about church renewal, Reformed worship and raising its prophetic voice for the pursuit of justice in the world. For WCRC to have the credibility to be an effective messenger of the Good News, these issues must be at the core of our values and the front edge of our witness.

We face a challenging future and a daunting task. Of one thing I am absolutely convinced, we can do more together than any one of us can do alone. In the communion we have now formed we must find our balance and equilibrium to be confessionally Reformed and an advocate for justice in the economy and the earth. In the global village that is our reality, we need each other's trust, support, challenge and encouragement. WCRC offers us a platform and a family to enhance our witness. We must neither shrink from the challenge nor retreat in fear. The God of Jacob is our refuge and our strength, and it is Jesus Christ—the head of the church—we represent and serve. Yes, our struggle at times will be to combat the principalities and powers of this age (might we call that the real Empire?) but Christ gives us the victory because he is the Lord of heaven and earth. We commit our history and the work we have done to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen and Amen.

Appendix 5

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF WARC

Setri Nyomi

*But Jesus looked at them and said,**"For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." (Mt 19.26)***With God all things are possible**

1. In this first decade of the 21st century the world has experienced many good things as well as many terrible things. We have seen signs of hope in our young people, technological advancements, and changes for good in many countries. We have also experienced food crises, crisis in the financial markets, devastating natural disasters, conflicts, wars, and increased insecurity. Things have generally become impossible in the world for many people. We have seen violent or unconstitutional changes of government in Madagascar, as well as challenging political situations in Iraq, Thailand, Kenya and Zimbabwe—to name just a few. In the face of these challenges, effective intervention by churches and church organizations seems to be an impossible task.
2. As we read the signs of our times, and as we see natural disasters, the situations of oppression, injustice, difficult challenges for churches facing decline, etc.—we feel more like crying, "I look up to the hills, from whence does my help come...", and stopping there. Change for the better seems impossible. It seems difficult even naïve to proclaim the second part of that Psalm 121 verses 1 and 2— "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."—It feels naïve to say "with God all things are possible."
3. In my ten years as General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), I have often had the painful experience of looking at how our churches deal with conflict, and how divisions have been a major problem in the Reformed family. Several churches here, including my own, know the pain I am talking about. Responding to God's call to mediate healing and reconciliation among Reformed churches constitutes a special task which can only be described with the words "Mission impossible!"

4. It is against this background that if I were asked ten years ago when I took this office whether or not I thought WARC and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) would ever become united and become one organization, my answer would have been IMPOSSIBLE. The odds are seriously against such a thing. This is a time when Christians are facing fragmentation. The forces of division are vicious. Christian right—Christian left; conservative—liberal, those who understand the calling of the church to include being salt and light of the world challenging evil, transforming society and being beacons for justice, and those who think the church should limit itself to a narrow field of operation called the “spiritual”, etc. It is humanly impossible to expect unity in this environment. Yet we have come to this General Council defying those odds because “With mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” Thank God.
5. This saying of our Lord Jesus Christ is placed in Matthew’s gospel against the backdrop of three episodes which defied societal trends of our Lord’s physical sojourn on earth. First the Pharisees raised a question about marriage and divorce which sought to have Jesus affirm the patriarchal norms of his days. Jesus gave a response which challenged the assumptions of patriarchy. Then children were brought to him and even the disciples wanted to follow the societal norms of exclusion of people who were not like them—and children were often in that category. On the basis of age, they suffered exclusion. Jesus challenged that norm and called for the children to be brought. In the third episode, a very good man who had obeyed all the commandments, most likely a respectable, religious man in the society, came to ask what it would take to have eternal life. Jesus’ response was to indicate that having the right theology must be followed by the right actions that transform society and this entails a change in lifestyle. That rich man’s obedience to God must be seen in how he moves away from his comfort zone, and engages in a lifestyle that makes a difference in the lives of the poor. These three episodes point to things that seem impossible, but Jesus maintains with God, all things are possible.
6. In the work that we have done in the last six years, we have encountered similar experiences. Many in our churches are comfortable with patriarchy, exclusion of people on all kinds of bases, and are so comfortable with lifestyles based on greed,

over-consumption and destruction of the environment that it is impossible to hear the message that our Lord gave as recorded in Matthew 19. Even though the tools developed by the WARC General Council in Accra, the Mission Statement, the Statement on Spirituality and the Accra Confession were gifts to help us do the impossible, many of us seemed to turn away like the rich man who could not respond positively to embrace the lifestyle that being in Jesus Christ called for.

7. While WARC was in its 24th General Council, we were touched with grief and horror at what noble sons and daughters of Africa experienced through the slave dungeons in Elmina and Cape Coast and the injustice that their descendants continue to bear today. We had to bow in shame that the Reformed Church did not utter a word to challenge the suffering that was going on around them as they worshipped. We also deeply feel anger and hurt, and continue to exclaim, "How can our faith be so blind?" Through that experience we were inspired to state clearly that we should never again be found in that position. One of the results was the Accra Confession. Today the need to remain vigilant in dismantling the legacies of slavery and the slave trade continues to be a current challenge in this country and elsewhere. You are still a long way from the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr. for this country which he expressed so eloquently in 1965. Yet today when you look at the White House, you will acknowledge that by God's grace an element of the impossible has happened. Yes, we do have a God for whom nothing shall be impossible—all dreams are possible.
8. In addition, we want to hear what the Holy Spirit says to us about how the nations of native people who were in this land long before it was settled by Europeans were treated and how their descendants continue to be treated. I pause here to pay tribute to the life of Chief Wilma Mankiller who gave her life for the dignity of her people and for justice in this land. She left this world in April this year. What we will learn from our conversations and interactions with Native Americans in this Uniting General Council will therefore be very important for the vision with which we leave this place. As a Communion of Reformed Churches, how ready are we to "walk our talk" and to offer ourselves as God's instruments to mediate the impossible—so that all in this land can enjoy fullness of life and justice?

9. Today, the God who makes all things possible, and who has brought together two Reformed bodies calls us to a new level of embracing an impossible future. A future in which we live as a communion—belonging to one another, caring for one another, offering pulpit and altar hospitality to one another because we have one Faith, one Lord, one baptism. We are called into the impossible future of embracing the Reformed identity and all its gifts as well as renewing our commitment to the ecumenical movement. We are called into the impossible future of making a difference in a world filled with suffering, conflicts, hunger and disease. We are called into the impossible future of covenanting for justice—justice for all women and men, justice for all races and castes, justice in the economy, and climate justice. The forces which shout this is impossible, and which will try to belittle our theological and spiritual commitment and label it ideological, are there. However, we can do no other than hear the still clear voice of our Lord Jesus Christ saying to mortals this may appear impossible, but with God, all things are possible.
10. This is the faith that has embraced us the last six years. In this report, I will not go into details of how we have fulfilled our mandate. That is captured for us in the book *From Accra and Utrecht to Grand Rapids* which I assume all delegates have read diligently. Further details are available in the Section documents and in documents which my colleagues and I can share with you. My task here today is simply to give you a few glimpses of this work.
11. Our programmes were carried out because with God all things are possible. This is not a passive proclamation that leaves us sitting down doing nothing while evil passes us by. It is a radical belief that changes us and propels us into action. Because we know that with God all things are possible, we can dare to challenge the forces of evil. We can speak truth to power.
12. Because we know that with God all things are possible we have come together, two organizations which some decades ago would not have seen eye to eye. Because we know that with God all things are possible, we will not be afraid to challenge the imperial forces that combine economic, political and military might to protect an economic system that enriches a few and leads to death and suffering for millions. We dared to address this in the Accra Confession in 2004 and

the last six years we have dared to call on all to live out the Accra Confession.

13. Because we know that with God all things are possible, we have dared to engage in mission responding to God's call to make a difference in communities, and to use the centenary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference to promote mission actions that are life-giving. Because we know that with God all things are possible, we have dared to discuss theologically how communion relates to justice, and we have dared to live out our commitment to Christian unity. We have dared to reflect theologically on what it means to be faithful to God today.
14. The close relationships that we have with Disciples and Lutherans result from common ground and a common vision that we find in our heritage and in our common quest to further Christian unity. At the beginning of this Uniting General Council, we have been able to celebrate the Associate membership of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC). Our Joint Working Group with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has led us to explore deeper what close relationships mean for our churches at all levels (including at the grassroots).
15. We enter into a new future in which we are called to live in a spirit of unity in the bond of peace. There are those divisive forces which will not want unity to succeed. But we can dare to move forward together because with God all things are possible.
16. Unity and communion bind us together to overcome division. They bind us together to face challenges and to respond together. How can we talk about the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace when in this same family some may have in abundance and even throw away tons of food daily, while some do not have access to one square meal this day? How can people who worship in our churches in the USA say they are united with sisters and brothers in Iraq or Pakistan? How can sisters and brothers from Zimbabwe displaced in South Africa relate with their South African or British sisters and brothers? How can we critically accompany the churches in South Africa which struggle to overcome the legacies of apartheid? How can we use inspiration and insights from faith commitments represented by the Belhar Confession and the

Accra Confession to make a difference in the world today? Sometimes even these may seem impossible. But with God nothing shall be impossible.

Responding to our Core Callings

17. The highlights of what we have done in the last six years are expressions of our belief in the God who has called us and who has assured us that in God nothing is impossible. We have dared to act knowing God is with us. It is in this spirit that we implemented the core callings that came out of our last General Council in Accra. The first Executive Committee meeting following the Accra General Council held in Evian affirmed these seven core callings as our guide for the period under review:
- To covenant for justice in the economy and the earth.
 - To search for spiritual renewal and renewal of Reformed worship.
 - To foster communion within the Reformed family and the unity of the church ecumenical.
 - To interpret and re-interpret the Reformed tradition and theology for contemporary witness.
 - To foster mission in unity, mission renewal and mission empowerment.
 - To promote inclusivity and partnership in church and society.
 - To enable Reformed churches to witness for justice and peace.
18. My colleagues and I have made it our priority to respond faithfully to the mandates you, our member churches, have given us between the 24th General Council and this Uniting General Council. These colleagues have given their professional talents, time and dedication to serving you and facilitating what churches committed themselves to in Accra 2004. Therefore, with gratitude, I invite them to join me as we give you some brief highlights of how we fulfilled these core callings.

19. *¹We live in a world today which compels us to act for justice and peace. All around us we see life being threatened—the earth being threatened through greed, and through consumption patterns which eat away at the core of our being. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches has had a long history and significant history in witnessing for justice and peace.*
20. *A defining moment came at the 24th General Council of WARC when delegates adopted a theological stance—the Accra Confession—declaring that the very integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent and if we refuse to act in the face of this injustice. Since Accra, the WARC Secretariat together with regional covenanting for justice working groups have been working especially with churches in supporting their efforts to live out the Accra Confession. Churches have been studying, reflecting, interpreting, and responding to the Accra Confession. They have also been taking action to live out their faith in these difficult times and to be witnesses in their communities, and where theology and praxis can work well together.*
21. The Accra Confession is both a gift and a challenge that we received from the 24th General Council. In that same General Council we came away with an action plan that gave us some key steps in the road map of addressing injustice by churches, nations and the WARC Secretariat. Ecumenical partnership with the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) has strengthened the process, especially in the initiative to build a covenanting for justice movement as a global witness for justice. Key themes were economy, ecology and empire, including specific focus on race and gender.
22. I hope in this Uniting General Council we will recommit ourselves to the values the Accra Confession brings us, as we dare to be God's agents of transformation in our world. Especially with the turmoil that the world is in, it is now time to intensify our actions and to build upon what we have done until now. This is at the core of our mission. We are thankful

¹ Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth presents highlights of Covenanting for justice in paragraphs 19 and 20

for the actions that some of our churches have taken in this regard—walking alongside peasant farmers, taking on privatization of water and other water-related issues, developing church policies around CO2 compensation and other ways of addressing climate justice, actions on pension funds, and others.

23. In our search for Spiritual renewal and renewal of Reformed Worship, we integrated meaningful spiritual gifts in different contexts, including gifts of young people in a number of our consultations. For example, in May 2008, a workshop was held in Cuba with the title “Spirituality of Resistance, Liberation and Transformation”.
24. We also worked together with the REC to survey what is happening in our churches in terms of spiritual renewal and renewal of worship. The results were coordinated by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. A statement on worship renewal which is a direct result of this survey will be coming to this General Council through the Section on Spiritual Renewal.
25. *²We organized a series of nine consultations on Communion and Justice. These were theological consultations: eight regional and one global. The consultations were organized in order to define what it means to be a Communion of Reformed Churches committed to justice. The aspect of communion is very important—also if we look back at the history of the two organizations. We would never have the desire to become a Communion if we had not seen in the past that, for example, the struggle against apartheid and the suffering under it was not just a local affair. We were very aware that this was something for the body of churches as a whole. We would never have taken the step to become a communion of churches if we had not seen that a confessional rigorosity by which the churches were not able to be together was something that had to discontinue. We would never have taken the step to be a communion of churches if we had not shared the enormous benefits of the work done by women and men before us.*

² The presentation in paragraph 25 is given by Rev. Dr. Douwe Visser

26. Becoming a Communion is part of a process that is at the heart of an ecumenical engagement wherein Reformed churches work for the goal of a true full communion of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is in this core calling that we have also been committed to working closely with the WCC. We live in a global landscape which is constantly changing. Unless the ecumenical movement dares to change, it could become ineffective. It is for this reason that WARC and the emerging WCRC has been committed to the WCC-led initiative to reflect on ecumenism in the 21st century and to dare to do things differently. I have been personally involved in this process for the last five years and over.
27. Our ecumenical relationships as well as significant achievements in the quest for Christian Unity are very important. We rejoice not only in our own positive steps in this area, but also in the positive steps of sisters and brothers in sister church bodies. For example, we are grateful to God for the steps our Lutheran sisters and brothers are taking to address the anathemas of the 16th century vis-à-vis Anabaptists and their dire consequences. Our own bilateral theological dialogues with Anabaptists yielded similar results in the 1980s. Today, we echo our own repentance and thank God for concrete steps that have since been taken, for example by the Reformed Church of Zurich as a result of where we are in our bilateral dialogue with Anabaptists. We are grateful for the presence of the Mennonite World Fellowship General Secretary among us.
28. Our commitment to do the impossible through deep bilateral and theological conversations with Disciples, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox and Anabaptists constitute some of the ways we have lived out this core calling.
29. *³The Calvin Jubilee year 2009 was of enormous importance for both the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council. It made us aware of the great theological traditions we have and of the contributions of so many theologians all over the world. It made us aware of where our deep sources of being a communion committed to justice are.*

³ The input in paragraphs 29 and 30 is given by Rev. Dr. Douwe Visser

30. *Doing theology is a global thing whereby men and women in North and South work together, giving it a fruitful exposure to the world. We also know that theology is done in contextual situations. We have to be aware of that. Notwithstanding this contextuality, we are also aware of the fact that we still speak that same Pentecostal language of unity all over the world.*
31. WARC and now WCRC also values how we engage in mission in ways that empower all today and in ways that demonstrate unity. WARC has a long history of discomfort with Reformed disunity. Till 2005 the Mission in Unity Project, which we ran jointly with the John Knox Center, sought to assist member churches to overcome barriers of isolation and division, and to search for new expressions of mission in unity. From 2006 onwards the focus on mission in unity became part of a broader mission thrust, which placed greater emphasis on the need to systematically reinterpret what we are called to be and to do in mission. In this way, in our mission commitments, churches can empower one another for credible witness.
32. *⁴Mission, we may say, is living out our Christian identity. And that identity is both God-given and to be acquired. We are already (part of) Christ's body and called to share in Christ's mission. It is only as we begin to live that identity and give shape to that calling that we begin to gradually discover what our identity and calling might concretely look like.*
33. *And so, for the past six years, therefore, the Alliance has organized much of its work on mission renewal not in the form of conferences and consultations but as action-reflection processes. For example:*
- *The Mission Today project that we developed for Edinburgh 2010, and*
 - *The Making a Difference Project with churches in Rwanda, South Africa and Belgium, enabled the participants to work together in mission, to share concretely in each other's*

⁴ The presentation on Mission in paragraphs 32 to 34 is given by Ms Jet den Hollander

mission. And as part of that also to analyse critically their mission legacies: the motives, the priorities, and the structures for mission which we inherited—which may or may not enhance our faithful witness today.

34. *It was very exciting to see that as they lived out their calling together the churches discovered more clearly what that calling really was—what their mission really is in terms of speaking the good news, transforming inherited relationships, addressing unjust structures, or finding new expressions of unity. So, in this way WARC facilitated their development as missional churches which glorify God in word and deed.*
35. Through these programmes we have been recognized as strengthening the mission of the churches as they seek to make a difference in their communities.
36. It is in the area of mission empowerment that we also feel it is important to strengthen the justice, mission, and development-related projects that our churches and Area Councils are engaged in. Thus we have a small Partnership Fund which makes grants to cover this work. Our partnership work includes promoting joint action among member churches and with civil society groups on issues of common concern.
37. *⁵We have had a strong emphasis on gender justice and building partnership of women and men. The Alliance has seen as very important to work with its member churches in gender awareness and leadership development. A key area for the Alliance for decades has been on supporting women in the ordained ministry. Another key area is on gender, leadership and power. This is one area that cuts across all the core gender justice issues.*
38. *A process of promoting positive masculinities, to develop a network of men as partners with women in addressing gender*

⁵ The presentation in paragraphs 37 to 39 is given by Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth.

justice has been going very well. Together with the World Council of Churches, we are developing a manual with specific male gender perspective and focus to help men through a process of conscientizing as they think about what it means to live in the partnership that God calls us to be as women and men together.

39. *Sadly, we have not been able to provide the facility for programmes for youth in the Alliance because of financial difficulties. We have not had an Executive Secretary for youth. But the office for Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership has facilitated space for youth networking across the globe, and also encouraging Reformed youth to network together and to pull their ideas and to be more involved in the work of the Alliance. The youth office also strives to ensure that the youth voices and perspectives are always included in all the work we do across the board. Mainly our work has been on internships. We have had youth interns in the Alliance in various programmes. We have a youth Moderator. We have a good youth core group in the Executive Committee. And in various ways they have been living out their witness and also sharing and building up the work of youth in the Alliance.*
40. Throughout the last six years the world has been further challenged by injustice, and lack of peace and insecurity. Through the core calling of enabling Reformed churches to witness for justice and peace, WARC has made statements and accompanied people in nations which have been especially affected. We have journeyed alongside people in Palestine and Israel, Lebanon, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Thailand, Madagascar, and other places where peace and justice constitute a major challenge. In the interest of reconciliation, we have also continued to provide critical accompaniment to churches struggling to rise above apartheid in South Africa, and to continue to urge the churches of the Dutch Reformed family toward reunification, and to pray for the day when the NHKA can genuinely take the steps necessary for us to welcome them back in our family.
41. In responding to all the seven core callings we have experienced many challenges, indeed we could say, humanly speaking it was impossible to achieve anything. But with the God who makes all things possible, what my colleagues have recounted shows the impact we have made even through

- impossible circumstances. With God, everything shall be possible.
42. One of the glues that binds us together is how we communicate within the family, and how we communicate who we are and what we do with the world.
 43. *⁶"Family" is the key word which focuses communication for WARC. We have worked hard over the last six years to create patterns of communication which allow us to speak to each other clearly, to hear each other, and to support what each other is saying.*
 44. *We have done this in a variety of ways. We have created news releases which are sent out by e-mail and posted to our website. We also publish our quarterly newsletter Update, and we have published some books as well. We work closely with the news agency, Ecumenical News International which sends our stories out even more broadly into the world.*
 45. *We also face communication challenges in WARC. We are not yet using the languages of the Global South as part of the official business of the organization.*
 46. *Electronic media and social media certainly are important to weaving together a worldwide family. But the best form of communication remains our meetings face to face when we can sit together, when we can listen to each other, and where we can share our stories directly. The social media and the electronic media help us to set up those meetings or carry on the business afterwards. But it is in being together, speaking together, praying and singing together that we are truly a global family.*
 47. One of our greatest challenges in the last six years is how WARC was resourced. In all my visits to our member churches, I have received great feedback on the importance of what we are doing and that many churches feel what we do is relevant to their ministries. They marvel that it is only a small team of dedicated staff who produce all that we do. And we certainly appreciate the churches and partners which have

⁶ The presentation in paragraphs 43 to 46 is given by Ms Kristine Greenaway.

faithfully supported our work in all these years. However, finances remain our major challenge.

48. *⁷When I joined WARC in 2005, I set myself two priorities. The first was to be a good custodian of the finances entrusted to the organization. And the second was to provide financial reports which were clear and transparent so that everyone inside the organization could understand them.*
49. *I have not managed to keep WARC out of a deficit situation. We have stayed within budget. But unfortunately this has not been sufficient. The income side has deteriorated every year. That has been due to several reasons. Some of it is due to non-payment of membership fees. Some of it due to underpayment of membership fees. Some of it is due to the reduction of membership fees. And predominantly also the very, very bad exchange rate fluctuations that we have experienced particularly in the last three years. We do our finances in Swiss Francs. We have to do this legally because our organization is based in Switzerland. But our income is received in various currencies—predominantly the US dollar. Since our last General Council in 2004 the US dollar has deteriorated at times up to 25 percent to what it was in 2004—which means that if we received membership contributions at that time, we would have received 25 percent less than what we were expecting to receive. It is very important that every church pays its membership contribution in the year in which it is due.*
50. *I want to pay tribute to the very poor churches which make an effort to pay something every year to this organization. I also wish to thank the churches that pay their membership contributions faithfully every year. I really wish to thank the churches that financially underpin the organization by contributing far in excess of what they are required to do. With many thanks.*
51. We are aware that as we face financial challenges, our member churches are also facing very difficult circumstances.

⁷ The input on Finances in paragraphs 48 to 50 is given by Ms Maureen O'Brien.

Some of you have had to reduce staff and to take other cost cutting measures. We share in that suffering and continue to pray for you. Some of the cost cutting measures have affected your ecumenical budgets. Thus a few churches have reduced their contributions to WARC during this period. We appreciate churches which have maintained the level of their contributions or even increased in spite of their own challenges. We plead with all churches to consider increasing their contributions, or at least not to cut their contributions especially between now and the next General Council—to give the exciting new baby, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the best chance to grow and to make a difference in the world.

52. As the WCRC begins its life, we have a new exciting future to embrace. There is so much we can do together to impact the world for good. We do appreciate the faithful giving of our member churches. It is very important that every single church gives faithfully—in spite of our own financial challenges. If we all do our part, the WCRC will be well placed to be a major force for unity and transformation. It is unfortunate that the WCRC will have to start on the note of a staff structure which has three less persons than the current WARC. This is a function of our financial situation, and our desire to start the WCRC on the note of a healthy balanced budget. This can become an impossible situation, unless all of us make a commitment to make sure that the WCRC is well resourced for our common tasks.
53. While I am on the theme of walking with the God of impossibilities, let me dare to throw in a personal challenge to all who are here. If you are in a position to pledge 1,000 thousand dollars per year to WCRC, for its first seven years, why don't you try it? It will go a long way to make an impact. Some can pledge more. Maybe it is 100 dollars per year that you can afford. That will be greatly appreciated too. In some cases, you know some people who would be willing to give. It will be great if you can get a few of those you know in your own contexts to make such a commitment. In some cases, your congregation may want to consider a regular annual gift that you can send to the WCRC. These gestures would be a major boost to what the member churches have been faithfully giving and will give us a solid backbone with which the WCRC can operate. Before you leave here, or shortly after you leave here, send us an e-mail of this commitment at

warc@warc.ch. Or visit our website and look for how to give on the site.

54. We are not angels. We have not been perfect in carrying out the mandates from the General Council in Accra. Our own critical analysis shows ways in which we have fallen short in fulfilling our mandates. In almost every core calling, we could have done much better than we have. The commitment to be inclusive of young people is one area in which we can clearly see a gap. We also wish our work had impacted the lives of ordinary Christians who sit in the pews of congregations of member churches Sunday after Sunday through more resources, such as the Reformation Day book *Renewing the Church* which we produced in 2005. Our Partnership Fund was not always able to respond to all the needs we were approached with. We have not been able to do everything we set out to in the foci of the Mission Project. The resources that some consultations called for have been late in coming out. Some of these are due to financial challenges and how few we are as a staff team. However, our inclusion of this in my report is not an occasion for excuses. But to indicate where in our own evaluation we have fallen short. Being human beings, some things simply became impossible. We thank God for grace and for the awareness that as we face the future, the God of impossibilities will strengthen us to overcome our failures.

Gratitude

55. In these last six years we have enjoyed very good leadership. Our President Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick can be described as nothing less than an experienced, visionary church leader who has led this movement with grace and passion. We are extremely grateful to him for his leadership. I personally thank Cliff for his guidance and friendship. We are very grateful to God for each of our vice presidents and officers as well as our Executive Committee members. Without your dedication and diligence in overseeing the policies that have governed WARC, we could not have made it this far.
56. There is a team of special people for whom I do not have enough words to express my gratitude. This is the WARC staff team. We are grateful to God for all those who have been part of this team for the last six years. Today, I want to focus especially on those who are currently on staff. My gratitude goes to Pat, Douwe, Jet, Kristine, Maureen, Hartmut, Penny,

Franziska, Heather, Smaranda and Daphne. It is a small but very dedicated team. If you look at our output, you will think we are more than a hundred. The reason? It is these women and men who have served the Alliance with such dedication and passion. We have been a good team together.

57. Allow me to be personal at this point. The work of a General Secretary is no easy responsibility. Without the support and prayers of my wife Akpene, life would have been impossible. I am very grateful to God for how she has accompanied me in this journey of leadership. Our two older children and their spouses have been a major source of support through these years. We have experienced God's gift (Nunana) and God's illumination (Kekeli) as we journeyed through some impossible times. We thank God for our 14 year old son. Apart from keeping me abreast with new IT skills needed for my ministry, his name, Xoeseko— "Only Believe" —is a constant reminder that as we face challenges and impossible tasks, we are called upon to only believe that with God all things are possible and to engage in life-giving action.
58. I thank you all, leaders and members of all our member churches and ecumenical partners. In the visits my colleagues and I have made to the churches, you have welcomed us warmly and shared with us your joys and challenges as well as ways in which you are faithfully carrying out the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want to thank you for the opportunity you have given me to serve you in these years. And I look forward to continuing to serve you in the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
59. I am very grateful to the President of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, Dr. Peter Borgdorff, and my counterpart the General Secretary of REC, Dr. Richard van Houten for the way we have worked together on this journey that we embarked on. WARC and REC have functioned well in this period of transition. I also pay tribute to the leadership of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, especially Dr. Robert Welsh for our common journey in this process. We look forward to the life of the World Communion of Reformed Churches with hope.
60. In this section of gratitude, as the life of WARC has been transformed into WCRC, I do want to pause to give thanks to God for the life and contributions of my predecessors. I would

like to pay tribute to the two who died in this period since our last General Council in Accra: Milan Opocensky, who died in January 2007, and Fred Kaan, the last General Secretary (Minister Secretary) of the International Congregational Council who died in October 2009. We thank God for their contributions. My only surviving predecessor, Rev. Edmond Perret (WARC General Secretary from 1970 to 1989) would have liked to be here to celebrate with us at this historic General Council. But alas his health does not permit him to do so. He sends his greetings. We have enclosed his greeting and words of wisdom for delegates in this General Council in your bags. Please find time to read it if you have not yet done so. For now, let us hear his voice which is still filled with challenges relevant for our days.

61. *⁸The term "world-wide crisis" or "global crisis" is on everybody's lips. But isn't the present crisis, the same as the one occurring at the beginning of the book of Genesis, of wanting to control everything, to impose, sometimes openly and more often covertly—a wish for power—of which the power of money is not the least. Is this crisis not humanity's as a whole? Must it not be accepted, faced, lived with and not submitted to? It is a crisis which whispers into our ear, "You shall be like gods" And, above all, has not the fundamental event already taken place? Have our crises and our death not been crucified on Good Friday? Is the resurrection not a new life offered at Easter? And is Pentecost not a divine breath that it is still good to breathe in today?*
62. *I wish you an excellent council and fruitful work. Put your whole hearts into it and bring your experience back to the churches and countries you represent.*
63. The occasional conversations I have had with Edmond Perret continue to show his passion for the Reformed family worldwide and have been a source of inspiration to me. We thank God for all these past General Secretaries of the World

⁸ The input in paragraphs 61 and 62 is given by Rev. Edmond Perret who was General Secretary of WARC from 1970 to 1989.

Alliance of Reformed Churches for their contributions, and for their lives.

Conclusion

64. We have gone through some challenges in the past six years. We did it together—member churches, officers, Executive Committee members and staff. Delegates to this General Council can feel satisfied that together we worked to fulfil the mandates set in 2004. You, the member churches and our partners, did it. The programmes facilitated by the staff team are only catalysts of what you did. So this is your report that we offer in gratitude to God.

65. We have even seen some apparently impossible situations. Yet we have come through these six years daring to believe what our Lord Jesus Christ said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." As we celebrate the birth of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, we are relying on this God. It is because of this reliance on God that we can dare to make every effort to maintain the free gift and responsibility of unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Appendix 6

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF REC

Richard van Houten

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome and Opening Remarks

I can hardly tell you what a pleasure it is to talk to you today, and to see you here. It is not exactly an accident that we meet here in my home town, where I grew up just a few miles away. This is also a place that is a kind of Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) heartland, a place where the values of REC have been lived out in many respects. It is not the only such place, as REC delegates here will be glad to tell you, but when the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WARC) said they would like to meet in the United States, this became the most logical place for us to join together.

So, I not only welcome you as the General Secretary of REC, but also as a native of this place. I trust over this week, you will appreciate the strengths of this community, even as you may also see some of our weaknesses. Like every place, we have our contributions and our challenges. But I am pleased to repeat what you have already heard from others, Welcome to Grand Rapids.

The path to this union, this merger of two world Reformed bodies, has been an intense journey for those of us involved. It has taken so much of our staff time in REC that we could not complete many of the initiatives we started in Utrecht five years ago. In the booklet, *Moving Towards Unity*, which you received, you will see many frank statements about several projects that we started but did not finish. A few, such as the worship renewal project, became joint projects with WARC once we were committed to union.

Ordinarily, this time should be taken with a report of the work of REC since 2005. However, I am going to take some time today to talk to you about why REC is here, and what the REC family brings into this union. For many of you, REC is just a set of initials on a letterhead, even if you do come from one of our members, so I would like to take a few minutes to help you understand why REC is here today and what it will bring into this union. Let me draw a few strong threads from our history that will be strengths for us all in the WCRC.

Why is REC here and what are some of the strengths it brings to this place?

When REC was founded with the name, Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES), in 1946, the founding churches had few or no other ecumenical relations. They were deeply pious and committed to the church, but also relatively isolated. They were all churches of secessions of the 19th century and did not easily trust Christians who were not very similar to themselves. I hope I do not dishonour the founders of REC when I say, half in jest, that when they put the word *Ecumenical* in their name, they did not realize yet where this would lead them. Of course, we might say the same about us putting the word *Communion* in our new name. I believe it will lead us to places we cannot predict today.

However, over the course of six decades, the members of REC and the nature of REC have changed. We have grown to more than 40 members, but along the way, at least 16 churches have joined us and left again. The road getting here was bumpy.

Let me highlight briefly a few of the threads I mentioned that contribute to the identity of REC:

- We have been a confessional body. From the beginning, we named the Reformed confessions in our constitutional basis. We expected that our members would be serious about their commitments to these confessions, and often challenged each other in that regard. While the challenges have diminished since 1992, we still officially declared in 1998 that one of our greatest values was “to act with Biblical and Confessional integrity in all things.”
- We have lived in a tradition of Reformed piety. Now, every Christian has some piety, but REC churches have often carried the torch for the kind of spiritual awakenings that came in 18th century Protestantism. Often called the second Reformation, these movements were the spiritual antecedents for many REC members. As a result, you will see many expressions of piety, expressions of commitment to the conversion of the world to faith in God, and a lot of sympathy for evangelical movements. REC was an early supporter of the Global Christian Forum, which intentionally sought inclusion of Evangelicals and Pentecostals. In our early history, we opposed the World Council of Churches, then grudgingly allowed contact, and finally moved to relate positively with REC affiliate membership in the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.
- We have lived together as a family interested in mutual care. Of course, REC is not unique in this, and we could even be faulted for our negligence in the past. Still, we saw ourselves as

a place where the care for each other could be assumed, that mutual love and care was a fundamental value. This value drove our youth work, our work in theological education, and the intentional pastoral visits to our member churches. We call this our *nurture* of one another. It is a fundamental part of our *koinonia*, our fellowship together.

- We built our commitment to social justice on the values of biblical integrity and mutual care. We have discussed issues of justice at nearly every synod and assembly since our beginnings. Every discussion began with a biblical study. These kept the REC family on a steady course, but at times one could also feel that these studies were delaying tactics. I was not there for most of those debates, and there are times when I read the record that I feel the frustration of the extended debates and the seemingly endless talk, when the right thing to do seems apparent. Still, I know that life is complex, and that it takes the earnest power of prayer and discernment to walk faithfully in the path of God. I always try to be cautious when I judge actions taken and words said 40 years ago in a different time and place.

Major Areas of Work

I would like to hold before you a few of the major areas of REC work in the last couple of decades. A few of these are matters you only need to know about, to know how these events have shaped us. For some matters, however, there are things unfinished, which the WCRC could continue, could reshape, or decide not to resume.

A. Theology

REC founders believed that theological agreement was quite basic to church unity. They never expected full agreement, but did set their agenda to explore some major theological doctrines. Nevertheless, these were never academic discussions, but always touched matters of practice, including ethics of marriage and polygamy, biblical criticism and other matters. We had a brief discussion of women's ordination in 1968 (most were against it then) which stimulated some of our members to explore this for the first time.

Two broad concerns occupied us over the course of several decades. The longest of these was racism, which I will return to later. The shorter one (just three decades) began with a concern about liberalism and the lack of discipline in our family, and ended with a 12-year, four-meeting debate on homosexuality from 1980-1992. It was a wrenching debate, and 12 of those membership resignations I mentioned came directly out of this issue. Briefly, I will say the outcome was that we determined that a member's position on the

treatment of their homosexual members was not a matter of confession, not a matter that affected a church's commitment to the Scriptures. When this decision was taken in 1992, the last of the hard-line opposition left, and from that point on, REC began to rebuild with those churches who accepted this level of diversity.

Out of that debate came a remarkable consensus on Scriptural hermeneutics and ethics. In 1992, REC adopted a short document that declared how its members viewed Scripture, how we saw the relation between the Scriptural text and interpretation of it, and how Scripture and its interpretation should function in making decisions about daily life, that is, ethics. Conservative and liberal members alike adopted this remarkable document independently, and I think it is still a treasure that should not be lost in the WCRC.

REC also produced a series of major study reports in the last few decades, all of which are a blend of theology and practical ethics. Most of these also contained within them practical guidelines that REC adopted:

- 1979, *The Social Calling of the Church*
- 1988, *The Family in Crisis Today*
- 1992, *Facing the Challenge of Secularism*
- 1996, *The Just Stewardship of Land and Creation*

B. Mission

Mission was an early concern of the early RES. They even wanted to start a separate Reformed Mission Council, analogous to the International Mission Council, an idea that fortunately died an early death. The first standing Committee of RES, however, was a Mission committee, created in 1996.

There were many mission partnerships within REC, often of a "Mother-Daughter" type of relationship. Therefore, it was natural that the earliest issues of theological education came from the Mission committee. It wanted to know how REC could help develop emerging theological training for the leadership development of the daughter churches. Such concerns about education matured to an attempt to be mutually accountable, and the issue became a concern for a theology committee. Out of this eventually came REC's Library and Textbook Programme begun in 1985, solidified in 1989, and running right up to the beginning of this General Council. It stops here, but the need still exists.

For the last two decades, besides having an ongoing discussion in a journal, the *REC Mission Bulletin*, we had a series of statements, starting with "Mission" in 1992, then the "Uniqueness of Christ" in

1996, and finally conferences on mission in the context of religious pluralism in 2000 and 2005. The 2005 meeting ended with a polished statement, "Christian Mission in the Midst of Religious Pluralism," and recommended that REC continue with Christian-Muslim dialogue, a piece of advice that could still be followed in the WCRC.

Like other ecumenical organizations, we felt we had to show a model of sharing among our family. The glaring difference between our poor brothers and sisters and the wealthy ones is a scandal in God's eyes, and REC has talked at length about this. We had a small aid programme, but it was poorly conceived. From its weaknesses, we explored the meaning of development together in three conferences in the early 1990s. We continued by thinking together about how churches get money and funding, and spent much time looking at management, stewardship and ways that God's justice demanded we act.

Working and thinking about sharing was naturally connected with our concern for economic justice. In 1998, REC officially endorsed the Jubilee 2000 campaign, a Christian movement advocating the forgiveness of international debts for poor, highly indebted countries. In 2005, REC endorsed the Micah Challenge, an evangelical movement to support the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The last piece of that programme was our Leadership Development Fund, in some ways similar to WARC's Partnership Fund, but considerably smaller. Since our last Assembly, we have granted about USD50,000 for various needs in leadership development.

C. Mutual Nurture

Like other ecumenical organizations, it was common for the REC General Secretary to visit member churches. About 15 years ago, REC formalized the practice of what we called personal ministry visits, a pastoral visit to a member church by senior staff or executive committee members. Every Executive Committee meeting was accompanied by team visits to members in the country or on the way to the meeting site. We spent a few days with each, hearing their stories, visiting institutions, and meeting with the leadership of the churches, including the often less formal leadership in women's and youth organizations. Our goal was to visit every member once between Assemblies, a goal we never quite met, but often came close to.

In the last few years, we have visited members in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Japan, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Greece, France, Uganda, Kenya and several others.

In my view, WCRC should adopt an intentional policy of planning such visits. Such a practice will make an important contribution to building community among us.

The second major piece of our mutual nurture was in youth ministry. We have described this in detail in other places, but we have had a standing commission on youth since 1980. After Jim Lont, our staff person, retired (again) in 2005, we have been less active, but we have a legacy of thought and action. In 2008, we published a collection of the youth work essays and speeches.

The Commission on Youth and Christian Nurture helped REC members in focusing on the place of youth in their service. It conducted a multi-year process studying *Children at the Lord's Supper*, not telling our members what to do, but giving them tools, a common statement on covenant principles that could guide their discussions. There is still an open recommendation to our members to reflect on this document.

D. Discrimination and Race

Racism was on the REC agenda by 1953. We challenged each other, but the most direct challenges came to our USA and South African members, where racism was institutionalized in society. At every synod into the 1990s, REC probed farther and deeper. We held regional conferences, taking a hard look at our own practices.

I know racism is not gone from my society. Still, by the mid-1970s, most of the racist laws were removed. Now we are left with social systems and institutions that still bear the imprint, and the prejudices that support those systems.

It was a longer journey in South Africa as you know. Let me share a brief look at the REC experience.

1. In 1972, when we met in Sydney, Australia, demonstrators nearly broke the windows of our meeting hall because one of the delegates was a brother of the South African prime minister.
2. In 1976, we met in Cape Town, where the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (the coloured branch under apartheid). This meeting was held in the middle of the 1976 race riots. Delegates were restricted to their meeting halls, but some were able to slip out each night to come to report.

3. In 1984, REC declared the theological defence of apartheid a heresy. It did not suspend its two "white" members, and that has led to a broad divide between WARC and REC history since then.
4. In 1988, the REC Assembly in Harare led the DRC moderator, Johan Heyns, to declare. "Apartheid is Sin."
5. In 1989, REC convened the Vereeninging Consultation, the first consultation in South Africa since the 1960 Cottesloe meetings (WCC) dealing directly with race in the Reformed family (limited to the Dutch Reformed family).
6. In 1992, REC fell just a few votes short of formally adopting the Belhar Confession into its constitution, but at the same time affirmed its earlier stance that the theological defence of apartheid is sin.
7. By 2000, REC began to explore racial and ethnic discrimination more widely again. We met in Indonesia in the middle of ethnic and religious conflicts there. We also began the facilitation of a local conflict between tribes in Nigeria, each of which had major Reformed Church components, helping each understand the nature of conflict and the nature of race and ethnicity. In 2000, REC also created a fourth standing commission, on Human Relations, meant to cover all forms of unjust discrimination.

One of the matters given to this new commission was HIV/AIDS. Of course, AIDS is a social issue with many dimensions, and unjust discrimination is but one of them. We can mention theology, ethics and sin, care for victims, education, and the medical issues. REC did not have the capacity to change most systems, but did walk with its members in trying to identify places where churches could help, and to think together about what this scourge means to our people and us. At the last REC Assembly, we developed a working document that members could use, a road map to help develop policy.

E. *Communications*

One of the primary assignments REC gave to its General Secretary was communications. Since 1964, REC has produced a monthly newsletter, called the *REC News Exchange*. Though there are many sources of news, this piece has remained highly appreciated among our members' leaders. In fact, when I started, it was important that I could read several languages so that we could gather this news from many sources.

Since 1972, REC has produced some quarterly reflections, first in theology, then in mission in 1980, and in Youth work in 1996. REC *Focus* joined these journals into one in 2000. Similar to WARC's *Reformed World*, we published *REC Focus* through 2007.

Conclusion

In some ways, ecumenical organizations are not powerful bodies. Though we have the grandeur of this place, and we gather many people from many different places, we do not have huge budgets and staff. We are not well known to the Christians who attend the worship services of your local churches.

However, we do provide hope for the leaders who have gathered here, not because we are great, but because we know who you are. We have heard your pain, we have suffered with you, and in this space, you will meet others who will be your friends, people who will come to know you and pray for you. For all the global reach and communications in our age, most people are still isolated. To end that isolation is one of our greatest tasks.

The only way we can do that is through love. I repeat what I wrote in *Moving Towards Unity*, that our twin banners of communion and justice are joined through love. If we do not care for one another, what good are we?

We will speak together to witness to the gospel. We will counsel each other on many things. But our greatest witness is the way the world knows we are his disciples, that we love one another, that we treasure the lives of the weakest among us as much as the large and strong.

May God bless us as we work together this week and in the years to come.

Appendix 7

MESSAGE FROM THE WOMEN'S PRE-COUNCIL

We are Reformed Christian women from the regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America and the Pacific who gathered at the Women's Pre-Council to the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, held at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI., from 14-17 June 2010. We live in different contexts and speak different languages yet possess the Pentecostal gift that allows us to hear each other's cries and see the image of Christ in each other.

We represent member churches of the World Alliance Reformed Churches and Reformed Ecumenical Council. We gather in response to God's call to discern how women and men might work together as God's instruments of peace and reconciliation, by creating and engaging transformative actions in the new Communion.

We are aware that in times of transition and change God calls us to be vigilant and accountable to God and to one another, relying on the Holy Spirit to empower us to create and maintain just practices, structures and relationships.

The use of Ephesians 4.3 as a theological rationale for the new direction we have embarked on raises critical concerns for us about the values that the Communion might consider significant in promoting "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" in its body. We are suspicious about the ways in which Ephesians functions as a text that (1) promotes the notion of oneness at the expense of excluding what does not fit and (2) endorses hierarchy and power as ways of normalizing unequal relationships and negotiating differences. 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? How will the Communion treat notions of power and authority, assumed by dominant and hegemonic power relations that already persist in the very fabric of its constituent parts?

We, the women of the Pre-Council entered a season of worship, prayer, biblical reflections and engagement in socio-economic analyses on the current global economic crisis. Emerging from that space of discernment, we call on the General Council to listen and to

commit to action in three key areas identified by us as critical in the work for peace and unity: justice, communion, and partnership.

Justice

God's rule of love and justice for all peoples and the earth is a core value of reformed theology.

Our visits this week to women's ministries serving people marginalized by the current economic crisis bring us face to face with the poignant ways in which the global economic crisis has wreaked devastation in the lives of women and men, even in the North. The work of women in these ministries reminds us of the strength and tenacity women bring to advocacy for justice, healing and reconciliation. Women involved in resisting injustice say "no" to structures of violence and economic injustice, but we are often ignored or silenced. Yet, we persevere with resilience and hope, developing new strategies for resistance and change.

Women participating in the Pre-Council envision a Communion that will build on the legacy of actions toward justice in the economy and the earth by living out the Accra Confession. We anticipate a commitment to mission in partnership that clearly names and monitors responsibilities for continuing (1) the Covenanting for Justice process; (2) the programme work on gender justice and racial justice; and (3) the allotment of equitable human and financial resources for justice and theology programmes.

We therefore call on the General Council to:

1. Guarantee the gains that women have made through WARC's work for gender and racial justice, with specific attention to the work done in the naming of the justice issues emerging from the intersections of women's multiple identities—including abilities, caste, race, language, class, sexuality, status in church and society and marital and family status.
2. Continue the justice commitment to the Accra Confession's emphasis on life in its fullness for all peoples and its active engagement in the process of Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth.
3. Maintain the involvement in the struggle to end violence against women, children and the earth and recognize these as justice issues.
4. Continue to engage in the struggles for life in its fullness for persons who are differently-abled.
5. Create mechanisms for ensuring and monitoring just relations in all of its structures and practices.

Communion

Communion offers opportunities for dialoguing on the things that make for unity and peace and for nurturing right relations in the body of Christ. We call on the General Council to:

- Actively support women's ordination, thereby valuing the distinct and different gifts and insights by which God equips women for leadership in the Communion and its member churches.
- Enable women's equal participation in all decision making bodies and processes of the Communion and its member churches.
- Maintain support for the formation of women for leadership in church and society, including education, training programmes and scholarship funds.
- Create structures that facilitate, monitor and implement policy provisions to achieve equal representation of women and men at all levels in the Communion and its member churches.
- Actively challenge the ways in which culture and theology intersect to undergird and support the patriarchal structures, understandings and attitudes that provide legitimization for how the church is organized and how it lives its witness.
- Ensure that women are included in all staff categories in the Secretariat.

Partnership

We celebrate the distinct gifts that women bring to the task of working in partnership with men toward God's visions for a renewed earth.

We call on the General Council to:

- Uphold the rich legacy of working with global partners for justice—including regional ecumenical organizations, the World Council of Churches and interfaith movements for justice.
- Support women in different parts of its body in their struggles for justice and partnership.
- Institutionalize a gender responsive budgeting process.
- Disallow the principle of the imposition of the English language as a condition for membership on the Executive Committee.

We are convinced that the new Communion will find unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, through justice, communion and partnership.

Appendix 8

**REFORMED YOUTH FORUM: MESSAGE TO THE UNITING
GENERAL COUNCIL 2010**

The Reformed Youth Forum (RYF) met 14-17 June 2010 at Grand Rapids, Michigan, bringing together youth aged 18-30 from member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). We met under the theme "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" (Eph 4.3). We represent the diverse communities of Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, North and South America. We are grateful to God and to our churches for the opportunities to worship, to learn and to mutually share our experiences and stories. We are inspired to each live the message of Ephesians.

Who we are

We live in an age of globalization with friends and family across many borders. We therefore see and understand the world differently from previous generations. We are often perceived as immature and lacking experience, but we share a mutual understanding that our youth have gifts, abilities, spiritual maturity and experience that we share with the whole body of Christ.

We share mutual values of openness and respect. We are eager to explore the meaning of our Reformed tradition today beyond denominations and with other faiths.

We are keen to change ourselves and our world for the better. We share a history with those before us of working for equality in the midst of strife. So we recognize that division and disrespect are not options for our vision of the world today and for the future. We are shaped by our history but we are not bound by it.

Our challenges

We recognize the challenges to justice in our world, including poverty, HIV/AIDS, poor access to health care, harsh economic realities, are challenges that affect us without regard to age. The social realities of our world have created a spiritual crisis that causes many youth to lose hope, and avoid our relationship with God and with each other. We recognize the challenge to unity created by the political and economic structures that continue to keep us from full communion by excluding persons from our fellowship because of travel restrictions, visa complications and economic deprivation. We recognize the challenges to peace in an

age of religious prejudice where fear reigns instead of compassion and dialogue.

We accept the challenge to create an inclusive World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) not bound by divisions of age, denomination, gender, the diversity of languages or labels by which we may define ourselves. We are willing to take our place as whole mature people in Christ in the WCRC to live our calling in this family of faith.

Our offering

We offer our whole selves, our passion, our enthusiasm, our desire to know God and to know each other as we share this journey of faith. We offer fresh new ways of understanding church and the world which both recognize the past and embrace the future, while working for progress in the present. We offer our willingness to honour our differences without deliberately magnifying our divisions; this is the living reality of what our parents and ancestors struggled with, and continue to pray for. We are grateful for new ways of communication, and technology that allows us to cross boundaries and borders and to find new ways to live out communion and justice in our own places.

Our calling

We share a vision to live out the inclusivity we experience in the Reformed Youth Forum, at home in our local communities. We share a vision for communities that are transformed by our faith, hope and love. We share a vision for an inclusive WCRC family whose worship, fellowship and actions are based on just relationships rather than strengthening institutions. We ask the Uniting General Council to remember this vision as it creates WCRC, to develop and maintain structures of governance that are based on relationships rather than hierarchy or rank. We recognize that our vision is not impossible if we know prayer that is action. We commit our gifts to WCRC and the whole body of Christ as we speak the truth in love for the peace of our world. (Eph 4.11-16)

Appendix 9

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Reformed churches are on a journey, trusting in the leading of the triune God, from Accra and Utrecht to Grand Rapids, the member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) have sought to live faithfully and have responded to God's call to establish the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

The Uniting General Council of WCRC gives thanks to God for past and present leaders of both WARC and REC at all levels, who all have provided significant leadership in guiding and leading both bodies in seeking to work for visible unity among all of God's people, living out the ideals of the gospel and striving for justice in the world.

It is the role of WCRC to facilitate formal and informal networks among member churches and regional councils that empower member churches and help foster creative ways of sharing resources for mission.

It is hoped that the aims of the staff will be to empower and enable the whole Communion to be involved in the work and ministry of WCRC. Member churches and regional councils should become willing partners in living out the vision (and mission) of WCRC.

When this report refers to the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) hereinafter it designates member churches, regional councils, and the Geneva-based secretariat.

The Policy Committee recommends that:*Reformed Identity, Theology and Communion*

1. WCRC emphasize the importance of its theological basis and of theological training in the life of its member churches, and point to the statement of Reformed theological identity drawn up at the Uniting General Council, as well as other Reformed theological statements. WCRC encourage the development of a network of theologians, and a network of those who can prepare Reformed approaches to a theology of religions to assist in interfaith dialogue and relations.
2. The Executive Committee arrange studies of "communion" and the nature of being a confessional/confessing church, and

promote sharing of experiences and life between member churches.

3. WCRC continue the publication/dissemination of *Reformed World and Update* (or its successor publication⁹), and that they be made accessible to member churches, and facilitate the wider use of catechetical material.

Christian Unity and Ecumenical Engagement

1. WCRC initiate, foster, and advance ecumenical relationships and invite regional councils (where not available, member churches) to both receive and appropriate ecumenical engagement for their local context with a multiplicity of methodologies which are multi-directional, while at the same time identifying issues from their particular contexts for wider engagement by WCRC.
2. WCRC recommit to the "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" (Accra Confession, 2004) as an invitation to give witness to our common concern for global economic and ecological justice as a matter of faith, and recommit to engagement with other Communion and faith-based organizations focusing on the implications of theological constructions for social justice and action.
3. WCRC initiate discussions *within* the Communion to consider the possibility of associating with the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" (1999).

Justice in the Economy and the Earth

1. WCRC affirm the centrality of the "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" (Accra Confession, 2004) as one of the two core priorities (Communion and Justice) of WCRC, and call upon the Executive Committee to provide dedicated staff and budget toward this central core calling.
2. WCRC continue the process of education on the Accra Confession and its implications, including multi-faceted engagements (North-North, South-South, South-North), specific work on climate justice, ecological debt and ecological destruction, and Biblical studies – including indigenous perspectives.

⁹ Renamed *Reformed Communiqué* at the UGC

3. WCRC call upon and its member churches in cooperation with WCC and other ecumenical bodies, networks and organizations to prepare a Global Ecumenical Conference to propose 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.
 - Is accounting for social and environmental risks.
 - Sets clear limits to greed.

It shall be explored how in the follow-up such a process can be supported by a Global Ecumenical Panel, 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.

4. This Uniting General Council calls upon WCRC to promote and work toward the realization of the vision of life-giving civilization as an alternative to the neoliberal economic paradigm, introducing new metrics that reflect God's intention for the flourishing of creation, and humankind within creation, that will include engaging the powers in the world economic system

Worship and Spiritual Renewal

1. WCRC adopt the statement *Worshipping the Triune God* (2010 revised edition) as a working document, recommend its use by member churches, and ensure its wide dissemination within and beyond WCRC.
2. WCRC advise the Executive Committee to receive feedback of the statement's use by member churches, and develop ways to assist member churches to make effective use of the statement.
3. WCRC advise the Executive Committee to consider the appointment of a working group on this topic.

Leadership Development and Nurture

1. WCRC recommit to the equal accessibility of theological education and development programmes for women and men, both ordained and non-ordained.

2. WCRC recommit to theological reflection about all forms of authority and structures of power in the church and in this Communion.
3. WCRC support youth leadership development through networking, resourcing, training and fellowship; and appoint a youth network facilitator.

Gender Justice

1. WCRC affirm its commitment to full partnership between women and men by effecting a 50 percent representation of women on the Executive Committee and Presidium.
2. WCRC promote the ordination of women amongst its member churches.
3. WCRC initiate programmes focusing on the intersection of gender justice with issues of persons with disabilities.
4. WCRC further the work of gender justice education for transformation by developing, providing and sharing resources for use in the Christian education of children.

Youth Empowerment

1. A youth section is created in WCRC *Reformed Communiqué* newsletter for youths and youth networks to communicate and update the Communion on local, regional, and global youth projects.
2. A Youth Fund be begun by WCRC, and thereafter supported by regional networks. An initial contribution from WCRC for investment supported by regions will demonstrate a commitment to regional youth networks.
3. The minimum requirement for youth delegates (under age 30) to the Executive Committee to be no less than three persons. In addition, the Nominating Committee should require at least one person under age 30 to be elected to the Presidium, with the nominating committee giving consideration to a diversity of ages.

Mission

1. WCRC work with member churches to facilitate a broad participatory process of reflection that can guide us toward a shared theological statement on mission.
2. The Executive Committee be charged to identify the necessary resources, financial and otherwise, that will ensure responses to the contextual changes and challenges of the world, so that mission is retained at the heart of WCRC in its structures and programmatic activities.
3. WCRC facilitate deeper partnerships that empower the member churches and help foster creative ways of sharing resources for mission. WCRC identify strategic alliances with other agencies, particularly for its programmatic work, that strive to express its identity as a World Communion of Reformed Churches in mission.

Peace and Reconciliation

1. In countries such as Nigeria, Sudan, and Kenya there are moves to introduce Sharia, a law which will create inequality before the law and disadvantage Christians and other minority religions and perpetuate and deepen religious division. Since there is a strong Christian presence in those countries, WCRC has particular responsibility to work there toward peace and reconciliation.
2. WCRC, working with appropriate member churches and other organizations, seek ways to accompany member churches through prophetic solidarity, education and advocacy. This will include a commitment to not participate in violence against one another.
3. Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, WCRC work with the member churches, the WCC and others to seek appropriate partners for engagement and inter-religious dialogue, recognizing that no solution will be found without engaging with Israeli/Jewish and Palestinian representatives, wherever possible. WCRC and its member churches feel solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters in these difficult situations.
4. This conflict brings instability to the wider region, and indeed has global implications. The situation in the Middle East and other Muslim countries where the presence of Christian minorities is seriously threatened requires an effective

- programme including a facilitator to empower Christian presence in the Middle East, and Christians as agents of peace and reconciliation.
5. WCRC continue the work begun by WARC in Croatia and South Africa on peace and reconciliation.
 6. Regarding Indigenous People issues, WCRC initiate a process leading toward confession and repentance of past wrongs to live into the truth that we are equal in God's sight; seek humbly to initiate relationships with Indigenous People in order to listen and understand; to honour and respect the cultural differences of all types of worship expression; include the voices of Indigenous people in the governance of WCRC; promote the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People as a resource to member churches.
 7. Regarding immigration and asylum seekers, WCRC recommit to being a witness to God's inclusive welcome by challenging, through statements and actions, all instances where people are treated with indignity because of unjust, arbitrary and inhuman immigration and asylum policies.

Additional Recommendations from the Policy Committee

In addition the Policy Committee proposes that:

1. Regional Councils should be the locus of much of WCRC work, and thus the Executive Committee and staff should develop methods for empowering Regional Councils. This may include regional consultants.
2. WCRC's work on mission should include collaborative work and dialogue with other religious traditions, possibly creating an Inter-Religious Council or Organisation, or working with already existing IROs. Regional Councils should be encouraged to begin this work where it does not already exist.
3. WCRC should develop educational programmes leading to more complex theological perspectives in member churches where gender imbalance is an issue. These programmes will need to pay attention to local issues and cultures, and may be assisted by Regional Councils.
4. Youth empowerment is essential in all areas of WCRC. Thus the scholarship, theological education, and other programmes should be sustained.

5. Because WCRC is equally committed to justice and communion, WCRC charge the Executive Committee to commit equal resources in the core budget and staffing configurations to these two priorities.
6. Because of the global South methodology of support that employs in-kind contributions along with monetary contributions, WCRC's financial reporting should reflect this.
7. WCRC recommit to the actions of the WARC 24th General Council (2004) related to the churches in Papua, Indonesia, regarding oppression and marginalization of its people, and charge the Executive Committee to implement these previous actions, and to support its member church in Papua concerning the dialogue between Papuan leaders and the government of Indonesia.
8. WCRC charge the Executive Committee to establish a Task Force on Healing and Reconciliation for the Dutch Reformed Church family in South Africa, taking into account the decisions of Ottawa (1982) and Debrecen (1997).
9. WCRC amend the relevant sections (II.A.1 and II.A.2) of its Bylaws to effect a 50 percent gender-balance of its elected Executive Committee membership and a 50 percent gender-balance of its Presidium by adding the following sentence to each section as the final sentence: "The Presidium and the Executive Committee shall be 50 percent women and 50 percent men."
10. WCRC charge the Executive Committee to establish a Monitoring Group on Just Relationships, Inclusion and Representation in all aspects of the Communion's life and governance.
11. WCRC explore improving web access to knowledge database and best practices, and commit resources toward this end.
12. WCRC charge the Executive Committee to review the languages (which will include the number of delegates speaking a particular language) for interpretation in preparation for the next General Council.
13. WCRC charge the Executive Committee to provide an appropriate response to the United Nations Framework on

Climate Change, with attention to the particular concerns of our member churches.

14. WCRC adopt as essential guidelines the Johannesburg Global Dialogue Statement on the Accra Confession (September 2009), the Cartigny Global Theological Consultation Statement on Communion and Justice (March 2010) and the Joint Declaration *Dreaming a Different World Together* by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany.
15. WCRC instruct the Executive Committee to review the entire nominating process of the Uniting General Council.
16. WCRC notes the deep divisions and struggle that are still present within our Communion over such issues as ordination of women, human sexuality.
17. We should struggle for the truth¹⁰ with mutual respect and in the spirit of communion.
18. To affirm and refer to the Executive Committee the Partnership Fund that has been serving our churches' mission for such a long time.

¹⁰ Executive Committee was instructed to deepen the discussion of the meaning of "truth"

Appendix 10

PUBLIC ISSUES COMMITTEE REPORT

We are a people on a journey, following where the master walks.

We are people on a journey, in the shadow of the cross.

*What compels? The face of Jesus. Who protects? Our faithful guide:
He who treads the road of service, Christ the Lord the crucified.*

Living the unity in the bond of peace, and driven by our common concern for justice, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), as a family of Reformed churches around the world, believes that human dignity, equality, the integrity of creation, eradication of poverty, and peace and reconciliation are the key challenges of our time. As churches we are called upon to give voice to all issues which threaten abundant life for all in our communities, and to stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged.

The report of the Public Issues Committee seeks to outline a number of concerns facing the church and the world as they are experienced by WCRC's own members and their communities. As we name concerns, we lift our members and their churches and communities in prayer, and urge action, we seek to be faithful to God's desire expressed in the Gospel of John, that all might have life, and have it abundantly.

Dignity of all persons*Migration*

We are a communion of churches from every continent, gathered to express and to discover our wealth of diversity and the unity we share, not only as Reformed churches, but also on the more basic level, as human beings with different cultures and expressions.

We acknowledge that the movement of people and population has always given rise to conflict. We understand the difficulty of those who find it difficult to make space for newly arrived persons, and for the new communities to adapt.

We deplore the ill-treatment of migrants, attacks by individuals, criminalization by governments. We deplore the disjointed administration and bureaucracy, which makes obtaining paperwork unnecessarily complicated and leads people into irregular and illegal situations, despite often their best efforts. We deplore the

unsympathetic and undignified treatment by government agencies of displaced, vulnerable and often traumatized people.

We deplore the enslavement and trafficking of vulnerable people, and particularly the abuse of women and children in the sex trade, domestic work, and in factories and farms.

We urge our governments and churches to treat all people with dignity and equality. We urge our governments and churches to see people neither as a threat nor as a commodity, but as human beings with dignity who contribute to the richness of our cultures and give their new communities an opportunity to grow economically and culturally.

We urge governments to revise their immigration policies and to develop systems of immigration that will meet the needs of both the people and the community as a whole.

Prisoners of conscience

We affirm the freedom of religion and ideology and human expression that do not cause direct and obvious harm to others.

We deplore the imprisonment and abuse of persons because of conscience. In particular, we deplore the threatening and also killings of human rights activists in many parts of the world represented at this World Communion of Reformed Churches.

We urge governments which are detaining people because of their religion or beliefs or political commitments or other human expression to consider that suppression causes hardening of positions, creates martyrs and damages the heart and soul of a nation.

We affirm the efforts of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) as it addresses the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe. We continue to hold the people of Zimbabwe in prayer.

We affirm the Reformed Church in Romania in their efforts to rehabilitate the memory of members who were killed by the communist dictatorship between 1945 and 1989. We encourage the Conference of European Churches (CEC) to stimulate the rehabilitation of people. It is unacceptable that properties confiscated during that time have not been returned. We call on the Romanian government to respect the integrity of life and property of all its people, including the Reformed churches.

Equality and inclusivity

With the scriptures, we affirm that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28)

It is with grave concern that we learn that religious discrimination continues to be experienced and suffered by many of our member churches all over the world.

Our attention has been drawn in particular to the serious and deeply concerning political situation in Madagascar. Sadly, the situation in this country is not unique. Reports from countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia indicate problems of similar gravity.

In view of religious and all other forms of discrimination, threats and persecution of member churches in various countries of the world, WCRC commits itself to raising awareness on behalf of our oppressed sisters and brothers. We have particular concern for the Dalit community in India as it faces oppression and discrimination. WCRC calls for prayer for our persecuted brothers and sisters and also for member churches to take action regionally and globally as appropriate, and to do so within already existing networks.

Integrity of Creation

We as Reformed Christians from all over the world affirm that our Creator placed humankind in Eden to sustain the integrity of all life, of all living things, therefore, we confess that we have not always been worthy caretakers of gifts of land, sea, forests, and air. We share the responsibility of materialism and over-consumption, which lead to overuse and misuse of natural resources, and have neglected our duty to sustain the webs of life.

We deplore excesses of multi-national corporations that use resources for profit without regard for the land and its people. We highlight the situations of drought, landslides, melting icecaps and oil spills as we support the voices of our brothers and sisters in Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, the Himalayas, Indonesia and all places in the world which suffer from the misuse and abuse of natural resources. We call on all people to live in solidarity with communities in places such as Guatemala and Haiti which have been affected by the mismanagement of resources.

God has made us stewards of creation, therefore our calling is to protect and cherish the abundant gifts of creation, not least by reducing, reusing and recycling.

We acknowledge work by the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches of Brazil and Switzerland on "Water as a Human Right and Public Good" and we call on all member churches to support and adopt this declaration.

Eradication of poverty

We affirm that the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it (Psalm 24.1). God intends that all people, created in the divine image, should have life in abundance and be stewards of creation to the benefit of all.

We deplore any economic system that exploits resources and people to serve the interest of the rich at the expense of the poor resulting in, for example, forced migration. We deplore any political system that brings poverty and hardship to its own people or other people through sanctions or trade agreements.

We urge WCRC leadership to collaborate with other organizations to keep governments accountable to reach the Millennium Development Goals. In the context of global realities and global injustice, we encourage churches to seek a just society in which the poor will be cared for. In light of the suffering of the people of North Korea and Cuba, we urge WCRC leadership to write to the United Nations to ask for reconsideration of the sanctions, and to seek alternative forms of humanitarian relief. We exhort member churches to keep in prayer all the poor, and to strive to eradicate poverty and suffering in their communities.

Peace and reconciliation

As churches of WCRC, we are called to give a lead in developing peaceful relationships among Christians, and efforts to promote peaceful relationships amongst diverse religious groups. We affirm the preservation of cultural identity, especially through freedom of language.

We deplore situations where the strong oppress, exploit and otherwise take advantage of the weak; the majority dominates the minority locally, regionally and internationally. We deplore political situations characterized by dictatorial control and imposed or coerced uniformity. In saying these things, we express our anguish over situations of religious discrimination and violence, particularly against Christians, in Indonesia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Iraq and North India; the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the US military base in Okinawa, Japan; the current turmoil in Thailand and in Sri Lanka; the US armed intervention through military bases in Colombia; the issue of linguistic freedom for Hungarians in Slovakia;

the effects of the civil military coup in Honduras; issues of sovereignty in Malvinas/the Falkland Islands; the military occupation of Burma; China's restriction of Taiwan's independence; and the trend of some nations as they amass weapons.

Recommendations of the Public Issues Committee

Member churches

1. We call on all member churches to support and adopt the document published by the Brazilian and Swiss Protestant churches entitled "Water as a Human Right and a Public Good".
2. We urge member churches to advocate methods of agriculture which conserve water, soil and diversity of plant life.
3. We urge member churches to actively participate in planting seedlings to renew forests and to protest against the indiscriminate felling of trees.
4. We urge churches to educate all people, young and old, to use fewer and reuse more of our resources in order to sustain and maintain the beauty of creation.
5. We recommend that member churches lobby or otherwise urge governments to make provisions in their policies on admission of asylum seekers to take account of the impending influx of tens of thousands of people (particularly from the Pacific Islands) who are expected to be displaced by rising sea levels associated with climate change.
6. We ask that the member churches of WCRC be encouraged to reflect, document and share conversations regarding the historical significance of Haiti and the implications for its current economic and social development.

Executive Committee

7. We urge the Executive Committee to write a letter to the Conference of European Churches (CEC) to ask that the problem of Spanish Protestants be put on the agenda of the meeting of the President of the European Commission Barroso and the Prime Minister of Spain in preparation of the upcoming European Union presidency.
8. We ask the Executive Committee to bring to the attention of all member churches of WCRC the situation of the churches and the issue of religious freedom in the Middle East and ask all member churches for prayer.
9. We ask the Executive Committee to visit our brothers and sisters in Madagascar and to establish whether WCRC can play a role of mediation, and to do so in conjunction with local and regional organizations (for instance, the AACC).

10. We ask the Executive Committee to reconsider the task and role of the Public Issues Committee.
11. We ask that the Executive Committee write to the United Nations to petition the right of Taiwan to participate in the United Nations (and other secular international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO)) equally, as a distinct member of the international society.
12. We ask that the Executive Committee write letters of solidarity (and make a personal visit where budget permits) to the member churches from the Pacific Islands.
13. We ask that the Executive Committee write to member churches, urging them as institutions to reduce their carbon footprint and that WCRC develop and disseminate to member churches instructional materials and suggested guidelines which may include suggestions of how this might be done.
14. We ask that the Executive Committee make a public statement (in the form of a press release) on the effects of the US military intervention and placement of military bases in Columbia.
15. We ask that the Executive Committee make a public statement (in the form a press release) against the practice of weapons proliferation.
16. We ask that the Executive Committee make a public statement condemning the military occupation in Burma, and the associated effects of this occupation.
17. We ask that Executive Committee continue its ecumenical relations to foster peace amongst different Christian traditions.

General Secretariat

18. We ask that:
 - a. The General Secretary request the United Nations to reconsider its position on economic sanctions against North Korea and allow humanitarian assistance to the people of North Korea.
 - b. That the General Secretary with the Presidium visit Seoul and Pyongyang to have prayer meetings for the reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula.
 - c. A recommendation be made to change from the Armistice Agreement to the Peace Treaty between the two Korean nations as requested by the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.
19. We ask that the General Secretary address the suffering of the people of Cuba by:

- a. Fully supporting and advocating ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the US government against the nation of Cuba.
- b. Petitioning by letter, including a copy of this resolution, to the President of the USA, the Secretary of State of the USA, the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the USA to restore peaceful diplomatic relations with the nation of Cuba and to repeal all and any laws imposing an embargo or blockade against goods, assets, property, travel and trade with Cuba.
- c. Encouraging member churches of WCRC and our ecumenical partners and affiliates in the USA to utilize their structures to coordinate efforts to request a policy change and end the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the US Government against Cuba.
- d. Encouraging all churches of WCRC and our partners and affiliates to pray for the people, churches, communities and prisoners of conscience in Cuba.

Other

20. The Public Issues Committee refer to the Policy Committee the concerns of racial justice, the ongoing need for repentance, racial reconciliation and deepened relationships in the life of the churches in the Dutch Reformed family in South Africa. The Public Issues Committee recommend to the Policy Committee that WCRC constitute a task force or other committee to address this set of concerns. We expect that this Committee would see as its primary task to walk alongside the leaders and members of our WCRC member churches in South Africa as they address these concerns.
21. The Public Issues Committee refer to the Policy Committee the concerns raised by the church in Papua regarding oppression and marginalization of its people. This issue was taken up in the General Council meeting of WARC in 2004, yet the leaders of the church in Papua do not feel that their concerns have been addressed in the ways expected.
22. We ask that delegates of this United General Council be provided with a comprehensive list (including the statements submitted from member churches and proposals from the floor of the Public Issues Committee) to take back to their member churches to raise awareness of the issue, and to provide the basis for prayer.
23. We ask that the Policy Committee discuss and create a policy around the provision of food for participants at General Council meetings, based on the principle of living simply so that others

may simply live. Such a policy is important not only to stand in solidarity with our poverty-stricken brothers and sisters around the world, but is a real way that we – a corporate entity founded on Christian principles of equality and justice – can more faithfully align how we think with how we act.

24. We ask that the Executive Committee review the function and purpose of the Public Issues Committee.

Requests for prayer

We hold in prayer the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe.

We hold in prayer all of our brothers and sisters who are victims of religious discrimination.

We pray for all of the poor and strive to eradicate poverty and suffering.

We pray for the rich, that they should be aware of their responsibilities.

We pray for churches in the Middle East in their quest for peace and religious freedom.

We pray for the human rights of the people of Bangladesh.

We pray for the people of Puerto Rico as they seek to express their identity.

We hold in prayer all those who are discriminated against in their use of indigenous languages.

We pray for those communities which are affected by human-made industrial disasters.

We hold in prayer all of those who are affected by inter-ethnic conflict and difficult relations.

We pray for the people of Sri Lanka in their efforts toward working toward reconciliation and lasting peace.

We pray for all of those with responsibility for the ethical use of new forms of biotechnology.

We pray for good world relationships between east and west, north and south.

We pray for those preparing the conference in December 2010 in Mexico, which will build on the work of the climate change conference in Copenhagen.

We pray for Sudan and their present situation.

We hold each other in prayer where our histories, cultures and contexts create different perspectives and a struggle to live in mutual respect and the spirit of communion.

We pray for Somalia.

We pray for religious conditions in Indonesia.

We pray for the United Protestant Church in Belgium, its members, and the country in which it lies.

We pray for human rights issues in Columbia.

We pray for the situation in Lesotho.

Statement on relationships with First Nations Peoples, Native American Peoples, and Inuit and Métis Peoples in North America

We, as churches in the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), respond to the call to repentance, and to work for justice and equality for all peoples, particularly at this 2010 Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA in our relationship with Native American, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis persons. While not all of our churches have been in direct relationship to these communities, we recognize that similar experiences have occurred in many parts of the world. As Reformed churches, we:

- Repent of those ways in which we have manifested cultural, economic and theological arrogance as we have formed and sustained our churches and their ministries; and for those times when those same structures perpetrated abuse on women, men and children who were entitled to expect better from those preaching a gospel of love.
- Repent of the ecclesiological hegemony we have exhibited when we set forth forms of worship, music, and biblical interpretation as if they are the only legitimate liturgical expressions, rather than offerings to be contributed to a greater whole alongside those of Native American, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Christians.
- Repent of those moments when we have taught theology and church history in ways which have disregarded the history, theology, and contributions of those who received the gospel into their own communities in North America, and in their unique ways gave glory to God.
- Repent of our history littered with ways in which we have betrayed gospel values of justice, fairness, and love for our neighbour by disregard for the fundamental value of each human person in our communities, by the confiscation of land, and mass killings.

We offer our apology. We trust that, in our genuine repentance and relying on God's grace, we will have the courage to do what is necessary to repair broken relationships, begin new paths of reconciliation and partnership with our brothers and sisters, and respond to opportunities to participate in dialogue with Indigenous peoples in the United States, Canada, and countries throughout the world. Finally, in joining hands together, we will know ourselves to be renewed to preach God's word of grace and abundant life for all in a world in need of healing.

Statement on the denial of visas

We, the members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), express our profound dismay to the government of the United States of America, and to its offices around the world, for the denial of visas to 74 delegated individuals around the world as they sought entry into the United States for the events of the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 14-28, 2010, and call for the return of all application and processing fees to those who have been denied visas.

Leadership of WCRC and its affiliated bodies met frequently and received promises and assurances from US government officials, including in the State Department, that delegates to this international gathering of Reformed churches would not be barred entry into the United States, yet 74 individuals were kept from entry. Their voices and their contributions were therefore silenced, and the witness of our churches has been diminished.

We deplore the manifestation of fear and inhospitality, masked as concerns for illegal immigration and terrorism, which prevented our brothers and sisters from attending this important gathering; and we deeply regret the ways in which our fellowship and its witness has been diminished by their missing and critically important voices. We are dismayed that promises made to facilitate the visas for our delegates were broken.

As a world ecumenical organization we depend on the free movement of our members for the normal conduct of our work. We call upon the government of the United States to ensure that for future events held in the United States, delegates will not be denied visas on any grounds other than a genuine and specific concern about the individual's intentions. If this cannot be guaranteed, we will have to choose alternative countries in which to assemble.

We are deeply disappointed that the United States government has not been able to accommodate a Christian organization seeking to build mutual understanding and peace across the world.

Appendix 11

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance Committee gives thanks to God for the generosity of our member churches in supporting both the core budget of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and its various programmes, and the budget of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC).

The Finance Committee met and reviewed the financial statements since 2004, and the 2010 and 2011 budgets as approved by the Joint Executive. It discussed financial policies for WCRC and fundraising initiatives to support the future of the organisation.

These discussions have led to recommendations in the following areas:

Audited Accounts: A detailed review of the 2004-2009 audited accounts of WARC was undertaken, including the difference between core and programme budgets.

Recommendation 1: That in the future, WCRC core and programme financials should be done as two separate audited accounts.

Executive Committee Meetings: Clarity was requested with regard to regulations governing the expenses incurred by Executive Committee members when attending meetings.

Recommendation 2: That this question be referred to the new Finance Committee to propose guidelines to the Executive Committee.

Staff benefits: Concerns were expressed regarding the financial implications of staff benefits, such as the cost of home leave, education allowances, etc.

Recommendation 3: That this question be referred to the new Finance Committee to draw up an appropriate policy.

Area Councils: It was noted that the European Area Council is the only Area Council that has an agreement with the WCRC office to receive their financial contributions from the European member churches.

Recommendation 4: Churches that wish to channel contributions for Area Councils via the WCRC office should clearly state the specific amount above the WCRC membership fee to be allocated to the respective Area Council.

Membership fees: The existing policy on consequences of non-payment of membership fees was reviewed. Concerns were expressed regarding administration of this. Pastoral visits by the WCRC leadership in the regions might be able to be intentional around financial opportunities.

Recommendations 5:

- That the new Finance Committee be asked to recommend a set of procedures on the consequences of non-payment of membership fees which is culturally sensitive and which can realistically be administered.
- That every member of the new Executive Committee should be an advocate for WCRC finances and other in-kind contributions for all the churches within their region.
- That all delegates and representatives of churches should immediately upon their return communicate with their church regarding outstanding membership fees.
- That the minimum WCRC annual membership fee be USD500 with provision that those member churches who were only part of REC and paid less than USD500 may approach the Executive in writing for a transitional exception if needed.

WCRC Budget: Financial risks related to income were expressed, including the financial capacity of the growing churches in the global south and the decline in membership of churches in the global north.

Recommendation 6: That the Finance Committee be asked to consider budgeting an annual fixed contribution from the core budget to the General Council Fund (e.g. CHF50,000) instead of the current practice of allotting a percentage of annual membership contributions (e.g. 7.5%).

Financial Management: It is essential that financial management be conducted at the highest possible level. In order to encourage clarity between policy decision and implementation, the following recommendation is made:

Recommendation 7:

- The new position of Finance Coordinator should be reviewed by the Executive Committee with a view to determining whether it should revert to an Executive Secretary level position, clarifying the reporting relationship to ensure that financial information is received at all levels.
- That a clear job description and list of responsibilities be prepared in relation to the General Treasurer.
- That the Executive Committee, in naming the new Finance Committee be free to name individuals from beyond the membership of the Executive Committee to ensure persons with strong financial skills are included.
- That two members of the previous Finance Network be invited to sit with the new Finance Committee at its first meeting.

Investment Strategy: There is a need for the Finance Committee to develop an investment strategy and policy with the advice of specialists.

Recommendation 8: That a small investment committee based in Geneva be implemented to oversee the investment strategy of WCRC including socially responsible investing, and managing exchange rate risk. We will seek skills from around the world as we move forward with the investment strategy.

Fundraising: This was discussed with input from Stephen Lytch who is volunteering his fundraising services. A key focus of the new Executive should be to communicate clearly and succinctly the vision and mission of WCRC in a way that facilitates fundraising. Income tax offsets for donations to WCRC in the USA were confirmed. Other countries would have to be looked at individually. A suggestion was made that tax offsets may be possible if donations for WCRC are channelled via the local churches.

Recommendation 9: That the Executive consider engaging a development officer, possibly with separate funding.

Special Recommendation 10: That as an expression of our commitment to the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), delegates, visitors and others present at the Uniting General Council be encouraged to make a financial donation or pledge to WCRC—pledge cards will be made available.

The following issues were discussed and are highlighted here for information:

UGC Budget: The UGC budget was reviewed and it was confirmed that a clear picture of whether it will be budget neutral or not will not be available until the UGC is complete. It was felt that savings could be achieved at future General Councils with regard to its length, the amount of subsidies and the size of delegations.

Youth Programme: Regrets were expressed that there are no plans for funding a Youth Programme. Suggestions were made with regard to support from certain churches and the possibility of the employment of an intern.

Seconded Staff: It was suggested that seconded staff could be found to increase the staff complement in the WCRC office.

Budgeting for WCRC: The Finance Committee acknowledges the core callings of communion and justice in WCRC and encourages a balance in budgeting that reflects these values.

Appendix 12

**SECTION REPORT ON REFORMED IDENTITY,
THEOLOGY AND COMMUNION**

As members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), we recognize that on the ground of Jesus Christ's saving work, the Father through the Spirit calls out one people for God's praise and service, and this people we call the Church catholic. On that basis, as a part of the universal Church, we strive with humility to give expression to our Reformed identity and theology. Our self-awareness comes to expression in our appreciation of various foundational principles. At the same time, our self-awareness reminds us that we are a people on a journey to become more fully the communion we are called to be.

A deep allegiance to the authority of the Bible as God's word was central to the development of the 16th century Protestant Reformation; continuing recognition of that authority is basic to our identity in Christ as guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3.16-17). As churches also informed by creedal and confessional documents that summarize our understanding of Scripture, we submit our own traditions and ambitions to constant reformation by the Spirit as we live as followers of Jesus Christ in ever changing cultures (*Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*—the Reformed church always has to be reforming).

In baptism, the Church recognizes new birth into the family of God (1 Pet 3.21), and in the communion of the Lord's Table we recognize a wondrous union with Christ and with each other (1 Cor 11.25-26). Receiving and celebrating the gift of salvation, we long for the constant growth of the body of Christ. In the worship of God and in the fellowship of believers, everyone is warmly welcomed. New members are discipled and, as followers of Christ, all members are urged to grow in faith and action.

We consciously call ourselves a "communion" of churches. Our rich communion with Christ calls for deep commitment. It reminds us that our identity flows out of a gift of unity that is ours by God's grace. The triune God welcomes and transforms our lives through the gifts of forgiveness, reconciliation and sanctification. Accordingly, the gift of communion that we have received from God leads to celebration in worship. Our liturgical expressions, with diversity, attest to the greatness of our awesome God.

In Reformed theology, we affirm and embody characteristics that distinguish how we see our place in God's world. Covenantal theology provides a framework by which we see holistic connections in God's unfolding plan of salvation, to which we are called to witness. To own our Reformed identity is to express appreciation for God's gift of grace. At the same time, it evokes a commitment to strive tirelessly by God's grace to become more and more the communion that God calls us to be. Embracing God's sovereign love, manifested in the call of Christ, we are compelled to express spiritual and social solidarity with those who suffer injustice and brokenness in this world (Am 5.24; Mic 6.8). The gracious sovereignty of God reminds us that God lovingly claims this whole world as God's own. That recognition energizes our carrying out of our calling in God's mission (Mat 28.18-20). It encourages us to develop our intellect and skills in all areas of life to be a light in a dark world (Mat 5.16).

As we profess the priesthood of all believers, we value the equality and dignity before God of all members—those abled and differently abled, young and old, female and male. We are challenged to be responsible keepers of the earth that God created and entrusted to our care. In living and deepening our Reformed identity, we seek to experience peace with and gain greater understanding and appreciation of those neighbours who are of other faith backgrounds.

As a World Communion of Reformed Churches, we have much to learn as we seek to live out our Reformed identity, theology and communion.¹¹ Yet, we face the future in the confidence that the Holy Spirit has been sent to equip and lead the Church.

Recommendations:

1. That the WCRC office encourage the development of a network of theologians who would organize and coordinate their own efforts toward shared theology from around the globe.

¹¹ A most helpful document that serves to set the programme for further advancement is the report entitled "Global Theological Consultation on Communion and Justice, 4-9 March 2010, Cartigny, Switzerland: A message to the members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches."

2. That WCRC emphasize the importance of theological training in the life of its churches.
3. That WCRC promote the exchange of pastors, of lay leadership, and the exchange or sharing of experiences between member churches.
4. That WCRC, by means of consultations, advance the study of "Communion" in terms of its nature, foundation, significance and rules of engagement.
5. That the WCRC office help the membership of WCRC to clarify what it means to be a confessional or confessing church.
6. That the WCRC office develop a network of people to advance our understanding of a Reformed theology of religions to assist in interfaith dialogue.
7. That the WCRC office facilitate the wider use of catechetical materials in the churches by coordinating what is available and making it electronically accessible.
8. That the WCRC office assist in the preparation or collection of prayers for each other, and prayers for use in worship, making them available electronically.
9. That WCRC continue publication of *Reformed World* and that it be made accessible to the general membership of all the churches in WCRC.
10. That the WCRC office prepare for involvement in the 2013 Heidelberg Catechism anniversary and the 2017 Wittenberg Reformation jubilee.

Appendix 13

SECTION REPORT ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND ECUMENICAL ENGAGEMENT

Objective: The objective of this section was to critically examine the role of WCRC in ecumenical relations in light of past REC and WARC involvements and to make recommendations for further work.

Introduction:

Celebrating our communion visible in the World Communion of Reformed Churches can be seen as a very important step in the history of Reformed churches worldwide. It is an essential sign of our commitment to overcoming division. It shows the "Unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace". It affirms the long commitment of Reformed churches that have inspired the ecumenical movement throughout the world. It strengthens Reformed Christians worldwide in their desire for unity among the churches. It is important to underline that unity does not mean "uniformity". Unity is often and can be lived out in reconciled diversity.

Notwithstanding what has been done before, it could be worth considering the idea of focusing more in the coming years on the reception of the results of the dialogues on a local and regional level. The dialogues have gone on for quite a few decades and have resulted in many agreements. These results however are often in a sort of global vacuum. Member churches have often not seen much of a change within their context of living together. That may be a reason why there is a critical approach toward the continuation of the dialogues. Why it may appear that many dialogues are at a standstill, they remain critical

On the other hand it is also true that many feel dialogues to be at a standstill. The same subjects are being discussed yet not many great steps forward are being made. In view of this an idea might be to organize local or regional dialogue consultations that work as a reception process for harvesting the results simultaneously with ongoing dialogues. WCRC's regional councils could be very much involved in the set-up of these consultations.

“The ultimate purpose of ecumenical engagement is rooted in God’s mission and witness to justice,” therefore, the following **recommendations** are offered:

1. Reaffirm the Lund Principle 1952. To do everything together except those things where deep differences of conviction compel us to act separately.
2. To construct a framework for ecumenical engagement, with a multiplicity of methodologies which is multi-directional, and resourced by the Geneva office, the areas and the member churches. All within the framework of developing the communion.
3. To encourage dialogue/interaction amongst WCRC member churches: specific topics may include Episcopate, ordination and general participation in leadership, especially as they impact women.
4. Ecumenical engagements to take place with other Communion and faith-based organizations focusing on theological basis and implications for social justice and action.
5. In the spirit of mutual recognition of authority we recommend that WCRC initiate, foster, and further ecumenical relationships and invite area councils (where not available member churches) to both receive and appropriate this work for their local context while at the same time identifying issues out of their particular context for wider engagements by WCRC.
6. In recognizing that WCRC provides an international overview of the reception and implementation of ecumenical engagements, we recommend that space be provided at General Council meetings for stories to be shared about such “fruits of the harvest” so that different contexts can share their experiences and learn from each other.
7. To have a consultation within WCRC to consider the possibility of associating with the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (1999).
8. To have a consultation within WCRC about the “Leuenberg Agreement” (1973) and comparable agreements with churches and areas that have not yet signed. (See Communion and Justice Document on sharing resources equally and having a full communion.)
9. We recommend that in the horizon of each ecumenical engagement we have “Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth” (The Accra Confession, 2004) as an invitation to give witness to our common concern for global economic and ecological justice as a matter of faith.

Appendix 14

SECTION REPORT ON JUSTICE IN THE ECONOMY, ON THE EARTH AND FOR ALL OF GOD'S CREATION

1. In this historic moment when two ecumenical movements, with strong passion and commitment to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ, come together to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) as a visible sign of unity, we are grateful and we rejoice that this milestone moment is the gift of the God of justice, whose work of creation is itself a display of unity and harmony. WCRC is founded on a basis of communion and justice, through the grace of God who has bestowed upon us the deep privilege of becoming co-workers with God in this ministry. In accepting this gift WCRC acknowledges the privileges and the responsibilities entrusted to us. We recommit ourselves, therefore, to the basic, yet profound principle that in communion we belong to God and to each other, and are accountable together for the stewardship of all God's creation. In this regard we accept responsibility for our part in the problems of the world. We rejoice that we are led on this journey by the God of justice and we believe that we are called to work with God in creating a different world – a world of Peace, of Justice and of harmony with Creation.
2. When the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) met in Accra in 2004, WARC wrestled with the claim that the integrity of our faith was at stake if we remained silent and complicit in the face of global systemic economic and ecological injustice embodied in the neoliberal economic paradigm. It was a difficult moment for WARC as it tried to faithfully navigate space for the various perspectives and interests to contend. WARC emerged confessing the sin of complicity and rejecting the world economic order imposed by global neo-liberal capitalism and any other system which defies God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable and the whole of creation from the fullness of life. In Accra, WARC named the empire and declared that indeed there was an alternative through God's grace and human stewardship.
3. The prophetic reading of the signs of the times lifted up in Accra have become a crushing reality:
 - a) The credit meltdown of late 2008 and 2009 confirmed Accra's rejection of the neoliberal system's denial of governmental regulation. The need for democratic, accountable and just global financial and economic

- structures and institutions remains pressing in the face of spiraling world poverty.
- b) The theological idolatry of capital and the market was also underlined by Accra, highlighting an amoral market system that denies the values of the God of Justice, allowing vast salaries and profits for corporate leaders and growing numbers of people without decent work and just compensation, excluded from the market system and without social safety nets.
 - c) The power of empire has been underlined by the preemptive wars and the continued plagues of repression and coups, where governments use military might to enforce compliance to the reigning world order.
 - d) The crisis of global sustainability and denial of the process of ecological destruction has been tragically confirmed in the failure of the Copenhagen Climate Summit with its lack of a binding agreement to ensure the future of the planet and all of God's creatures.
4. Against this background we acknowledge and give thanks for the work of member churches working toward fullness of life for all creation, recognizing that there is still much to be done arising from the commitments we entered into in Accra.
 5. In Accra WARC defined empire to mean "the coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power that constitutes a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their own interests".
 6. And as we have journeyed on since Accra the following understanding of empire has commended itself to us as an elaboration of what was begun in Accra:
 "We speak of empire, because we discern a coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power in our world today, that constitutes a reality and a spirit of lordless domination, created by humankind yet enslaving simultaneously; an all-encompassing global reality serving, protecting and defending the interests of powerful corporations, nations, elites and privileged people, while imperiously excluding, even sacrificing, humanity and exploiting creation; a pervasive spirit of destructive self-interest, even greed—the worship of money, goods and possessions; the gospel of consumerism, proclaimed through powerful propaganda and religiously justified, believed and followed; the colonization of consciousness, values and notions of human life by the imperial logic; a spirit lacking in compassionate justice and showing contemptuous disregard for the gifts of creation and the household of life." (From the Globalization Project of the Uniting

Reformed Church in Southern Africa and Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany.)

7. Here in Grand Rapids we recognize and acknowledge the fragmentation of societies, the decimation of peoples and cultures and the genocidal policies, evidenced in the stories of the North American first nations. The absence of welcome to the neighbour illustrated by denial of visas to 74 WCRC participants, which we experienced, serves to remind us that the fragmentation of societies and the exclusion of the other continue today.
8. We were confronted by the violence of empire, underscored by pre-emptive wars of occupation, expanded militarization; the recent devastating earthquake in Haiti revealing the legacy of resistance to former slaves having power and creating a nation, coupled with colonial oppression and economic exploitation, which resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Haitians and the destruction of their capital city; and immigration injustice leading to 12 million people in the USA, many of whom are employed in exploitative positions and lacking safety on the job. We acknowledge that the margins are not as clearly defined as many would think and that the pain being experienced is the result of our systems of unregulated and unchecked power and our collective neglect to see through the "eyes of our hearts" (Eph. 1.18).
9. [The reality of empire is borne on the legs of racism, sexism, colonialism and classism. We have borne the pain of gender injustice, and we have seen in our own midst that there is not equal access to structures of decision-making; and the equity that has been written into our new constitution was placed there without unanimity. This reality is but a partial reflection of the brokenness of our world, where the majority of the world's poor are women and the majority of women are poor. This scandalous situation is part of the power structure of empire, wherein an almost exclusively white and male dominated global financial industry controls the global financial system with the penalty falling more fully on the poor and poorer nations than on those who developed the instruments and strategies that led to this disaster.]¹²

¹² Paragraph 9 is in parenthesis because the Committee was divided in its opinion about including it. This paragraph is retained as part of a reflection to the Executive Committee.

10. This system of injustice and domination exploits and endangers children and youth, making them vulnerable and forcing them to the margins of society. This flies in the face of Jesus' clear call to us in our relationship with children, who he sees as bearers of God's realm in our midst (Luke 9.46-48).
11. It is clear that gender, economic, social and ecological justice intersect, calling us to multidimensional approaches to our work. We lament the fact that the situation worldwide is much worse than that which we faced six years ago and we grieve our continued complicity.
12. Confronting these signs of the times, and in faithful response to the God of justice, we recommend the following actions to WCRC.

Recommendations

This Uniting General Council:

1. Affirms the centrality of the Accra Confession to the life of WCRC and so names covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth as WCRC's number one priority, linking our understanding of communion with our commitment and faithfulness to the God of justice and calls upon the Executive Committee to provide dedicated staff and budget for this.
2. Calls upon WCRC to promote and work toward the realization of the vision of life-giving civilization as an alternative to the neo-liberal economic paradigm, introducing new metrics that reflect God's intention for the flourishing of creation and humankind within creation that will include engaging the powers in the world economic system.
3. Calls upon WCRC and its member churches in cooperation with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other ecumenical bodies, networks and organizations to prepare a Global Ecumenical Conference to propose 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.
 - Is accounting for social and environmental risks.
 - Sets clear limits to greed that is unfortunately present in the world today.

It shall be explored how in the follow-up such a process can be supported by a Global Ecumenical Panel, 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.

4. Calls upon WCRC and member churches to continue the multi-faceted dialogue (North-North, South-South, South-North) rooted in the Accra Confession that will result in a widening and deepening of our understanding of and commitment to covenanting together for justice in the economy and the earth.
5. Within this framework to develop specific work on climate justice, ecological debt and ecological destruction, including re-reading the Bible from creation and indigenous perspectives and immediate actions we can all take toward life-giving civilization.
6. Calls upon WCRC to continue the process of education on the Accra Confession and its implications, establishing a resource bank of Bible studies, sermons, actions, adult education and materials for young people and children, to inform and enrich this process.
7. Recognizing that justice is inclusive, calls upon the WCRC Executive Committee and staff to frame all their work so that it is inclusive of everyone: women, men, youth and children, people with disabilities, indigenous and first nation, marginalized and minority groups (this is a suggestive and not exhaustive list).

Appendix 15

**REPORT OF THE SECTION ON SPIRITUAL AND WORSHIP
RENEWAL****Introduction**

The sharing of wisdom is a common practice in many cultures—Eastern and Western, Southern and Northern—and is particularly suited for learning and sharing across cultures, generations, and centuries, both in oral and written forms. The sharing of wisdom comprises a significant strand of the biblical literature, including Proverbs and proverb-like Psalms, Jesus’ beatitudes and several Pauline exhortations. To share wisdom is to knit together the sinews of Christ’s body, the church. Sharing wisdom is, thus, a central practice for global Christian fellowships, like the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). When the wisdom that is shared is a faithful echo and appropriation of scriptural wisdom, a faithful testimony to the Word and “Wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1.24), then this sharing of wisdom can be a sign of Pentecost, not Babel—a gift of the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of wisdom” (Eph 1.17).

The purpose of this collection of proverbs about the practice of Christian worship is to build up the body of Christ for faithful service and ministry. This collection of proverbs is gathered by Reformed Christians. It is at once a *catholic* collection, reflecting participation in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and a *particular* collection, reflecting the unique history, theological convictions, and practices of Reformed communities worldwide. This document was drafted in response to mandates by both the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) at its 2004 Assembly in Accra, Ghana, and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) at its 2005 Assembly in Utrecht, the Netherlands, following a period of communication with member churches from both organisations. It was developed by the worship planning team for the 2010 WCRC Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, in consultation with pastors, teachers, and other leaders throughout the world, both within and outside of the Reformed tradition, and was refined by the Worship and Spiritual Renewal Section of the Uniting General Council.

The document is designed to present a vision for worship and spiritual renewal in which we invite each other to deeper and more vital expression. It is not designed to impose a set of practices on member churches or to imply that worship in member churches already embodies the fullness of this wisdom. The document is designed for several uses:

1. The document can be used within a given congregation or denomination to shape a conversation about the gifts, challenges, strengths and weaknesses of local practices.

Those leading these conversations could pause after each proverb and ask "how has God gifted us to practice this wisdom?", "in what ways is God calling us to embody this wisdom more faithfully?" and "in what other ways would we express the wisdom of our practices related to this theme?" Each proverb is designed to elicit conversations that explore the connections between theological convictions and practices, conversations of testimony and spiritual discernment that are indispensable for fruitful ministry in any context.

2. The document can shape a conversation between and among congregations, denominations, and believers from quite different cultural contexts. Those shaping these conversations could pause after each proverb and ask "how is God gifting each of us in our unique cultural contexts to practice this wisdom?" and "in what way might God be calling us to practice this more faithfully, particularly in light of what we learn from each other?"

3. The document is an invitation to collaborative in-depth study and further refinement. Each proverb is a summary of a field of research and Christian reflection, drawing upon work in biblical exegesis, theological reflection and historical scholarship. Each proverb could be fruitfully refined after continuing reflection in light of the challenges of faithful discipleship. Thus, this collection is not designed to be final or complete. It is designed to be open-ended: any member church or ecumenical partner can easily supplement this collection with its own materials. Future WCRC gatherings could also amend this collection by adding proverbs to respond to unique challenges that arise in the future.

The ultimate goal of all of these uses, however, is not simply to enhance conversations or to result in a better document. The ultimate goal is nothing less than to elicit, by the Spirit's power, the faithful and grateful worship of the triune God. May God's Spirit bless these words and all who wrestle with them so that the church of Christ may be strengthened.

Note: for this edition of the document, the terms "church", "congregation", and "community" are used interchangeably,

reflecting the different uses of our member churches. The terms "blessed" and "wise" alternate throughout the document, with the term "blessed" typically used to refer to blessings God gives when we follow biblical commands, and "wise" for judgments that congregations make in discerning God's will. We anticipate further refinement of this usage, following responses from member churches.

I. A Called and Forgiven People: Assembling in Jesus' Name

1.1 Called by the Triune God

Blessed are the people of God
 who are deeply aware
 that they are both called by and address *the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit*—¹³
 a God of splendour and majesty
 perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ,
 the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1.15).

Blessed is the community
 that gratefully acknowledges
 that the triune God not only receives our worship,
 but also makes our worship possible,
 prompting us through the Holy Spirit,
 and sanctifying our offerings
 through the perfect priesthood of Jesus Christ,
 who during his life on earth offered
 praise "to the Father," "full of joy in the Holy Spirit" (Luke 10.21),
 and even now "ever lives to pray for us" (Heb 7.25).

Blessed is the congregation
 that insists that believers gather to worship God
 not first of all in order that God might bless them,
 but because God has already blessed them.

Blessed is the congregation that then discovers
 that God does indeed bless them
 as they worship the triune God

¹³ Belhar Confession and Heidelberg Catechism

who nourishes, teaches, convicts, and corrects them,
and strengthens bonds
that unite believers with Jesus Christ and with each other
through the sanctifying actions
of the proclamation of the word and corporate prayer,
through baptism and the Lord's Supper,
through fellowship, offerings, and testimony.

1.2 Corporate Assembly, the Whole People of God

Wise is the worshiping community
that "does not neglect meeting together" (Heb 10.25),
but joyfully gathers in Jesus' name,
eager to proclaim the Word of God,
to offer praise and prayer,
and to celebrate the sacraments,
each of which are actions of the whole people of God,
"the royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2.9).

Blessed is the congregation
that invites all worshipers—
including those which our cultures
may label in different ways as "disabled"—
to full, conscious and active participation in corporate worship,
engaging heart, soul, and mind in devotion to God,
deeply aware of how their own personal worship
participates in a much larger chorus of praise to God.

Blessed is the congregation
that expresses in its worship
the communion in the body
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,
the oneness that is the gift and calling of God,
that unites the young and old,
and believers of every time and place
*who share a common calling by the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ.*¹⁴

1.3 The Holy Spirit

Wise is the worshiping community
that recognizes how the Holy Spirit works
through both reason and emotion,

¹⁴ From WCRC materials for the Grand Rapids event

through both spiritual disciplines and surprising events,
through both services that are prayerfully planned
and through moments of spontaneous discovery.

Wise is the worshipping community that recognizes that
the lasting value or spiritual power of worship
does not depend upon our own creativity,
imagination, intellect, or emotions,
but comes from the Holy Spirit,
who may choose to use any or all of these things.
For truly, worship is a gift to receive,
not an accomplishment to achieve.

1.4 Affirming and Resisting Culture

Wise is the church
that seeks to be “in” but not “of” the world, (John 15.19)
resisting aspects of the culture
that compromise the integrity of the gospel,
and eagerly engaging its culture
with the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ
who comes to each culture, but is not bound by any culture.

Wise, then, is the church
that is grateful that the gospel of Jesus
is at once transcultural, contextual,
cross-cultural, and counter-cultural.¹⁵

1.5 The Goodness of the Redeemed Creation

Wise is the congregation
that makes clear that its worship
participates in the song of praise
that is offered by all creation.

Wise is the congregation that
celebrates worship as an embodied reality,
grateful for the gestures and postures
that express our praise and prayer,
and the book, water, bread, and wine,
that God ordains for our use—
the gifts of God for the people of God.

¹⁵ Lutheran World Federation Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture

1.6 Leading God's People

Wise is the community that
calls, trains, affirms, and responds to
those gifted for leadership in all genders, ages, races, abilities
providing formative training and mentorship for them in the
theology and practices of worship.

Wise are leaders in worship
who equip all the members of the community
for full, conscious, and active participation,¹⁶
taking care to express hospitality
to those who are not yet a part of Christ's body, the church.

1.7 Artistic Expression

Blessed is the congregation in which the Word is proclaimed
and prayers and praise are offered
not only through words,
but also through artistic expression:
through gifts God has given
to each local community
in music and dance,
in speech and silence,
in visual art and architecture.
Blessed are the artists
who offer and discipline their gifts
so God's people may
testify to the goodness of God, offer thanks and express
repentance.

Wise are artists who are grateful
both for the limitations offered by the second commandment,
and also for the example of the biblical artists called by God
and equipped by God's people for service
according to God's commands. (Ex 35.30ff)

Wise is the church
that gratefully receives
the gifts of faithful songs and artworks
from other centuries and other cultures,
celebrating the catholicity of the church,
and cultivating creativity

¹⁶ Cf. Vatican II

through new songs and works for worship.

II. Joyfully Proclaiming God's Word

2.1 Word and Spirit

Blessed is the congregation
in which the Word of God is proclaimed
with conviction and joy
surrounded by expectant prayers
and profound gratitude
for the Holy Spirit's work
to illuminate the hearts and minds of God's people.

2.2 The Breadth of the Christ-Centred Word

Wise is the congregation
that nourishes believers
with readings and sermons that engage the breadth and depth of
God's Word,
Old Testament and New Testament,
always proclaiming the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2.3 Calling Forth Rest and Witness, Justice and Peace

Blessed is the congregation
in which the proclamation of God's Word
comforts those who mourn
and confronts those who oppose God's reign.

Wise is the preacher
who invites hearers to receive God's lavish grace,
to repent from sin and evil,
to turn toward Christ,
to proclaim peace,
"to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God" (Mic
6.8).

2.4 Resisting Idolatry

Wise is the congregation
that proclaims the Word of God
in ways that actively expose and resist
both the idols that we are tempted to worship instead of God
and also the idols of our distorted understandings of God.

Blessed is the congregation
that challenges these distortions
by contemplating the person and work of Jesus Christ,

“the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of God’s being” (Heb 1.3).

2.5 Credo: The Response of Faith

Wise is the congregation
in which the proclamation of the gospel
is accepted as the word of God,
which is at work in you who believe (1 Thes 2.13),
leading to both confession and praise,
both repentance and a commitment to service,
both compassion and a passion for justice,
both personal and communal actions,
both new obedience and profound gratitude.

Blessed is the congregation
that invites believers to testify to the goodness of God
by expressing the faith of the church
that transcends and forms our individual experiences
and unites us with believers across cultures and centuries,
and by testifying to the work of God in the life of the local
community.

III. Responding to God in Prayer and Offerings

3.1 Praise and Gratitude

Blessed is the church that
offers praise and thanksgiving (cf. Ps 50.14, Heb 13.15),
not only extolling the beauty and glory of God,
but also contemplating, reciting,
and celebrating all that God has done
throughout history.

Wise is the congregation
that draws upon and learns from
the Bible’s own narratively-shaped prayers of
praise and thanksgiving (e.g. Ps 136)
as it gives form to its own prayer.

3.2 Praying in Jesus’ Name, Through the Spirit

Blessed is the church that prays in Jesus’ name,
acknowledging our union with our ascended and ever-present Lord.

Blessed is the worshiping community
that prays in and through the Holy Spirit,
desiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit,

and acknowledging that as we pray the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, interceding for us according to the will of God (Rom 8.26-27), and resisting the “cosmic powers of this present darkness” (Eph 6.12).

3.3 Full Range of Human Experience

Wise is the church that,
following the example of the Psalms,
encourages honest and
that express the full range of human experience—
the “anatomy of the soul”—
spoken, sung or silent,
danced, dramatized or visualized—
prayers of celebration and lament,
trust and desperation,
supplication and intercession,
thanksgiving and confession,
healing and hope.

Blessed is the church that prays not only for its own needs,
but also for the needs of the world that God so loves.¹⁷

3.4 Gifts and Offerings

Wise is the church that gratefully practices
the giving of gifts, time and talent,
as an act of dedication and worship

Wise is the church which affirms
that all of life is lived in service to God and neighbour,
and that believers are called to be stewards of every gift of God.

IV. Baptizing and Feasting

4.1 Jesus’ Commands to Baptize and Celebrate the Lord’s Supper

Blessed is the church
that faithfully obeys Jesus’ commands
“to make disciples,

¹⁷ The phrase “Anatomy of the Soul” is from John Calvin’s commentary on the Psalms

baptizing them
 in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 and teaching them to obey
 everything Jesus has commanded (Matt. 28.20)
 and to "eat and drink in remembrance of me," (Luke 22.19-20)
 receiving these signs
 as occasions in which God
 works to nourish and sustain,
 comfort and challenge,
 teach and transform us.

4.2 Baptism

Blessed is the congregation
 that announces that their true identity
 is found in Jesus Christ.

Blessed is the congregation
 that proclaims how the waters of baptism
 are a sign and seal
 of God's promises
 to wash us clean,
 to adopt us into the body of Christ,
 to send the Holy Spirit to renew, empower,
 and resurrect us a to new life in Christ.

Blessed is the congregation
 that proclaims how the waters of baptism
 are also a sign and seal of God's call to renounce sin and evil,
 to embrace Christ, and our new identity in him
 and to live a renewed and holy life.

Wise is the community
 who celebrates baptism joyfully
 and remembers that baptism is a means of grace and
 encouragement
 to live out our vows of covenant
 faithfulness.

4.3 Lord's Supper

Blessed is the church
 that regularly celebrates the Lord's Supper
 as a feast of thanksgiving, communion, and hope.

Blessed is the congregation

that not only gratefully remembers God's creating and redeeming work in Jesus Christ, knowing his presence in the breaking of the bread, but also gratefully receives the gift of union with Jesus Christ and Christ's body, and looks forward to the feast of the coming kingdom.

Blessed is the congregation that shares this meal by "discerning the body of Christ" in its manifold oneness, by expressing hospitality for one another with grace and truth (1 Cor 11.29-33), and by reflecting God's hospitality for us in ministries of hospitality in the world.

V. A Blessed and Commissioned People Serving in Jesus' Name

5.1 God's Sending

Blessed is the congregation in which believers are encouraged by God's gracious blessing, and challenged by God's gracious call to proclaim the good news of Jesus and to live as a healing presence in the world in the name of Jesus.

5.2 Daily Worship

Wise is the community that nourishes faith by encouraging daily worship for all believers, with emphasis on reading and meditating on God's Word, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, offering prayers of praise and petition, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, listening for God in "sheer silence", (1 Kings 19.12) and living every moment before the face of God.

5.3 Hospitality and Evangelization

Blessed are communities in which hospitality is practiced in both public worship and in personal lives, where strangers and guests are welcomed and embraced, where the poor and marginalized, diseased and forsaken, can find refuge under the shadow of God's wings.

Blessed are communities
in which all people are invited and challenged
to become disciples of Jesus,
receiving baptism and formation in the faith (cf. Mat 28.19)

5.4 Formation for Worship

Wise are congregations
that invite and challenge believers
of all ages and abilities
to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ” (2 Pet 3.18).

Blessed are congregations
that nurture the faithful interplay
of scripture, doctrines, practices, and the fruit of the Spirit.

Wise are congregations that deepen worship
through reflection on and teaching about the meaning of worship
practices.

5.5 Worship, Compassion, and Justice

Blessed are congregations
whose public worship points to Jesus Christ,
and Jesus’ message about the
kingdom of God.

Blessed are congregations
whose corporate worship and public witness
are consistent with each other
and faithful to God’s Word,
whose worship and witness are
a testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Blessed are congregations who seek to receive
the liberating work of the Holy Spirit
who alone can break through hypocrisy
and through whom
justice and peace, worship and witness,
can truly embrace.

5.6 Maranatha: Worship and Christian Hope

Blessed are congregations
who are not content
to live only the present moment,

but whose worship expresses
the groaning of all creation
for the fullness of God's reign
in Jesus Christ.

Blessed are congregations whose
life together is summed up
in the certain hope of the prayer "Maranatha"—
"come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22.20).

The Section on Spiritual and Worship Renewal recommends that the Uniting General Council:

1. Adopt the statement "Worshiping the Triune God (2010 edition)," as revised by our section group (see revision beneath), as a working document recommended for use in member churches for discussion, teaching and learning, and spiritual discernment about corporate worship practices.
2. Direct the secretariat a) to send the document to the member churches, describing for member churches the multiple uses of the document as described in the introduction, and b) to request that member churches submit responses to the document, along with suggestions for materials to be incorporated in the next edition of the document, by no later than June 2012, c) to send the document to other ecumenical organisations (e.g., The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)) with a request for response, as appropriate in the context of our relationship with those organisations, d) to request a learning conversation about contextualized worship practices with the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous Peoples, or other appropriate forums for mutual learning with Christian indigenous people groups, as a means of furthering understanding within the body of Christ, e) to publish the 2010 edition of the document in *Reformed World* as soon as possible, f) to develop a press release about the document to encourage appropriate media coverage.
3. Direct the Executive Committee to name a working group which will have the responsibility a) to prepare a summary report of the responses of member churches and partner ecumenical organisations, b) to work with the secretariat to host or participate in the learning conversations with indigenous people groups as described in recommendation, c) to work with the secretariat to discern ways of using the internet to share best practices which reflect the document (e.g. video clips of worship services of member churches), d) to host learning conversations

with youth in member churches, including on-line forums, about the best ways of communicating the material in this document in light of their insights and experiences, e) to work with the secretariat to identify possible publication outlets for the document, f) to consult with member churches who desire to prepare translation of the document in other languages, g) to present a revised version of the document for approval at the next General Assembly.

As we discussed this material, our section group took note that

- *The document responds to the mandate of WARC (2004) and REC (2005) to prepare a document on worship in the Reformed tradition.*
- *The document arises out of concerns and joys reported by member churches (2007-2010).*
- *The document describes many common concerns, convictions, practices associated with the Reformed tradition*
- *The document reflects the spirit of the World Communion of Reformed Churches as it articulates a vision for worship and wisdom about worship practices which can assist us in discerning God's will, without binding the consciences of our members.*
- *The document is adaptable, and promises to serve as a catalyst for ongoing learning and sharing among member churches, a means by which we can encourage each other to "grow in grace and knowledge in the Lord Jesus.*

Appendix 16

SECTION REPORT ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND NURTURE**Layperson Development, Youth Development and Formal Theological Education****Preamble**

We affirm that:

- All God's people must contribute to building and sustaining the Body of Christ.
- Therefore, Christian development should pay critical attention to life-long learning of all members.
- It is the re-discovery of an old reality and part of our Reformed identity relating to the priesthood of all believers (Ephesians 4.1, 11 and 12).
- Although the different fields of Lay, Youth and Formal Theological Education can be distinguished, these must be considered holistically.
- A basic principle of the field of Leadership Development and Nurture is that "all member churches share their gifts" (Constitution IV, A). Every member church is asked to share as much knowledge and resources as is possible.

We acknowledge that:

- Lay leadership has become increasingly important as demands for pastoral leadership rise. Lay persons have been required to perform at funerals, baptisms and other events and must therefore be appropriately equipped.
- Persons of 30 years and below are "youth".
- The development of the youth ministry in member churches and the proclamation of the gospel and Reformed identity to the world's youth are of paramount importance.
- The voices of young people must be heard and integrated into the full life, work and programmes of the church.
- This is the mandate of the Section on Youth Empowerment.
- Formal Theological Education is the Education for (future) ministers and pastors.
- The following areas of priority must be considered in relation to Formal Theological Education: curriculum during education, profile of a (Reformed) minister, programme after graduation (lifelong learning) and personal coaching and caring after graduation.

- Curriculum contains the following elements: knowledge, attitude, management requirements as well as the organization of the member church (local and global).

Recommendations

We therefore recommend the following:

General

- Development of all persons for church leadership is:
 - A lifelong process.
 - Takes place in training and education programmes as well as in real life experiences.
 - Not only knowledge but also the competency to transform (Reformed) theology and other knowledge to different (post)modern contexts and practices.
- Access to development programmes should be equally open to women and men. In leadership development programmes there should be a focus on creating a friendly environment for female leadership. The member churches are encouraged to help each other to reach this environment and to learn from and support each other.
- WCRC develop a strong network of knowledge that would be easily accessible to all member churches. To this end, WCRC has to invest in a high-standard, web-based knowledge system.
- Existing development programmes of WARC and REC should be critically reviewed prior to continuing these.

Layperson Development

- A curriculum for life-long learning and another for lay worship leaders should be developed and shared within the Communion.
- Member churches of WCRC should:
 - Commit meaningful budgetary resources for the empowerment of lay leaders.
 - Equip their ministers to provide effective training for lay persons.
 - Create supportive environments in which lay persons would be encouraged to develop their gifts and offer themselves and their professional knowledge for ministry in church-run institutions and pastoral care to the congregation and pastors.
 - Endeavour to motivate laypersons fairly and equitably including through self-development opportunities, since they often work on a volunteer basis.
- The interpretation of “the priesthood of all believers” should be subjected to theological reflection by WCRC in order to address

any conflicts or hierarchies that may have arisen within the different Reformed families.

- WCRC must:
 - Clarify who constitute the lay or ordained, given the differences in interpretation between congregations. However, the roles of lay persons must be seen as equally important and supportive of the work of the ordained.
 - Should facilitate ecumenical sharing of training resources for the laity through distance education, internet-based learning and networking by lay training centres.
 - Should facilitate the development of assessment and accreditation criteria for lay worship leaders to perform a common set of functions.

Youth Development

This Section agreed that youth ministry in WCRC was of paramount concern. The ministry to, with and by young people is important to ongoing reform, present vitality and future existence. Therefore, to demonstrate vision and forward action, youth ministry should attract high priority of resources. In the interest of youth ministry, the Section would like to make recommendations on four main issues: networking, resourcing, training and fellowship.

Networking

- WCRC:
 - Create forums for people to connect and share ideas.
 - Foster communal resource development.
 - Update database of youth ministry workers.
 - Collaborate with other ecumenical bodies on youth development.
 - Connect with other student and youth movements.

Training

- WCRC support:
 - Consultants and trainers to visit regions or sub-regions to deliver training and development in youth nurture.
 - Regional youth leaders to share training events.

Resourcing

- WCRC undertake:
 - The construction of a digital clearing house for curricula and training materials for youth programmes, worship resources, Bible studies and vocational skills building.

- The update of databases of Resource Centre Directors.

Fellowshipping

- WCRC support:
 - Opportunities to share concerns and stories and visitations of encouragement.
 - Face to face meetings of youth leaders: regionally and at assemblies.

Moving Forward

- WCRC:
 - Develop and sustain a working party of skilled volunteers to work toward the above objectives.
 - Appoint a facilitator to dedicate significant time and expertise to the objectives of Youth Empowerment and Nurture by December 2012.

Formal Theological Education

Every member church has to:

- Provide a profile of a (Reformed) minister. Profiles will include the competency of the minister to translate the Reformed theology and Reformed tradition in the local context as well as a sense for diversity in gender, race and ethnicity.
- Develop life-long learning programmes for ministers working in the church.
- Develop coaching and caring programmes for ministers working in the church.

WCRC encourage the member churches:

- To share information on curricula, profiling, lifelong learning programmes, coaching and caring on the new-created knowledge network. Focal persons of member churches will maintain regular contact with each other by social media and other technologies, on different levels: country, region, global.
- To share knowledge, books and human resources with other member churches.
- To develop joint theological education facilities in-country and build consortia of seminaries to work together in regions.

Appendix 17

SECTION REPORT ON GENDER JUSTICE

We are Reformed Christian women and men from the regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, South America, the Middle East, North America and the Pacific called by God to bear witness to the uniqueness of being made in the image of God, and to live out that witness in concrete ways in communities. We gathered at Calvin College, Grand Rapids from June 18-28, 2010 to celebrate the uniting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) forming a new body; the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). We rejoice in the on-going work of the spirit of God in summoning this new Communion into being and providing new possibilities for women and men to live out the core values of unity with conditions of justice and peace within communities.

Gender justice is an ongoing journey of praying together, engaging, challenging, always seeking discernment on how God wants us to live as women and men. It involves finding and putting into practice new ways to express and live out the uniqueness of bearing the image of God, fulfilling our responsibility of building and nurturing right, just and equal relationships between women, men and the earth. The venue for the living out of these right, just and equal relationships is our families, local churches, communities, regions and the world. We do so by first being open to the promptings of the Spirit of God, challenging us to hold under the scrutiny of God's justice all the norms that we have nurtured about the roles and places of women and men in family, society and church, which have resulted in exclusionary practices that pain the heart of God and fracture relationships.

We celebrate the on-going work of the Spirit of God in the gender justice programmes carried out in the past in response to God's call to be responsible bearers of the image of God. From Seoul to Debrecen to Accra to Grand Rapids, the spirit of God has been active in creating and sustaining gender justice initiatives (1) challenging patriarchy (its ideology, structures and images) and the systemic exclusion of women from positions of leadership in the church; (2) producing resources to enable churches to identify and address gender injustices as relations of power; (3) strengthening women's participation in the ecumenical movement allowing for learnings from cross-cultural experiences; (4) connecting issues of gender justice with economy, ecology and empire, thereby

providing new ways of speaking about the threats to human life that are posed by political and economic domination and globalization; and (5) shifting from limiting gender justice solely to what is traditionally understood as women's issues, to including a focus on notions and practices of masculinity and how these relate to the quest for just and equal relations between women and men. With joy and hope, we celebrate the recent work of the spirit in guiding the new Communion in the bold decision of a 50 percent—50 percent representation between women and men in the Council of WCRC.

On hearing stories from the regions, the Section is brought face to face with the critical gaps in the work of gender justice. These include (1) the lagging behind of some communities in carrying out gender justice initiatives; (2) the continuing exclusion of women from the ministry of Word and Sacrament and from other leadership in the church; (3) the escalation of violence against women and children; (4) the failure to name and engage gender justice issues together with issues of disability; and (5) the persistence of a culture of domination that results in the perpetuation of conditions of brokenness and suffering in the body of Christ.

We are grateful for the discerning work of the Women's Pre-Council (WPC) of WCRC in identifying the three key areas of *Justice, Communion and Partnership* as useful categories for assessing our advancements and setbacks. Engaging the notions of Justice, Communion and Partnership in its assessment and evaluation of the advancement and setbacks, the Section puts forward recommendations to the Policy Committee under the categories of: (1) Accountability; (2) Education; and (3) Ordination, for the purpose of helping WCRC to move forward with Gender Justice work in the next seven years.

Recommendations of the Gender Justice Section

1. Accountability

The Section recommends that WCRC enable greater accountability from churches on the gender justice work carried out in relation to WCRC programmes and that WCRC continue living out the Accra Confession, paying particular attention to how questions of gender justice intersect with questions of economic and ecological justice and social exclusion.

Methodology

The Section recommends that:

- a. WCRC affirm its commitment to full partnership between women and men by working toward making ordination of women binding for communion and by effecting a 50 percent representation of women on its executive.
- b. WCRC create structural changes to provide for a monitoring body or task group to support gender justice in WCRC and enable this body or task group to report to the executive.
- c. WCRC initiate programmes focusing on the intersection of gender justice with issues of persons with disabilities.
- d. WCRC establish an international core group, including feminist theologians, pastors, economists and climate change experts to develop a process to support churches' engagement on economic and climate justice issues from critical gender perspectives.
- e. WCRC maintain and support the Gender Justice Network in regions in which it is active as well as encourage those regions which are not yet represented to participate accordingly.
- f. WCRC establish gender responsive budgeting as a practice that guarantees the sustainability of the gender justice programmes and involves WCRC in raising funds for gender justice programmes, instead of leaving fundraising responsibility to staff.

2. Education

The Section sees gender justice education as one critical way in which WCRC can be empowered to live out its commitment of enabling full partnership through its adoption of a 50 percent representation of women in the council.

Methodology

The Section recommends that:

- a. WCRC continue the work of WARC on Gender, Leadership and Power and engage feminist creative theologies as tools for education.
- b. WCRC widen its focus on gender justice education.
- c. WCRC continue the work of gender justice education for transformation for men.
- d. WCRC provide leadership training support to member churches struggling to live out the call to true partnership between women and men in light of the new 50-50 representation.
- e. WCRC further the work of gender justice education for transformation by developing/providing/sharing resources for use in the Christian education of children.

3. **Ordination**

The Section views ordination as central to the understanding of communion. True unity cannot be realized in a context where the call of God to women to actualize their gifts in the ministry of Word and Sacrament is not recognized.

Methodology

The Section recommends that:

- a. WCRC develop a map of member churches, indicating where the issues relating to women's ordination and gender justice are not adequately addressed.
- b. WCRC promote the ordination of women and work toward a time when the ordination of women will be binding on communion.
- c. WCRC strengthen the accompaniment programme for women in the ordained ministry, by including this issue on the agenda of WCRC leaders when they visit member churches.
- d. WCRC continue its support and accompaniment of theological education of women, especially young women, and the Theological Education Fund be utilized to support this accompaniment.

Appendix 18

SECTION REPORT ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**Preamble: Youth and Reformation**

The Youth Empowerment Section consists of diverse members of varying ages, cultures, and differing conceptions of youths' role within the Reformed world. Discussions concentrated on providing definitions of "Youth" and "Reformed", where consultation, critical questioning and encounter with new insights of how youths are positioned were common. Not limited to age boundaries, the Section understands youth to be characterized by a specific outlook to and way of life: Youths are enthusiastic, explorative and desire self-fulfillment. Societal, political, and cultural trends present youths with dangerous ethical, moral and religious dilemmas that include stereotyping, marginalization and disenfranchisement. The Section supports and commends the work done in the Youth Ministry subsection of the Leadership, Development and Nurture Section. However, the Youth Empowerment Section would like to present these issues as separate. The Section looks forward to further discussion and collaboration between the two sections.

Challenges common to youth need to be addressed through discipleship and sharing, while providing space for self-growth and expression of identity. Proper and adequate mentorship needs to be produced through institutional programmes and services that foster individuals' social, communal, and cultural identities. These are programmes that will empower and provide youth with necessary assets and leadership roles. In addition, these programmes will create the space for youth to express identity, power and claim ownership of their church community. Youth can only be leaders of tomorrow if they are true leaders of today.

The Section recognizes a lack of theological exploration concerning youths' position within society. This issue is illustrated through the prevalent yet ambiguous understanding of the term "youth" and the marginalizing stereotypes and social roles implicated therein. The Section calls for an in-depth exploration into the gap between theology of youth as legitimate leaders of the church and ministry to youth as passive recipients of their faith. The Section upholds the importance of earnest discussion and critical reflection on the theology of youth and its influence on the creation of youth programmes and ministry with youth.

Youth in Mission

The Section calls for adequate representation and roles of leadership within the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Accomplishing the task of creating such an environment is fraught with economic, social, communication and resource difficulties. Programmes should cultivate communal senses of belonging, religious and social identities. Through proper processes of theological discussion that critically examines youths' religious and social position, programmes may find a foundation that leads to adequate representation within WCRC. A foundation that maintains an awareness of historical, local, regional and global networks and programmes contains the advantage of learning from this history. The Section acknowledges the work done with regard to youth empowerment by WARC and REC as one of significant progress, yet sees this past work as failing to allow for sufficient space for youths in the Reformed world.

Investment in youths as valuable participants and community leaders opens doors for a more equitable, just and mutual position of youth within WCRC. This investment can only be created through a reconfiguration of social, economic, and resource systems of WCRC. Proper discipleship can be established through the granting of societal responsibilities that recognize youths as intelligent, autonomous and capable church leaders. The Section calls for the support of the Communion to uplift the legitimacy and power found in youth.

Spiritual Renewal

The Section embraces the fundamental Reformed values of change, and revitalization. Challenges unique to youth may be addressed through proper discipleship and spiritual renewal: a process that is informed by these values. Particular lenses and ways of life distinguish Reformed youth. Thus, a process of spiritual renewal that addresses this distinction is necessary for establishing a more mutual incorporation and inclusion of youth within WCRC. Similarly to other marginalized groups, youths are categorized through reductive stereotypes. A freedom from these restrictions is found within dynamic and new understandings of youths' role within Reformed theology and WCRC. Proper discipleship for youth is created through local, regional and global programmes that may foster religious and social identities that in turn encourage just, mutual relationships between youths and others.

Recommendations: The Section calls for:

1. The creation of a youth Section in the WCRC *Reformed Communiqué* newsletter for youths and youth networks to communicate and update the Communion on local, regional, and global youth projects. This space will be used to empower youths, and to promote the inclusion of youth concerns in conversations of social and political issues of WCRC. Most specifically, this space will allow for opportunities for youth to become involved in and a part of WCRC.
2. The creation of a Youth Fund, begun by WCRC, and thereafter supported by Regional Networks. An initial contribution from WCRC for investment supported by regions will demonstrate a commitment to regional youth networks. Individual regions will then contribute to the allotment of the initial gift. Regional coordinators will direct local projects designated pertinent to regional youth networks, which will be supported by the region through this fund. Regional youth coordinators are volunteers who are passionate individuals working to support regional youth projects and to promote an active regional youth network. The Youth Fund and the regional coordinators will provide regional networks with the human and financial resources crucial to its success.
3. The minimum requirement for youth delegates to the Executive Committee to be no less than four persons. WCRC should require that regions with three or more nominees identify, in addition to one male and one female, one young person under 30. In addition, the nominating committee should require at least one young person under 30 to be elected to the Presidium. This will correct the current unfair nominating processes that neglect a commitment to adequate youth representation in the WCRC Executive Committee and Presidium. WCRC should guarantee the inclusion and participation of youth within programmes that explicitly involve and affect youth.

Appendix 19

SECTION REPORT ON MISSION**Introduction**

The Section on Mission at the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) heard the reports of the WARC Mission in Unity Project till 2005¹⁸ and the Mission Project 2006-2010 as well as the work conducted by the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in areas of mission. We received a report on the recent gathering to commemorate the centenary of the 1910 World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 2010. The deliberations of the Section were also informed by the powerful presentations given by the First Nations Peoples of the United States and Canada.

Theological basis

The Section agreed that the churches' response to God's mission is, and must continue to be, at the heart of WCRC. The missional identity and engagement of the churches and of our communion is the *raison d'être* (reason for being) of WCRC, is essential to its Reformed identity, and therefore, must be reflected in its structures, use of resources and programmatic actions.

God's mission (*missio Dei*) is God's purpose in Christ to renew the whole of creation. It is communal in nature because God is a communal God. This mission is a dynamic process whereby God's people are called to participate in God's mission. Therefore, engaging in God's mission is God's call to the whole church as a worldwide community. We engage most faithfully in mission when we do so together. The church not only participates but is also transformed by its engagement in the mission of God.

Whereas our ancestors understood mission as engaging with those who are geographically "far away," we understand mission to be the crossing of all borders and barriers that separate people from God, one another and Creation, trusting that by crossing borders, the Spirit makes possible reconciliation through Christ. This is the gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ to be shared both within the church and with neighbours, with a deep sense of respect, sensitivity, understanding and humility in relation to peoples of other faiths, belief systems and contexts.

¹⁸ In cooperation with the John Knox International Reformed Center

Creative engagement in God's mission is the joy and responsibility of every believer. The primary place for missional engagement is the local community in which Christians live even when mission is undertaken within a global network which brings the people of Christ together as agents of justice, reconciliation, transformation and redemption.

The First Nations Peoples reminded us of our responsibilities as participants in God's mission (*missio Dei*) and the need to repent of any form of mission praxis that disempowers or dehumanizes. Mission, bearing witness to the justice of God and overcoming the wrongdoings of the past, requires intentional and continuous efforts of de-linking the historical and enduring connections between slavery, colonialism and Christian mission. Mission is practiced in partnership with the triune God and among churches reflecting the fact that mission today is done in the midst of a religiously plural society.

Recommendations

1. Mission as the raison d'être (reason for being) of WCRC

We recommend that WCRC understand its overall mandate and its core callings as the shared participation in God's mission so that all activities and programmes strengthen the mission praxis of its member churches, individually as well as regionally and globally.

2. Role as catalyst

We recommend that WCRC retain the role as a catalyst for enabling its member churches to be missional churches responding to the contextual changes and challenges of the world in which we live. This requires particular programmatic action. In view of this, we charge the Executive Committee with the responsibility of identifying the necessary resources, financial and otherwise, that will ensure mission is retained as the heart of WCRC in its structures and in programmatic activities that complement what other networks and organisations are already doing in this respect.

3. Facilitating networks and strategic alliances

We recommend that WCRC facilitate formal and informal networks among member churches and with other ecumenical institutions and mission agencies that help to develop deeper partnerships that empower the member churches and help foster creative ways of sharing resources for mission. This is to include processes of mission action and reflection that rethink the direction and goal of partnerships, evaluate existing partnerships and assist in developing new ways of relating to each other as equal participants in God's mission. WCRC should also contribute to and build up the wider

ecumenical work in mission by identifying strategic alliances with other agencies, particularly for its programmatic work, that strive to express its identity as a World Communion of Reformed Churches in mission.

4. WCRC statement on Mission

We recommend that WCRC work with member churches and organisations such as the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to put in place a broad participatory process of reflection that can guide us toward a shared theological statement on mission.

Appendix 20

SECTION REPORT ON WORKING FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

God has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has enlisted us in this ministry of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5.19)

Jesus said, "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give." (John 14.27)

The Section on Working for Peace and Reconciliation presents this report, recognizing that Reformed churches have had a history of conflict and splitting but also that they, and particularly the constituent parts of the new World Communion of Reformed Churches, have long worked faithfully in the name of the Prince of Peace in areas of violence and injustice. This report affirms that work and seeks to identify areas in which work inherited from the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) and World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) should be continued as well as areas in which new work may be begun.

The root causes of conflict often lie in situations where people, institutions and nations seek nothing but their own power and wealth. The distinctive witness of the World Communion of Churches (WCRCh), its member churches and individual members lies in seeking the will of God, through laying aside the desire for personal, institutional and national advancement which distorts relationships between each other and with God.

The Section named a number of situations in which churches encounter struggle, conflict and strife which inevitably impact upon their ability to proclaim the gospel.

Conflict issues

These include the problems of conflict arising over scarcity of water, land and other natural resources; political instability, oppression and lawlessness in Zimbabwe; attempts to divide populations and countries by creating political boundaries based on religious lines in Nigeria and Kenya; the need for Christian/Muslim dialogue and greater understanding, respect and cooperation between these great religions, particularly in Israel/Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Indonesia and Morocco; the division of the Korean Peninsula; and the ongoing, life-denying menace of empire as expounded in the Accra Confession.

a. In countries such as Nigeria, Malawi, Sudan and Kenya, there are moves to introduce *Shari`a* law which will create inequality before the law and disadvantage Christians and other minority religions and perpetuate and deepen religious division. Since there is a strong Christian presence in those countries, WCRC has particular responsibility to work there toward peace and reconciliation.

Recommendation: that WCRC, working with appropriate member churches and other organizations, seeks to develop a way to accompany the churches through prophetic solidarity, education and advocacy.

b. The long unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict brings instability to the whole Middle East and wider region. The situation has worsened since the beginning of the war on Iraq in 2003 and many Christians are moving away from the region. The Section sees an urgent need to strengthening Christian/Muslim dialogue.

Recommendation: that WCRC work with the churches and others to seek appropriate partners for dialogue, recognizing that no solution will be found without engaging with Jewish representatives, wherever possible.

Church issues

These included concerns about divisions between churches along racial, political, cultural and socio-economic lines, especially in South Africa and Central and Eastern Europe; the conflict between two churches in Croatia; the issue of lesbian and gay ordination, which is tearing apart member churches in all regions as debates take place over whether Scripture allows homosexual practices at all, or for gay and lesbian people in leadership; experiences of conflict arising from differing theologies and practices on the ordination of women; and reconciling relationships between the church and Indigenous people. The Section expresses the hope that ordination issues will be taken up by the Theology Network and recommends that it adopt a pastoral approach with an awareness that deeper and deeper hurt will be caused within churches as debate progresses.

Recommendation: affirm the need to continue work in South Africa and Croatia inherited from WARC.

The Section wishes to focus on Church and Indigenous People issues

It is important for WCRC and its member churches to be sensitive to the traditions of other cultures by honouring and respecting their dignity as people. In part, this means that there should be flexibility to accommodate different styles of worship as a way of fostering inclusiveness and treating the cultural contribution of Indigenous people as a gift. More widely, the relationship between the church and Indigenous people has been marred with racism, abuse and paternalism robbing them of their traditional lands, economic resources, cultural and spiritual identities, and social and political systems. In North America, this was done through the cooperation of governments and church missions in running residential schools to which children were forcibly removed from their homes, stripped of their languages and cultures and frequently subjected to racism, physical and sexual abuse.

Recommendations: that WCRC

1. Seek to initiate a process leading toward confession of past wrongs and the development of a genuine regard for Indigenous People as equally God's people.
2. Seek humbly to initiate relationships with Indigenous People in order to listen and understand; to honour and respect the cultural differences of all types of worship expression.
3. Encourage the inclusion of Indigenous voices in the decision-making processes of WCRC and its member churches.
4. Promote the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People as a resource with member churches and encourage member churches to find ways it can be lived out in the light of the gospel. (www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html)

Human rights

These include concerns about immigration; family and relationship violence; same sex marriage; abortion; human trafficking; inequality in educational opportunities; racism; the abuse of human rights and detention and deportation of innocent citizens, for example in Madagascar, Colombia, the Philippines and Morocco among many others; and the issue of Roma people in Europe.

The Section chose to focus on immigration

All human history has involved migration and the biblical narrative reflects this. Movement should be seen as just as "normal" as settlement. Migration has often been about seeking resources for

life or freedom. Seeking to restrict migration can have the effect of denying opportunities for life and liberty. The Section believes that nothing less than a recognition that all human beings are made in the image of God is demanded of us. Such a recognition should lead to an attitude of welcome toward strangers and a willingness to share.

Recommendation: that WCRC and its member churches continue to be a witness to God's inclusive welcome and to challenge, through statements and action, all instances where people are treated with indignity because of restrictive and brutal immigration policies.

The Section recommends that the United General Council affirms, with deep appreciation, the involvement in the past of the constituent parts of the new WCRC in working for reconciliation and peace and in challenging churches to seek meaningful changes in embracing each other in obedience to God's call and prays that this ministry will continue to flourish.

Appendix 21

UNITY IN UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY

Sabine Dressler-Kromminga

Unity as a triad

It is with an image from music—the triad—that I view the relationship between unity, uniqueness, and diversity:

The *root of the chord* is the basis for everything—the foundation from which all things derive, upon which everything rests, and in which everything is contained.

In this case, the root is unity.

Adding the *third of the chord* results in a more voluminous harmony and expresses diversity—that which goes beyond all else and differs from all that is.

Finally the *fifth of the chord* imparts a unique and distinctive tone quality that makes the chord shine and gives it its own special, vivid sound.

Although each of the three tones can resonate individually, each needs the others to reach the perfection of full harmony. A single tone by itself, without the other two, sounds stale and boring.

Thus, when speaking of unity, we invariably mean a unity that respects and values uniqueness and diversity equally. If it doesn't, unity degenerates into mere uniformity and conformity, becoming lifeless and dull. Unity can only come alive when one is mindful of human relationships and of our interdependence—that we need one another.

Regarding the question as to what each human being's uniqueness means to them and what consequences result from it, my confirmation candidates from back home have offered the astonishing—and I feel very fitting—definition: All people belong together, yet everyone is free to be different.

When we speak of diversity we are referring to a diversity that recognizes itself as variety in individuality, as a plurality that sees its own uniqueness mirrored in others, while at the same time admiring the others' differences. The group and the individual are

linked to and exist in relationship with one another. Because there is uniqueness, there is diversity. Conversely, where uniqueness is threatened, diversity perishes.

Thinking of Unity in Terms of the Trinity

We can also express this in terms of the Trinity:

God, the creator and source of all life, is the originator of unity and has granted unity to all of us by creating humankind in relation to God and God's image, and in relation to our fellow creatures as equals. Each person has been granted rights and dignity in equal measure, and each is precious and unique.

In **Christ** who gives himself and his life for us, our uniqueness acquires its special meaning: each one of us is special to him. In his love he follows us to the farthest reaches of the earth so that no one will be lost. In other words—it is that hundredth sheep (Luke 15.3-7) that is essential for establishing the unity of the church.

In the **Spirit** that is multifaceted power and overwhelming joy—the colourful splendour and imaginativeness of life that is expressed in so many various forms. The power of God's Spirit has many voices and is unlimited. It gathers together and connects that which was dispersed, and is inspiring and creative beyond understanding. Every day the Spirit creates new wonders for all to see.

At the same time, our existence in the presence of God's Spirit reassures us that we are held safely and cared for by God, and the Spirit's inner bond keeps us living in permanent relation to others, the Creator, and Christ. Thus the triad of unity—the interaction of Creator, Redeemer, and Spirit gains stature and space in our lives.

The Austrian lyric poet Erich Fried describes the experience of the opposite of such inseparable unity in his love poem "Without You." He conveys the perceptions of a person mourning the separation from or saying farewell to a loved one. The person who has been left alone and lonely feels different without his beloved; in particular, there is a feeling of being less than before.

Erich Fried, *Without You*

*Not nothing
without you
but not the same*

*Not nothing
without you
but perhaps less*

*Not nothing
but less
and less*

*Perhaps not nothing
without you
but not much more*

What is true in the context of a lover's relationship is also true regarding our togetherness or "non-togetherness" in unity, uniqueness, and diversity. We notice how much we need each other.

Unity in Justice and Holiness

Unity that is perceived, honoured, and protected in its uniqueness and diversity is conditional, carrying with it the **requirement and consequence**—which is justice.

Unity without justice cannot be put into practice because unity, in essence, is justice—not only in that unity honours and respects that with which it lives, but also in the sense that being together is consciously shaped, and that unity's success depends on the preservation and defence of each person's right to be unique.

At the same time, justice is the result of unity—it is visible, demonstrable, and to be experienced by everyone. The Church of Jesus Christ does not exist for itself alone in "splendid isolation," but within a world yearning for justice every day, every hour, everywhere (Romans 8.18-22). The Church of Jesus Christ is part of this world, a place in which nobody can claim justice for him or herself alone, because such justice is no justice at all.

The command to promote that which is right and to stand up for justice is connected to the mission of preserving a living and multifaceted unity, "making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"(Eph 4.3) —together, for one another, in this world, now and today: "(You were taught) to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph 4.23-24).

When the reformed world family has gathered to make plans for the future under the programmatic declaration to preserve unity, that future will be marked by the continuous search for that which is right and intercession for justice.

The letter to the Ephesians makes it unequivocally clear: You can't have one without the other. Life in unity involves engagement for justice, and holiness will be proven in such activity.

The urgent appeal to the Christian community of the past is equally valid today:

Change your minds, change your conduct, renew yourselves for God's sake and live according to your calling as justified by God, and therefore as justified people who are not only asked to do what is right, but who are qualified to do so in a special way!

The ethical principle of the interaction of justification and sanctification particularly emphasized by Reformed theology will therefore be a significant theological aspect and a distinctive mark of the future World Community of Reformed Churches.

Although we do not yet know what this future will look like, we can have some idea of what the just actions look like that will foster it and make it possible. The following further emphasizes the interaction and interweaving of unity and justice:

Social science speaks of justice as *iustitia connectiva* (Jan Assmann). The term describes actions directed toward the relationship, communication, and solidarity of people amongst themselves, and likewise portrays a lively relationship between humankind and God. Acting on behalf of one another, being there for each other, and living together—these things are best expressed by *iustitia connectiva*, which keeps society together. Central to such a "connective justice" are the life options of its subjects, and the concern for or care of the most vulnerable and marginalized people becomes the crucial criterion of justice.

With this definition of justice in mind, I would like to impress upon each of us within the newly reformed world community a sentence from the Beatitudes: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Mt 5.6)

I hear two messages in this passage:

Firstly, the promise of God's protection, redemption and blessing is given to those who are yearning for right and justice in so many different places on earth today, because it has been withheld from them in their economic, social, political and cultural contexts.

Secondly, I hear this Beatitude as Jesus' appeal to all of us as the church to be engaged in human rights and justice for the earth—as if such engagement, which can sometimes truly be a battle, were a physical need like hunger or thirst. Blessing—and in the end, the fulfilment of body and soul—is promised to those who follow this desire to fight and take responsibility for justice.

Appendix 22

REFLECTIONS FROM LATIN AMERICA:

"Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace" (Eph 4.3)

Ruth Padilla

Peace ruled. Or so told the official story. Borders were secured by the emperor's legions. Surely taxes and tributes were burdensome, especially when the benefit was mostly seen in far-off centres of power. But then again, they did guarantee security; the slightest disturbance was swiftly repressed. Torture was a common practice, and served as deterrence. Honour, naturally, was due the emperor, the "Lord", who so effectively imposed peace and kept unity among such a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious array of people. By the way, any parallels with the global scene today are absolutely coincidental! Those were the days of the *Pax Romana*.

Yet one holy night, into this fragile peace, pounded precariously together with cross nails and oppressive taxation, another peace was announced. The angels shattered the repressed silence with songs of "Peace on Earth!" They announced good news to a weary people: the long-awaited Prince of Peace had broken into history in the shape of a poor working class baby in an insignificant corner, far from the seats of Roman and Temple power. Once he went public, Jesus' rule was not marked by military nor economic might. Instead, he gave himself away, granting sight to the blind, feeding the hungry, liberating the oppressed, affirming the dignity of women, children and others who were marginalized in Jewish society. Rather than imposing security by repression and death, Jesus took on the scornful cross in loving sacrifice. In so doing, he unveiled as deceitful the powers of death that held humanity estranged from God, from one another and from the rest of creation. Jesus, our peace, effected salvation, granting new life to the dead, healing from enmity to a broken humanity and restoration to the entire created order. A core mark of the Good News of Christ is this re-definition of peace, *Pax Christi*.

Far from merely a repressed lack of disturbance, God's peace is dynamic, life-granting, wellbeing. And as Jesus preached and so fully embodied, peace never shows up where her sister, justice, is absent. Jesus made peace by doing justice. And the entire account of God's dealings in human history reveals God as the Lord, who

acts with steadfast love, justice and righteousness on earth, for in those things God delights (Jer 9.23-24). For God's people, called to make God and God's good purposes known among the nations, doing justice then is not some marginal, optional, addition to the agenda. Neither is it some human, ideologically inspired, social or political programme. It is not a reduced social gospel. Justice is a passion that grows out of the very heart of God. And justice, in God's dictionary, is defined as redemptive restoration of all things that are wrong. Justice sets things right; it vindicates the victims of natural disaster and human oppression: widows, orphans, foreigners with no chance to earn a living, even criminals in need of a second chance—and the 25,000 children who are dying this very day in our world from preventable diseases.

As the visible face and tangible force of love, justice brings peace, wholeness of life, because it sets things right between people and God, people and other people, people and creation—as it was in the beginning. The fruit of justice is shalom, peace, the flourishing of life, and the realization of God's good purposes. Injustice and oppression, poverty, hunger, and homelessness, none of these are God's intent. God, the loving-community of three, is pained when God's image in the women and men God so lovingly created is effaced by any of these humanly inflicted evils. God, the reconciler, suffers when abuse of power, unequal opportunity, greed or indifference mar the relationships between God's children. Furthermore, God, the Creator, sustainer of all life, mourns when the garden God planted, the skies God painted, the waters God released, and the multiplicity of living beings God filled God's earth with are ravaged and exploited with no concern for their health and wellbeing.

"Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace." The apostle Paul is writing from prison to followers of Jesus in the port city of Ephesus and in the broader Asia Minor region. Through time—by conquest, colonization, and emigration—Greeks, Persians, Romans and Jews had been added to the indigenous inhabitants of Anatolia—Bythinian, Mysians, Phrygians, and Lydians. Diverse cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and religious expressions mixed and clashed, forced together by the hegemony of Rome. Traditions were being challenged, identities were shifting, and many felt uprooted, at a loss—especially the people at the bottom of the totem pole.

It is into this scene that Paul's words are read to the growing community of Christ-followers, most of them, gentiles. "Make every

effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.” Unity, he urged, not uniformity. Because, you see, there were those for whom “we are all equal but some are more equal than others”. Proud of their lineage and heritage—after all, they were direct descendants of God’s people of old, the chosen nation of Israel—and marked by the “might makes right” imperial culture, they rested assured of their belonging and believed they owned the right to determine who was in and who was out of the new community being forged by the apostles’ teaching. “Become like us, the true believers; look at the world through our lenses and organise your experience into our categories. Otherwise you’ll only ever be second-class. We can tolerate a little colour here and there, a token representative of minority groups. But they must be willing to blend in, to accommodate to our standards and expectations, our jargon and our styles. Again, any similarity with current experience is pure coincidence!

This sort of alienating inclusion and “invisibilizing” uniformity was common currency in the Roman Empire. People were forced into conformity with the powers that be, even if that meant losing identity, denying their rich distinctiveness and being melded into an amorphous blob easily manipulated for the purposes of the powerful. Yet such uniformity is far from the unity God exemplifies and God’s people are called to embody. The Creator fashioned every human being, women and men alike, in God’s very image, equal in worth and dignity yet also uniquely particular and marvellously distinctive. Christ’s reconciling ministry breaks down all humanly constructed walls and spiritually bolstered exclusions to make unity possible. And the Spirit weaves together a community whose members are diversely gifted for the building up of that community and for works of peace and justice far outside its bounds. The unity Jesus prayed for among his disciples was this one, grounded in the very being of the triune community of love. Formal linkages and mergers of structures and institutions may follow, but the essential unity that makes God’s love known in God’s world is the one lived out by a human community grounded on God’s word and into which God’s Spirit breathes the mutual enjoyment and concert of purpose that characterize God-community.

“Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.” Paul’s call was not one he issued lightly. Years earlier, as a radical defender of the Jewish faith, he had actually gone on murderous rampages with the pious intent of eradicating the pernicious sect that dared question religious practices of exclusion and oppression and challenged the imposition of legalities over and

against the value of human life. Paul was fully aware of the imprisoning effect of pride and the deadly impact of prejudice. But once Jesus had torn off his blinders, and the Spirit had reoriented Paul's will, he had become known as the apostle to the gentiles. And today he was enduring prison under the accusation of taking non-Jews into the Temple, beyond the wall built to keep the ins in and the outs out! His conviction regarding God's cosmic reconciling purposes in Christ propelled him—against all odds—into a life mission marked by sacrificial efforts to breed unity, peace and justice within the new community. When both legalistic interpretations of Jewish law and imposed Roman decrees prescribed submissive acquiescence on the part of women, children and slaves to oppressive relational patterns in family and work, he daringly preached mutual submission to all, particularly to the powerful—men, fathers, employers—and he acknowledged the anointed leadership of women, young people and non-Jewish Christians in the early church.

"Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace." Historical coincidences and official stories aside, to what are we called as Reformed Christians in God's world today? In times when globalizing forces and ramped-up military campaigns seek to win hearts and minds, and guarantee but a façade of peace and security, while actually threatening the identity, the livelihood and, in many cases, the very life of people, are we ready to make every effort to seek justice for all people so that bountiful peace may be engendered? Or must we confess that we are often far too comfortable with things as they are and far too indifferent to the cries of those 25 thousand children whose deaths could be prevented today, their AIDS-widowed mom's, their refugee dads, their sex-trafficked sisters, their unemployed siblings, their drug-imprisoned cousins? In times when institutionalized pride and prejudice, spiced with a fair amount of greed and self-interest, have dug deep trenches between churches and denominations over theologies and ideologies, doctrines and dollars, are we ready to make every effort to maintain the unity of God's people so that God's love may be known in God's world? Or must we confess that we are often far too comfortable with things as they are and far too indifferent to women and men crying out for authentic love, for visible expressions of forgiveness and restoration, for communities of belonging marked by hope beyond hope? In times when, victims of unrestrained agro-industrial exploitation, many lands no longer yield fruit and others could soon disappear under the sea, when fellow creatures are being choked by oil spouts, smothered by smog, plucked and plundered at will, deprived of their natural

habitats—from Brazil to Papua New Guinea, are we willing to make every effort to safeguard the diverse forms of life on God's earth so that God's intent of abundant life for all of creation may be fulfilled? Or must we confess that all too often we are far too comfortable with things as they are and far too indifferent to the depredation of nature and its devastating impact on the most vulnerable inhabitants of God's earth?

As we come together during this Uniting General Council, and we depart from here as members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, may we not merely celebrate that our merger increases our number, grants us greater power of convocation, or access to more advantageous positions in the public square. Instead, may we see ourselves as fruits and agents of *Pax Christi*, as a community brought together by God's reconciling will in Christ and sent as such into the world by the power of God's Spirit to incarnate God's good purposes for the entire cosmos. So while we're here and as we go forth, let us grant brothers and sisters from areas of the world some dismissal as remote or insignificant their rightful place at our communion table; let's give full credit to voices from Haiti, Indonesia, Mali... No means perhaps there for global conferences on beautiful campuses with tailored lawns. No prestigious speakers flown in for grand occasions. But yes, believe it or not, something good can come from Nazareth! Let us tear down the walls of self-defence, security and prosperity that our greed, pride and prejudice have built, and take the risk of becoming welcoming communities—even to people who are different than us. Let's pledge ultimate allegiance not to the Caesars of the day but to the Lord of history, the only Prince of Peace. Let us fervently promise today to "Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Amen.

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Appendix 23

**FLOURISHING LIFE-GIVING OIKOS – A FAITH JOURNEY
TOWARDS COSMIC UNITY**

Park Seong-Won

*"How very **good and pleasant** it is when kindred live together in unity! (Ps 133.1)*

No other word than this beautiful praise comes to my mind as we congratulate and celebrate the coming together of the two worldwide Reformed families, forming one World Communion of Reformed Churches.

What kind of joy is it that we are enjoying and celebrating today? What sort of unity is it that we have achieved today? What type of life in unity should we live out today and tomorrow? What challenges are ahead of us on our ongoing journey of unity and justice?

Celebrate! Celebrate! Celebrate!

In Psalm 133, "good and pleasant" is a kind of joy the Psalmist expressed when kindred came to live together in unity. The Hebrew word טוב (Tob) for the English "good" describes an extraordinary joy for reunion of the divided family; it is the same word that God spoke with acclamation as each stage of the creation was accomplished (Gen 1.4,10,12,18,21,25,31). "Tob" also means "beauty", the esthetics of Eden, the garden of life.

What kind of "good" is it? What kind of "beauty" would it be? A highly significant point to be noted here is that "Tob" is not a relative concept. It is not the antonym of "bad" or "ugliness." It is an absolute concept as it is. In Buddhism too, the concept of "beauty" is neither dualistic nor relative. Beauty stands as it is. In Confucian teaching, "Tao" (道) or "The Way", is a concept of the ultimate virtue just as the Johanine theological term *logos* is viewed through the concept of beauty and good.

"Beauty" and "good" represent the concept of unity and perfection. It is the concept of the ONENESS of creation. It perfectly corresponds to the *Ubuntu*, an African expression of human interrelated ties (or bonds) lived in community and in harmony with

the whole creation. It also corresponds to the *Sangsaeng* (相生), an ancient Asian concept of “conviviality”, sharing community and economy which allows all to flourish together.

Unity is a major vision God longs to realize in this divided world. All biblical stories since Genesis 3 are the stories of what human beings divide and God unites. “That all may be one” is the major goal of the mission of Jesus as he clearly stated in his last prayer (John 17.21). But the unity God promotes is not merely for the sake of unity, but firmly based on God’s justice, that is, right relationship. As God created the cosmos from chaos, God wants to put order into the chaotic disunity of all the relationships of God’s creation, including the relationship between God and the creation, on the basis of God’s justice and God’s rhythm of life.

What we have achieved, and are acclaiming and celebrating today is this sort of unity. It shouldn’t be just a structural merger of the two organizations for various reasons including ecumenical survival. It shouldn’t bring the two together by compromising the theological differences. It must be one of the most committed responses that the divided human community can make. For the ultimate vision of Jesus is that all be one, in an interrelated and even mysterious way, as illustrated in John 10.17-26. That is why the Psalmist used טוב (Tob), the word describing utmost joy. In this respect, the unity we have achieved today is something to be extraordinarily acclaimed and celebrated.

Flourishing life-giving *Oikos*

What is clear is that our journey toward unity is not finished here. A greater unity lies ahead. A more urgent task is before us. The ecumenical movement has always been committed to the unity of churches and of humankind, and this must be continued. However, a particular challenge I want to make today is **our unity with nature**, that is, **cosmic unity**.

Through our faith, we are witnessing the kairotic implosion of today’s modern civilization, which is rapidly destroying the foundation of all living beings. The danger of climate change and ecological disaster is approaching an extraordinary critical point. We are told that the current human civilization will soon reach the point of no return unless immediate and urgent action is taken.

The Accra Confession has clearly pointed out the level of danger the current human civilization has reached. Just to give you some shocking figures, according to data by Prof. John van Klinken of

Groningen University, between 1850 and 1950 one animal species vanished every year; in 1989 one animal species vanished per day; in 2000 one animal species vanished per hour and within 50 years, 25 percent of animal and plant species will vanish due to global warming. Dr. Clara Deser, senior scientist of the National Centre for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) said in her interview with a Korean paper on March 3rd, 2008 that the global warming process is advancing 10 or 20 years faster than expected. The portion of the glaciers in the Polar regions that melted down last year was what had been expected to happen 10 or 20 years later. The situation is much more serious than we imagine. If we continue down this current path, we will produce changes greater than any experienced in the past 300 million years. Alan Durning pointed out that the global consumer class produced and consumed as many goods and services in the half century from 1950 to 2000 as throughout the entire period of history prior to that date. This sort of data indicates that the impact of modern economy and development is far greater than one can imagine. As mammon keeps tempting us to BUY more, the time has come to say BYE to consumerism.

Ishimure Michiko, a Japanese environmental writer, pointed out that the original sin today is modernity itself, which separates humanity from humanity, and humanity from all other living beings in God's *Oikos*. In today's world it is widely accepted that the Christian worldview has been a major contributor to ecological destruction. With "Witnessing in the Midst of a Suffering Creation—a Challenge of the Mission of the Church" as the theme at the International Consultation on God's Creation, held in September 2006 in Geneva, a critical point was made that the worldwide expansion of Western or modern civilization through Christian mission is one of the responsible contributors to the current ecological crisis. "The ecological crisis has its origin in Western civilization. The intellectual foundation leading to the exploitation of nature and the excessive human claims on the resources of the planet has been laid in the West ... Christian preaching and Western civilization have historically been closely connected and have functioned hand in hand. On the one hand, the Christian mission laid the spiritual ground for the freedom from nature, and on the other hand, the benefits of Western civilization were often interpreted as an additional proof for the credibility of the Gospel... For a long time certain theologians proudly maintained that the Christian mission had prepared the grounds of modernity." (Lukas Vischer)

Thus, modern civilization with the spiritual support of Christian theology and mission has made a considerable contribution to

separating human beings from nature, and as a consequence, both human community and the environment are now paying a high price.

How should Christian theology, spirituality and mission respond to this crisis? What would be the way that the Christian community could respond to the crisis in a responsible way? Diarmuid O'Murchu claims that human community today needs a "spiritual homecoming", namely, reconnection of human beings with nature. We, the human community, should take decisive action to go back and reconnect ourselves with the nature which is the divine source of life. This requires a radical reformation of our theology, our spirituality and our missiology. We may need another reformation today.

I find that there is no task more urgent than the question of unity with nature, "Cosmic Unity", to which the united Reformed family worldwide must commit themselves today, as our planet faces total destruction of the foundation of life of all living beings.

Attention, therefore, has to be drawn to a different level of unity as we praise, celebrate and enjoy the living together of the Reformed family today. Traditionally, the goal of unity has been focused on "Unity of the Church" and "Unity of Humankind". Having been convinced that the ecumenical movement for these two dimensions of unity should continue, we now need to widen the horizon of cosmic unity toward the whole *Oikoumene*. *Koinonia* in diversity should not remain at the level of Unity of the Church and Unity of Humankind. It should be expanded to all creation in God's *Oikoumene*. Justice, peace and reconciliation should be realized not only in human history but also in the whole creation. Therefore, fellowship and unity among all the members of God's *Oikos*, including cosmic unity and *Koinonia*, should be the major witness of the ecumenical movement in the 21st century. In this sense the ecumenical movement should be an **initiator of life-giving civilization**.

A further step for living out the Accra Confession needs to be taken. No doubt, the Accra Confession has made a remarkable step in taking a clear faith stance with regard to mammon and the lordless empire that drives the God-created cosmos into chaos. The Accra Confession, however, is not enough, because its main focus is "resistance" as it keeps saying "We reject..." In response to the search for alternatives, a more proactive step needs to be taken. A messianic ecumenical process is needed for not only resisting mammon and empire, but also choosing life by reclaiming and

flourishing "Life-Giving Civilization" so that we and our descendents may live. Can the newly born World Communion of Reformed Churches commit to this historic mission of transforming life-depriving civilization into life-giving civilization as a forefront ecumenical initiator in this century when life and death are set before the earth community?

A prayerful hope as a concluding remark

Irenaeus of Lyon put spiritual implication of social justice by saying the following simple slogan, "*Gloria Dei, homo vivens.*" The glory of God is that humans may live. John Calvin, our common theological ancestor expressed the same concern by saying "Where God is known, there humanity is also cared for." In the face of today's major challenge of unprecedented ecological devastation, could the World Communion of Reformed Churches coin a contemporary equivalent saying, "*Gloria Dei, cosmos vivens.*" The glory of God is that the cosmos may live and "Where God is known, there the cosmos is also cared for"?

Appendix 24

**UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE
JUSTICE RENEWED**

J. Ayana McCalman

"Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds." These immortal words of the Jamaican icon Bob Marley provide a profound philosophical framework for the process of our self understanding as well as our engagement with the communities in which we live. In particular, these words provide a challenge to renew and when necessary unlearn our own misunderstandings of unity, peace and justice.

It is an unfortunate reality that peace and unity have become loose jargon, which is often boastful in its proclamation but superficial in practice. Jesus noted that peace as the world gives is a facade (John 14.27). Instead Jesus proclaims a bold, radical faith that lives in the midst of unjust circumstances with a promise of abundant life (John 10.10). In renewing our commitment to justice we must therefore proclaim and live the bold alternatives to counter the current political, economic and social systems that steal and destroy life. In particular, justice demands a renewed approach to learning and the promotion of genuine partnership.

The current systems of learning encourage mass consumption of information without any critical challenge to the current social systems that often render formal education useless. A renewed approach to education ought to encourage as its mandate life-long learning, self awareness, creativity and genuine development of communities.

Renowned Caribbean scholar and thinker Professor Rex Nettleford eloquently describes the issue in this manner: "One area of serious concern for all of us is the delivery of the sort of education to our young people that will allow them to grab hold of their destiny, take decisions in their own interest, consonant with the demands of a country that may be poor in material wealth but rich in human resources, or may be materially well-off but spiritually jaded, so that they may take hold of the legacy of that spirit of independence, of self reliance, individual initiative and the capacity for coordinated social action towards mutual growth."

Jesus in his own teaching ministry recognized that any form of learning should challenge a person to integrate the way they live with the way they think, which in itself is transformational. We can see Jesus' challenge to teach and transform in his discourse with Zaccheus and the rich young ruler: Luke 19.1-0; Matthew 19.16-28. In both instances Jesus' teaching was focused on enabling both men to understand that their identity was rooted not in money or material possessions but in their right relationships with the communities in which they lived.

Jesus' willingness to eat with Zaccheus who was ostracized by his own community and his restoration of Zaccheus as a Son of Abraham is in itself transformational. Zaccheus in the face of his restoration to community also matched his new life with a vow of justice to not only reconcile but make restoration of goods to his own community, a vow which in itself holds invaluable teaching for the true meaning of restorative justice today.

By contrast, Jesus confronted the rich young ruler by directly challenging him to see that despite all his riches he still lacked one thing. Jesus' seemingly exaggerated demand for the sale of his possessions was misunderstood by the rich young ruler to mean a loss of material wealth. The ruler's own limited education in his religious teachings dissuaded him from envisioning a new life reality that restoration of right relationships especially with those who are poor and disadvantaged would not necessarily include loss of his own wealth. In our own times it is this very fear that has disabled wealthy nations from demanding true peace and unity that includes restoration of the historical goods and dignity of those who are poor and disadvantaged.

A renewed understanding of identity and community by necessity requires genuine partnership. Our *raison d'être* as humanity and a community of faith is to partner with God to ensure the realization of abundant full life in the whole earth. This goal requires the ideas, skills and effort of each of us to live, learn and work together, that is, partnership.

What are the values which will encourage partnership to yield meaningful benefits? What challenges arise for the church in committing to practice partnership in its life, work and witness?

First, my own understanding has led me to enumerate the values of partnership as these.

God is sovereign. I acknowledge it as fact that the divine spirit of God is in control of all life and the whole earth. At the genesis of the biblical testament there is this reminder: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth": Gen 1.1. But lest you misunderstand or misquote my interpretation of God's sovereignty I hasten to say this. Sovereignty does not encompass the narrow perception of authoritarian, autocratic, or elite domination. Instead it is wholesome and includes the earth and all its fullness—grass, fruit, sun, moon, stars, cattle, fish, man and woman, as symbols and agents of God's divine creative power. It is a true partnership that allows the whole earth to celebrate being created while being creative.

Partnership demands more than equality. It demands mutual respect. It requires us to transcend labels, perceptions of limitation or scarcity and stereotypical ideas of potential or capacity. It encourages us to value every person and every living thing as representing abundant and unlimited creative power for present and ultimate good. Again at the genesis of the biblical testament it is recorded: "And God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good": Genesis 1.31.

Partnership requires the promotion of justice and just relationships. Justice is premised on the equal application of the principle of fairness and the practice of living truth in all circumstances and situations. This reminds me of the words of Jesus as again recorded in the biblical testament. Jesus when tested by a lawyer in summarizing the commandments of God espoused as the second of the greatest commandments: "Love your neighbour as you love yourself": Matthew 22.38.

Despite our struggles with the historical data of the complicity of the church in activities and doctrines that have perpetuated mental enslavement and have even rationalized physical enslavement the church does have a testimony of partnership from its early formation to its existence today. The biblical testament of the Acts of the Apostles is replete with testimonies of the commitment of the church to daily live the values we have previously considered—affirmation of God's sovereignty, mutual respect and the promotion of justice.

In my own context of the Caribbean, the annals of history testify that the church even in the face of slavery, indentureship and the discomforts of the birth and growth of new nations continued and continues to bring communities of people together with various,

skills and gifts to worship together and care for people united by the church's inherently inclusive prequalification: our love for God and Christ. The prevailing examples of ecumenism and more so represented by this very Uniting General Council are also examples of how the church encourages whole communities to work together across boundaries to transform the lives of people throughout the world.

The testimony of the church also reveals what I consider to be the greatest challenge to the church to fully embrace the practice of partnership. It is the challenge of enabling meaningful ways of working together with the non-church community. More specifically it is the challenge of overcoming the narrow perception that it is the church's exclusive right to realize the attainment of fullness of life for the whole earth.

So how does this change the way the church will work towards accomplishing mission? It requires that the institution of the church work together in a multi-disciplinary construct with the community in which we live. The members of our churches already do this each day as they enter their work spaces. So even as we equip and train ministers and theologians the church must work alongside farmers, journalists, counsellors, poets, scientists, musicians, legislators, artists and all God's people in all places to work towards emancipation for all people to celebrate the continuous process of realizing our human potential.

More than this it is a direct challenge to the church to openly advocate and act for social justice and change. Social justice is not charity. It goes beyond that. It is in solidarity with those who are poor but also demands that the church utilizes its resources and networks in a systematic way that meets needs, promotes self-sufficiency, and communal responsibility. It is a call for each of us to love God, love ourselves but also love our neighbours—a circle of responsibility that calls us to account not only to God but also to take account of each other.

In final words, it is our enduring commitment to social justice and genuine partnership that will ensure that unity of the Spirit and peace no longer remains an elusive goal to be pursued but never attained. This Uniting General Council therefore stands as prophetic witness to the power of God's Spirit to enable unity and peace. Jesus boldly proclaimed "With God all things are possible": Matthew 19.26. As we read the signs of our times I pray we are each challenged to renew our commitment to justice and follow Jesus'

radical faith to boldly proclaim and live the alternatives that will make "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" possible for all God's creation.

Appendix 25

ALL MY RELATIVES¹⁹

Richard Twiss

Introduction

In a formal gathering like this our Lakota/Sioux people offer the greeting, *Mitakuye Oyasin*. It is a traditional tribal greeting which translates "All My Relatives or Relations." What is communicated is a sense of one's connectedness to the bigger world of creation. It says I am part of the people who have gone before me, with the people living today, and with those who will come after me. It says I am related to things above, things below and things all around. It says I am a small part of all that is, and ever has been, sacred. It militates against the sacred/secular dichotomy and dualism of the West and aligns us with a holistic and integrated view of the world. I will add that perhaps, because of what the Creator has made possible for us in the coming of Jesus, in the truest sense of this term, we become the Body of Christ—the family of God. So today I greet you as your Lakota brother in Jesus!

My father is Oglala Lakota/Sioux from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and my mother is Sicangu from the Rosebud Lakota/Sioux Indian Reservation, both in South Dakota. I was born in 1954 and lived among my mother's people until age 6, when we moved away from the reservation where I grew up until I moved back in 1972.

In the winter of 1972, along with 600 others, I participated in the American Indian Movement's (AIM) forced takeover and occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office Building in Washington, DC, protesting the US Federal Government's breaking of more than 700 congressionally ratified treaties that it made with our tribes. For eight days we occupied the building and were surrounded by riot police. During this period of my life I began to allow hatred toward

¹⁹ Some of this material is adapted from Richard Twiss's book, *One Church Many Tribes* (Regal Press, 2000), a chapter he wrote in *Remembering Jamestown, Hard Questions about Christian Mission*, (Pickwick Publications, 2010) and a chapter he wrote in *Holy Bible: Mosaic* (Tyndale, 2009).

white people and Christianity to grow in my heart. In 1974, however, after years of many painful experiences with drug and alcohol abuse, time in jail and a growing despair of my own lostness, I became a follower of Jesus while living in Hawaii.

This Hawaii experience occurred when I was all alone during a drug overdose at two o'clock in the morning on an isolated beach. There, in deep desperation, I yelled, "Jesus if you're real, then will you forgive me, come into my life and be my saviour?" And he did!

I am only "Ikce Wicasa"—a Common Man. I am not a chief, tribal leader nor do I speak for all Native people. I am only a pitiful human being who follows the path of beauty that we call the Jesus Way. As a common man, I welcome all of you to Turtle Island. For those visiting from other lands, welcome as our honoured guests. If this event was in one our native communities or villages we would welcome you in a formal way with food, gifts and songs. So I apologize I can only offer words of welcome.

Many tribes refer to North America as Turtle Island. More that 700 different tribes believe that the Creator put them on this land long before Columbus got lost in his search for a new trade route to the East Indies and we discovered him floating around lost in the Caribbean. Paul writes in Acts 17.26 that the Creator pre-determined set times and geographic places. We are the First Nations peoples of Turtle Island. It would appear the Creator brought the Europeans to Turtle Island too. Perhaps in Jesus, we could have walked together as brothers and sisters and a great new nation "The Body of Christ" made of many nations could have grown here between our peoples. But it did not. The most horrific incidence of genocide and ethnic cleansing in the western hemisphere occurred here instead.

Our people were decimated by war and disease from some 50 million in 1400 to barely 230,000 in 1895. There are numbers of documented cases where smallpox-infected blankets were sent to villages (biological terrorism) and bounties were paid for the heads and scalps of Native men, women and children. Today we are 2.4 million in the USA and 1.2 in Canada. But, perhaps what makes the story most tragic is that so much of this was the result of the misappropriation of the biblical narrative that was co-opted as a tool of colonial imperialism. However, the story is not finished.

It was a defining moment in my journey as a Lakota follower of Jesus when Dr Jerry Yellowhawk prayed over me in a Lakota naming

ceremony, giving me the name *Taoyate Obnajin* "He Stands With His People," and Rev. Vincent Yellow Old Woman gifted me with his eagle feather head dress to confirm the name and Creator's gifting in my life.

Over the years as I have reflected on my experience in Hawaii. I am glad I did not find faith in Jesus in a church building or institution. It spared me from having to then become Christian Reformed right away; I didn't have to become Baptist right away; I didn't have to become a Presbyterian right away; I didn't have to become an Anglican right away; I didn't have to become a Pentecostal right away; I didn't have to become a Methodist right away. I just became a follower of Jesus. Soon after my commitment to Jesus, I learned I needed to become a Christian too. And from there I became a Calvinist, Wesleyan, Lutheran, Quaker, Pentecostal, Dispensational, Armenian and Evangelical Christian. And then I learned that I had to decide on a Bible to read; the RSV, NRSV, KJV, NIV, CEV, NKJV and that some English speakers believed only English speakers could have a Bible that was "Authorized" by God. And then I was taught there was such a thing as Christian pants, shirts, dresses, shoes, and socks, Christian haircuts, Christian instruments, and Christian buildings.

Somehow when Jesus came into my life and overwhelmed me with his love and kindness I wanted nothing more than to simply follow him because he truly saved me from a life of addiction, abuse, self-destruction and likely a premature death. While following Jesus seemed one thing, becoming a Christian seemed quite another thing.

As the years passed I began to resist the pressure to accept interpretations of the Bible that said "old things had passed away and all things had become white" regarding my following Jesus in the context of my Native cultural ways, music, dance, drumming, ceremony and culture. In reference to my Native culture I was informed the Bible said "touch not the unclean thing," or "come out from among them and be separate," or "what fellowship does light have with darkness." This meant I needed to leave my Indian ways behind me, because I had a new identity in Christ, and it WAS NOT Indian! The Bible was used to demonize just about everything important to our cultural sense of being one with God and creation. So, while Jesus found me, the church began to lose me! The church became complicit in the colonialism of indigenous people.

One of the points of colonialism is to displace people from their

culture and then their land. African scholar, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, (n-Go-gay-wa-ti-ONG-go) in *Decolonizing the Mind*, sees that the way that control was introduced and managed was to deconstruct the people's sense of self and replace it with that of the colonizer ... the cultural bomb. The effect of the cultural bomb was to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland ... the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world ... tools of self-definition in relationship to others.

Sadly, the hegemony of the prevailing worldview assumptions of the European immigrants not only lingers today, but has morphed into a distinct Christianized cultural bias against Native and indigenous culture and ways. Because of clashing worldview values Native North American/indigenous people have never been embraced as co-equal participants in the life, work and mission of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul uses the human body as a metaphor to describe how people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds should regard and interact with one another. In verse 20 he says "the eye cannot say to the hand I don't need you and the hand can't say to the feet I don't need you."

In North America we have more than four centuries of active on-going missions among our tribes. Yet, despite four hundred years of witness, there has never been a self-identifying Native person in a position of national leadership in any denomination or any para-church ministry, nor are there any today. A close examination of the national Christian speaking platforms across the land reveals the glaring absence of native men and women who are ascribed a place of spiritual stature in our own land. And I repeat—in our own land. And I repeat again, in our own land!

If you look at a thing and you cannot identify any perceived sense of value in it, then you get along without it. You cannot see how it will in some way benefit or add value to your life.

The Euro-North American expression of Christ and his kingdom has said to the Native North American expression of Christ and his kingdom, we don't need you. You have nothing we need. You can add nothing of benefit to us. But we in turn have everything you need.

It has created and only reinforces a benefactor/beneficiary paradigm in the church. We exist in the minds, policies, and attitudes of the North American church as the perpetual mission field; needy recipients, unreached peoples, marginalized, etc. We are not seen in light of the scripture as co-equal participants in the life and mission of the American church.

The missionary efforts among the people located on my reservation over the past 150 years still suffer under the weight of that hegemony and are typical of the current state of the "Native church." The largest town on the Rosebud Reservation is named Mission. This community of 910 people is so named because it was the place where missionary agencies were invited to set up shop. In July of 2008 I led a cross-cultural immersion course for seminary students in Mission. I sent groups of two or three people to visit nine different churches on a Sunday morning in five different communities. Afterward, during a de-brief time, without exception each group commented that they could have been attending any "white" church in "anywhere" USA. There was nothing "Native" about those mission churches except the fact that Natives were sitting in the pews. The music, liturgy, language, décor, and style were all Anglo.

This kind of paternalism and "evangelism" goes on all summer long, year after year, decade after decade and little changes on reservations all across the USA and Canada.

A 2008 *New York Times* newspaper article reported that males between 15 and 25 on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation have the highest incidence of suicide in America. A 2010 television documentary stated three of four girls have been raped or sexually assaulted on the same reservation. Poverty, alcohol and drug abuse and all the maladies that accompany these things are staggering in magnitude! These kinds of socio-economic realities exist in indigenous communities around the world wherever European colonialism has gone.

An authentic Native American cultural or indigenous expression of following Jesus has never been allowed to develop—the very idea being rejected as syncretistic and incongruous with "biblical" faith. Instead of embracing Jesus as the Creator, the majority of Native Americans blame American Christianity and the church for the loss of their own culture and identity.

Early missionary John Sergeant, while pastoring a Christian native community, emphasized to his converts "their cultural inadequacy and their personal responsibility for overcoming that inadequacy... Only through a complete sense of their own inadequacy can Natives be properly Christianized (Wyss 1998, 94). He felt they could not fulfill this mandate and began a school to assist them toward Christianity with the goal of "total eradication of all that marks them as native... to root out their vicious habits, and to change their whole way of living" (Wyss 1998, 92).

Despite the history and implications of colonial missions, I nonetheless believe we are in the midst of a historic paradigmatic shift from the paternalism of the past to a genuine native-led movement of the gospel where indigenous believers are emerging as co-equal participants in the life, work and mission of Jesus among the nations.

One way to make some sense of early colonial and current neo-colonial mission endeavours is to look at the church through the juxtaposition between Jesus and Christianity, and Christianity and Christendom, the latter being, as professor Peter d'Errico writes in his foreword to *Pagans in the Promised Land*, "an alliance of princes and priestly authorities that culminates in the doctrine of divine right of kings and popes."²⁰

Lamin Sanneh nuances these comparisons a bit differently: World Christianity is not one thing, but a variety of indigenous responses through more or less effective local idioms, but in any case without necessarily the European Enlightenment frame. "Global Christianity," on the other hand, is the faithful replication of Christian forms and patterns developed in Europe. It echoes Hilaire Belloc's famous statement, "Europe is the faith." It is, in fact, religious establishment and the cultural captivity of faith.²¹

Phillip Jenkins in *The Next Christendom*, while acknowledging we are undergoing the greatest shift in the history of Christianity, sees Christianity being inextricably bound up with that of Europe and

² Peter D'Errico, "Foreword" to Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008), ix.

³ Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 22.

European-derived civilizations overseas, above all in North America.

Peter D'Errico writes, "When we make these important distinctions, we can begin to understand the possibility of differences between the teaching of Jesus and the political and legal doctrines of a church-state complex operating in his name."²² With this as a backdrop I will put a little of my tobacco in our common pipe of dialogue for you to smoke on and hopefully enjoy.

As Native people, we are in-between the worlds of yesterday and where we will be; between traditional worldviews and western rationalism; between community and individuality; between spirituality and religion. We are not what we used to be and we are still becoming what we are not yet. In this in-between time we experience confusion, deep loss, fear, the unknown, searching, lostness, despair, our circle is broken. Our identity is constantly stressed, being reshaped, redefined, or altered by the hegemonic assumptions of western Christian dualism, American (national) patriotism or western individualism as we regain our balance in the modern technological world where we live as indigenous peoples.

Here is something I have been thinking about that helps make sense of what it means for me to be fully human—Sicangu Lakota—and a devoted follower of Jesus. Our Creator became two-legged. God came in the form of a human being. "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood" (John 1.14; Message Version).

So then, I would ask, whose "hood" did the Creator of heaven and earth move into. The Creator moved into a small Native village named Bethlehem among a tribe of people called the Hebrews and a sub-tribe, called the Tribe of Judah. Jesus was a black-haired, black-eyed and dark skinned tribal, indigenous, aboriginal, native, First Nations boy—an ethnic boy, depending on who gets to call someone else ethnic. He was given tribal names; Bright and Morning Star, The Rock, Rose of Sharon, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Lily of the Valley, Chief Cornerstone, Daystar and many more.

When Jesus, God-the-Son was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, as he came out of the water, God-the-Holy-Spirit, like a

⁴ D'Errico, "Foreword" to Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land*, ix.

dove descended on Jesus; then the voice of God-the-Father was heard from heaven saying, "this is my beloved Native boy in whom my heart is deeply pleased." Jesus did not feel ashamed, like a second class citizen, or any sense of inferiority about his dark skin, tribal ways or ethnic identity because he received the affirmation of his Father's and the Holy Spirit's love—in the midst of his tribal identity. God-the-Father was not embarrassed by his son's obvious ethnic identity.

As we consider a new lens to view the humanity of Jesus through, I want to then reconsider the place or role of indigenous people in light of the *missio dei* as a Trinitarian mutuality model for biblical story-telling. While *missio dei* is translated "Mission of God," I like the notion of story-telling as more reflective of God's work in creation. It is God's story, a "living story" that is constantly unfolding. *missio dei*, however, as Trinitarian mission can serve as both a corrective and redemptive lens in addressing the displacement, neo-colonial oppression and utter disregard for the value of our First Nations/indigenous people in colonial Christianity.

Phillip Potter sees *missio dei* presenting a radical departure from a western ecclesiocentric focus to a Trinitarian focus.²³ *Missio dei* can be thought of in terms of the extension of God's "village" life in the story of the coming of Jesus and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in Creation; it is the Creator's invitation to be restored in relationship within the village of God.

Trinitarian theology points to the radical communal nature of God. This communion overflows into an involvement with history that "aims at drawing humanity and creation in general into this communion with God's very life. God's very nature, therefore, is missionary. It is not primarily about the propagation or transmission of intellectual convictions, doctrines, moral commands, etc., but rather about the inclusion of all creation in God's overflowing, superabundant life of communion. The church's missionary nature derives from its participation in this overflowing Trinitarian life."²⁴

Indigenous people find in the *missio dei* a place of identity,

⁵ Philip Potter, *Life in All its Fullness* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981).

⁶ Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 288-89.

belonging, value, peace, justice and affirmation—Shalom. That place, however, does not, and has not existed in missionary efforts among our tribal people. The Bible expresses the same reality of the new humanity in the word *shalom*. Potter would say the goal toward which God is working, the ultimate end of his mission, is the establishment of *shalom*, which intrinsically involves the realization of the full potentialities of ALL creation—human and non-human—and its ultimate reconciliation and unity in Christ.²⁵

The “outcomes” of a Trinitarian centred focus of the *missio dei* described by Bevans and Schroeder are “building vibrant community life, where real sharing, mutuality, service and solidarity take place.”²⁶ In this place people experience genuine local autonomy and cultural existence that thrives, as well as a real sense of communion with other local churches and Christians of other cultural groups. This picture of a Trinitarian based *missio dei* has the feel of village life. As the dominance of western, modernist worldview assumptions decline in light of the shift of Christianity from the north to the south and west to east, *missio dei* has huge implications for the future of mission/story-telling as an expression of community.

God expressing God’s self through the diversity of the oneness between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the overarching theme of creation—existing in remarkable community expressed through radical diversity. Some have said God is one **because** God is three. Or that unity is not possible in the absence of diversity or again, that unity is only possible in the midst of diversity. Where there is no diversity you have only conformity, uniformity or sameness. Diversity should not be regarded as only a socio-cultural conversation, but a deeply theological one as well.

The *missio dei* as Trinitarian faith calls us to “recognize the interconnectedness of everything in the universe. Everything is related to everything else, and this means that an anthropology in the light of the Trinity can never be one that is anthropocentric.” Since everything is connected, humanity is part of the whole of creation²⁷ and the whole of creation is part of our human identity.

⁷ Potter, *Life in All its Fullness*.

⁸ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 298.

⁹ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 301.

And everything that "never was," has ever been, or ever shall be, came first, "existed," within the community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit before it proceeded out from them.

In Genesis, the human/creation story emerges from within the radical community of the Trinity and the oneness within the diversity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Revelation, it "ends" with the radical community of the Trinity and the oneness within the diversity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with human beings fully participating, having been restored to *imago dei*. "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev 7.9).

On the basis of both the Genesis and Revelation accounts no people or race should regard itself as superior or inferior in origin or essence. What John saw in Revelation was birthed out of God's self. The diversity in heaven is the reality of what God intended to be from the very beginning because only in the diversity of humanity could the indescribability of God be "mirrored." With these as bookends, the *missio dei* is a home for indigenous people in the story of Creation.

In the *missio dei*, as "observable" in Revelation, heavenly worship reflects in its perfected state that which from the beginning of time always existed in the Trinity; here we see diversity perfected, cultures flourish, creation restored and the radical self-giving oneness of the community of the redeemed—the divine *tiyospaye*—"extended family" worshipping the Creator. Cultural diversity is not a deviation from God's "original plan," the result of sin or judgment at Babel, but has always been God's intention and design for human beings. This is good news for indigenous people and affirms our "place" as Native/indigenous people within the context of God's eternal triune community and purposes for creation.

Earlier this year I taught at a conference for Christian school educators hosted by Rehoboth Christian School in Gallup, New Mexico on the Navajo Reservation. Rehoboth Christian School was established in 1903 by the Christian Reformed Church as part of its missionary work among the Navajo and Zuni people. In its earlier years, like all Christian-run boarding schools in the United States and Canada, the missionaries and teachers were, by and large, very condemning of native cultural beliefs and practices. The majority of the theological streams in the Reformed tradition in North America have never treated, respected nor honoured Native peoples and their

traditions. Because the understandings of John Calvin could not be distinguished from their western/enlightenment cultural framework, generations of Native/indigenous Reformed pastors and Christians to this day distrust, reject and even demonize their own traditional ways as a result of the categorical teachings of Reformed Theology they encountered at Rehoboth.

I want to say Rehoboth as a school is changing, albeit slowly but steadily, as it awakens to the pain and wounds it caused among our people and the embracing of a new future. Can we re-imagine a new or changed future where people are living out their faith in Jesus in light of the *missio dei*, together as fellow learners and co-equal participants in the life, work and mission of Jesus. This week in Grand Rapids of cultural activity, mutual learning and the formation of this historic new communion is a step in the right direction for the members of the new World Communion of Reformed Churches around the world. Is institutional or structural change enough though to bring about this hoped-for future?

Edinburgh 2010

“If denominational unity was the express purpose of Edinburgh 2010 some measure of success was realized. The platform however, was largely unchanged from 1910 except for one woman’s voice and one global south participant. Furthermore, the songs of worship may have come from many places but the leadership was entirely non-representative of the majority of the church. If denominational unity was the intended goal of Edinburgh 2010, it may have been achieved in some small measure; if the presentation of the body of Christ in mission was the goal however, we will have to wait for another time.”

Attending the Edinburgh 2010 Mission Conference as the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, I saw that, yes, there has been a great deal of change since 1910—but not in every way. Indigenous people were again, for the most part, either invisible or marginal to the concerns and directions of the conference. With Christianity at a critical global crossroads, nothing could be more important than setting the relationship of the churches to the indigenous peoples on a firm foundation. Edinburgh 2010 revealed how far we have to go. It is for the churches to pick up this bit of urgent business left undone.

Indigenous Manifesto

I appeal to the new World Communion of Reformed Churches to become active participants in calling the churches of the United

States and Canada to strive for justice and equality in the church's work among our tribes by:

1. Repenting of its cultural, economic and philosophical arrogance;
2. Its ecclesiological hegemony;
 - a. We have our own liturgies, ceremonies and rituals that are just as capable of expressing a biblical faith as anything that has ever come out of Geneva, Germany, Rome or Alexandria.
3. Its presupposed theological superiority that has brought great shame and oppression to our native hearts;
 - a. That status of recognition belongs to the conglomeration of Euro-American scholars, ministers and lay folk who have, over the centuries, used their economic, academic, religious and political dominance to create the illusion that the Bible, read through their experience, is the Bible read correctly.²⁸
 - b. Indigenous reflection and critique of the emerging neo-Calvinism.
 - c. Inclusion of theological textbooks from indigenous scholars and the global south in North American seminaries and universities.
4. Its inequitable control of wealth derived from lands unjustly, illegally and immorally taken from our Native people;
 - a. Great wealth has been extracted from our lands by "Christian" land owners and business owners that continue to propagate an economic and ecclesiological system that oppresses our people today.

And then by establishing a kind of truth and reconciliation committee for the purpose of seeking ways to make restitution to tribal people who still carry self-hatred toward themselves because of the misappropriation of scripture, misrepresentation of Jesus and the Gospel of Good News and coopting of the Bible as a tool of colonialism and imperialism.

This would include creating a process of reporting to maintain accountability by monitoring progress by a commission comprised of people from North America and beyond representing indigenous leaders and the global south.

¹⁰ Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 44.

This would include establishing a budget specifically to support local native initiatives dealing with issues of reconciliation, justice and community development.

NAIITS is a group of Native scholars who for the sake of their children's children, have stopped waiting for an ecclesial body to make room for them at the table of theological discourse and launched an innovative new approach to theological education for indigenous people.

The World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People is another global movement of followers of Jesus who have met around the world since 1996 to celebrate their freedom in Christ through the beauty of their songs, languages, dances, ceremony, instruments, chants, and rituals of their cultural ways.

Can you and I live with a heart for justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God—a faith in Jesus lived under the shadow of the community of heaven expressed through radical diversity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Appendix 26

OPENING WORSHIP, FRIDAY, 18 JUNE 2010**SERMON****Notice – Construction in Progress
1 Pet 2.4-12, Mk 1.14-18****Part A – Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff**

I am deeply honoured to deliver the first part of this sermon this morning—a sermon that has been developed in two parts. After I have finished part A, the Rev. Doctor Clifton Kirkpatrick will deliver part B. One sermon—two preachers—the same message.

May God be honoured by what is said here today.

As many of you arrived on this campus during the last few days you, no doubt, noticed a major construction project that dominates the landscape of the campus. When finished, sometime in 2011, it will be a beautifully renovated facility that will be known as the Covenant Fine Arts Auditorium. Construction sites almost always are messy. That is the way it is when scaffolding and construction equipment are scattered about. The completion of the facility can only be anticipated—maybe even visualized by trained eyes—but someday soon the building will accommodate many fine offerings of praise in the fine arts that God has given.

We are gathered in this place this morning as a community under construction. It's really important for us to acknowledge that reality, not only as we begin the journey as a World Communion of Reformed Churches, but also as individual members thereof. As we worship together here, keenly aware of our representative presence on behalf of our home churches and their nearly 80 million members around the world, we acknowledge before God and to each other that we ourselves are under construction. We acknowledge our state not merely to sound a note of humility—or to offer it as an excuse for our imperfections—but to testify that we have read and heard the word of the Lord through God's servant Peter when he writes "As you come to him, the living Stone...you also, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2.5).

At this historic gathering it is so appropriate not only that we are beginning our journey to Unity in the Spirit in worship, but also that we are doing so in the clear awareness that we are gathered as the people of God. Yes, we are a people of the Reformation—and we are here under the rubric of many names—but together we are a people under construction. We have chosen to describe that construction to be a communion—a fellowship—a spiritual house—an ecumenical organization—a testimony—a vehicle—to bear witness to the centrality of Jesus Christ and the gospel that has made us whole. Before we together can do the work of God we need to be constructed into that “spiritual house” in order that we might perform and live into the “holy priesthood” we are called to be.

It is noteworthy—and an essential reminder (don’t you think?)—that God’s redemptive activity in the world—and in our lives—is presented as a preface to what we are called to do. It is that gospel we share—and the redemptive message we have heard—that forms the basis of the communion we now celebrate. Our communion and fellowship is first and foremost in Christ who in his grace makes us to be a “chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Pet 2.9). It is in Christ where we find our identity and our calling; it is in Christ—and by the power of his Spirit—that we are gathered in this place. It is in Christ—and by his power—that the Communion of Reformed Churches is launched. It is the gospel of Christ we proclaim: it is the love of Christ for the people of the world that gives hope to the nations; good news to the poor; binds up the broken-hearted; proclaims freedom to those held captive and release from darkness for all who are prisoners of the spirits of this age. It is Christ’s care for all that God has made that propels us to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour, to comfort all who mourn, to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour (Isaiah 61).

And, of course, serve we must. The Apostle Peter in the passage we read states it clearly. We must finish the verse and hear the consequence “that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Cliff Kirkpatrick, in part B of this message, will focus our attention on the specifics of serving. Suffice it to say for now that through the Communion of Reformed Churches we have an opportunity to be faithful together to both the proclamation and the living-out of the

gospel message. To proclaim the gospel as being redemptive and transformational without engaging the spirits of this age is neither biblical nor reformed. To engage the spirits of this age without the proclamation of the gospel will align us with countless humanitarian efforts that are at risk of being neither redemptive nor transformational in a biblical spiritual sense. The Communion of Reformed Churches can walk a more excellent way. In our service together we must do both—proclaim and serve; preach and teach; resist and promote; genuinely care for people’s spiritual well-being and prophecy that every square inch and centimetre of this world belongs to God. As a communion we are not called to create the space of God’s domain—but rather—to let the world know that it already is—as it always was—the handiwork of a mighty God.

The traditions of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) have a common source. Yes, historical developments may have influenced a different emphasis for each partner present here today. But, that does not mean that one tradition trumps the other, or that one should be lifted above the other. The historical emphasis that each now brings to the communion is needed to enrich all of us in this more intimate relationship. Together, as the constitution affirms, we will be true to our confessional commitments as expressed in the historic creeds from which all of us derive our reformational principles. But most of all, together we will seek to live in the spirit of what it means to be in communion. To find ourselves “on the way” and accepting each other as fellow pilgrims on the road to obedient service. By God’s grace, we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” for such a time as this, so that we may “declare the praises of him who called (us) out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Yes, we are under construction as a communion, as an organization, as prophets, priests and kings. At times it may be messy—pieces of our construction equipment may be scattered here and there. But let us be the servants of Jesus Christ this day together. Let us demonstrate for all to see that we are gathered in the “Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.” Let us be together the disciples of Jesus who prayed for the Church to be One.

Blessed be his marvellous Name!

Part B – Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick

Jesus talks about what a great day it will be when people come together from “east and west and south and north” (Luke 13.29) to

join together in the realm of God. Friends, this is indeed such a great day, and I join Peter Borgdorff in giving thanks to God that we have come from all parts of the world to join together in the new construction that God is doing among us. As we came together as the WARC global family in Accra six years ago, one of the younger delegates in my church's delegation announced with glee that "this is the closest we will get to Pentecost this side of heaven!" And she was right. But today we are even closer!

This is a great day! It is the day that the Lord has made! It is a day that will make history as we have brought together these two branches of the Reformed family from all corners of the earth to "be one in Christ ... that the world might believe!" (Jn 17.21) Sisters and brothers in Christ, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

As many of you know, the World Social Forum gathers each year around the theme that "a different world is possible" in order to offer a different vision from the rich and powerful of the world—a vision of a world where the gap is closed between the rich and the poor, where peacemaking rather than domination is the order of the day, where poverty and its attendant symptoms like HIV/AIDS are eliminated, where creation is restored, and where a social order is put in place built around collaboration and community. As Reformed Christians and a global Reformed body, we have shared these aspirations (and see them as part of God's plan for humanity). We have also been part of this global movement based on the firm conviction that a different world is possible. As we start a new chapter in our life together as a World Communion of Reformed Churches, this conviction needs to be our central affirmation and is indeed God's will for us.

This same theme, that a different world is possible, is what we hear echoed as we read from the Gospel of Mark of Jesus coming to Galilee proclaiming the good news that "the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near." (Mk 1.15) Jesus' announcement was not simply about the love of God in a theoretical sense or even as an experience of personal faith but that a new world was indeed possible and is in fact breaking into human history with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a realm very different from the kingdom that Mark's hearers knew so well—the kingdom of Herod—based on the principles that might makes right, that those of power and privilege should be protected, and that the people exist to serve the emperor and not the reverse.

The realm that Jesus announces is that grounded in the words of the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it." (Ps 24.1) It was foretold by Amos when he imagined a world where justice will roll down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream and by Isaiah when he had a vision of a world where there is good news to the poor, release for the captives and liberty for the oppressed (Am 5.24 and Isa 61.1-2) —a world whose values centre on liberation, restitution and reconciliation.

Jesus' announcement comes with an invitation. It is like an alarm clock letting us know that the time is fulfilled and we need to wake up and respond to his invitation to repent, to believe and to live into this new world with passion, energy and hope—to go into the streets and change the patterns of human life so that all may know life in fullness. It is an invitation to reorient our lives to God's way in the world. And the invitation is extended to us as well two thousand years later!

I am struck that the first thing that Jesus did after making this bold announcement was to form a community of disciples. For Jesus knew well that a world of justice would only be possible if it was also lived out by a community of disciples who practiced the reality of justice and reconciliation in their own lives and who were partners with Jesus in helping this reign of God break into human history. For Jesus, justice and communion were the hallmarks of the Christian community. And that is why they are the hallmarks of our commitment to be a World Communion of Reformed Churches.

The work of the Holy Spirit through a vision of the realm of God and of life in communion has also broken through in our life together as Reformed Christians in recent years. It was the Holy Spirit working through the power of a visit to the slave dungeons in Ghana at the WARC General Council in 2004 that inspired us to create and live out the Accra Confession. To go to Elmina and see that the Dutch Reformed Christians who ran the slave trade saw no contradiction in building their chapel on top of the female slave dungeon made us resolve to never again stand aside in the face of injustice. It was—and it is—imperative as followers of Jesus Christ for us to say forcefully and effectively, "no!" to the global systems that impoverish people and destroy the creation—and "yes" to the realm of God.

In a very different way, the Holy Spirit was with us when we gathered from WARC and REC on this very campus in the middle of

an incredibly cold and snowbound winter in 2006. We had all come expecting to tinker with the mechanisms that would allow us to cooperate better between our two organizations, but as we shared our stories around the fireplace in Prince Centre, it became clear to us (to a person) that God was not calling us to figure out how to cooperate better but rather to be one—that just maybe this Reformed communion, which is more likely to split than any other, might be the communion that could pioneer in becoming a communion where so-called “evangelicals” and “ecumenicals” could realize that we belong to each other and are called together to work for a different world in our time.

This week is our opportunity to claim for ourselves (and for our churches) God’s call to justice and communion as our own. It is time to believe and act upon what we have doubted for far too long—that a different world is possible and that Reformed people and churches can really live together in communion as a testimony to the one body of Christ worldwide. It is a time to bring our stones, however imperfect they may be, into a new spiritual house founded on the living stone, Jesus Christ, to be a holy priesthood in order to proclaim the mighty acts of God to all the world. This is a defining moment for Reformed Christians and an incredible opportunity to join God in changing the world and changing the character of our Christian community.

May God richly bless us and the World Communion of Reformed Churches as we are built into a spiritual house around the living stone, Jesus Christ, and become a living demonstration of God’s promise that a different church and a different world are possible!

Appendix 27

SERMON**"All" Means "All"**

Rev. Dr. Dora Arce

A little over 2000 years ago, the first and second generations of Christians were debating how to shape their own identity. Theirs was the task of keeping faith with the movement of Jesus while offering convincing responses to the challenges posed by their context. An honest testimony to the ethical aspects of this debate is given classic expression in the letter to the Ephesians.

Allow me today to use this letter, even though, as we discovered during the Women Pre-Assembly, it also has the flavour of a sort of Constitution and Bylaws not very open to any amendments from the floor, and build on its message as a pretext to share with you a brief reflection from your sisters and brothers in Cuba. Now I haven't submitted my words to any committee for its approbation, but I can assure you that it embodies the spirit of solidarity and commitment of the Cuban side of God's circle. They flow from the fountain of inspiration born of 120 years of work undertaken by the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba. We have worked relentlessly among our people and we will be celebrating this milestone soon, on the 26 June in fact. We will both honour our tradition and rededicate ourselves to give reasons for the hope and trust we have for God's reign which is giving signs of flourishing in our country.

So as the author of Ephesians might put it: To you who are joined together as God's special people and who continue to believe in Jesus Christ and who live united in him, to you we offer a warm embrace in the name of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba. Wait a minute. That's not right. It sounds so formal...Cubans don't greet each other that way. We begin and end every conversation with simpler words: Lots of kisses and hugs...so repeat after me: Abrazos...that means "hugs." Try "Besos" which is "kisses." Turn to your neighbour and offer them a warm Cuban greeting: "Abrazos y besos"...that's better...now back to the reflection.

Let me also say that as part of the body of Christ, albeit a small one, it is no less important in giving life and flexibility to the whole body—the Cuban Presbyterian Reformed Church is a testimony to the commitment arising from our identity as a Latin American AND

Caribbean church. Our experience reminds us that Christ himself suggested it is a perfect blessing to be different, to enjoy diverse gifts and functions, yet to be united in love. And what a great responsibility: to respond to the Word of God, recognizing that in that Word is the presence of the Spirit. It is indeed a challenge: being honest before God's Word and yet at the same to discover the will of God in changing times.

I feel this responsibility and challenge all the more because we are called together here from all the four corners of the world to achieve a consensus. Can we transform ourselves into a completely healthy and functional family? No. Let us be more! Can we become an inclusive family?

Let us recall an important fact. A large portion of the debate among the first, post-Easter generations of believers in the Jesus movement was focused on the theme of inclusion. Moreover, the chief problem presented in the New Testament was the tension between those who came from that we might call the effervescent expressions of the Jewish tradition and those who came from foreign religions and philosophical systems...these latter we have labelled "the gentiles". Can Jews and gentiles eat together? That's where the rubber hits the road. When Jesus suggested that all are welcome, what did he mean?

If we listen between the lines of the canonical texts we hear of other tensions: the place and participation of women, the question of slavery, family dynamics, ethnical issues, the respect for civil authority and all the growing pains of ecclesial institutionalization. Many of these challenges remain exactly the same, for the same church, twenty centuries later. We have to accept also that in general, we are not much different from our ancestors; we love to impose restrictive means, tests participation in Christ's community. Not all are welcomed into the Reign of God. In the same way we have to preserve 74 chairs with just names on them, because our sisters and brothers were excluded from this circle of communion.

And that first generation of followers was well aware that the impulse to be hospitable to differences and to consider this inclusivity as a gift of God and to shape a community according to this principle, well, put on your crash helmets, meant they were now on a collision course with the Roman Empire when wanting to include all in the community. They were running contrary to the imperial theology which was trying its darnedest to promote exactly the opposite condition.

Right. I am not naive. There can be little doubt that this subversive, inclusive character of the Jesus movement was lost with the passage of time. For better or worse, this initial and essentially dynamic principle of inclusion died a slow death, a victim of the church's process of institutionalization. Once the idea of "all being welcome" had been the glue and motivation for the primitive Christian movement. However this inclusivity ran contrary to all the ideological and religious precepts of the day...it was buried.

As far as I am aware, in the New Testament, the only people who were excluded in the Jesus movement were the rich, which is a category of people, among other things, people who were and who continue to be those who can meet without having to commit anything that would disturb their comfort levels. On the contrary, they were and are the brakes in any attempt to change or transform "the way things have always been."

And then, add to this debate over wealth the many tensions that some gospels raise with respect to confronting the status quo: the exclusion of women, children and tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers, widows and Samaritans...in sum, the gospels attack the injustice of any people or ideas that in that time argued for exclusivist religious practice. All these exclusivist impulses were questioned, albeit in a pacific manner, by the "good news" movement of Jesus, *"pues el que no está contra nosotros, por nosotros está"* (Mc 9:40)

And I use the word "pacific" advisedly for I see Jesus' pacifism as one of the uncontroversial adjectives to apply to the early movement even though it was often met with a violent reaction.

We have one indisputable fact: it is true that Jesus and the majority of those initial friends who followed him were executed by the Roman Empire because they protested for and lived by the "prime directive" that all people have the right to fullness of life. All!

It happened and then as now, the essential strength of the movement was to desire to include "all" God's creatures so that they can join in the design and the building up of a just order, a community where all enjoy the fruits of God's gift of life. A circle where, "All" means "All".

For those churches which follow the lectionary, during this recent season of Easter we read through portions of the Acts of Apostles. In those first moments, when the primitive apostolic company

began to organize its own memories and experiences it was identified by the name: "The Way." But Acts gives us a key idea which for some reason has been permanently hidden for the past 20 centuries: if we get beyond our own self interest and self absorption the principle of God's unconditional love means one thing: "All" means "All."

To quote Acts, the first women and men were also known as "those who have transformed the entire world" (Acts 17:6b). Some translations put it this way, "Those who wanted to turn the world upside down."

I believe that the God of history who in the words of the prophet took dry bones, inert and bereft of all life and turned them into living beings, I believe that this God who takes the lifeless and lifts it into fullness of life, is calling us today. This God is calling us as a world community of Reformed churches to take up again our vocation to set the world on its head—by our testimony as a communion and our practice as doers of justice.

We are inheritors of a Jesus movement which in essence is an inclusive space, a space for diversity, a space transformed by justice, a justice which must be based on a just relationship between all peoples and creation: Economical justice, ecological justice, social justice, gender justice....

If we seek to become a true "Community of Churches" and if we want to be a family which by its very identity reflects a constancy of faith to renew its mission in this world, if we wish to be a "confessing" church, we must see ourselves as the reincarnation of the God who is in God's essence, a God of diversity and inclusion: we need to listen to the voices of the women, the children, the young people, people with disabilities, natives and indigenous people, the cries of the Creation! All means all.

Let me say it again: Our diversity is a gift of God. Whatever are the roads down which we now may travel as a Communion of Reformed Churches, our faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to Christ himself will take this foundational recognition of diversity as a divine gift. Ours is a simple affirmation: All means all. God receives and embraces all living beings. We are the people called to transform this world, not by rigid exclusivity or mindless uniformity. We build God's reign through justice which embraces diversity. Amen

Appendix 28

MORNING WORSHIP, SATURDAY, 19 JUNE 2010**SERMON****Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko**

General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

John 17. 20 - 23

*I ask not only on behalf of these,
but also on behalf of those
who will believe in me through their word,*

*that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me
and I am in you, may they also be in us,
so that the world may believe that you have sent
me.*

*The glory that you have given me I have given
them,
so that they may be one, as we are one,*

*I in them and you in me,
that they may become completely one,
so that the world may know that you have sent me
and have loved them even as you have loved me.'*

"Sorry I have no other plans."

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, our meditation this morning is based on the "High Priestly Prayer" of Jesus in which he prayed specifically for Unity among his disciples. The gospel accounts bear witness to the fact that his ministry and spiritual formation were centered in prayer. And this particular prayer was offered immediately after the last Passover meal that he celebrated with the twelve disciples. However it is not clear whether the gospel writer John was within listening distance at the time Jesus rendered this prayer. Be that as it may it is not my intention to split your meditation attention by pursuing details of an academic nature at this time.

A careful study of both *content* and *method* of what and how Jesus prayed brings us to the conclusion that 1) prayer, be it individual or communal, is an intimate conversational way of speaking to God, sincerely believing that God hears one's prayers. His prayers are 2) deeply rooted in **Faith** and marked by **trust** because without both **Faith** and **trust** such speaking or conversation **is anything** but prayer; 3) in prayer we bring to God issues of personal concern closest to our hearts. In this *High Priestly Prayer* the closest concern to Jesus' heart is not himself; even though he was faced with eminent arrest and crucifixion. The central preoccupation of his prayer was the **Unity** of his disciples.

He petitions God to "gift" the disciples with a model of Unity that entwines God, Son and the disciples. It is unity that is based on **trust**. The Rev. William H. Morley quotes an ancient legend in which Jesus arrives in heaven and the angel Gabriel was curious to know what *strategic plans*, if any, Jesus had made for his work to continue. Jesus happily informed him that he had left everything in the hands of his disciples. "What! Did you say disciples?" replied the shocked Gabriel. "Yes, the disciples, Peter, Thomas and the rest," replied Jesus. "And if that fails?" asked Gabriel. And Jesus replied, "*Sorry I have no other plans.*"

In this ancient legend Gabriel is depicted as making a friendly suggestion for Jesus to develop plan "B" in case things do not work out as foreseen. Yes Jesus had made no alternative arrangements because he trusted God. He was fully aware of the challenges the disciples were to encounter in due course. This is the reason why he prayed for them. Without underestimating the difficulties that lay ahead he prayed that God might set them apart for the sake of God's mission; a mission that engages people from different cultures and nations, though distinct, are one in purpose, love and action.

Today we are gathered here in Grand Rapids for a historic moment in the life of the Ecumenical movement. This Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Reformed Ecumenical Council is a visible manifestation of **unity** which Christ willed and prayed for. While I do not know the length of time the two church families took to come this far, we are moved by what has been achieved through the ceaseless prayers of the church. It is common experience that when churches move toward visible unity such developments are shrouded by all kinds of fears, doubts and anxieties. And yet we should recognize that church unity is neither about us nor is it the result of the work of some "Theological Rocket

Scientists". It is the work of Jesus the Good Shepherd who calls his sheep from every nation and lays down his life for them, "*so that there will be one fold and one shepherd*".

Sisters and brothers in Christ coming from every continent let us be grateful to God for calling us through his Son Jesus Christ to visible unity. He has left everything about the continuation of his work in our hands. He has ***no other plans***.

To the two church families soon to unite, may you when asked the question, "have you made plan B in case the venture into unity does not last?" let your simple and straightforward reply be "***Sorry we have no other plans by the grace of God.***" AMEN

Appendix 29

MORNING WORSHIP, FRIDAY, 25 JUNE 2010**SERMON****On Psalm 133**

Rev. S. Sujanna Raj
Church of South India, Diocese of Vellore

The first meeting of the Protestant Missionary Society in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910 led to the creation of the International Missionary Conference in 1939 held in the Madras Christian College, India (Tambaram, Chennai then Madras). This helped many churches come together to eventually form a Church union and in 1948 the World Council of Churches (WCC). This movement led to the formation of the Church of South India in 1947 (September 27th) one of the biggest and largest ecumenical church unions in the world, and it is from this church background that I come. The attempt in this Union was not to draw together different denominations of the same type but an attempt to heal the major divisions among the church which subsisted since the reformation period. The basis of this Union is threefold: (1) Greater Peace (2) Closer Fellowship and (3) Fuller Life. It is the most significant expression of the ecumenical spirit. Every year on this day we remember and celebrate this Union during which we reflect on this Psalm 133 because it reminds us of *the necessity, nature and benevolence of being together*; by and large to rededicate ourselves for further growth in this Union.

Likewise this morning and at this very important and inimitable gathering of this council it is very pertinent to reflect and be reminded of what the psalmist is alluding to in the Psalm of Unity.

More than anything else did the family gathering at Jerusalem on the yearly religious festival kindle the imagination of King David to pen this poem which also reflects his delight in the success of political and social union. Hence, though the Psalm reflects the religious ceremony and the reunion of members of divided families who left Jerusalem for other corners of the nation for various reasons such as jobs, marriages, business etc., in general it is the epithet and significance of being together that is expressed. Thus it starts with...

"Behold how good and pleasant when brethren live together in unity." (Verse 1)

Behold emphasizes calling for the attention or consideration of the reader or the listener to pay attention to what follows in the Psalm. What follows is *how good and pleasant* is living together. So it is not just good or pleasant but a combination of both that is truth and feeling. Truth and feeling is not an ideal set-up which is impossible to achieve but is rather an invitation to seek out perfection; the perfection which we had in our relationship with God and with one another in the Garden of Eden. The penetration of the sin in the hearts of the people not only demolished the peerless relationship between God and human beings but also demoralized the relationship between people. It is apparent in the killing of Abel by his own brother Cain and in going to the length of reaching God using human abilities by building the tower of Babel, which invited God's anger in disbanding people by making them speak different tongues so that they could not understand each other. Hence living together is not exhibiting uniformity or doing and practicing the same things but it is acquiring the lost relationship, which is divine as well as real. The most interesting fact of the Psalm is that "unity is possible". This possibility of unity is projected in the following lines of the Psalm with two pictorial metaphors.

"It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!"(Verses 2-3a)

The precious oil on the head, running down the head of Aaron speaks of the religious ceremony in which Aaron has been anointed as high priest. The high priest is anointed with oil which is precious because it is prepared with olive oil, a mixture of medicine and aromas, a combination which Moses is ordered to make from spices (Ex 30.23-25). Oil pouring down the head of Aaron signifies God's presence and pleasure. Charles Spurgeon compares brotherly love to this oil that flows from the head and cannot be confined to a place but rather spreads ubiquitously. It neither stagnates nor has a preferred path but rather spreads everywhere. The other simile is the dew of Hermon falling on Mount Zion. The language and the imagination is poetic and in genre explains the refreshing and renewing experiences of togetherness. The distance between Hermon and Zion makes it is very unlikely that dew from Hermon should fall or flow down to Zion. Also Zion is probably a mountain, so this would not be possible. But the author emphatically points

out that it is possible to reach implausible ends. The beauty of the analogy is that Hermon is a place where dew is very common in contrast to Mount Zion which is a very dry place, so the dew of Hermon falling on Mount Zion is a revitalizing and refurbishing experience. Out of these two metaphors one is real, the other an exaggeration. However they imply the same purpose which is that being together is "good and pleasant and it is possible". The final statement in this Psalm is again related to the first verse which says: "For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore."(Verse 3b)

"There" here refers to "living together in Unity". So the first line is the object of the blessing commanded in the last line. This verse clarifies most of our queries as to where do we experience God's blessings? In the covenant God made with Abraham God has promised to bless the nations, not individuals, and in the Covenant at Sinai it is what we have to do for God which is ultimately to exist, survive and live together in unity, peace and justice. Prophet Isaiah says to prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness and points out only then that the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh will witness it (Isaiah 40.1-5). All point us to the fact that the blessing of the Lord exists when brethren live together. But it is every important to reflect on what this blessing is all about and life evermore. As John Calvin expressed "Live in peace and the God of peace shall be with you" and the sentiments of Paul exposed in 2 Corinthians 13.11 and Philippians' 4.9 blessing is nothing but a cultivation of Peace. It is not about wealth, social position or talent but about living with greater satisfaction and happiness in harmony. Life evermore is translating eschatological hope into an ecclesiological reality that brings the future into the present. By and large converting the prayer of Jesus into reality, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me". (John17.22-23)

Now, how do we overcome all our differences, so that we can live together in unity? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor who after spending three years with 25 young men preparing them to be pastors during the rise of the Third Reich in Germany, brought out a book, "Life Together", emphasizes the fact that unity is a gift of God, and not something we create. At times we think we are working to bring people together but as Christians, individuals and Church as a community of believers, we need to heal our differences and realize the prerequisite of the need of God's grace.

For which through Christ, we repent of our self-centeredness; we pay the emotional price of vulnerability; we rub shoulders with one another; we move out of our comfort-zone of relationship; and we accept people where they are at. The message of Christ is the message of reconciliation, the message of relationship and the message of reformation because he said the "the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe in the Gospel".

Love is conceived of Unity and the fruit of unity is Peace. Let us realize it is not good is good forever and bad is bad always, right is right and wrong is wrong undoubtedly, otherwise we will never make it. The greatest transformation that was ever and eternally established by Jesus on the Cross is that we are all sinners and so are equal. It is our unworthiness that qualifies us to be worthy of reaching others to come together and accept each other and live in Unity.

I believe this is a beginning of yet another beginning in coming together as ecumenical churches to spread the spirit of ecumenism in this divided world. A union of churches in the world with Reformed thinking has not only a greater responsibility to propagate the gospel of unity and peace but also to set an example by living and growing together beyond all creed, colour and frontiers to extend a better fellowship with kingdom values in this world of absurdity, hostility and perplexity. There is a saying in our vernacular language "we divide as we grow and as we divide we grow". So let division be our strength rather than otherwise. Heal the differences, invite others with open heart and hope for a better future. Let this be a mark of "eschatological hope becoming ecclesiastical reality".

God Bless you.

Appendix 30

MORNING WORSHIP, MONDAY 21 JUNE, 2010**MEDITATION**

Olav Fykse Tveit
 General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC)

Theme: The Spring of Living Water

*1*You were dead through the trespasses and sins *2*in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. *3*All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. *4*But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us *5*even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— *6*and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, *7*so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. *8*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— *9*not the result of works, so that no one may boast. *10*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (NRSV) Ephesians 2.1-9 (10)

The words of the theme of your General Council from Ephesians chapter 4—"Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace"—presuppose these words from chapter 2.

The bonds of peace presuppose the bonds of baptism.

In the Faith and Order document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) from 1982, one of the most significant texts from the ecumenical movement, we read (B.6):

"Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world".

The prayers we have just heard and said together are a strong echo of the liturgy of baptism in the early church; words which accompanied those going down the steps into a river or into a baptistery and then mounting the steps again to a new life.

*You were dead
We were dead
God made us alive
Together
With Christ
By grace through faith
It is the gift of God
Created for good works*

The whole of the letter to the Ephesians has at its aim to strengthen that life together which is so wonderfully described as “the bonds of peace”. These bonds of peace are not always clear to see, neither in the context of the deep differences about Jewish or Gentile identity in the church in Ephesus, nor in other local or global communions of baptized human beings with many different identities. The bonds of peace are something the church struggles with and will continue to struggle with.

Communion needs more than superficial words. There is a need for words that address reality in a way that can also transform it. We need to confess our sins together. Our way of defining reality must be honest, something that we acknowledge, something that we can believe in, be challenged by—and still be who we are. The call to baptism is not about illusions or the manipulation of identities.

The way towards peace requires honest and clear words.

“You were dead.” “You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived.” The “others”, “the Gentiles” who through their baptism and faith had become part of the household of God, did not and do not have a preferential position. “You were dead.”

There could hardly be a more critical description of reality. There are always reasons to make the past look nicer than it is. We can try to cover wrinkles, grey hair or bald patches, but not sin. There are times for clear and critical words.

But such words cannot stand alone. Not even when they are completely correct. To focus merely on the mistakes or trespasses of others creates even more self-defensive frustration, more hostility that blocks, more destructive death. Something more is

needed. We need not only the water of baptism to wash away our sins; we also need it to nurture life.

The way towards peace requires inclusive words. The problem is not only with the "other". The text says, "All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh". The older sisters and brothers in the household of God, those who received the promises of salvation first, should not forget their own actions. There is a need for the solidarity of self-criticism in all peace-making and all peace-keeping. No criticism is able to create life-giving changes unless it is given in solidarity, so that it can be transformed into self-criticism. We all have something to be accountable for. Those who talk only about the faults of others tend to make me suspicious. Have they really understood who they are themselves? The transformative power of life-giving change is destroyed when we play the game of looking for scapegoats. That game is over. This is what is said later in verses 14-16: "He (Christ) is our peace, who has made us both one [...] that he might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end."

The way towards peace requires words of thankfulness. We need words that recognize that the most significant things are those that have been given to us. Such thankfulness is much more than mere confirmation of what we have received. Words of thanks are words of praise to God who is rich in mercy. Words of thankfulness express that we know that we need this gift, that we receive it and make it our own, that the source of life and joy come from beyond ourselves. Only this can unite us, again and again. To remember our baptism is first and foremost to give thanks together.

The way towards peace requires words of faith. We need the common baptismal confession to God. We need to confess the same faith in our creator, our saviour and our life-giver. Words about ourselves—as individuals or as different groups with a common identity—are not enough, however honest and inclusive they may be. We need words about God, God who is rich in mercy. Theology is more than reflection, it is doxology, praise to God. A theology of baptism must speak the truth about life and offer glory to God. In baptism God gave us the riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

The way towards peace requires words of action. Baptism is an action of God. The spring of living water is created by God. When I was baptized, my mother had to carry me to the baptismal font. Later at Sunday school these verses from Ephesians 2 were the first

verses from the Bible that I had to learn by heart, part of my catechism. They are verses which provide us with a deep echo of the Early Church's liturgy of baptism, of being one with Christ. Whether we are carried by our parents to the font or ask for baptism as adults, baptism, my baptism and your baptism, is always the action of God's word. As at the beginning, God's words are creative, living words; God "made us alive together with Christ".

Baptism calls us to act. Baptism calls us to be peacemakers. As verse 10 says: "We are created in Christ Jesus for good works". The way towards peace needs the creative, transformative words of God, working in our baptism through the water, word and Spirit. On the day of our baptism and every day that we live as baptized people. "You are made alive together with Christ" (v.5). The way we define reality shapes reality.

So sisters and brothers, let us in gratitude repeat the words that were said at our baptism, our common baptism in the bond of peace.

May God continue to call us to transformation and teach us the ways of peace, leading us to the spring of living water, as one people called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in the whole of the world.

Appendix 31

CELEBRATORY SERVICE, SUNDAY, 20 JUNE 2010**SERMON**

Yvonne V. Delk

“What are we doing here?”

Let us pray:

Have your own way

You are the potter; we are the clay

Mould us and make us after your will,

Mould this World Communion of Reformed Churches after your will,

Mould me your preacher after your will,

Mould this sermon after your will,

We surrender everything to you

And we are waiting yielding and still,

Amen.

The question “What are we doing here?” Well, preacher, that should be obvious. This is a historic moment! The world’s largest network of protestant churches in the reformed tradition has gathered in a celebration of Christian unity. We are witnessing in this place the communion of global churches based in 108 countries, representing 80 million people. We have come following the call of God, united by the spirit of God, and deeply rooted in the bonds of peace. Still, as your preacher, I press the question—**What are we doing here?** I press the question because there is an expectation that surrounds this moment as past events, present realities and future hopes converge in this communion. I keep pressing because relationships need questions—questions about our identity and the depth of the binding covenants that we will make between women and men, youth and elders, sisters and brothers of different races, nationalities and tongues. Questions about the nature of the covenants that we make between the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Relationships need questions—question: How will this unity form and shape us in ways that we are not free to walk away from? Relationships need questions—questions of identity, affirmations, visions and actions. Faith questions about a witnessing ground from which to say yes or no. Questions of what we are prepared to live with and what we refuse to live with. Questions of whose rules will have power over

us. Questions of who it is that has called us to this place and given us our reason for being.

What are you doing here? This is not only my question, it is precisely the question posed by God in the biblical text read in this service from the 19th Chapter of 1 Kings. God is speaking to his prophet—Elijah. Elijah is God’s messenger at a very critical time in biblical history. It is a time in which the people of God are trying to find their way in a wilderness of other Gods. This particular drama unfolds between God’s messenger—Elijah and the messengers of Baal-Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah—messenger of God, and Ahab and Jezebel—messengers of Baal, are in a battle to capture the hearts, minds, souls and spirits of a people wandering in the wilderness. Elijah’s very name means “The Lord is my God”. Elijah is totally committed to God’s word and has a single-minded obedience to serve God. I believe that Elijah—like this new communion, is rooted in God’s word, God’s spirit and seeks to understand the will and way of God for peace. Even with his commitment to God, Elijah’s journey is not easy and God wonders if this journey is too much for him. The peace that God is seeking is not an easy peace. A prophet risks ridicule, judgment and threats to his very life when he believes in the vision of a world that God intends. Elijah represents the word, the covenant, the hope and the spirit of God. However, Elijah is traveling alone and Baal’s priests are traveling in large numbers, with a different message and they speak with a different voice. When the priest of Baal threatens Elijah’s identity, his mission, his God and his very existence, he is intimidated, frightened, exhausted, silenced and ends up hiding under a desert shrub in the wilderness. He believes that his ministry has been fruitless and that his life is not worth living. When threatened, Elijah hides. Elijah may be hiding from God, but God has not abandoned him, or rejected him—God is with him. God speaks with the question: “Elijah, what are you doing here?” The question is about his identity—meaning his relationship with God; the question is about his present state of existence—intimidation, exhaustion, and silence when facing the priest of Baal; the question is about how he understands God’s word, his call and mission as a messenger of God.

In the encounter, God calls his messenger from fear to memory, from exhaustion and intimidation to a fresh engagement with God’s spirit, from hiding into a bold witness before the prophets of Baal.

Well, here we are and the question is our question. “What are we doing here?” It is a question about our relationship with God, with one another and the world. It is a question about what it is that

unites us, energizes us and equips us spiritually for the journey; it is a question about our confession of faith, our mission, our witness in a world of other prophets who speak with a different voice.

We exist in a world that is not yet free. Each and every day there is a struggle for the dignity, justice, freedom and well-being of every human being in every place of the globe. The issues, priorities and challenges before us as a global church are urgent and demanding. The threats to life are personal and systematic, the threats are to individuals and groups, the threats are to the very earth in which we exist. There are those who are here as members of this communion and there are those in global communities waiting to see if this unity model will make a difference to the realities that they face on a daily basis. There are those who are hoping for something in this unity, expecting something to happen in this unity; and there are those who are praying that we will risk something, realizing that our beliefs do have consequences.

While we come to this service in celebration, we also come confessionally. In the prayer of confession we prayed in this service, we confessed that we have enmeshed our world in a realm of sin; we have accepted inhuman oppression of humanity. Like Elijah, we too have been intimidated and silenced. But today, here we are—refusing to exist in an isolated state; here we are refusing to hide; here we are members of the entire human family; here we are—a community of broken and reconciled believers. Here we are asking that God's spirit and peace will make of us one body in Jesus Christ. Just as God was with Elijah as he hid in the wilderness, so God is with us as we take shape in this gathering in Grand Rapids. God is with us—in this very service, at the table where we will share a meal, at the sessions where we have and will continue to hear each other in speech, in the wonderful diversity of God's humankind, and in the covenants that we make one with the other as we witness to the God who called us to this place.

As your preacher for this service, I bring a threefold word. First, **do not fear, God is with us**. Elijah was in a fear mode, God replaces Elijah's fear with memory. God speaks—Elijah get out of the cave, God stand on the mountain, remember I am your God, I am with you and I am about to pass by. The same god now speaks to us—do not fear—remember who I am. The prophet Isaiah puts it this way—do not fear for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine. **First and foremost we gather here as the people of God**. We are connected to a past, present and future that

belongs to God. God has called us here in the context of our histories, our experiences, our pain, our betrayals and our denials to be the people of God. We have been called here in the rich diversity of our cultures, our faith affirmations, and our confessions, to glorify God, to be shaped in the image of God and to be God's messengers in the world. When we remember that we belong to God we can face the fear in ourselves and in the world with vision, courage and truth. When we remember that we belong to God, we let go of our fear, our private definitions and we surrender to our names as the people of God. When we remember that we belong to God, we are no longer named by the powers of privilege, racism, sexism, and classism; rather by the sovereign God who creates in us a new community. When we remember that we belong to God, we are no longer captive to the old order—God is breaking down barriers, breaking through our fears, and creating through our confession of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, a new communion. **Why are we here?** We are here to confess and to witness to the world that we believe in the one God who makes us one.

My second word is that we are a people rooted in the unity of the spirit. Where there is no spirit, there is no power. God realizes that Elijah—his messenger—has been exhausted by the powers, intimidated by the powers and now silenced by the powers. He needs a fresh engagement of the spirit of God. Let me sin boldly by saying we come to this place in the reality and presence of all that is unfolding in our globe. Day by day, we reel from the news of the suffering of persons and of the earth, the injustices endured by people and the earth. We too need the energy, the passion that God's spirit can bring. We need to feel God's spirit, falling fresh, breathing fresh on us, and pulling us together in unity, cohesion and vision. We need to feel God's spirit that sometimes does not come in the fire, or the wind or the earthquake, but in the silence of our hearts and our being—God's spirit is here with us—let it breathe on us, let it breathe on us—breathe on us breath of God, fill us with life anew so that we may love the way you love and do what you would do.

We are a people united in the spirit and by the spirit. The spirit never leaves us as it finds us. The spirit gives new life in our churches, our structures, our communion and our globe. If we are clear about this affirmation, then I can say without a shadow of doubt that the spirit of God will not leave this communion of churches as it finds us. The spirit crosses all the traditional boundaries. It breaks the rules of homogeneity and comfortable security. You can't control the spirit. It moves when and where it

will. The prophet Micah reminds us that when the spirit is present God takes the old order and makes something new—a new order is revealed—daughters and sons will prophesy, the elderly will dream dreams, young people will see visions and all who call on the name of God will be saved. Why are we here—we are here, under the construction of the sovereign god, becoming the new creation in Jesus Christ. My final word is that God is calling us to be a bold witness. The prophet Elijah was called out of hiding and silence to a bold witness. The church at Pentecost was a unity model and a spirit model. It was created in the power of the spirit and in the presence of the powers. Spirit and witness were connected. Spirit-filled persons were speaking truth to power. The Pentecostal spirit was alive in the streets of Jerusalem.

When the spirit descended upon Jesus, he proclaimed that he had been chosen to preach the message of good news to the poor, sent to announce pardon to the prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind, to set the burdened and the battered free and to proclaim the year of God's favour.

What are we doing here? We are here called out of all those personal, private, privileged spaces where we tend to hide from each other but never from God. We are called out of hiding to become messengers of God, witnesses to the unity of God, witnesses to the peace of God. We have come seeking peace that can bring meaning into emptiness, hope in the midst of despair; courage that suffering cannot turn back, confession that leader us to healing and transformation in a broken world.

The question—what are we doing here?

Now I know that the answer to this question will emerge as we continue to dialogue one with the other, search the scriptures for the divinely inspired word of God that will give us our identity, our call and our mission.

As your preacher for this service, let me confess personally about what I am doing here. I am here as one member of this historic union of reformed churches. I am an African-American, ordained, female minister in the United Church of Christ, I have come to affirm that faith, that truth, that spirit that can renew, heal and transform. I am here to glorify the one who is the author, the perfecter and the finisher of my faith. I am here to join you in worship, in prayer, interpretation of the scriptures. I am here to remember my baptism, join you at the Lord's table and witness to

the faith in a global community for the life of the global community believing that there can be no peace without justice. What am I doing here? I am here to commit my life to the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace so that lives can be changed; biblical visions can come into view; the blind can see; the lame can walk; the captives can be released; and the acceptable year of the Lord can be proclaimed! Well I have named myself and confessed before God and you my reason for being here. The question still remains— what are you doing here?

Amen.

Appendix 32

CLOSING SERMON: SUNDAY, 26 JUNE 2010
Embracing The New?

Jerry Pillay

Bible Readings: Isaiah 43.14-21
Mark 1.14-20

A man came home one day and was most horrified with his wife because she had changed the furniture around in the house. His wife said, "What's the matter honey, I thought as a man who likes to be progressive and who doesn't mind change that you would be welcoming of this new setting?" To which he replied, "Yes, I am progressive and I don't mind change provided that everything remains the same." I suppose that when we search the depths of our hearts and when the time of true testing comes, we are very much the same. We have these "soul conversations" fraught with confusion and wrestle as we ponder on what we think we should want and with what we really want. On the surface we may give consent to what appears to be the general mind, not giving voice to our silent thoughts lest we should be the odd ones out or fear rebuke for having a different view. The problem with the latter is reflected in this question: "Are we then really able to embrace something new?"

In Isaiah 43, God is in a conversation with the people of Israel. A people who, no doubt, had tasted of his glory, witnessed his miracles, and come to know of his majesty and power as he separated the seas, dealt with unjust leaders and provided for his people. However, at regular intervals we discover that they are struggling with spiritual amnesia as they forget the deeds of this glorious Yahweh God. Their reason for forgetting is simply this, they are driven by their desires and wants rather than focusing on what God wills. They are self-focused rather than God-centered. Yes, we all have this kind of "Gethsemane struggle", places in which we must decide between what we want and what God wills.

I believe that it is God's will that we have come together as REC and WARC to establish this new body known as the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). My belief is affirmed by the biblical imperative given to us in John 17 which calls for the unity of Christians. Unity is a gift, as we have been told at regular times in this Council, a gift to be appropriated, appreciated and affirmed. Perhaps what we need to recognize also, is the fact that our

sinfulness and disobedience continues to rob us of the joys of being God's people serving together and better in the world. The only way to change this is through repentance. Perhaps the establishment of WCRC can be seen as a visible act of corporate repentance and a willful desire to be obedient to the Word of God: "Father that they may be one".

I must say that I have been greatly moved by the sense of unity that has pervaded this Council. This has been clearly seen in our worship, fellowship, discussions and mutual efforts to make things work. The way we have created space for each other in the use of language (though limited to four), shared liturgy, opportunities to listen to each other's stories in the Sections and Committees, all tell us that it is possible to have unity in diversity. It affirms the reality of the biblical description offered in Ephesians 4 to be one body as we share the one Spirit, hope, Lord, baptism, one God and Father of all.

Of course, this does not mean that we have got it all right. We are still trying, and in the midst of imperfections, questions and dissatisfaction we are still on a journey to find and meaningfully embrace each other. There are many minority groups, countries and regions amongst us who may feel neglected and wonder whether we are taking them seriously. They may even leave this Council disillusioned by the fact that we may have said little or nothing about their context and that we have not accorded them meaningful representation in the work of the Council. This I might add is not only the situation of the minority but also that of the powerful who may believe that their financial contributions to this organization ought to earn them certain rights and privileges. My plea is that we would give things time and opportunity to develop even as this new body develops. One significant new development at this Council has been the focus on the situation of the First Nations People. We have seen how they have touched us with their stories and in some cases we were able to even identify with their experience and link it with our own. A further inclusion is the space given to people with disabilities and other marginalized communities. This is something the Council must continue to do; be prepared to listen to the voice of the often voiceless.

The two Reformed bodies have come together, and whilst there has been much to celebrate we cannot deny that somewhere in the back of the minds of some must be this sense of sadness and bereavement driven by the nostalgia of what you leave behind. Perhaps it's not so difficult for those of us who belonged to WARC,

and it may not be as bad for those who had dual membership, but for those who belonged to REC alone that must be most taxing, some of you may feel that you have been swallowed up by WARC. I want to say to the former WARC membership to continue to perpetuate the past would be a serious obstacle for the future of the WCRC. If the only thing that we have changed is our name then we have missed the boat. We need to dialogue and dream together what new direction and forms we would take. We need to recognize that just as God called Israel into something new he is saying the same to us today: "See I am doing a new thing amongst you! Do you not perceive it?" In trying to appropriate God's new thing it is inevitable that we would need to leave some things behind. We would need to ask together, "What do we take with us and what do we leave behind?" I am pleased to report that in our first Executive Committee meeting on Thursday I was fully supported in proposing that we appoint a Strategic Planning Team to help crystallize our vision and charter a new way forward guided by all the thoughts that have come out of our time together in these past days. In this we will be discerning God's will for us as WCRC.

In this passage in Isaiah 43 God is calling the people of Israel to embrace his "new thing". It is not only an invitation but it is an act of grace. Grace upon a people who continually resist God's will. Why? Perhaps this story might help to answer this question. Once a frog and a scorpion wanted to go across a river but the scorpion couldn't swim, so he suggested to the frog: "Why don't you carry me to the other side and in return I will scratch your back." "No", said the frog, "You will sting me and I will die." "But I will drown as well", said the scorpion. The frog making sense of that said, "Well what are you waiting for? Jump on my back!" So off they went. Somewhere around midpoint can you guess what the scorpion did? Yes, it stung the frog. In its last few breaths the frog cried out: "Why did you do it? Why?" And the scorpion replied, "Because it's just in my nature to sting!"

It's just in our nature to say when things get tough, "Let's go back to Egypt". Let's apportion blame. Let's form the old again. How many union processes are suffering because of the same? How many churches are in conflict because of issues of power, positions, personalities and possessions? Like the Rich Young Ruler we have a desire to belong but we end up belonging to our belonging, a desire to possess but we end up being possessed by our possessions. Why? Because it's just in our nature! No! It's not in our nature. God in Jesus Christ has made us a new creation, a brand new person, a people belonging to God. In the flesh we will not succeed. We

therefore need to establish what it means to live in the power of the Spirit.

God is inviting us to embrace his “new thing” not only as he invited Israel but also as he did to his would-be disciples in Mark chapter one, verses 14-20. Here, Jesus calls them into a specific mandate to follow him and to make disciples and this is embedded in his own mission and ministry: “Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news.” For me, the task of WCRC is firstly to bring churches together in fellowship and draw us to our common effective mission in the world as we all seek to proclaim the good news of God. Fellowship is important and vital. It reminds us that our motive is not to fight each other as Christians as we so often tend to do. Rather, we are called into a bigger picture and greater purpose which lies in the will of God.

Secondly, the purpose for WCRC is to hold us together in unity. A united Christian witness would tell more to the world. Church unity, I believe, is not only for the benefit of the church. More so, it is for the benefit of God: “That the world might know and believe (in Jesus)!” And in this sense, it is for the benefit of the world. The church exists for the world and not for itself and not to keep a bunch of supposedly holy people happy. We are holy when we do the things of God, when we are drawn into his “new thing” embracing it with passion, responsibility, joy and thanksgiving. Embracing and living in unity is our response to God’s grace. Israel choosing to follow God is her response to God’s invitation of grace. But will Israel choose grace? The task of WCRC is to help Reformed churches work towards unity, preserve unity and extend this call to all those who proclaim Christ as we do.

Thirdly, the task of WCRC is to engage its member churches and others to collectively do mission in the world. As it proclaims the good news it does so in both *kerugma* and *praxis* (Word and Deed) —both are like the two sides of a scissor, we cannot do the one without the other. Our task is not only to “save souls” but to transform the world. To make it a Godly place where there is justice, peace, reconciliation, forgiveness and hope. In this light we must continue to covenant for justice, work towards peace and reconciliation, care for the environment and earth and live responsibly as we think of the generations that will follow us. In the midst of economic injustices, poverty, greed and deprivation we need to affirm and assert the biblical/theological preferential option of the poor. We need to be where Jesus chose to be, namely,

among the poor and oppressed. We need to accompany and stand in solidarity with the same in their struggles wherever they are in the world, exercising prophetic witness and genuine care.

But it all begins at home. The church cannot point fingers at the world without first attempting to get its house in order. No one will take us seriously if we do not practice what we preach. St Francis once said, "When you go out to preach use words only if it is necessary." In this Council we were challenged on the issues of gender justice and youth involvement, among other issues, and rightly so. If justice is at the heart of our values as WCRC then we need to discern what this means for us as a family. Perhaps God is calling us to embrace something new?

Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom (reign) of God. And this kingdom cuts through every area in life; social, political, economic, cultural, racial, etc. God's presence in the world tells us that business as usual is no longer acceptable. The time has come for us to be drawn into the unusual business of God. The time has come to follow God and not the world. Our challenge as churches is not only to provide an "alternative society" to the world but to **be** that society.

We give thanks to God for the establishment of this new body, the World Communion of Reformed Churches. As we begin our life together may we stop to ask: What *new* thing is God calling us to embrace? Our failure to ask and answer this question in the days to come will be a missed opportunity to embark upon the new things that God wants to do in us, with us and through us. The disciples responded to the call to follow Jesus. They left their nets and followed him. What are you going to leave behind to follow Jesus in this new body, the WCRC? As President, I am ready for this challenge—Are you?

Appendix 33

DREAMING A DIFFERENT WORLD TOGETHER**Joint Declaration of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany****For Liturgical Use**

Together, from North and South, discerning the signs of our times, we hear the cries of your people and see the wounds of your creation.

We are shocked by stories of injustice worldwide and disturbed by accounts of ecological destruction. We are moved by experiences of oppression, violence and being violated; experiences of exclusion and marginalization, often of minorities; experiences of human trafficking and modern-day slavery; experiences of vulnerability and neglect, lack of education, employment, protection, health, dignity, more often than not the experiences of women and children. We listen to warnings of climate change, prophecies of local disasters, dangers to air and sea; we hear accounts of coral reefs that are lost and deserts that grow, of the atmosphere that is polluted and snow that disappears. We are told of threats to the future of our children and our children's children. We receive reports about lack of clean water and abuse of natural resources. We see the devastation of militarism and violence and war. We read studies about unfair trade and out-of-control finance and deepening poverty that disturb us. We learn about statistics describing our time and our realities and they shame us.

Behind much of these, we observe in our world a coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power into a spirit of domination that seems to lord it over all and everything. We experience this presence in a pervasive spirit of destructive self-interest, even greed—the worship of money, goods and possessions; in a spirit that lacks compassionate justice and shows contemptuous disregard for the household of life and the gifts of creation. We recognize this spirit of our time in an all-encompassing way of life that serves, protects and defends the interests of powerful corporations, nations, elites and privileged people, while willing to sacrifice humanity and creation. We even hear proclaimed today a gospel of consumerism, supported by powerful propaganda and believed and followed by many, religiously spreading and

justifying this spirit of our time. We sense the seductive power of idolatry, the danger of losing our soul.

Therefore we lament—with the cries of your afflicted people and the wounds of your suffering creation.

Together, from North and South, we are comforted by the gospel, by the common faith we share and the common tradition in which we stand, by your Word and Spirit.

We are comforted by the knowledge that our world belongs to God; by the assurances that we do not belong to ourselves; by the promises that Jesus Christ is Lord—and we proclaim these convictions as central to our faith and tradition.

We remember the voices of our mothers and fathers, denying that there could be areas of our life in which we do not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords, areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him. We recall their witness when faced with the realities and the spirit of their times, with the lordless powers and ideologies of their day, with the challenges and temptations of their moments in history.

We confess with them that God has revealed Godself as the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace on earth; that in a world full of injustice and enmity God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that God calls the church to follow God in this; that God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoners and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the strangers, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the people of God to do what is good and to seek the right.

With them we are convinced that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

Together we are inspired by these convictions in our broken world today; together we resist the ideology that there is no alternative, and together we reject the spirit of idolatry with its disdain for the household of life and the gifts of creation.

Together, from North and South, we heed the call of your Word and Spirit, the claim of this gospel on us, today.

We declare that Jesus Christ is God's assurance of forgiveness and God's mighty claim upon our whole life; that through Him we receive joyful deliverance from the godless powers of this world for free and grateful service to God's creatures in our common world, today.

We remember together the instruction of your law, teaching us to seek justice, compassion and truth; the voices of your prophets, warning us to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God; the visions of your worship and praise, inspiring us to long for the day when justice and peace embrace; the many accounts of salvation, exodus, liberation from bondage, filled with promises of your saving presence—we remember this even today.

We continue to believe that since we are not our own our whole life should be spent in the cultivation of righteousness, also in our common world, today.

We feel inspired by those voices who taught us that true piety and love of righteousness belong together; that worship and justice cannot be separated; that God is truly known where humanity flourishes; that we recognize as if in a mirror both your image and our own flesh in the poor, the despised and the furthest strangers in the world. We believe that all this remains true in our deeply divided and unjust world, today.

We recall those teachers who professed your creation to be the theatre of your glory, moving us to contemplation and wonder, to gratitude and respect, to stewardship, vocation and responsibility—also in our threatened world, today.

We remain mindful that together we live in communion—as members of Christ and partakers of his gifts, and thus members of one another, bound to employ our gifts readily and cheerfully for the well-being of the other.

We still acknowledge that being baptized in your name and into your body, we are called to your ministry of priest, king and prophet—as priests to receive and proclaim your justification and to share in your service, your care, your compassion and your intercession for the world; as kings to share in your struggle against the powers, your sanctification of the world and your victory over all forms of sin and destruction; as prophets to publicly proclaim your truth, your truth of reconciliation and justice, your truth that sets people free.

Together, we are moved by these memories and this claim on our life.

From South and North, together in communion, we dream a different world.

Being claimed by you, we long together for your reign of justice and peace, for your presence and your salvation—for freedom from these disturbing realities, these harsh inequalities, this cultural domination, this abysmal disparity, this injustice, this destruction; we dream of your promises of shalom. We cry and plead, we sigh and pray together for our broken and threatened world.

Praying, we commit ourselves together to care for your creatures and your creation; to work with all who seek for alternative ways—those with insight and knowledge, those with special gifts and opportunities, those in positions of leadership and responsibility; not to seek for simple answers; not to close our ears to the stories of those who are afflicted; not to close our minds to the knowledge of those in science and research; not to close our eyes for the realities all around us, both near and far; not to close our fists in selfish greed; not to close our hearts when we encounter the suffering and the wounds; not to close our hands in abdication of what is in our power to do in order to make a difference—treasuring energy, protecting biodiversity, resisting desertification, saving water, preventing pollution, respecting your work, marvelling in your creation, celebrating the wonderful web of life, your rich and abundant household of belonging.

Committing ourselves, we covenant to believe, to love, to hope together; to find new ways of being obedient, new ways of creating communities of life and witness in our shared world; to talk and learn together; to search and seek solutions together; to raise our own awareness; to see with new eyes; to turn and to change; to mitigate causes and adapt to new life-styles; to live in solidarity

with victims; to speak for those without voice; to remember those easily forgotten. To heed the call to prophetic action, to struggle and strive, to face and expose, to challenge and critique, to analyze and plan, to reframe and refuse. To cultivate and nurture a spirituality of resistance and a lifestyle of discipleship—as witnesses to your compassionate justice, dreaming a different world.

Appendix 34

LETTER FROM THE REFORMED DELEGATION AT**TO THE COUNCIL OF THE**

June 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers

In the context of worship, Bible Studies and vibrant discussions, we as a delegation of the Reformed family of churches joined over 300 members of the Ecumenical family broadly representing the global Christian church as we gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland from 2-6 June 2010. The Edinburgh 2010 conference, under the theme of 'Witnessing to Christ Today', was both a commemoration of the Edinburgh 1910 Missionary Conference, a celebration of what God has made possible in mission since and a moment of deep reflection on the challenges facing churches in the 21st century.

1John 1:3 reminds us that we are to "declare what we have seen and heard" from God in fellowship with one another, and this provides a theological rationale for churches working together for the sake of mission. Matthew 28:18-20 also impels us to share the Good News with the rest of the world.

The touching liturgies, riveting Bible studies, moving songs, engaging presentations and enlivening human encounters have all left a deep and lasting impression on us. Throughout the five days one thing stood out: Mission, understood as God moving towards humanity, remains as urgent a calling for us as it was one hundred years ago. The central message of Edinburgh 2010 is a renewed call for holistic Christian mission from every corner of the earth to every corner of the earth.

Yet the conference also recognized that the context in which Christian mission is to be carried out has changed vastly since 1910. Today the world can no longer be easily divided into the Christian World and the non-Christian World – at least not geographically. If the heartlands of Christianity were Europe and America in 1910, in our own time Christianity is growing fastest in Asia, Latin America and Africa, the so-called global South.

Whereas the Edinburgh 1910 conference met against the backdrop of colonialism and imperialism, Edinburgh 2010 meets in a context in which these and the Cold War have disappeared in their earlier manifestations. In their place we now have globalization. And yet the cumulative legacies of colonialism, imperialism and the two World Wars followed by countless civil wars have left deep scars on the peoples and countries of the world – Christians not excepted.

A hundred years after Edinburgh 1910, we have come to recognize and acknowledge the presence of other faiths and other traditions. We no longer think it appropriate to define God's other people of faith as "non-Christians". A hundred years later, we have come to a deeper understanding of both human and ecological rights. We realize that while old divisions may have disappeared, inequality, injustice and violence remain with us.

This then is the context into which Reformed churches are called to become witnesses of Christ. As Reformed Churches we are called to celebrate the strides made through God's grace since 1910. But we are also called recognize the challenges that remain.

- Christian mission should no longer be a matter of pride and aggression, but conducted with humility as a witness to Christ the risen Lord.
- As affirmed by the 1989 San Antonio World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Christian mission should no longer be understood as a matter of senders and receivers, subjects and objects. The *Missio Dei* impels us all to become agents of

mission. In this manner, mission will cease to be conducted as if it was what rich countries do to poor countries; what whites do to blacks, what the rich do to the poor and what men do to women. In this regard, it is particularly important that we listen to what the Spirit is saying about mission in the life and witness of the churches of the global South.

- At the Edinburgh 2010 conference it became clear to us that unity in mission is important, but it is also important that we allow and make space for diversity of methods and expressions. Christian mission is 'exploding' in different places and in different forms. Our primary duty is one of listening and affirming rather than controlling. And yet as Reformed churches, we must always keep the vision of united witness firmly before us, working hard to move in the direction of unity in diversity, unity in witness.
- Christian mission is not only a matter for adults. It has become essential that we listen to and make space to the voices and concerns of children and youth.
- For us Edinburgh 2010 was unequivocal on challenges relating to social justice, human dignity and human rights. Christian mission is necessarily about the fate and state of the poor and the marginalized in all countries of the world. Christian mission is about human dignity – dignity derived from God. To this end Christian mission aims to confront all the sins that affront the dignity of human beings – poverty, hunger, disease, violence and war.
- However, Edinburgh went further than only recognizing social justice issues. Social justice issues were linked to ecological justice issues. The cry of the poor is the same as the cry of the earth. Just as the poor buckle under the heavy yoke of unjust economic policies and practices, the earth is buckling under the weight of massive degradation and wanton destruction carried out in the name of progress and development. The challenge of mission in the 21st century includes finding bridges and linkages between the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. The option for the poor should also include solidarity with the earth.
- Christian mission can no longer be conducted as if Christianity was the only religion in the world. We have to respect and collaborate with other religions. Yet, at the same time, we are encouraged to remain faithful to our faith and our traditions – bearing witness to Christ from deep within these traditions.

Brothers and sisters, we have taken the liberty to write you this letter from Edinburgh, in order to share with you 'what we have seen and heard ... so that you may have fellowship with us even as

our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3).

We pray that God will renew your vigor and hunger for mission as you join us in living out these affirmations of mission in the 21st century and, together with our ecumenical colleagues around the globe, in affirming the *Common Call* of Edinburgh 2010, as printed below.

May the creation and the deliberations of the World Communion of Reformed Churches be instrumental in our life and witness together as creative and effective missional churches.

Yours Sincerely,

The Reformed delegation and Mission Today representatives to Edinburgh 2010,

Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick (United States of America)

Dr. Setri Nyomi (Ghana)

Ms Jet den Hollander (Netherlands)

Rev. Norman Francis (Jamaica)

Rev. Adelaida Jiminez Cortes (Colombia)

Dr. Tinyiko Maluleke (South Africa)

Dr. Mary Mikhael (Lebanon)

Rev. Simon Ririhena (Moluccas / Netherlands)

Rev. Julio Lopez (Mission Today Pilot Project– Argentina)

Dr. Wout van Laar (Mission Today Pilot Project - Netherlands)

Edinburgh 2010

COMMON CALL

As we gather for the centenary of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910, we believe the church, as a sign and symbol of the reign of God, is called to witness to Christ today by sharing in God's mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living

demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.

2. Remembering Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and his resurrection for the world's salvation, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to authentic dialogue, respectful engagement and humble witness among people of other faiths – and no faith – to the uniqueness of Christ. Our approach is marked with bold confidence in the gospel message; it builds friendship, seeks reconciliation and practices hospitality.
3. Knowing the Holy Spirit who blows over the world at will, reconnecting creation and bringing authentic life, we are called to become communities of compassion and healing, where young people are actively participating in mission, and women and men share power and responsibilities fairly, where there is a new zeal for justice, peace and the protection of the environment, and renewed liturgy reflecting the beauties of the Creator and creation.
4. Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.
5. Affirming the importance of the biblical foundations of our missional engagement and valuing the witness of the Apostles and martyrs, we are called to rejoice in the expressions of the gospel in many nations all over the world. We celebrate the renewal experienced through movements of migration and mission in all directions, the way all are equipped for mission by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and God's continual calling of children and young people to further the gospel.
6. Recognizing the need to shape a new generation of leaders with authenticity for mission in a world of diversities in the twenty-first century, we are called to work together in new forms of theological education. Because we are all made in the image of God, these will draw on one another's unique charisms, challenge each other to grow in faith and understanding, share resources equitably worldwide, involve the entire human being

and the whole family of God, and respect the wisdom of our elders while also fostering the participation of children.

7. Hearing the call of Jesus to make disciples of all people – poor, wealthy, marginalised, ignored, powerful, living with disability, young, and old – we are called as communities of faith to mission from everywhere to everywhere. In joy we hear the call to receive from one another in our witness by word and action, in streets, fields, offices, homes, and schools, offering reconciliation, showing love, demonstrating grace and speaking out truth.
8. Recalling Christ, the host at the banquet, and committed to that unity for which he lived and prayed, we are called to ongoing co-operation, to deal with controversial issues and to work towards a common vision. We are challenged to welcome one another in our diversity, affirm our membership through baptism in the One Body of Christ, and recognize our need for mutuality, partnership, collaboration and networking in mission, so that the world might believe.
9. Remembering Jesus' way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As we look to Christ's coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.

Edinburgh, June 6, 2010

Appendix 35

RESOLUTION**Whereas**

the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches held its first meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan June 18-28, 2010; and

Whereas

the location of this first meeting took place on land originally inhabited by First Nation, Aboriginal and Native American people; and

Whereas

Michael Peters graciously presented the World Communion of Reformed Churches with a medallion that commemorates this event,

It is resolved

- that the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Church gratefully accepts the medallion as a gift that evidences “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”

It is further resolved

- that the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches hereby designates this gift to be held in trust during the term of service of the current president (and passed on to future presidents), and
- that the president be authorized to wear the medallion (at his or her personal discretion) at official World Communion of Reformed Churches functions.

June 25, 2010

Appendix 36

**WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WCRC)
ARTICLES of UNION****A. WHEREAS:**

1. Reformed Churches of the Presbyterian and Congregational traditions are found, under a variety of names, in many parts of the world, and were led in the providence of God to manifest more fully their essential oneness, within their respective traditions, in order to further the mission and unity of the Church catholic. In particular:
 - a. In 1875, certain Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in different nations, at a meeting in London (England), formed The Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System²⁹ of church polity, and adopted a Constitution. During the ensuing years the Alliance has met in representative General Council format and has engaged in programmes of fellowship, study and service in the name of the Gospel.
 - b. In 1891, representatives of certain Congregational Churches met together in London (England) as an International Congregational Council, and during the following years other such meetings were held. In 1949, at Wellesley (Massachusetts, USA), an organization known as The International Congregational Council was formally established with programmes of fellowship, study and service in the name of the Gospel and has met in Assembly from time to time.
 - c. In 1946, representatives of certain Reformed churches met together in Grand Rapids (Michigan, USA) to form the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which in its Synod of 1988 became the Reformed Ecumenical Council.

²⁹ In 1954 the 17th General Council of the WARC adopted a new Constitution in which the name of the organization was amended: *Presbyterian System* became *Presbyterian Order*

- d. In 1970 the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the world holding the Presbyterian System of church polity and the International Congregational Council united to form the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational).
2. From 1998-2006, through years of mutual discussion, study and cooperation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council entered into a deeper understanding of the common history and calling of their member Churches culminating in a proposal to unite the two bodies.
3. The respective Executive Committees in 2007 after consultation with their member churches formally adopted the proposal to unite the two organizations.

B. BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1. At the 25th General Council of The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) and the 16th Assembly of The Reformed Ecumenical Council held at Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, on June 18, 2010, the two organizations now constitute one body, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), recognizing in gratitude to God that such an act of union is implemented not only in order to carry out the major aims for which both organizations have existed separately, but also in order to respond to God's call for service in the church and the world.
 - a. By examining and living together the traditions of faith and practice within the Reformed family,
 - b. By supporting one another within the tremendous scope of mission to which Christ is calling all people in our time and by working together for the unity of all people in Christ, for the unity of all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ counting on the love of God who created us and living in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. We thank God for and reaffirm the streams of identity within the united body made up of Congregationalists, Reformed, Presbyterians, Waldensians, and some United

and uniting churches and our commitment to serving the church ecumenical.

3. In entering upon this common way, we together affirm our faith in Jesus Christ and covenant to share the joy of working in response to God's calling in relation to contemporary challenges, seeking to order our common life by God's grace.
4. The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) from this day, June 18, 2010 is the continuing body of these two organizations (and their predecessor bodies) whose separate existence will be transformed into a united existence upon the adoption of the constitution of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
5. The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) from this day, June 18, 2010, as the continuing body of these two organizations, joined in identity and function through the Constitution and Bylaws of the World Communion of Reformed Churches registered in Switzerland, as well as the Bylaws of the WCRC registered in the USA. While the two sister organizations may have separate assets, those assets will be dedicated to the operation of the combined identity that will be known to all member churches as the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).
6. The assets and liabilities, rights and obligations including but not limited to all corporate powers and privileges and all property whether real, personal, or mixed, wherever situated, of the two bodies which have hereby united shall belong to the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) which shall be entitled to any rights which may accrue to either of the uniting bodies at any time in the future.
7. The official records of the two uniting bodies (and their predecessor organizations) shall be preserved and held by or on behalf of the World Communion of Reformed Churches as making up the official history of the united body.
8. Upon the adoption of the Constitution and Bylaws of the World Communion of Reformed Churches by delegates at its first meeting in Council, the said Constitution and

Bylaws shall govern its life, except where transitional arrangements are spelled out in these articles of union. At the same time the Bylaws of the sister organization, the WCRC, shall be adopted.

9. The transitional arrangements include adding that the Presidents of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council serving until the Uniting General Council shall also serve as additional members of the Executive Committee between the Uniting General Council and the next General Council of the WCRC for the one term only. Thereafter, only the provisions in the Constitution and Bylaws shall prevail.
10. The staffing and financial arrangements at the start of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) will be in accordance with the relevant decisions agreed upon by the Executive Committees of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in their meetings between 2006 and June 17, 2010.

To be adopted by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches General Council and the Reformed Ecumenical Council Assembly on the 18th day of June in the year of our Lord, 2010.

“Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace”

To God be the Glory.

Appendix 37

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

[Adopted 2010]

**PO Box 2110
150, route de Ferney
1211 Geneva 2,
Switzerland**

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WCRC)

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Jesus Christ is the foundation and head of the Christian church.

It is in Jesus Christ that the Word became flesh and the gospel is embodied.

It is to God in Christ that the holy Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit, bear witness.

It is through Christ that God gives abundant life and spiritual vitality to the members of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The churches in the World Communion of Reformed Churches are called together in the name of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Under the sovereign God, with Christ's followers across the globe, sharing one baptism, the members of the communion belong to the one holy catholic and apostolic church.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND SUCCESSION

The name of this organization shall be World Communion of Reformed Churches. The following constitute the name of the organization in French, German and Spanish:

Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées (CMER)

Weltgemeinschaft Reformierter Kirchen (WGRK)

Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas (CMIR)

The World Communion of Reformed Churches succeeds the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and its antecedents, as a united ecumenical body for Reformed churches.

ARTICLE II – BASIS

The basis of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be the Word of the triune God, incarnate in Jesus Christ and revealed in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to this triune God that the church bears witness. The World Communion of Reformed Churches is committed to embody a Reformed identity as articulated in the Ecumenical Creeds of the early church, in the historic confessions of the Reformation, and as continued in the life and witness of the Reformed community.

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.
- 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 fulfill 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.

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

Composition

- A. All current member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches shall be members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. A church that is under suspension in either preceding body at the time of the formation shall remain under suspension in the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
- B. Other churches of the Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Waldensian, other First Reformation, United, and Uniting traditions are eligible for membership, if such a church affirms this constitution.
- C. Member churches are expected to join in achieving the Aims and Purposes of the World Communion of Reformed Churches by, among other things, participating in meetings, taking seriously its actions and decisions, and engaging in its collective work.
- D. Fellowships of churches that affirm a Reformed identity and include in their membership World Communion of Reformed Churches' members are eligible for associate membership. Such associate members shall share in the fellowship and programmes of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, participate on a reciprocal basis without a vote in governance, and thereby strengthen the broader Reformed family's participation in the church ecumenical.
- E. An institution established by one or more member churches or whose faith basis and operation are in agreement with that of the historic Reformed confessions are eligible for affiliate membership, without voting privileges.
- F. Membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches does not limit the autonomy of any member church or

restrict its relationships with other churches or with other ecumenical organizations.

- G. Members in the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall support the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches through an annual financial contribution reflecting the resources and membership of that church. The General Council or the Executive Committee shall set a minimum contribution requirement for all member churches, associate and affiliate members.

Procedural Issues

- H. Application for membership shall be made to the office of the General Secretary not later than six months before a General Council meeting. Admission to membership shall be by decision of the Executive Committee following consultation with other member churches in the region. The General Council shall ratify new members by a two-thirds majority of ballots cast. A new member shall not vote on the ratification of its own membership.
- I. A member church may terminate its membership by giving notice in writing to the office of the General Secretary. They will be encouraged to give reasons for this action.
- J. The Executive Committee may suspend the membership of a member church for actions in violation of the Basis, Values, or Aims and Purposes of this constitution or for persistent failure to support or communicate with the organization, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1. Such action may be proposed to the Executive Committee by one or more member churches, after such church or churches have previously presented their concerns to the church in question. A proposal to suspend a member church shall be presented to the Executive Committee at least six months prior to its meeting.
 - 2. The Executive Committee that has received a proposal for suspension shall conduct an investigation. The officers shall develop an investigative process for the specific charges. The process shall be approved by the Executive Committee.
 - 3. The Executive Committee shall take final action only after the church in question has been given sufficient opportunity to defend itself.
 - 4. After such an investigation has been completed, the Executive Committee may decide by a two-thirds

vote of members present to suspend the membership of the member church in question or refer the case to the next General Council. When an Executive Committee decides suspension, it may be lifted at any subsequent Executive Committee meeting.

5. When a member church is suspended at a General Council meeting, that suspension may be lifted at any subsequent General Council meeting upon recommendation of the then current Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall, therefore, maintain communication with that member church about the matters related to the cause for suspension.
6. 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. A member church whose membership privileges are withdrawn shall be considered an inactive member. An inactive member church may attend a General Council meeting as an observer but will not have the right to speak or vote. Inactive members do not qualify for financial support from the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
7. A suspended member church may send observers to plenary sessions of the General Council but shall not have the right to vote or address plenary sessions of the General Council except by extraordinary permission of the President. A suspended member church shall not have any financial obligations to the World Communion of Reformed Churches during the suspension.

ARTICLE VII – GENERAL COUNCIL

- A. The General Council is the main governing body of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The General Council is legally constituted to transact the business of the World Communion of Reformed Churches when representatives of one-half plus one of its member churches are present to establish a quorum.
- B. The General Council shall

- 1 provide leadership for the World Communion of Reformed Churches in achieving the aims and purposes of the organization;
 - 2 adopt and amend the Constitution and the Bylaws;
 - 3 make and adopt policies and programmes for the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
 - 4 elect officers and members of the Executive Committee;
 - 5 consider matters brought before it by member churches;
 - 6 ratify decisions of the Executive Committee.
- C. Decisions of the General Council concerning its organization and institutional activities shall be binding.
- D. Decisions of the General Council involving the life and witness of the member churches are advisory in character.

ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS OF GENERAL COUNCIL

- A. The General Council shall ordinarily meet once in every seven years.
- B. At the request of at least one-fifth of the member churches, the Executive Committee shall convene the General Council into special session.
- C. The time, place, and programme of a General Council meeting shall be determined by the Executive Committee.
- D. The General Council, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its business.

ARTICLE IX – COMPOSITION OF GENERAL COUNCIL

- A. Participants at the General Council are delegates, associate and affiliate delegates, ecumenical delegates, consultants, observers, guests, and visitors.
- B. Member churches shall be entitled to appoint delegates on the basis of their baptized membership according to the following plan:
1. three delegates for churches with up to 200,000 members
 2. four delegates for churches with 200,001 to 300,000 members
 3. five delegates for churches with 300,001 to 500,000 members

4. six delegates for churches with 500,001 to 750,000 members
 5. seven delegates for churches with 750,001 to 1,000,000 members
 6. eight delegates for churches with 1,000,001 to 1,500,000 members
 7. nine delegates for churches with 1,500,001 to 2,000,000
 8. ten delegates for churches with more than 2,000,000.
- C. Where a church sends two or more delegates, no more than half shall be ordained ministers, and the delegation shall be gender-balanced. Where a church sends two delegates, at least one shall be a woman. Where a church sends four or more delegates, at least one half of the delegates shall be women and at least one delegate shall be thirty years of age or younger on the date the General Council is convened.
- D. Each of the officers of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be an ex-officio delegate (with vote) to any General Council that meets during the officer's term of office.
- E. Delegates shall have the right to vote and to move or second a motion in all sessions of the General Council.

ARTICLE X – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- A. The Executive Committee shall have twenty two (22) members elected by the General Council (including six (6) officers). The Moderator, President or Convener of each Regional Council shall be members. The General Secretary shall be a member ex-officio (without vote). The Executive Committee is legally constituted to transact the business of the World Communion of Reformed Churches when a majority of its members is present to establish a quorum.
- B. The Executive Committee may invite Executive Secretaries to participate in its meetings in an advisory capacity.
- C. If any member of the Executive Committee is unable to attend a particular meeting of the Committee, an alternate may be appointed under the provisions in the Bylaws.
- D. The Executive Committee shall meet annually.
- E. When the President and the General Secretary deem it necessary to secure a decision of the Executive Committee between its meetings, a vote by mail, email, telephone conference, or other electronic means may be taken. In

such cases the required majority (one-half plus one) is based on all the members of the Executive Committee.

- F. The Executive Committee shall:
1. Exercise general oversight of the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches between meetings of the General Council including, but not limited to, the formation of departments, committees, and commissions to carry out the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
 2. Authorize the President and/or the General Secretary to speak for the World Communion of Reformed Churches between meetings of the General Council. The Executive Committee may, by way of exception and if needed, appoint one or more additional persons to speak for the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
 3. Perform all duties specified elsewhere in this Constitution and in the Bylaws or committed to it by the General Council.
 4. Approve the annual financial reports and adopt the annual budget.
 5. Fill vacancies among the officers and in its own membership, as specified in the Bylaws, which may occur between meetings of the General Council.
 6. Elect a General Secretary and appoint Executive Secretaries.
 7. Decide on admission to and suspension of membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches in consultation with local member churches subject to ratification by the next General Council.

ARTICLE XI – OFFICERS OF THE WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

- A. The General Council shall elect a president and four (4) vice-presidents from among the delegates to the General Council. The General Council shall also elect a General Treasurer. These elected officers shall hold office from the time of their installation until their successors are elected and installed in office.
- B. The officers of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall have power to

1. Approve the agendas for Executive Committee meetings.
 2. Ensure coherence in the interdepartmental work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
 3. Provide advice and direction to the General Secretary.
 4. Report for review to the Executive Committee concerning the actions they have taken.
 5. Oversee the assets of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
- C. Any two of the following: the President (or one of the Vice-Presidents if substituting for the President), the General Secretary, and the General Treasurer, are authorized to sign jointly for all legally required registration, opening of bank accounts, and other legal transactions of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

ARTICLE XII – GENERAL SECRETARY

- A. The General Secretary shall be the chief executive officer of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and shall be responsible to the General Council and to the Executive Committee to direct and coordinate the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
- B. The General Secretary shall serve a term of seven years and shall be eligible for one renewal for another seven-year term. A comprehensive performance review will be scheduled at the midpoint of each seven-year term and prior to the decision to appoint the General Secretary to a second seven-year term. The performance review is conducted by persons appointed by the Executive Committee.
- C. The General Secretary shall make all necessary arrangements for the convening, reporting, and proper conduct of the General Council.
- D. The General Secretary shall supervise the personnel of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and be responsible for the proper functioning of the secretariat.
- E. All publications shall be under the supervision of the General Secretary.

ARTICLE XIII – EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES

- A. Executive Secretaries shall be appointed for the operations of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
- B. The number of Executive Secretaries serving at any one time, and the scope of their responsibilities, is determined by the Executive Committee upon recommendation of the General Secretary.
- C. Executive Secretaries shall serve a term of five years and shall be eligible for one renewal for another five-year term. A comprehensive performance review will be scheduled at the midpoint of each five-year term and prior to the decision to appoint an Executive Secretary to a second five-year term. The performance review is conducted by the General Secretary.

ARTICLE XIV – FINANCE

- A. The World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be financed by contributions from member churches, associate and affiliate members, and gifts from individuals, congregations, organizations, and other sources.
- B. The General Treasurer and the General Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of the annual budget, which shall be presented to the Executive Committee for approval.
- C. The financial accounts of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be audited annually by auditors approved by the Executive Committee. The audited accounts shall be adopted annually by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XV – DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES, OFFICES, AND COMMISSIONS

- A. The General Council or the Executive Committee may form departments, committees, and commissions to carry out the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
- B. All committees or commissions shall be accountable to the General Council and the Executive Committee.
- C. Departments and offices shall be accountable to the General Council and the Executive Committee, through the General Secretary. They shall function in a manner that promotes the coherence of the programmes of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. To this end they are not independent entities but function interdependently.

ARTICLE XVI – ORGANIZATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

To promote the closest possible community and cooperation among member churches in a particular area of the world, and the effectiveness of the total work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the General Council may authorize the organization of a Regional Council composed of the member churches in that defined geographical area. Such a Regional Council shall be accountable to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches through its appointed administrative structures.

- A. The number, boundaries, and names of the areas shall be determined by the General Council or by the Executive Committee in consultation with the member churches of the region.
- B. The organization of a Regional Council shall be effected by the member churches within the area, in conformity with the Constitution and Bylaws of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Each Regional Council shall adopt its own Bylaws subject to ratification by the Executive Committee.
- C. Each Regional Council shall meet from time to time within the geographic area, provide for an Administrative Committee, and elect officers pursuant to its Bylaws.
- D. Each Regional Council shall elect a President, a Moderator or a Convener.
- E. Each Regional Council shall elect a Secretary and a Treasurer to serve the Regional Council, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XVII – LEGAL STATUS

- A. The World Communion of Reformed Churches is an international non-governmental and non-profit organization, organized as an association, pursuant to articles 60ss of the Swiss Civil Code (CC). Its registered office is in Geneva, Switzerland. In the event of dissolution of the association, any remaining assets, after the payment of existent liability, shall be distributed pro rata to the member churches or the successor entity.

- B. The World Communion of Reformed Churches shall have a sister international organization, WCRC, registered in the USA. Membership of the two international, non-governmental, not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations shall be the same. The two sister organizations shall be governed by the same General Council, Executive Committee and Officers.

ARTICLE XVIII – AMENDMENTS

- A. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the delegates in attendance at any meeting of the General Council, provided the proposed amendment has been transmitted to each member church, to members of the Executive Committee, and to the Regional Councils at least six months before it is submitted for approval.
- B. The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the delegates in attendance at a meeting of the General Council, provided notice of at least 24 hours has been given to the delegates attending that meeting.
- C. The Bylaws may also be amended between meetings of the General Council by the Executive Committee. Such changes shall be submitted to the next General Council for ratification.

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WCRC)

THE BYLAWS

I. GENERAL COUNCIL

- A. The Executive Committee shall serve as the Business Committee of the General Council.
- B. The President, with the advice of the Executive Committee, shall appoint from among the delegates such Standing Committees and Task Groups as may be necessary.
- C. The status and classification of participants at a General Council meeting shall be as follows:
 - 1. Each member church shall have a formula-specified number of voting delegates.

2. An associate delegate is one who represents an associate-member organization. Associate delegates have the right to speak but may not vote.
3. An affiliate delegate is one who represents an affiliated organization. Affiliate delegates have the right to speak but may not vote.
4. An ecumenical delegate is one who represents a recognized ecumenical fraternal organization. Ecumenical delegates have the right to speak but may not vote.
5. Guests are those individuals who have been invited to attend the General Council meeting. Guests have the right to speak but may not vote.
6. Observers are representatives from member churches or other communions who are considering becoming members of the World Communion of Reformed churches. Observers may participate in the activities of the General Council but do not have the right to vote.
7. Consultants may be present at the General Council or Executive Committee meeting upon invitation by the officers. A consultant may be asked to address the assembly on the issue for which the consultant is present. A consultant's right to speak is limited to that specific matter, and the consultant may not vote.
8. Visitors are those individuals who attend the public sessions of the General Council for personal reasons. Visitors do not have the right to speak, make motions, or vote.

II. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Elections

1. The General Council shall elect officers from among the delegates to that General Council, taking into consideration geographical distribution, cultural and denominational diversity, gender, age, and experience.
2. The General Council shall elect an Executive Committee from among the delegates to that General Council, taking into consideration geographical distribution, cultural and denominational diversity, gender, age, experience, and the advice of regional councils.

3. The Executive Committee members shall hold office from their installation until their successors are elected and installed in office.
4. Members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible to serve for not more than two consecutive terms.
5. The General Council, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, shall elect a Nominating Committee of not more than ten persons, two of whom must be under 30 years of age, one of them female and one male. The nomination procedure shall take into consideration geographical distribution, cultural and denominational diversity, and gender.
6. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for election as officers or as members of the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee shall receive and consider proposed nominations from delegates from Regional Councils and shall make its own proposals.
7. The Nominating Committee shall present to the General Council a slate of nominations for officers and for members of the Executive Committee. When the proposal of the Nominating Committee has been presented, nominations from the floor may be proposed as an alternative to any of the nominees recommended by the Nominating Committee.
8. The election of General Council Officers and Executive Committee members shall take place no sooner than twenty-four hours after the presentation of all candidates.
9. Each member of the Executive Committee shall be required to disclose potential and real conflict of interest issues. A signed form for such disclosure shall be retained in the office of the General Secretary.
10. Delegates elected to the Executive Committee are ordinarily expected to represent the interests of the General Council.

B. Alternates

1. If any member of the Executive Committee is unable to attend a particular meeting of the Executive Committee, the President and the General Secretary, after due consultation, may appoint an alternate from the same region, to serve for that particular meeting as a member of the Executive Committee.

2. The Executive Committee may invite churches or organizations to appoint a representative to attend meetings of the Executive Committee. Such an invited representative shall be able to participate in the meeting without the right to vote.

C. Removal from office

1. When an officer or member of the Executive Committee is deemed by another officer or member to have failed to perform his or her duties, a hearing or hearings shall be conducted.
2. Having heard the accusations, having considered the appropriate evidence and having heard the response the accused person chooses to make, the Executive Committee may reprimand, suspend, or remove the accused person, or declare that the person's service will continue. The seriousness of the offence will determine the action to be taken—not necessarily the number of occasions of transgression.
3. When an officer or member of the Executive Committee has been found guilty of an offence by the ecclesiastical procedures of his or her church, the Executive Committee may declare the office or membership vacant after having taken note of the official statement of the charges (formal accusation), decision, and censure (judgment, sentence). The member shall be offered the opportunity to make a response in writing or in person (at her or his own expense) to the Executive Committee.
4. Whether or not there is a response, the Executive Committee may remove or suspend the person, or take no action.

D. Vacant positions

When the position of a member of the Executive Committee becomes vacant through death, resignation in writing to the General Secretary, removal from office by action of the Executive Committee, or non-attendance over an extended period, the Executive Committee may fill such vacancy in the following manner:

1. If the office of President becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall fill the office of President by election from among the Vice-Presidents.
2. If the office of a Vice-President becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall fill the office by election from among the members of the Executive Committee.
3. If the office of General Treasurer becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall select a person to fill the position.
4. If a general position on the Executive Committee becomes vacant, the Executive Committee may fill the vacancy by election from among those who were delegates to the previous General Council, taking into consideration geographical distribution, cultural and denominational diversity, gender, age, and experience.

E. Meetings

1. The Executive Committee shall meet once a year, the specific time and place to be set by the Executive Committee at its previous meeting or by way of circular decision as provided for in article X.E of the Constitution. Failing this, the President and the General Secretary decide as to the time and place of the Executive Committee's meeting. If they cannot come to an agreement, the President decides.
2. The President and the General Secretary may call special meetings of the Executive Committee, and shall do so at the request of a majority of the members of the Executive Committee.
3. A quorum shall be a majority of the total membership of the Executive Committee.

III. FINANCES

- A. The Executive Committee may propose proportionate financial contributions to the churches.
- B. Any proposals for the disbursement of any funds relating to the World Communion of Reformed Churches, other than disbursements included in the annual budget, shall be approved by the Executive Committee.
- C. In exceptional cases, the General Secretary shall be permitted to initiate an action with financial consequences, within the parameters of the purposes and aims of the

World Communion of Reformed Churches, after consultation with and the approval of the President and the General Treasurer.

- D. If necessary for timely consideration, the Executive Committee may vote on the adoption of the budget by mail ballot, teleconference, or other electronic means upon the recommendation of the officers.
- E. The General Treasurer and the finance secretary shall report regularly to the Executive Committee.
- F. The expenses of the President, the General Secretary, the General Treasurer, and other members of the staff will be met from the funds of the World Communion of Reformed Churches when they attend meetings of the General Council and the Executive Committee.
- G. The expenses of delegates to the General Council and of members of the Executive Committee attending the General Council shall be paid by the churches of which they are members unless a prior agreement for support has been negotiated.
- H. The World Communion of Reformed Churches shall pay for the expenses of the Executive Committee in accordance with established administrative guidelines.
- I. Each Regional Council shall submit to the General Secretary a copy of its annual audited financial statements.

Appendix 38

BYLAWS**OF****WCRC**

ARTICLE I**NAME AND PURPOSES**

Section 1.1 Name. This corporation shall be known as WCRC.

Section 1.2 Aims and Purposes. This corporation is a nonprofit corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law). This corporation is the identity of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in the United States. This corporation shall work in concert with a sister corporation formed under the laws of Switzerland as outlined under the Constitution and Bylaws as defined under Section 2.3.

The Aims and Purposes of this corporation are as follows:

(a) The World Communion of Reformed Churches shall assist its member churches by:

(i) widening and deepening understanding and community among the member churches and helping them to fulfill their own responsibilities in the service of Christ.

(ii) 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.

(iii) promoting the full and just participation of all members, of all ages, in all aspects of the church's life and its public witness.

(iv) promoting the full and just partnership of women and men in church and society.

(v) 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:

(i) promoting economic and ecological justice, global peace, and reconciliation in the world.

(ii) promoting and defending religious, civil, and all other human rights wherever threatened throughout the world.

(iii) encouraging and promoting relief and sustainable development in the world and focusing on the eradication of poverty.

(iv) providing Reformed perspectives on church unity.

This corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law) or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law).

This corporation has not been formed for pecuniary profit or gain. No part of the assets, income or profit of this corporation will inure to the benefit of its members, Trustees or officers. However, this corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article I.

No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. This corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Upon dissolution of this corporation, any assets which have not been used to satisfy the obligations of this corporation shall be distributed exclusively to corporations (a) exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law) and (b) contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law).

ARTICLE II

BASIS, IDENTITY AND VALUES

Section 2.1 Organizational Basis. The basis of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be the Word of the triune God, incarnate in Jesus Christ and revealed in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to this triune God that the church bears witness. The World Communion of Reformed Churches is committed to embody a Reformed identity as articulated in the historic Reformed confessions and the Ecumenical Creeds of the early church, and as continued in the life and witness of the Reformed community.

Section 2.2 Organizational 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 Reformed worship and spiritual life.
- (d) Renewing a commitment to partnership in God's mission, through witness, diaconal service, and work for justice, so as to foster mission in unity, mission renewal, and mission empowerment.
- (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.

Section 2.3 Organizational 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 member churches 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.

Section 2.4 Organizational Documents. The World Communion of Reformed Churches has adopted a Constitution (the "Constitution") and related Bylaws (the "Ecclesiastical Bylaws") (collectively, the "Constitution and Bylaws") that are foundational documents for this corporation. Certain provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws have been carried forward into these Bylaws (the "Carry-Over Provisions"). In the event that the World Communion of Reformed Churches chooses to amend the Constitution and Bylaws such that changes are made to the Carry-Over Provisions, then these Bylaws will be automatically amended to reflect any changes to the Carry-Over Provisions. In the event of any inconsistency between the Constitution and Bylaws on one hand, and these Bylaws on the other, the following shall apply:

(a) If the inconsistency is in connection with a Carry-Over Provision, then the terms of the Constitution and Bylaws shall govern.

(b) If the inconsistency is in connection with any other provision, then the terms of these Bylaws shall govern.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 3.1 Membership Corporation. This corporation is organized as a membership corporation under Michigan law.

Section 3.2 Members. Membership in the corporation shall be determined as follows:

(a) All member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches that are not under suspension in either organization at the time of the formation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be members.

(b) Other churches of the Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Waldensian, other First Reformation, United and Uniting traditions are eligible for membership, if such a church affirms the Constitution.

(c) Member churches are expected to join in achieving the Aims and Purposes of the World Communion of Reformed Churches by, among other things, participating in meetings, taking seriously its actions and decisions, and engaging in its collective work.

(d) Fellowships of churches that affirm a Reformed identity and include in their membership World Communion of Reformed Churches' members are eligible for associate membership. Such associate members shall share in the fellowship and programs of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, participate on a reciprocal basis without a vote in governance, and thereby strengthen the broader Reformed family's participation in the church ecumenical.

(e) An institution established by one or more member churches or whose faith basis and operation are in agreement with that of the historic Reformed confessions are eligible for affiliate membership, without voting privileges.

(f) Membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches does not limit the autonomy of any member church or restrict its relationships with other churches or with other ecumenical organizations.

(g) Members in the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall support the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches through an annual financial contribution reflecting the resources and membership of that church. The General Council or the Executive Committee shall set a minimum contribution requirement for all member churches, associate and affiliate members.

(h) Application for membership shall be made to the office of the

General Secretary not later than six months before a General Council meeting. Admission to membership shall be by decision of the Executive Committee following consultation with other member churches in the region. The General Council shall ratify new members by a two-thirds majority of ballots cast. A new member shall not vote on the ratification of its own membership.

(i) A member church may terminate its membership by giving notice in writing to the office of the General Secretary. They will be encouraged to give reasons for this action.

(j) The Executive Committee may suspend the membership of a member church for actions in violation of the Basis, Values, or Aims and Purposes of these Bylaws or for persistent failure to support or communicate with the organization, subject to the following conditions:

(i) Such action may be proposed to the Executive Committee by one or more member churches, after such church or churches have previously presented their concerns to the church in question. A proposal to suspend a member church shall be presented to the Executive Committee at least six months prior to its meeting.

(ii) The Executive Committee that has received a proposal for suspension shall conduct an investigation. The officers shall develop an investigative process for the specific charges. The process shall be approved by the Executive Committee.

(iii) The Executive Committee shall take final action only after the church in question has been given sufficient opportunity to defend itself.

(iv) After such an investigation has been completed the Executive Committee may decide by a two-thirds vote to suspend the membership of the member in question or refer the case to the next General Council. When an Executive Committee decides suspension, it may be lifted at any subsequent Executive Committee meeting.

(v) When a member church is suspended at a General Council meeting, that suspension may be lifted at any subsequent General Council meeting upon recommendation of the then current Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall, therefore, maintain communication with that member church about the matters related to the cause for suspension.

(vi) Any member that fails to make membership contributions and does not communicate with the secretariat may be suspended by the Executive Committee. Such a member may be reinstated by the Executive Committee upon resumption of contact and fulfillment of its obligations.

(k) A suspended member may send observers to plenary sessions of the General Council but shall not have the right to vote or address plenary sessions of the General Council except by extraordinary permission of the President.

A suspended member shall not have any financial obligations to the World Communion of Reformed Churches during the suspension.

ARTICLE IV

GENERAL COUNCIL

Section 4.1 **Generally.** The General Council is the main governing body of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The General Council shall:

- (a) provide leadership for the World Communion of Reformed Churches in achieving the aims and purposes of the organization;
- (b) adopt and amend the Constitution and Bylaws;
- (c) make and adopt policies and programmes for the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
- (d) elect officers and members of the Executive Committee;
- (e) consider matters brought before it by member churches; and
- (f) ratify decisions of the Executive Committee.

Section 4.2 **Authority of the General Council.** Decisions of the General Council concerning its organization and institutional activities shall be binding. Decisions of the General Council involving the life and witness of the member churches are advisory in character.

Section 4.3 **Meetings of the General Council.** The General Council shall meet at least once every seven (7) years. At this regular meeting, the General Council shall elect the officers and members of the Executive Committee and shall receive a report of the election. The Executive Committee shall call additional special meetings of the General Council as may be requested in writing by at least one-fifth (1/5) of the member churches.

Section 4.4 **Notice of Meetings: Location.** All member churches in the corporation shall be entitled to receive at least thirty (30) days notice of any regular or special meeting of the General Council. The time, place, and programme of a General Council meeting shall be determined by the Executive Committee and included in such notice.

Section 4.5 **Rules of Procedure.** The General Council, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its business.

Section 4.6 **Participants.** Participants at the General Council are delegates, associate and affiliate delegates, ecumenical delegates, consultants, observers, guests, and visitors.

Section 4.7 **Delegates: Voting.**

- (a) Member churches shall be entitled to appoint delegates to the

General Council on the basis of their baptized membership according to the following plan:

- members; (i) ~~two~~ delegates for churches with up to 100,000
- members; (ii) ~~three~~ delegates for churches with 100,001 to 200,000
- members; (iii) ~~four~~ delegates for churches with 200,001 to 300,000
- members; (iv) ~~five~~ delegates for churches with 300,001 to 500,000
- members; (v) ~~six~~ delegates for churches with 500,001 to 750,000
- members; and (vi) ~~seven~~ delegates for churches with 750,001 to 1,000,000
- members. (vii) ~~eight~~ delegates for churches with more than 1,000,000

(b) Where a church sends two or more delegates, no more than half shall be ordained ministers, and the delegation shall be gender-balanced. Where a church sends two delegates, at least one shall be a woman. Where a church sends four or more delegates, at least one third of the delegates shall be women and at least one delegate shall be thirty years of age or younger on the date the General Council is convened.

(c) Each of the officers of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall be an ex-officio delegate (with vote) to any General Council that meets during the officer's term of office.

(d) Each delegate to the General Council shall have the right to move or second a motion in all sessions of the General Council, and shall have one (1) vote on all matters coming before the General Council during such sessions(s).

Section 4.8 Quorum; Voting. A quorum shall exist for the purpose of conducting business at a General Council meeting if more than fifty percent (50%) of the corporation's member churches have delegates present. At all meetings of the General Council at which a quorum has been established, every question shall be determined by a majority of votes unless otherwise specifically provided by the Articles or these Bylaws.

ARTICLE V

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 5.1 Generally. The Executive Committee shall have twenty-two (22) members elected by the General Council (including six (6) officers). The moderators of Regional Councils shall be members. The General Secretary shall be a member ex-officio

(without vote). The Executive Committee may invite Executive Secretaries to participate in its meetings in an advisory capacity.

Section 5.2 Corresponding Members; Alternates. Corresponding members are persons representing specific geographical or organizational entities related to the World Communion of Reformed Churches and are invited to participate in officially called meetings but without the power to make or to second motions or to vote. If any member of the Executive Committee is unable to attend a particular meeting of the Committee, an alternate may be appointed under the provisions in the Ecclesiastical Bylaws.

Section 5.3 Removal; Vacancies. A member of the Executive Committee may be removed, and a vacancy on the Executive Committee may be filled, according to the provisions of the Ecclesiastical Bylaws.

Section 5.4 Annual Meetings; Interim Meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet annually. If and when the President and the General Secretary deem it necessary to secure a decision of the Executive Committee between its meetings, a vote by mail, email, telephone conference, or other electronic means may be taken. In such cases the required majority (one-half plus one) is based on all the members of the Executive Committee. Special meetings may be called according to the provisions of the Ecclesiastical Bylaws.

Section 5.5 Quorum; Voting. A quorum shall exist for the purpose of conducting business at an annual meeting of the Executive Committee when more than fifty percent (50%) of its members are present. At all annual meetings of the Executive Committee at which a quorum has been established, every question shall be determined by a majority of votes of those members present, unless otherwise specifically provided by the Articles or these Bylaws.

Section 5.6 Duties of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall:

- (a) exercise general oversight of the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches between meetings of the General Council including, but not limited to, the formation of departments, committees and commissions to carry out the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
- (b) authorize the President and/or the General Secretary to speak for the World Communion of Reformed Churches between meetings of the General Council. The Executive Committee may, by way of exception and if needed, appoint one or more additional persons to speak for the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
- (c) perform all duties specified elsewhere in these Bylaws, the Ecclesiastical Bylaws, or committed to it by the General Council;
- (d) approve the annual financial reports and adopt the annual budget;
- (e) fill vacancies among the officers and in its own membership, as specified in these Bylaws, which may occur between meetings of the General Council;

- and
- (f) elect a General Secretary and appoint Executive Secretaries;
 - (g) decide on admission to and suspension of membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches subject to ratification by the next General Council.

Section 5.7 Remuneration. Members of the Executive Committee, as such shall not receive any remuneration for their services but may be allowed expenses for their attendance at regular or special meetings of the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VI

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

Section 6.1 Principal Officers. The General Council shall elect the following officers from the delegates to the General Council, to hold office from their installation until their successors are elected and installed in office:

- (a) a President;
- (b) four Vice-Presidents; and
- (c) a General Treasurer.

Section 6.2 Duties of the Officers. The officers of the World Communion of Reformed Churches shall have power to:

- (a) approve the agendas for Executive Committee meetings;
- (b) ensure coherence in the interdepartmental work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
- (c) provide advice and direction to the General Secretary;
- (d) report for review to the Executive Committee concerning the actions they have taken; and
- (e) oversee the assets of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Section 6.3 Authority of Officers. Any two of the following: the President (or one of the Vice-Presidents if substituting for the President), the General Secretary, and the General Treasurer, are authorized to sign jointly for all legally required registration, opening of bank accounts and other legal transactions of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

ARTICLE VII

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES

Section 7.1 Executive Secretaries. Executive Secretaries shall be appointed for the operations of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The number of Executive Secretaries serving at any one time, and the scope of their responsibilities, is determined by the Executive Committee upon recommendation of the General Secretary.

Section 7.2 Term. Executive Secretaries shall serve a term of five years and shall be eligible for one renewal for another five-year term. A comprehensive performance review will be scheduled at the midpoint of each five-year term and prior to the decision to appoint an Executive Secretary to a second five-year term. The performance review is conducted by the General Secretary.

ARTICLE VIII

GENERAL SECRETARY

Section 8.1 General Secretary. The General Secretary shall be the chief executive officer of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and shall be responsible to the General Council and to the Executive Committee to direct and coordinate the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The General Secretary shall also be the corporate secretary for the corporation.

Section 8.2 Term. The General Secretary shall serve a term of seven years and shall be eligible for one renewal for another seven-year term. A comprehensive performance review will be scheduled at the midpoint of each seven-year term and prior to the decision to appoint the General Secretary to a second seven-year term. The performance review is conducted by persons appointed by the Executive Committee.

Section 8.3 Duties. The General Secretary shall make all necessary arrangements for the convening, reporting and the proper conduct of the General Council. The General Secretary shall supervise the personnel of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and be responsible for the proper functioning of the secretariat. All publications shall be under the supervision of the General Secretary.

ARTICLE IX

COMMITTEES; REGIONAL COUNCILS

Section 9.1 Committees.

(a) The General Council or the Executive Committee may form departments, committees, and commissions to carry out the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

(b) All committees or commissions shall be accountable to the General Council and the Executive Committee.

(c) Departments and offices shall be accountable to the General Council and the Executive Committee, through the General Secretary. They shall function in a manner that promotes the coherence of the programmes of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. To this end they are not independent entities but function interdependently.

Section 9.2 Regional Councils. To promote the closest possible community and cooperation among member churches in a particular area of the world, and the effectiveness of the total work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the General Council may authorize the organization of a Regional Council composed of the member churches in that defined geographical area. Such a Regional Council shall be accountable to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches through its appointed administrative structures:

(a) The number, boundaries, and names of the areas shall be determined by the General Council or by the Executive Committee in consultation with the member churches of the region.

(b) The organization of a Regional Council shall be effected by the member churches within the area, in conformity with the Constitution and Bylaws. Each Regional Council shall adopt its own Bylaws subject to ratification by the Executive Committee.

(c) Each Regional Council shall meet from time to time within the geographic area, provide for an Administrative Committee, and elect officers pursuant to its Bylaws.

(d) A Convener or Secretary and a Treasurer for each Regional Council shall be elected by the Regional Council, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE X

INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS, TRUSTEES, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS

Section 10.1 Indemnification: Third Party Actions. This corporation has the power to indemnify a person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to a threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative and whether formal or informal (other than an action by or in the right of this corporation) by reason of fact that the person is or was a trustee, officer, employee or agent of this corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this corporation as a trustee, officer, partner, employee or agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, business corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, whether for profit or not for profit, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, penalties, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually reasonably incurred by that person in connection with the action, suit or proceedings if that person acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed by that person to be in or not opposed to the best interests of this corporation, and with respect to a criminal action or proceeding, that person had no reasonable cause to believe that the conduct was unlawful. The termination of an action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed by that person to be in or not opposed to the best interests of this corporation and, with respect to a criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that the person's conduct was unlawful.

Section 10.2 Indemnification: Actions in the Right of this Corporation. This corporation has the power to indemnify a person who was or is a party to, or is threatened

to be made a party to a threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of this corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that the person is or was a trustee, officer, employee or agent of this corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this corporation as a trustee, officer, partner, employee or agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, business corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, whether for profit or not, against expenses (including actual and reasonable attorneys' fees) and amounts paid in settlement incurred by that person in connection with the action or suit if that person acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed by that person to be in or not opposed to the best interests of this corporation. However, no indemnification shall be made for a claim, issue or matter in which such person shall have been found to be liable to this corporation unless and only to the extent that the court in which such action or suit was brought has determined upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all circumstances of the case, that person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnification for the expenses which the court considers proper.

Section 10.3 Indemnification: Mandatory and Permissive Payments.

(a) To the extent that a trustee, officer, employee or agent of this corporation has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of an action, suit or proceeding referred to in Section 10.1 or Section 10.2 of this Article X, or in defense of a claim, issue or matter in the action, suit, or proceeding, that person shall be indemnified against expenses (including actual and reasonable attorneys' fees) incurred by that person in connection with the action, suit or proceeding brought to enforce the mandatory indemnification provided in this Subsection.

(b) An indemnification under Section 10.1 or Section 10.2 of this Article X, unless ordered by a court, shall be made by this corporation only as authorized in a specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the trustee, officer, employee or agent is proper in the circumstances because that person has met the applicable standard of conduct as set forth in either Section 10.1 or Section 10.2. That determination shall be made in any of the following ways:

(i) A majority vote of a quorum of the Executive Committee consisting of members who were not parties to the action, suit or proceeding.

(ii) If that quorum is not obtainable, then by a majority vote of the Executive Committee members who were not parties to the action, suit, or proceeding, as long as there are at least two (2) disinterested Executive Committee members.

(iii) By independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

(iv) By the members of the corporation.

(c) If a person is entitled to indemnification under Section 10.1 or Section 10.2 of this Article X for a portion of expenses including attorneys' fees, judgments, penalties, fines, and amounts paid in settlement, but not for the total amount thereof, this corporation may indemnify the person for the portion of the expenses, judgments, penalties, fines, or amounts paid in settlement for which the person is entitled to be indemnified.

Section 10.4 Indemnification: Expense Advances. Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding described in Section 10.1 or Section 10.2 of this Article X may be paid by this corporation in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the trustee, officer, employee or agent to repay the expenses if it is ultimately determined that the person is not entitled to be indemnified by this corporation. The undertaking shall be by unlimited general obligation of the person on whose behalf advance are made but need not be secured. The indemnification provisions of Sections 10.1 through 10.4 of this Article X shall continue as to a person who ceases to be a trustee, officer, employee, or agent and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS

Section 11.1 Amendments.

(a) These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the delegates in attendance at any meeting of the General Council, provided the proposed amendment has been transmitted to each member church, to members of the Executive Committee, and to the Regional Councils at least six months before it is submitted for approval.

(b) The Ecclesiastical Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the delegates in attendance at a meeting of the General Council, provided notice of at least 24 hours has been given to the delegates attending that meeting.

(c) The Ecclesiastical Bylaws may also be amended between meetings of the General Council by the Executive Committee. Such changes shall be ratified by the next General Council.

(d) These Bylaws replace and supersede any prior Bylaws that this corporation has adopted, including Bylaws that this corporation adopted when it was operating under the name "The Reformed Ecumenical Synod" or the name "The Reformed Ecumenical Council."

CERTIFICATE

I, Setriakor Kobla Nyomi, the General Secretary of WCRC, certify that these Bylaws were adopted as the Bylaws of this corporation on June 25, 2010 and shall be the Bylaws of this corporation.

Dated: June 26, 2010

WCRC General Secretary

Appendix 39

BCS/CD-512 (Rev. 12/05)		
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES		
Date Received	(FOR BUREAU USE ONLY)	
	This document is effective on the date filed, unless a subsequent effective date within 90 days after received date is stated in the document.	
Name Kenneth G. Hofman; MILLER JOHNSON		
Address 250 Monroe Avenue, N.W., Suite 800		
City Grand Rapids	State MI	Zip Code 49503
Document will be returned to the name and address you enter above. If left blank document will be mailed to the registered office.		EFFECTIVE DATE: <input type="text"/>

RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

**of
WCRC**

For use by Ecclesiastical Corporations

(Please read information and instructions on the last page)

Pursuant to the provisions of Act 327, Public Acts of 1931 and Act 162, Public Acts of 1982, the undersigned person(s) execute the following Restated Articles:

1. These Restated Articles of Incorporation are executed pursuant to the provisions of Sections 641-651 of the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act being Act 162, Public Acts of 1982, as amended.
2. The present name of the corporation is The Reformed Ecumenical Council.
3. The corporation identification number (CID) assigned by the Bureau is 706-430.
4. The Corporation's former name is The Reformed Ecumenical Synod.
5. The original Articles of Incorporation were filed on November 8, 1978, and were amended by a filing on September 14, 1990.
6. The following Restated Articles of Incorporation supersede and amend in their entirety the original Articles of Incorporation, as amended, and shall be the Articles of Incorporation of the corporation.

ARTICLE I**NAME OF CORPORATION**

The name of this corporation is WCRC.

ARTICLE II**TERM OF CORPORATION**

The term of this corporation is perpetual.

ARTICLE III**CORPORATE PURPOSES**

This corporation is a nonprofit corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law). This corporation is the identity of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in the United States. This corporation shall work in concert with a sister corporation formed under the laws of Switzerland as outlined under a Constitution and Bylaws that binds this corporation. The purposes of this corporation are as follows:

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 fulfill 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.

The corporation may engage in any activity in connection with the above-stated purposes for which a nonprofit corporation may be organized under the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act. However, this corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or (b) by a corporation to which contributions are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The corporation has not been formed for pecuniary profit or gain. No part of the assets, income or profit of the corporation will inure to the benefit of officers, directors or members. However, the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article III.

No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Upon dissolution, the corporation shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, distribute all the assets of the corporation consistent with one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Any reference in this Article III to a provision of the Internal Revenue Code shall refer to that provision in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law.

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 member churches 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

ORGANIZATION AND FINANCING

The corporation shall be organized upon a non-stock, membership basis.

The corporation is funded by contributions, donations, subscriptions, grants or bequests from individuals and organizations, including gifts and offerings from the member churches of the corporation.

ARTICLE VI

REGISTERED OFFICE AND RESIDENT AGENT

The street address and mailing address of the present registered office of the corporation is 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE - Grand Rapids, Michigan MI 49560.

The name of the current resident agent of the corporation is Peter Borgdorff.

ARTICLE VII

LIMITED LIABILITY FOR DIRECTORS

A volunteer director of the corporation shall not be personally liable to the corporation or its members for monetary damages for a breach of the volunteer director's fiduciary duty, except for liability for any of the following:

- (a) A breach of the volunteer director's duty of loyalty to the corporation or its members;
- (b) Acts or omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

- (c) A violation of Section 551(l) of the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act;
- (d) A transaction from which the volunteer director derived an improper personal benefit; or
- (e) An act or omission that is grossly negligent.

The corporation shall assume all liability to any person other than the corporation or its members for claims for monetary damages for a breach of a volunteer director's duty in his or her capacity as a volunteer director and the volunteer director shall not be personally liable to such persons for monetary damages, except for liability for any of the following:

- (a) A breach of the volunteer director's duty of loyalty to the corporation or its members;
- (b) Acts of omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law;
- (c) A violation of Section 551(l) of the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act;
- (d) A transaction from which the volunteer director derived an improper person benefit; or
- (e) An act or omission that is grossly negligent.

For purposes of this Article VI, "volunteer director" means a director who does not receive anything of value from the corporation for serving as a director other than reasonable per diem compensation and reimbursement for actual, reasonable, and necessary expenses incurred by a director in his or her capacity as a director.

Any repeal, modification or adoption of any provision in these Articles of Incorporation inconsistent with this Article VI shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a volunteer director of the corporation existing at the time of such repeal, modification, or adoption.

ARTICLE VIII

LIMITED LIABILITY FOR NON-DIRECTOR VOLUNTEERS

The corporation shall assume the liability for all acts or omissions of a Non-director volunteer of the corporation (a "Non-director Volunteer") occurring on or after the effective date of this Article if all of the following are met:

- (a) The Non-director Volunteer was acting or reasonably believed he or she was acting within the scope of his or her authority.
- (b) The Non-director Volunteer was acting in good faith.

- (c) The Non-director Volunteer's conduct did not amount to gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct.
- (d) The Non-director Volunteer's conduct was not an intentional tort.
- (e) The Non-director Volunteer's conduct was not a tort arising out of the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle for which tort liability may be imposed as provided in MCLA § 500.3135.

For purposes of this Article VII, a "Non-director Volunteer" means an individual, other than a volunteer director performing services for a nonprofit corporation who does not receive compensation or any other type of consideration for the services other than reimbursement for expenses actually incurred.

If the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act is amended after this Article has been adopted by the members to authorize corporate action to further eliminate or limit the personal liability of Non-director Volunteers, then the liability of a director Volunteer for the corporation shall be eliminated or limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Nonprofit Corporation Act, as amended.

Any repeal, modification or adoption of any provision in these Articles of Association inconsistent with this Article VII shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a Non-director Volunteer existing at the time of such repeal, modification, or adoption.

ARTICLE IX

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of these Restated Articles of Incorporation is June 18, 2010.

The Restated Articles of Incorporation were duly adopted on June 25, 2010, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members entitled to vote in accordance with the provisions of Sections 611 and 642 of the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act.

WCRC

Dated: June 26, 2010

By: Setriakor Kobla Nyomi
Its: General Secretary

Name of person or organization remitting fees:

MILLER, JOHNSON, SNELL & CUMMISKEY, P.L.C.

Preparer's name and business telephone number:

Kenneth G. Hofman
(616) 831-1721

Appendix 40

UNITING GENERAL COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

Delegations

AFRICA

Angola

Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola

Rev. Coutinho Maravilhoso Moma

Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola

Mr. Pedro Quinanga

Botswana

Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana

Rev. Dikeme Radikgomo

Burkina Faso

Association of Reformed Evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso

Rev. Tegwende Leonard Kinda

Cameroon

Evangelical Church of Cameroon

Rev. Isaac Batome Henga

African Protestant Church

Rev. Jean Paul Bvouoyele

Ms Ida Françoise Heu Bouambo

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

Rev. Dr. Festus Ambe Asana

Mrs. Mbone Epie Ntuba Beatrice

Rev. Ituka Francis Mekumba

Rt. Rev. Dr. Nyansako-ni Nku

Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

Mr. Georges Yves Ela Ngomo

Ms Hortense Mbengono Mfomo Essomba

Rev. Frieda Moutngui Epse Ngi

Mr. Emmanuel Mve Elemva

Democratic Republic of Congo

Evangelical Community in Congo, Church of Christ in Congo

Rev. Edi Diantete Marcel Diafuanakana

Presbyterian Community of East Kasai, Church of Christ in Congo

Rev. Charles Lukumuena Lumuna Biayia

Ms Victorine Luse Somba Many

Presbyterian Community in Congo, Church of Christ in Congo

Rev. Bope Mikobi
 Rev. Dr. Mulumba M. Mukundi
 Ms Sabine Mukundi Kabeya
 Rev. Tshibemba Tshimpaka

Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, Church of Christ in Congo

Rev. Samuel Kabambi Dijinda Lukusa
 Ms Monique Misenga Mukuna Ngoie

Protestant Community of Katanga, Church of Christ in Congo

Rev. Floribert Kabwika Ntanda-Kadisabula

Egypt

Evangelical Church of Egypt - Synod of the Nile

Rev. Refat Fathy Roman Gergis
 Rev. Dr. Tharwat Fahmy Kades

Equatorial Guinea

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea

Mrs. Priscila Anguesomo Nsue Nnemkang
 Rev. Manuel Nzoh Asumu Alu

Ethiopia

Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Ms Million Terefe Gobena
 Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa Negari

Ghana

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Rt. Rev. Francis Robert Kwami Amenu
 Ms Annie Eunice Amma Anipa
 Rev. Dr. Cyril Fayose
 Rev. Godwin Kwaku Osiakwa

Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong
 Rev. Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Manso
 Dr. Esther Oduraa Ofei-Aboagye
 Samuel Amoah Opere
 Salome Ntobea Twum

Kenya

Reformed Church of East Africa

Rev. Samson Eturote Akoru
 Joseph Kipchumba Kigen
 Geoffrey Kiptanui Songok

Presbyterian Church of East Africa
Rev. Festus Kaburu Gitonga
Rev. Eustace Kabui
Mr. Thomas Leremore
Mrs. Veronica Njoki Muchiri

Lesotho

Lesotho Evangelical Church
Rev. John Rapelang Mokhahlane

Madagascar

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
Ms Iveline Lalanirina Ramahefarivo
Rev. Dr. Laurent William Ramambason
Mrs. Diamondra Ramambason
Mrs. Zoe Ramisarivelo
Mr. Josoa Randrianaly
Rev. Lala Haja Rasendrasahina
Ms Ando Stephanie Ratsimba

Malawi

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Nkhoma Synod
Rev. Davidson Chifungo
Rev. Chatha Eneya James Msangaambe

Mauritius

Presbyterian Church of Mauritius
Rev. James Rodney Curpanen
Mrs. Natacha Emmanuela Noyan

Morocco

Evangelical Church in Morocco
Ms Anne-Marie Teeuwissen

Mozambique

Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique
Rev. Amina Manuel
Rev. Constantino Mugema
Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
Mr. Sansao Mahalambe
Jose Tovela Junior
Ms Crestina Mause Tseco

Nigeria

Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv (NKST)

Rev. John Iornenge

Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria

Justice Joel Filibus Agya

Rev. Joseph Unum Ajaver

Mr. Kefas Solomon Akundo

Rev. Istifanus Bala Bahago

Rev. Bulus Adama Gani

Rev. Yakubu Ishaya Tsojon

Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ

Rev. Adamu Akyala

Mrs. Angbas Katsa Isuwa

Mr. Deborah Jonga

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Rev. Mercy Akpama

Elder Dr. Mfon Edyang-Ekpa

Dr. Benebo Fubara-Manuel

Rev. Ukpai Agwu Kalu

Rt. Rev. Ubon Bassey Usung

Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria

Rev. Elisha Eyab

Rev. Adamu Manasseh Musa

Mrs. Jemimah Manasseh Musa

Rev. Ji Yakubu Risae

Mrs. Betty Ayesukwe

United Church of Christ in Nigeria (HEKAN)

Rev. Emmanuel N. Dziggau

Mrs. Roda Hananiya Hananiya

Reunion

Protestant Church of Reunion Island

Mr. Simon Rafidison

Rwanda

Presbyterian Church in Rwanda

Rev. Nagaju Muke

Rev. Dr. Elisée Musemakweli

Senegal

Protestant Church of Senegal

Ms Linda Ebot

South Africa

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian

Rev. Dr. Felix Chingota

Rev. G. Chirwa

Ms Thandiwe Jumbe

Ms Judith Mkandawire

Dutch Reformed Church (NGK)

Dr. Johann Heinrich Ernst

Dr. Jacobus Johannes Gerber

Ms Rinel Hugo

Prof. Cornelius Johannes Petrus Niemandt

Ms Annette Potgieter

Prof. Pieter Johannes Strauss

Rev. Willie Van der Merwe

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa

Mrs. Valliry Alphosina Masangu

Rev. Dr. Titus Risimati Mobbie

Presbyterian Church of Africa

Rev. Mzukisi Faleni

Mrs. Nondwe Mabandla

Reformed Church in Africa

Rev. Victor Vythalingum Pillay

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

Rev. Hendric Pillay

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay

Ms Ditsebe Marcia Rosina Tleane

Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Rev. Motlalentwa Godfrey Betha

Prof. Selaelo Thias Kgatla

Dr. Dawid Admill Kuyler

Dr. Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel

Volkserk van Afrika

Mrs. Jennifer Marina Davidson

Dr. Donald Katts

Sudan

Africa Inland Church Sudan

Bishop Angbada John Kongi

Mr. Charles Jongo Manuel

Swaziland

Swaziland Reformed Church

Dr. Arnau van Wyngaard

Togo

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo
 Rev. Agbenoxevi Mawuli Awanyoh
 Rev. Komla Edoh Degbovi

Uganda

Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda
 Ms Catherine Bayogera
 Prof. Sams Sendawula Kironde-Kigozi
 Rev. Joseph Willkins Musiitwa
 Rev. Wilberforce Musisi Nagware Wabulo

Zambia

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Zambia Synod
 Rev. Llyod Ng'ambi
 Reformed Church in Zambia
 Mrs. Sebbah Mbewe
 Rev. Moses Lucas Mwale
 United Church of Zambia
 Mr. Kasumpa Bornwell Chishimba
 Rev. Chrispin Mbalazi
 Ms Chilongo Mwenya
 Rev. Rosemary Wazipila Nachilembe
 Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
 Rev. Christopher Mkandawire

Zimbabwe

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Harare Synod
 Rev. Aston Galanti
 Rev. Joseph Juma
 Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
 Mrs. Margret Chomutiri
 Rev. Dr. Enos Chomutiri
 Rev. Chimbiso Mufumhi
 Rev. Christopher Muni

ASIA**Bangladesh**

Church of Bangladesh
 Mrs. Janet Sarker
 Bishop Paul Shishir Sarker
 Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church in Bangladesh
 Rev. Parkhum Lushai

Rev. Zothansang Lushai

China

China Christian Council

Rev. Dr. Ying Gao

Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

Ms Wai Yee, Winnie Ma

Rev. Shing Yit So

India

Church of South India

Dr. Bennet Abraham

Rev. Christopher Solomon Avulamanda

Bishop Joseph Lawrence Bartholomeu

Rev. Linn Gann

Bishop Devakadasham Gnanasigamony

Rev. Samuel Prakash Isaac

Dr. Mrs. Soumini Jayan Samuel

Mr. Philip Modayil Mani

Dr. Mrs. Rashmi Rekha Senapati

Mr. Sudipta Singh

Evangelical Church of Maraland

Rev. Paithachho Riabi

Presbyterian Church of India

Rev. Stephen Chinzathang

Mr. Bolstarly Dkhar

Rev. Laldawngliana Fanai

Rev. Dr. Maksal Jones Hynniewta

Rev. Newin Mitcheal Iangrai

Rev. Iosterwell Iawphniaw

Rev. Dr. Lalmangaiha

Rev. Subha Singh Majaw

Indonesia

Christian Church in Central Sulawesi

Rev. Tony Tampake

Christian Church in Luwuk Banggai

Rev. Ariaty Walalangi

Christian Church in South Sulawesi

Rev. Atok Saramang

Ms Irfany Jedida Sopamena

Christian Church of Sumba

Rev. Naftali Djoru

Mr. Petrus Pandanga

Christian Churches in South Sumatra

- Mr. D'Karlo Purba
 Christian Churches of Java
 Rev. Retno Ratih Suryaning Handayani
 Rev. Dr. Kadarmanto Hardjowasito
 Christian Evangelical Church in Bolaang Mongondow
 Rev. Christina Raintama Pangulimang
 Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa
 Elder Billy Lombok
 Rev. Reinhard Rumengan
 Mrs. Olga Singkoh
 Rev. Roy Tamaweol
 Church of Toraja Mamasa
 Mr. Obed Nego Depparinding
 Mr. Libersin Saragih Allgan
 Mrs. Ruth Meymah Sinaga
 Mr. Yohanis Tandung
 . Hermin Victor Buntukaraeng
 Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua
 Mr. Boas Leonard Duwiri
 Rev. Dr. Karel Philemon Erari
 Rev. Jemima Jacoba Krey
 Mr. Arius Jhon Mebri
 Rev. Alberth Yoku
 Evangelical Church in Kalimantan
 Rev. Wardinan Lidim
 Rev. Prapatrotis Oedoy
 Indonesian Christian Church
 Ms Yael Eka Hadiputeri
 Rev. Arliyanus Larosa
 Rev. Lindawati Mismanto
 Rev. Dr. Lazarus Hendro Purwanto
 Mrs. Mungki Aditya Sasmita
 Rev. Kuntadi Sumadikarya
 Karo Batak Protestant Church
 Rev. Jenny Eva Karosekali
 Rev. Dr. Jadiaman Peranginangin
 Protestant Church in Indonesia
 Rev. Dr. Samuel Benyamin Hakh
 Mr. Grigorio Samusamu
 Ms Meiske Soedjadi-Karamoy
 Protestant Church in West Indonesia
 Prof. Dr. John Edward Harly Jacob FoEh
 Rev. Chatarina Paulina Kaloh
 Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor
 Rev. Dr. Ebenhaizer Imanuel Nuban Timo

Rev. Aleida Salean-Sola
Toraja Church
Mrs. Jeanny Maria Fatimah
Rev. MsArsiati Sipa' Kabangnga
Mr. Alexander Palinggi

Rev.

Indu' Yohanis Panggalo
Dr. Daniel Sampepajung
Rev. Yusuf Paliling Marthen Tayang

Japan

Church of Christ in Japan
Rev. Makito Hatta
Prof. Junko Kikuchi
Korean Christian Church in Japan
Rev. SooKil Park

Malaysia

Presbyterian Church in Malaysia
Mr. Cheh Liang Mok

Myanmar

Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Rev. Dr. Lal Engzau
Mrs. LalSangi
Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar
Rev. Chan Thleng
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Rev. Robert Thawm Luai
Independent Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Rev. Dr. Pa Sang
Mara Evangelical Church
Rev. Dr. L.B. Siama
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Mrs. LaiPui
Rev. Tial Hlei Thanga

Pakistan

Church of Pakistan
Mrs. Mussarat Mehnaz
Rt. Rev. Samuel Pervez
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Rev. Dr. Kamil Maqsood

Philippines

Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines

Ms Mona Teresa A. Sanchez

United Church of Christ in the Philippines

Bishop Eliezer Pascua

Mrs. Mary Ann Udtohan

Singapore

Presbyterian Church in Singapore

Rev. May Tan

Rev. Leonard Wee

South Korea

Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)

Rev. Dr. Hyun Ju Bae

Dr. Ji-Yeon Hong

Rev. Dr. Gyoung-Ho Jeong

Rev. Kyung In Kim

Mr. Dae Won Kim

Mr. Myung Han Kim

Mr. Hyung Kyoo Lee

Rev. Dal Ig Son

Rev. Dr. Sung Bihn Yim

Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)

Ms Yu-Mi Bae

Rev. Tae-Jin Bae

Rev. Yong-Kyu Kang

Rev. Dae-hyun Lee

Elder Young-Ja Song

Sri Lanka

Christian Reformed Church in Sri Lanka

Rev. Charles Norton Jansz

Mrs. Crystelle Van Dort

Presbytery of Lanka

Ms Rufina Niroshi Palliyaguruge

Rev. Kumbukage Piyadasa

Taiwan

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Rev. Dr. Te-Chien Chang

Rev. Dr. Yang-en Cheng

Ms Yueh-Wen Lu

Dr. Shu-Ying Shih

Mr. Ek-hong Sia

Thailand

Church of Christ in Thailand
Rev. Michael David Fucella

Vietnam

Presbyterian Church of Vietnam
Rev. Bao Xuan Nguyen

CARIBBEAN

Cuba

Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba
Rev. Dora Ester Arce-Valentin
Rev. Francisco Vicente Marrero-Gutierrez

Grenada

Presbyterian Church in Grenada
Ms Doniecia Madonna Ganness
Rev. Raphael Osbert James

Guyana

Guyana Presbyterian Church
Ms Krysta Bisnauth
Guyana Congregational Union
Mr. Marlon Fraser
Presbytery of Guyana
Elder Charlotte Christine Halley
Rev. James Rotri Sampson
Guyana Congregational Union
Rev. Winifred Victorine Samuels

Jamaica

United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
Rev. Dr. Collin I. Cowan
Rev. Dr. Yvette Maud Noble Bloomfield

Trinidad and Tobago

Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago
Mrs. Evangelene Bhagan
Rev. Elvis Elahie

EUROPE

Austria

Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession in Austria
Rev. Thomas Hennefeld
Ms Irmgard Langer

Belgium

United Protestant Church in Belgium
Dr. Guy Liagre

Bulgaria

Union of Evangelical Congregational Churches in Bulgaria
Rev. Danail Petrov Ignatov
Rev. Nikolov Blagovest Nikolov

Croatia

Reformed Christian (Calvinist) Church in Croatia
Rev. Eric Titus

Czech Republic

Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren
Ms Pavlina Buzková
Mr. Pavel Ruml

Denmark

Reformed Church of Denmark
Rev. Axel Bargheer
Rev. Sabine Hofmeister

France

Reformed Church of France
Mr. Roger-Michel Bory
Rev. Didier Crouzet
Rev. Dina Iloniaina Rajohns
Reformed Protestant Church of Alsace and Lorraine
Dr. Jean-Gustave Hentz

Germany

Church of Lippe
Rev. Christoph Bendix Balke
Ms Claudia Hildegard Ostarek
Reformed Alliance
Rev. Dr. Peter Bukowski
Ms Verena Jana Hoff

Ms Martina Wasserloos-Strunk
Dr. Friedrich Gerhard Martin Weinrich
Evangelical Reformed Church
Rev. Frauke Birgit Laaser
Dr. Johann Weusmann

Great Britain

United Free Church of Scotland
Rev. Ian Andrew Boa
United Reformed Church
Mr. James Breslin
Ms Karen Campbell
Rev. Richard Mortimer
Mr. Simon Peters
Rev. Jane Rowell
Church of Scotland
Rev. Dr. Alan D. Falconer
Rev. Alexander Horsburgh
Rev. Dr. Sheilagh M. Kesting
Mr. Iain McLarty
Rev. Lindsay Schluter
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Rev. Mrs. Nan Powell-Davies
Rev. Huw Powell-Davies
Union of Welsh Independents
Dr. Thomas Hefin Jones
Rev. Dr. Geraint Tudur

Greece

Greek Evangelical Church
Rev. Dimitrios Boukis
Mrs. Angela Meletiadis

Hungary

Reformed Church in Hungary
Bishop Dr. Gusztav Bolcskei
Rev. Zsuzsanna Palfi
Rev. Daniel Peterdi
Ms Zsanett Sütő
Rev. Dr. Kadar Zsolt

Ireland

Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Rev. Cheryl (Aadeen) Meban
Mrs. Kathryn Viner

Italy

Waldensian Evangelical Church
Rev. Claudio Pasquet
Ms Sara Rivoira

Latvia

Reformed Church in Latvia
Rev. Dr. Juris Calitis

Lithuania

Evangelical Reformed Church in Lithuania
Mrs. Renata Emilija Bareikiene
Rev. Rimas Mikalauskas

Luxemburg

Evangelical Protestant Church of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
Rev. Karl Georg Marhoffer

Netherlands

Covenant of Free Evangelical Churches in the Netherlands
Rev. Eduard Van den Berg
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Ms Rev. Susanne Freytag
Dr. Grietje (Margriet) Gosker
Ms Marloes Keller
Rev. Everhardus Overeem
Dr. Arjan Plaisier
Rev. Dr. Bastiaan Plaisier
Dr. Jacobus Maarten van't Kruis
Rev. Peter Verhoeff
Dr. Heleen Zorgdrager
Remonstrant Brotherhood
Rev. Lense Johannes Lijzen

Poland

Reformed Evangelical Church in Poland
Bishop Marek Izdebski
Mr. Lukasz Pawel Skurczynski

Portugal

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
Mr. Joao de Matos
Rev. David Valente

Republic of Ireland

Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Rev. Lorraine Ritchie

Romania

Reformed Church in Romania (Oradea)
Mr. Janos Antal
Bishop István Csury
Reformed Church in Romania (Cluj)
Rev. Tibor Kiss

Serbia

Protestant Christian Church in Serbia
Bishop Dr. Istvan Csete-Szemesi

Slovakia

Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
Rev. Marian Hamari

Spain

Spanish Evangelical Church
Mrs. Lidia Castell Valldosera
Rev. Israel Flores Olmos

Sweden

Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
Dr. Gunilla Gunner
Dr. Pieter Holtrop

Switzerland

Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
Ms Silvianna Bürki
Ms Verena Enzler-Hegner
Rev. Dr. Ernst Matthias Rüschi
Rev. Jean-Michel Sordet
Rev. Thomas Wipf

Ukraine

Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, Ukraine
Bishop Sandor Zan Fabian

LATIN AMERICA***Argentina***

Reformed Churches in Argentina

Mrs. Gabriela Mulder

Rev. Gerardo Carlos Cristian Oberman

Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Argentina

Rev. Juan Abelardo Schvindt

Brazil

Evangelical Reformed Churches in Brazil

Rev. Joao de Geus Los

Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Rev. Alex Sandro dos Santos

Rev. Clayton Leal da Silva

Rev. Assir Pereira

Rev. Eleni Rodrigues Mender Rangel

United Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Ms Magda Cristina Jarussi

Rev. Enoc Teixeira Wenceslau

Colombia

Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Rev. Vilma Isabel Yanez Ogaza

Costa Rica

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Costa Rica

Rev. José Francisco Huertas Rodríguez

Dominican Republic

Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic

Mr. Hector Benjamin Olea Cordero

Rev. Jose Manuel Gutierrez

Dominican Evangelical Church

Rev. Nelson Gustavo Rodriguez Andujar

El Salvador

Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador

Rev. Santiago Alfredo Flores Amaya

Elder Ana Margarita Mejia Arevalo

Guatamala

National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala

Ms Mirna Elizabeth Cifuentes de Sanchez

Mr. Milton Uvaldino Garcia Meza

Rev. Benjamin Yac Poz

Mexico

National Presbyterian Church of Mexico
Rev. Samuel Trinidad Bartolo

Uruguay

Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate
Mr. Jorge Roland
Rev. Carola Ruth Tron Urban

Venezuela

Presbyterian Church of Venezuela
Rev. Dr. Loida Maria Gaffaro de Valera
Rev. Elisa Esther Munoz de Bulmes

MIDDLE EAST

Lebanon

National Evangelical Union of Lebanon
Mrs. Leila Al Saleeby
National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
Rev. Najla Kassab
Mr. Arfan Jarjour
Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East
Ms Shaka Koujryan
Rev. Raffi Messerlian

Iran

Evangelical Church of Iran
Rev. Hendrik Shanazari

NORTH AMERICA

Canada

Christian Reformed Church in North America
Rev. Bruce G. Adema
Ms Louisa Bruinsma
Rev. Dr. William T. Koopmans
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Rev. Dr. Robert Neil Faris
Rev. Mary Fontaine
Rev. Stephen Kendall
Rev. Cheol Soon Park

Reformed Church in America

Mrs. Christina Labbe

United Church of Canada

Mr. Allan Buckingham

Ms E. Lori Crocker

Mr. Moses Kanhai

Rev. Catherine Faith MacLean

Rev. William James Thomas

Mr. Vic Wiebe

USA

Christian Reformed Church in North America

Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra

Ms Kate Kooyman

Dr. Carol Rottman

Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America

Rev. Dr. G. Lynne Herring

Dr. Robert D. Rush

Mrs. Laurie Sharpe

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Rev. Dr. James McGuire

Hungarian Reformed Church in America

Rev. Dr. Attila Kocsis

Rt. Rev. Sandor Szabo

Rev. Ferenc Varga

Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church

Deacon Erika Brooks

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Dr. B. Hunter Farrell

Rev. Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo

Rev. Alice Hageman

Ms Rachel Medema

Rev. Gradye Parsons

Rev. Dr. Neal Presa

Rev. Bruce Reyes Chow

Rev. Dr. Mrs. Marsha Snulligan-Haney

Mr. Aaron Stauffer

Rev. Robina Marie Winbush

Reformed Church in America

Rev. Jessica Bratt

Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Rev. En Young Kim

Rev. Donald Poest

Rev. Dr. James Seawood

United Church of Christ

Rev. Geoffrey A. Black
Rev. Sheldon Culver
Rev. Dr. Susan E. Davies
Dr. Eleazar Fernandez
Mr. De Sorrow Golden
Dr. Edith Rasell
Rev. Lydia Veliko

PACIFIC

American Samoa

Congregational Church in American Samoa

Mrs. Faaipoipoga Tialavea
Rev. Samuel (Sr.) Tialavea

Australia

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia

Rev. Hendrik De Waard

Uniting Church in Australia

Rev. Terence Corkin
Rev. Kerry Enright
Ms Robyn Ellen Goodwin
Rev. Prof. Dr. Ian James Mitchell Haire
Rev. Alistair Macrae
Rev. Charity Nompumelelo Majiza

French Polynesia

Maohi Protestant Church

Rev. Ariipeu Arthur Faua
Ms Gerida Pahio ep. Taiarui

Kiribati

Kiribati Protestant Church

Rev. Bureieta Karaiti
Rev. Temoua Torom

New Caledonia

Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands

Rev. Calvin Wandawa Eurimindia

New Zealand

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Rev. Dr. Jason Goroncy
Rev. Dr. Bruce Hamill

Niue Island

Niue Church

Mrs. Janice Rida Jackson
Rev. Hawea Albert Reed Jackson

Samoa

Congregational Christian Church in Samoa

Rev. Dr. Iutisone Salevo
Ms Ruta Sefo
Rev. Esekielu Situfu Tanielu

Tuvalu

Tuvalu Congregational Christian Church

Rev. Tofinga Falani
Mrs. Tangira Tofiga

Vanuatu

Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Rev. Allen Nafuki

ASSOCIATE AND AFFILIATE MEMBER DELEGATES

Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC)

Rev. Dr. Cathy Hubbard
Ms Laura Jennison Reed
Rev. Prof. David Michael Thompson
Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins
Dr. Robert Welsh
Dr. Newell Williams

International Reformed Theological Institute (IRTI)

Prof. Martien Everhardus Brinkman
Dr. Eduardus Van der Borght

ECUMENICAL OBSERVERS

Anglican Consultative Communion

Rev. Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan

Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (Armenian Orthodox Church)

Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian

Bread for All

Dr. Beat Dietschy

Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM)

Rev. Karen Herbst-Kim

Christian Churches Together in the USA
Dr. Richard Hamm

Council for World Mission (CWM)
Rev. Dr. Desmond Peter Vander Water

Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW)
Rev. Christoph Andreas Dieter Anders

Fondation pour l'Aide au Protestantisme Réformé (FAP)
Ms Silvia Leonor Adoue Renfer

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Dr. John Graz

International Council of Community Churches
Rev. Herman Harmelink III

Lutheran World Federation
Dr. Kathryn Johnson
Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko
Rev. Fred Opalinski

Mennonite World Conference
Dr. Larry Miller

Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)
Rev. Nicta Lubaale Makiika

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
Rev. Gregory Fairbanks

United Evangelical Mission (UEM)
Rev. Jutta Beldermann

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Bishop Patrick Cooney
Bishop Walter Hurley

World Council of Churches
Mr. Doug Chial
Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit

GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY (GIT)

Faculty

Prof. Dr. Peter Wyatt (Dean)
Dr. Annette Mosher (Dean of Students)
Dr. Ofelia Ortega (Chaplain)
Prof. Dr. Martin Avila
Prof. Dr. Anna Case Winters
Dr. Benebo Furbara
Prof. Dr. Nelly van Doorn-Harder
Dr. Douwe Visser
Dr. Henry Wilson
Prof. Dr. Hans de Wit

Students

Ms Barbara Amon Betschart
Dr. Lyle Bierma
Ms Lydia Matei Chemei
Mr. James Edward Church
Mr. Richard Arthur Davis
Ms Maria Wilhelmina de Reuver
Mr. Teferi Hundessa Dinka
Mr. Martin Engels
Mr. Steve Gaspersz
Rev. Endre Iszlai
Ms Eun ha Kim
Rev. Carlos A. Lara-Gabb
Ms Joo An Lee
Ms Yesie Irawan Lie
Rev. Alamatinga Sio Lusama
Mr. Balazs David Magyar
Ms Nadia Marais
Ms Joan Masterton
Ms Wezzie Mtonga
Mrs. Greta Nania
Mr. Roelof Johannes Nel
Rev. Elijah Oko Obinna
Rev. John Olakunle Ojo
Dr. Belay Guta Olam
Ms Yolanda Pantou
Mr. Yohanes Parihala
Mrs. Rada Pejic-Sremac
Ms Lal Hlim Puii
Rev. Brigitte Rabarijaona
Ms Satnarine Ramnath
Ms Theresa Rieder
Mrs. Merve Elisabeth Rugenstein-Itona
Ms Izett Sama Hernandez
Rev. Sujanna Raj Seelam
Mr. Srdjan Sremac
Mr. Matthew David Stone
Ms Aiko Widhidana Sumichan
Mr. Muthuraj Swamy
Rev. Natan Togau
Ms Nayeli SosanimVazquez Valencia
Ms Lucy Wambui Waweru
Ms Janine Merle Williams
Mr. Jeong Woon
Ms Marije Zeldenrijk

GUESTS

Christian Reformed Church in North America
Ms Susan van Houten
John Knox International Reformed Center, Geneva (JKIRC)
Dr. Cyril Ritchie
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Dr. Jane Douglass
United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
Prof. Allan Boesak
World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)
Mrs. Akpene Nyomi
Mr. Xoeseko Nyomi

MEMBERS OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff (REC President)
Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick (WARC President)
Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi (WARC General Secretary)
Richard van Houten (REC General Secretary)
Dr. Kobus Gerber (South Africa)
Dr. Margriet Gosker (Netherlands)
Rev. Stephen Kendall (Canada)
Rev. Dr. Ery Hutabarat (Indonesia)
Rev. Victor Pillay (South Africa)
Rev. Salome Twum (Ghana)

NON-MEMBER CHURCH OBSERVERS

Evangelical Church in Baden
Rev. Dr. Christopher Glimpel
Evangelical Church in the Rheinland
Oberkirchenrätin Barbara Rudolph
Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia
Dr. Björn Karl Theodor Rugenstein
Evangelical Church of Westphalia
Ms Beate Hessler
Oberkirchenrat Dr. Ulrich Möller
Faith Alive Christian Resources
Rev. Leonard Vander Zee
Global Evangelical Church
Rev. Samuel Dickson Kofi Dumevi
International Peacemaking Church of Christ

Mr. Jude Mukendi Kabongo
Knox College
Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon
Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NHKA)
Rev. Etienne Gerhard Fourie
Rev. Dr. D.J.C. van Wyk
Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau
Mrs. Provost Karin Held
Reformed Christian (Calvinist) Church in Croatia
Rev. Kopácsi Kettős János
Reformed Community of Congo
Bishop Bethuel Lutete Tunga Mpezo Nsezi Mpanda
Bishop Jean-Paul Mbuku Lukwala Masengomokene
National Presbyterian Church of Iraq
Rev. Haitham Akram Afram Jazrawi
Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) in the Evangelical Church in
Germany
Superintendentin Annette Maria Elisabeth
Kurschus Wesleyan Reform Church
Rev. Ishaku Aijbauka Bitrus
World Association of Taiwanese Christian Churches (WATCC)
Dr. Ai-Lan Wang

**FORMER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT
WHO WERE NOT DELEGATES**

Mr. Helis Hernan Barraza Diaz
Mr. Peter Borgdorff
Mrs. Judith Elaine Fisher
Rev. Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang
Dr. Winston Kawale
Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Rev. Gottfried Wilhelm Locher
Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega Suarez
Rev. Lilia Rafalimanana

OFFICIAL MINUTE TAKER

Ms Carol Veldman Rudie

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Speakers (first keynote event)

Rev. Sabine Dressler-Kromminga
Mrs. Ruth Padilla DeBorst

Rev. Dr. Park Seong-Won
 Ms J. Ayana McCalman
 Rev. Sharon Watkins (moderator)

Speaker (second keynote event)

Mr. Richard Twiss

STAFF

REC

Dr. Richard Van Houten	General Secretary
Ms Joy Lee	Administrative Assistant

WARC

Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi	General Secretary
Ms Elisabeth Henriette Den Hollander	Executive Secretary for Mission
Ms Kristine Greenaway	Executive Secretary for Communications
Ms Maureen O'Brien	Executive Secretary for Finance
Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth	Executive Secretary for Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership
Dr. Douwe Visser	Executive Secretary for Theology and Ecumenical Engagement
Ms Penelope Blachut	Administrative Assistant

Coopted Staff

Rev. Jeanette Beagley-Koolhaas
 Mr. Gilbert Beaume
 Mr. James Boldenow
 Mr. Theo Buss
 Rev. Claire Chimelli
 Mr. Tony Coates
 Mrs. Elisabeth-Donata Coleman
 Ms Stephanie DeWeerd
 Mr. Setriakor Dzivenu
 Rev. Chris Ferguson
 Mrs. Laura Gattinoni
 Mr. David Goodman
 Ms Patricia Isabel Groeting
 Mrs. Ana Guarnerio
 Prof. Darrell Guder
 Mr. William Hagarty
 Rev. John Hulst
 Mrs. Nelvina Ilbrink

Ms Manuela Bettina Johannsen-Wille
Rev. Dr. Karla Ann Koll
Rev. Anani Kuadjovi-Ayedewou
Ms Ying Wai (Yvette) Lau
Rev. Hartmut Lucke
Mr. John Mambu
Rev. Dr. Joseph Obiri Yeboah Mante
Mr. Ed Miller
Mr. Kevin Morales
Mrs. Margaret Wanjiku Mukuna
Ms Elizabeth Nash
Ms Joy Noble
Ms Maria Helena Nyberg
Mr. Ramon Perez
Mr. Hefry Falimanana Rakotoarijao
Mr. Donald Reasoner
Rev. John Rozeboom
Ms Carol Rudie
Ms Mercy Rumengan
Mrs. Renate Elisabeth Sbeghen
Mr. Renato Sicoli
Mr. David Sidebotham
Ms Myriam Marcela Sintado
Rev. Carlos Alberto Sintado
Rev. Dr. Eriberto Soto
Ms Carol Speiring
Ms Jane Stranz
Mrs. Suanne Sweetman
Dr. Jillian Claire Tabart
Rev. Arie Van Eek
Mrs. Elizabeth Visinand
Mrs. Antoinette Visser-Berkouwer
Mrs. Annette von Lerber
Ms Bethany Vrieland
Rev. Louis Wagenveld
Mr. Duncan Wilson
Mr. Stephen Woerner
Rev. Philip Woods
Ms Claudia Wrogg
Rev. Cornelio German Zijlstra
Rev. Henry Zwaanstra

Consultants

Rev. David Baak
Rev. Dr. Mrs. Bridget Ben-Naimah

Mr. Ed Bianchi
Rev. Paulette Brown
Rev. Cynthia Holder Rich
Mrs. Nancy Mugure Kabue
Mr. Samuel Njuguna Kabue
Rev. Dr. Dong Sung Kim
Dr. Puleng Lenka-Bula
Rev. James C. Lont
Dr. Stephens Lytch
Prof. Dr. Maake Jonathan Masango
Ms Jennifer Ayana McCalman
Dr. Fulata Moyo
Rev. Japhet Ndhlovu
Rev. Dr. Seong-Won Park
Mr. Philip Vinod Peacock
Rev. Michael Peters
Mr. Levi Rickert

Ms Beth Swagman
Ms Carolyn Thompson
Mr. Harm van Wijnen
Mr. Jonathan Vandenberg
Mr. PetersherIn Vander Meulen

Stewards

Ms Zsofia Abraham, Hungary
Ms Kendra Lorie Gail Allen, USA
Ms Godiva Lucille Amenu, Ghana
Mr. Tyson B. Babayco, USA
Ms Devin Berry, USA
Mr. Richard Browne, UK
Ms Elis Calado Hungaro, Brazil
Mr. Eunsub Cho, USA
Mr. Henry W.S. Coates, USA
Ms Kelly Colwell, USA
Ms Carissa De Young, USA
Mr. Anthony Elenbaas, USA
Mr. Kaoma Randolph Fernandes, Guyana
Mr. David AK Gonuh, UK
Ms Ursina Elisabeth Hardegger, Switzerland
Ms Andrunie Harris, Guyana
Mr. Thomas Ernst Heim, Switzerland
Mr. Michael Heller, USA
Mr. Eduardo Rodolfo Hernandez Moreira, Uruguay
Mr. Mark Hofman, USA

Mr. Naphtali Itona, Switzerland
Mr. Wiroon Jitpraneechai, Thailand
Ms Sheryl Johnson, Canada
Mr. Bineati Kabokia, Kiribati
Mr. Zydrunas Kamarauskas, Lithuania
Ms Leshia Knopf, Canada
Mr. Jan Korevaar, Canada
Ms Jayeon Lee, South Korea
Ms Maria Jane McDaid, UK
Mr. Keiichi Nagai, Japan
Ms Mariann Fruzsina Nagy, Hungary
Ms Jillian Neilson, UK
Ms Vanessa Persenaire, USA
Ms Megan E. Puckett, USA
Ms Ihoby Rakotomalala, USA
Ms Gabija Ramšaitė, Lithuania
Ms Sarah Ross, USA
Ms Debora Rachelina Stefani Simanjuntak, Indonesia
Ms Donalda Sinkute, Lithuania
Ms Eden Thangji, USA
Ms Rini Lalrinmawii Tochwawng, India
Ms Aleena Maari Gina Toplak, Germany
Ms Femke Visser, Netherlands
Ms Lydia Wiles, USA
Ms Kimberlee Louise Woutersz, Sri Lanka
Ms Ya-Chi Yang, Taiwan
Ms Valerie Ziegler, Canada

Worship Committee

Ms Alison Adam
Rev. Nicqi Ashwood
Dr. Emily Brink
Rev. Sabine Dressler-Kromminga
Mr. Christopher Kingdom-Grier
Rev. Christina Mandang
Dr. Joel Navarro
Rev. Dr. John Witvliet

Appendix 41

**OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS
2010-2017****President**

Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa – President of the Communion of Reformed Churches in Africa (new President of CRCA to be elected in 2011)

Vice-Presidents/Moderators

Mr. Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz, Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Ms Yueh-Wen Lu, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Rev. Dr. Bastiaan Plaisier, Protestant Church in the Netherlands

Treasurer

Rev. Dr. Gottfried Wilhelm Locher, Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

Moderators for Justice and Partnership Office

Mr. Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz, Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Ms Yueh-Wen Lu, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Moderator for Theology, Mission and Communion Office

Rev. Dr. Bastiaan Plaisier, Protestant Church in the Netherlands

Moderator for Communications Office

Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Moderator of Finance Office

Rev. Dr. Gottfried Wilhelm Locher, Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

Members

Bishop Dr. Gusztáv Bölcskei, Reformed Church in Hungary – President of WCRC Europe (new President of WCRC Europe to be elected in 2011)

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. Mary Fontaine, Presbyterian Church in Canada

Dr. Kobus Gerber, Dutch Reformed Church (South Africa)
Ms Yael Eka Hadiputeri, Indonesian Christian Church
Rev. Hong Chi Hu, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan – President of
North East Asia Area Council (succeeded in 2011 by: Rev. Dr. Yang-
En Cheng, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)
Mrs. Najla Kassab Abousawan, 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. Allen Nafuki, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
Rev. Gradye Parsons, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Neal Presa, Middlesex Presbyterian Church (USA) – Convener
of the Caribbean and North America Area Council
Rev. Carola Tron Urban, Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River
Plate (Uruguay)
Ms Salome Twum, Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Advisors

Ms Robyn Ellen Goodwin, Uniting Church in Australia
Rev. Yong-Kyu Kang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
Rev. Dr. William T. Koopmans, Christian Reformed Church in North
America

Appendix 42

**MEMBER CHURCHES OF THE
WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES**

AFRICA

Algeria

Protestant Church of Algeria

Angola

Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola

Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola

Botswana

Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana

Burkina Faso

Association of Reformed Evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso

Cameroon

African Protestant Church

Evangelical Church of Cameroon

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

Central African Republic

Protestant Church of Christ the King

Congo

Evangelical Church of Congo

Democratic Republic of Congo

Presbyterian Community in Congo, Church of Christ in Congo

Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, Church of Christ in Congo

Evangelical Community in Congo, Church of Christ in Congo

Reformed Presbyterian Community in Africa, Church of Christ in Congo

Presbyterian Community of East Kasai, Church of Christ in Congo

Protestant Community of Shaba, Church of Christ in Congo

Reformed Community of Presbyterians, Church of Christ in Congo

Equatorial Guinea

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea

Egypt

Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile

Ethiopia

Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Ghana

Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Kenya

Presbyterian Church of East Africa
Reformed Church of East Africa

Lesotho

Lesotho Evangelical Church

Liberia

Presbyterian Church of Liberia

Madagascar

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar

Malawi

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Malawi
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Nkhoma Synod

Mauritius

Presbyterian Church of Mauritius

Morocco

Evangelical Church in Morocco

Mozambique

Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique
Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
Reformed Church in Mozambique
United Church of Christ in Mozambique

Niger

Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger

Nigeria

Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria
Church of Christ in the Sudan among the TIV

Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria
United Church of Christ in Nigeria (HEKAN)

Reunion

Protestant Church of Reunion Island

Rwanda

Presbyterian Church in Rwanda

Senegal

Protestant Church of Senegal

South Africa

Dutch Reformed Church
Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA)
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
Presbyterian Church of Africa
Reformed Church in Africa
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
Volkserk van Afrika

Sudan

Africa Inland Church Sudan
Presbyterian Church of the Sudan

Swaziland

Swaziland Reformed Church

Togo

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of

Zambia

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Zambia Synod
Reformed Church in Zambia
United Church of Zambia

Zimbabwe

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Harare Synod
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

Uganda

Christian Reformed Church in East Africa

ASIA**Bangladesh**

Church of Bangladesh

Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church in Bangladesh

China

China Christian Council

Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

India

Congregational Church of India (Maraland)

Church of North India

Church of South India

Evangelical Church of Maraland

Lairam Church of Jesus Christ

Mara Evangelical Church

Presbyterian Church of India

Reformed Presbyterian Church, NE India

Indonesia

Christian Churches in South Sumatra (GKSBS)

Christian Church in Central Sulawesi (GKST)

Christian Church in East Timor (GKTT)

Christian Churches of Java (GKJ)

Christian Church in Luwuk Banggai (GKLB)

Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKSS)

Christian Church of Sumba (GKS)

Christian Evangelical Church in Bolaang Mongondow (GMIBM)

Christian Evangelical Church in Halmahera (GMIH)

Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM)

Christian Evangelical Church in Sangihe-Talaud (GMIST)

Church of Toraja Mamasa (GTM)

East Java Christian Church (GKJW)

Evangelical Church in Kalimantan (GKE)

Evangelical Christian Church in Papua (GKITP)

Karo Batak Protestant Church (GBKP)

Indonesian Christian Church Synod (GKI)

Indonesian Protestant Church in Buol Tolitoli (GPIBT)

Indonesian Protestant Church of Donggala (GPID)

Indonesian Protestant Church in Gorontalo (GPIG)
Pasundan Christian Church (GKP)
Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB)
Protestant Church in West Indonesia (GPIB)
Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM)
Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI)
Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi (GEPULTRA)
Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT)
Toraja Church (GT)

Japan

Church of Christ in Japan
Korean Christian Church in Japan

Korea

Presbyterian Church in Korea (Daeshin)
Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hap Dong Chung Tong)
Presbyterian Church of Korea
Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Malaysia

Presbyterian Church in Malaysia

Myanmar

Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Independent Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

Pakistan

Church of Pakistan
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

Philippines

Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
United Evangelical Church of Christ

Singapore

Presbyterian Church in Singapore

Sri Lanka

Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka
Presbytery of Lank

Taiwan

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Thailand

Church of Christ in Thailand

Vietnam

Presbyterian Church of Vietnam

CARRIBEAN

Cuba

Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba

Grenada

Presbyterian Church in Grenada

Guyana

Guyana Congregational Union

Guyana Presbyterian Church

Presbytery of Guyana

Dominican Republic

Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic

Dominican Evangelical Church

Jamaica

United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

Trinidad and Tobago

Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago

EUROPE

Austria

Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession in Austria

Belgium

United Protestant Church in Belgium

Bulgaria

Union of Evangelical Congregational Churches in Bulgaria

Croatia

Reformed Christian Church in Croatia

Czech Republic

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

Denmark

Reformed Church of Denmark

France

Evangelical Reformed Church of France
Malagasy Protestant Church in France
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine
Reformed Church of France

Germany

Church of Lippe
Evangelical Reformed Church
Reformed Alliance

Great Britain

Church of Scotland
Presbyterian Church of Wales
United Free Church of Scotland
United Reformed Church (UK)
Union of Welsh Independents

Greece

Greek Evangelical Church

Hungary

Reformed Church in Hungary

Ireland

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Italy

Waldensian Evangelical Church

Latvia

Reformed Church in Latvia

Lithuania

Evangelical Reformed Church in Lithuania

Luxembourg

Evangelical Protestant Church of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Netherlands

Covenant of Free Evangelical Churches in the Netherlands

Protestant Church in the Netherlands

Remonstrant Brotherhood

Poland

Reformed Evangelical Church in Poland

Portugal

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal

Romania

Reformed Church in Romania (Cluj)

Reformed Church in Romania (Oradea)

Serbia

Reformed Church in Serbia

Slovakia

Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia

Slovenia

Reformed Christian Church in Slovenia

Spain

Spanish Evangelical Church

Sweden

Mission Covenant Church of Sweden

Switzerland

Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

Ukraine

Reformed Church in Transcarpathia

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina

Evangelical Congregational Church

Evangelical Church of the River Plate

Presbyterian Church of Argentina

Reformed Churches in Argentina

Brazil

Arab Evangelical Church of São Paulo
Evangelical Reformed Churches in Brazil
Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Bolivia

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Bolivia

Chili

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Chile
Presbyterian Church of Chile

Colombia

Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Costa Rica

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Costa Rica

El Salvador

Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador

Honduras

Christian Reformed Church of Honduras

Guatemala

National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala

Mexico

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Mexico
National Presbyterian Church of Mexico
Presbyterian Reformed Church of Mexico

Uruguay

Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate

Venezuela

Presbyterian Church of Venezuela

MIDDLE EAST

Iran

Synod of the Evangelical Church of Iran

Lebanon

National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
National Evangelical Union of Lebanon
Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

NORTH AMERICA

Canada

Presbyterian Church in Canada
United Church of Canada

United States

Christian Reformed Church in North America
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
Korean Presbyterian Church in America
Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Reformed Church in America
United Church of Christ

PACIFIC

American Samoa

Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa

Australia

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
Congregational Federation of Australia
Uniting Church in Australia

French Polynesia

Ma'ohi Protestant Church

Kiribati

Kiribati Protestant Church

Marshall Islands

Reformed Congregational Churches
United Church of Christ-Congregational in the Marshall Islands

New Caledonia

Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands

New Zealand

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Niue

Niue Church

Samoa

Congregational Christian Church in Samoa

Solomon Islands

United Church in the Solomon Islands

Tuvalu

Tuvalu Christian Church

Vanuatu

Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu