



World Communion  
of Reformed Churches

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES 2014**

**Behold, I make  
all things new**

World Communion of Reformed Churches  
Executive Committee  
11-18 May 2014  
Hannover, Germany

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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

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

*Philip Tanis, executive secretary for communications*

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **President**

Jerry Pillay (Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, South Africa)

### **Vice-presidents**

Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz (Presbyterian Church of Colombia, Colombia)

Yvette Noble Bloomfield (United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands, Jamaica)

Yueh-Wen Lu (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, Taiwan)

Bas Plaisier (Protestant Church in the Netherlands, Hong Kong, China)

### **Treasurer**

Johann Weusmann (Evangelical Reformed Church, Germany)

### **Members of the executive committee**

Lydia Adajawah (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana)

Peter Borgdorff (Christian Reformed Church in North America, USA)

Allan Buckingham (United Church of Canada, Canada)

Peter Bukowski (Reformed Alliance, Germany)

Mary Fontaine (Presbyterian Church in Canada, Canada)

Yael Eka Hadiputeri (Indonesian Christian Church, Indonesia)

Kobus Gerber (Dutch Reformed Church, South Africa)

Jan-Gerd Heetderks (Protestant Church in the Netherlands, The Netherlands)

Kyeong-Shin Kang (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea)

Najla Kassab (National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, Lebanon)

Clifton Kirkpatrick (Presbyterian Church (USA), USA)

Subha Singh Majaw (Presbyterian Church of India, India)

Cheryl Meban (Presbyterian Church in Ireland, United Kingdom)

Cheh Liang Mok (Presbyterian Church in Malaysia, Malaysia)

Allen Nafuki (Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, Vanuatu)

Veronica Njoki Muchiri (Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya)

Gabriela Lucía Mulder (Reformed Churches in Argentina, Argentina)

Elisée Musemakweli (Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, Rwanda)

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

Salome Twum Ofori Danquah (Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ghana)

Lisa Vander Wal (Reformed Church in America, USA)

**Advisors**

Yong-Kyu Kang (Republic of Korea)  
William T Koopmans (Canada)  
Stephen Kendall (Canada)  
Stephens Lytch (WCRC Endowment Fund president)

**Sister organizations**

Douglas Chial, World Council of Churches  
Collin Cowan, Council for World Mission  
Norbert Deneke, Lutheran World Federation  
Gregory Fairbanks, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity  
Cyril Ritchie, John Knox International Reformed Centre  
Greg Roussos, Presbyterian Foundation  
Tom Taylor, Presbyterian Foundation  
Robert Welsh, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (WCRC Associate member)

**WCRC staff**

Setri Nyomi, general secretary  
Chris Ferguson, general secretary-elect  
Dora Arce-Valentín  
Philip Tanis  
Douwe Visser  
Gerhard Plenter  
Claudia Duval  
Viktória Kóczyán  
Anna Krüger  
Paul Oppenheim  
Páraic Réamonn

**Interpreter**

Carlos Tamayo Arce

**Recorder**

Páraic Réamonn

**Absent with apologies**

Mark Koenig (WCRC/PCUSA UN liaison)  
Ryan Smith (WCRC/PCUSA UN liaison)

**Representatives of host churches**

Jörg Schmidt, Reformed Alliance  
Sabine Dressler, Reformed Alliance

**Stewards**

Antje Bracht  
Anneke Bargheer  
Selma Dorn  
Birk Leckscheid  
Svenja Nordholdt  
Aleena Toplak

**Visitors**

Sylvia Bukowski (Germany)  
Esther Kang (Republic of Korea)  
Alison Kendall (Canada)  
Tashina McLean (Canada)  
Henny Wendt-Plaisiers (Hong Kong, China)

## **CORE GROUPS AND COMMITTEES**

### **THEOLOGY, MISSION AND COMMUNION**

*Moderator:* Bas Plaisier

Peter Bukowski

Kobus Gerber

Yael Eka Hadiputeri

Najla Kassab

William T Koopmans

Elisée Musemakweli

Carola Tron Urban

Lisa Vander Wal

*Staff:* Douwe Visser, Viktória Kóczian

### **JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP**

*Co-moderators:* Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz and Yueh-Wen Lu

Lydia Adajawah

Mary Fontaine

Jan-Gerd Heetderks

Clifton Kirkpatrick

Clayton Leal Da Silva

Veronica Njoki Muchiri

Subha Singh Majaw

Gabriela Lucía Mulder

Johann Weusmann

*Staff:* Dora Arce-Valentín

### **COMMUNICATION**

*Moderator:* Yvette Noble Bloomfield

Peter Borgdorff

Allan Buckingham

Kyeong-Shin Kang

Yong-Kyu Kang

Stephens Lytch

Cheryl Meban

Cheh Liang Mok

Allen Nafuki

Salome Twum Ofori Danquah

*Staff:* Philip Tanis, Anna Krüger

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

*Moderator:* Johann Weusmann

Stephen Kendall

Clifton Kirkpatrick

Yueh-Wen Lu

Stephens Lytch

Cheh Liang Mok

Veronica Njoki Muchiri

President

General Secretary

*Staff:* Gerhard Plenter, Anna Krüger

## **CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

*Moderator:* Cheryl Meban

Lydia Adajawah

Peter Borgdorff

Yael Eka Hadiputeri

Allen Nafuki

Carola Tron Urban

President

General Secretary

*Staff:* Setri Nyomi

## **PARTNERSHIP FUND COMMITTEE**

*Moderator:* Kobus Gerber

Yvette Noble Bloomfield

Najla Kassab

Clayton Leal da Silva

Subha Singh Majaw

Bas Plaisier

Salome Twum Ofori Danquah

*Staff:* Douwe Visser, Viktória Koczian

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

*Moderator:* Jerry Pillay

Helis Hernán Barraza Díaz

Yvette Noble Bloomfield

Yueh-Wen Lu

Bas Plaisier

Johann Weusmann

*Staff:* Setri Nyomi



**WCRC ENDOWMENT FUND TRUSTEES**

*Co-moderators:* Peter Borgdorff and Clifton Kirkpatrick

Allan Buckingham

Brenda Bullock

Jane Dempsey Douglass (by email)

Mary Fontaine

Stephen Kendall

William T Koopmans

Stephens Lytch (president)

*Staff:* Philip Tanis

The president and general secretary may attend any core group and are *ex-officio* members of all committees.

## TIMETABLE

Theme: "Behold, I make all things new"

### **Saturday, May 10**

All day

Arrival of participants in congregational visits on Sunday

14.00 – 21.00

Officers meeting

### **Sunday, May 11**

06.00 – 17.00

Visit to 12 Lippe Church, ERK and the Reformierte Bund congregations for worship and conversation

06.00 – 17.00

Arrival of all other participants

14.00 – 18.00

Officers meeting

18.00 – 19.15

Opening Worship in the Reformed Church, Hannover

19.30 – 21.00

Dinner

### **Monday, May 12**

08.00 – 08.45

Transfer to the EKD offices

09.00 – 09.20

Morning Worship

Greeting by Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber on behalf of EKD

09.30 – 10.30

Plenary: President's address and discussions

10.30 – 11.00

Snack break

11:00 – 13.00

Plenary: General Secretary's report and discussions

13.00 – 14.00

Lunch break

14.00 – 15.30

Visit with EKD: The Mission and Challenges of German churches.

15.30 – 16.00

Tea/Coffee break

16.00 – 18.00

Plenary: Plenary: Regional Council reports,

UN Office Report, John Knox Centre Report, Fraternal greetings

18.00 – 18.30

Transfer from EKD offices to HLH for dinner

18.30 – 19.30

Dinner Break

19.30 – 21.00

Regional meetings

### **Tuesday, May 13**

08.30 – 08.50

Morning Worship

09.00 – 11.00	Election of General Secretary – Receiving report of the GS Search Committee
11:00 – 11.30	Snack break
11.30 – 13.00	Core Groups
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 16.00	Committee meetings
16:00 – 16.30	Snack break
16.30 – 18.00	Committee meetings
18.00 – 19.00	Dinner break
19.00 – 21.00	Regional meetings

### **Wednesday, May 14**

08.30 – 08.50	Morning Worship
09.00 – 10.30	26 <sup>th</sup> General Council presentation and discussion
10.30 – 11.00	Snack break
11.00 – 12.30	Theme plenary
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 16.00	Core Groups
16.00 – 16.30	Snack break
16.30 – 18.00	Core Groups
18.00 – 19.00	Dinner break
19.00 – 21.00	Personnel Committee meeting/North American Trustees meeting

### **Thursday, May 15**

08.30 – 08.50	Morning Worship
09.00 – 10.30	26 <sup>th</sup> General Council discussions and decision
10.30 – 11.00	Snack break
11.00 – 12.30	Core Groups (Final Meetings)
12.30 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 16.00	Committee meetings
16.00 – 16.30	Snack break
16.30 – 18.00	Committee meetings (Final)
18.00 – 20.00	Dinner and conversation with the Presbyterian Foundation (Fund Raising)
20.00 – 22.00	Free evening

### **Friday, May 16**

08.30 – 08.50	Morning Worship
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09.00 – 10.30	Reports of Committees/Core Groups
10.30 – 11.00	Snack Break
11.00 – 12.30	Reports of Committees
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 15.30	Reports of Core Groups
15.30 – 16.00	Snack Break
16.00 – 17.30	Greetings and Messages and Conversation with the outgoing General Secretary
19.30ff	Officers meeting

### **Saturday, May 17**

08.30 – 09.00	Morning Worship
09.00 – 10.30	Reports of Committees/Core Groups
10.30 – 11.00	Conversation with the General Secretary-elect
11.00 – 11.15	WCRC Michigan Corporation meeting
11.15 – 11.35	Snack break
11.35 – 12.35	Closed session – matters arising from reports on governance and management
12.35 – 13.00	Any other Business Closing of Business and acknowledgements
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 17.30	Free Time
18.00 – 21.00	Farewell dinner and programme

### **Sunday, May 18**

10.00 – 14.30	Installation Service for the New General Secretary in the Reformed Church, Hannover Festive reception and lunch at the HLH after the service
16.00ff	Departures

### **Monday, May 19**

Departures continue



## **ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2014**

### **The executive committee**

1. approved the minutes of the executive committee meeting in Dodowa, Ghana, 7-15 May 2013.
2. received the address of the president (*document 1*).
3. received the report of the general secretary (*document 2*).

### **Regional councils**

4. received the report of the African Communion of Reformed Churches, ACRC (*document 8.1*).
5. received the report of the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Latin America, AIPRAL (*document 8.2*).
6. received the report of the Caribbean and North American area council, CANAAC (*document 8.3*).
7. received the report of the Communion of Reformed Churches in Indonesia (*document 8.4*).
8. received the report of the Northeast Asia area council, NEAAC (*document 8.5*).
9. received a verbal report on the South Asia regional council, SARC.
10. received the report of WCRC Europe (*document 8.6*).

### **Related institutions**

11. received a report on the Global Christian Forum (*document 9.1*).
12. reappointed Wes Granberg-Michaelson as WCRC representative on the steering committee of the Global Christian Forum.
13. received a report from Cyril Ritchie, president of the John Knox International Reformed Centre (*document 9.2*).
14. received a report from the Presbyterian ministry at the UN (*document 9.3*).

### **General secretary search**

15. received the report of the general secretary search committee (*document 10*).
16. elected Christopher Ferguson unanimously as general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches for a seven-year term beginning 1 September 2014, in accordance with the position description and conditions of service.
17. agreed that the general secretary-elect start work on 1 August 2014, to have a one month overlap together with the current general secretary; and that the outgoing general secretary

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finish his term of office on 31 August 2014 and the incoming general secretary assume office on 1 September 2014.

18. dismissed the general secretary search committee with thanks.

## 26th general council

19. received the proposal from the officers on the 26th general council (*document 11*).

20. agreed to hold the council in Erfurt, Germany, on condition that a substantial part of the costs be covered by funds to be raised in conjunction with civil and church authorities in Germany.

21. agreed the dates of 13-28 June 2017, with the possibility of shortening this a little.

22. agreed the theme "Living God, renew and transform us."

23. agreed in principle the proposed flow, with the possibility of adjustment.

24. appointed the following general council planning committee:

- o Lisa Vander Wal, convener
- o Jerry Pillay (WCRC president)
- o Cheryl Meban
- o Doug Chial
- o Dario Barolín
- o Aiko Sumichan
- o Chris Ferguson (WCRC general secretary-elect; general secretary from 1 September 2014)
- o the general council coordinator (when appointed)
- o two (2) representatives of the German host committee

25. gave the planning committee the following terms of reference:

- a. to be responsible for the broad plans of the 26th general council within the framework set by the executive committee in 2014. This includes working with the WCRC general secretary and staff to develop a detailed programme, timetable, budget, fundraising strategies, publications (including guidelines for several of the general council processes), subthemes, flow, discernment processes, meaningful decision-making tracks (including subgroupings they may decide on), and symbolic events of the general council.
- b. to develop recommendations for decision of executive committee the number of delegates (including balances), and participants in other categories.
- c. to work with representatives of the host committee in Germany for all aspects of the hosting operations, ensuring that the housing and conference facilities are adequate for the general council.

- It is understood that the general secretary and staff, including a general council coordinator when engaged, will take the lead in the practical initiatives that feed the deliberations of the planning committee and will in turn take their directions from the planning committee.
26. authorized the officers to appoint a worship committee for the general council.

### **Theology, mission and communion**

27. received the report of the theology, mission and communion core group (*document 12*).
28. received with appreciation the reports of three consultations on “mission on the front line,” “faith confessions in the life of WCRG member denominations,” and “the meaning of communion,” noting the importance of these topics for future discussions; resolved to make the reports available on the website, and encouraged ongoing work in these areas.
29. received with joy the report on the second round of Joint Working Group between the WCRG and the Lutheran World Federation and adopted its recommendations; affirmed the implications of already existing ecumenical unity described within it; and agreed to facilitate the implementation of these principles for unity wherever practicable and to continue to explore ways to embody this reality in the life of the WCRG.
30. agreed to engage in a dialogue with the Anglican Communion on the theme of communion.
31. approved the proposed team for the dialogue with the Anglican Communion.
32. requested the secretary to report in 2015 on mission projects in which the office is engaged in conjunction with the Partnership Fund.
33. mandated the secretary to write to the regions to explain our understanding and framework for mission and invite them to use the materials published in *Together Towards Life: Missions and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.
34. mandated the secretary to invite input from theologians for opinions and reactions to the WCC perspective on mission expressed in *Together Towards Life: Missions and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, with the goal of publishing response articles in *Reformed World*.
35. encouraged the secretary to explore what is happening in new expressions of Christianity and report back with a view to possible engagements.
36. encouraged the African region, in partnership with other regions where appropriate, to explore contacts with the African instituted churches.



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37. endorsed plans to add more theological documents to the WCRC website.
38. asked the WCRC office, in cooperation with the local host committee, to compile various publications for member churches and the public, in preparation of the Reformation Jubilee and on the way to 2017.
39. asked the same team to be responsible for drafting a proposed statement (a *Wittenberg declaration*), along with the Lutheran and other Reformation churches, to
  - a. articulate a common understanding of the meaning of Reformation and its future prospects, and
  - b. move Lutheran-Reformed full communion to the global level.
40. noted with appreciation the work of the TMC office under the leadership of Douwe Visser, secretary.

## **Justice and partnership**

41. received the report of the justice and partnership core group (*document 13*).
42. approved “Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Accra confession” (*appendix 1*), with the addition of having an analysis of the Accra confession’s assessment of social reality, as a guideline for organizing regional and global consultations.
43. approved “Global consultation on the Accra confession” (*appendix 2*) as a guideline for the global consultation on the Accra confession in Hannover, 2-6 November 2014.
44. agreed, to the extent funds are available, to organize a Lent campaign in 2015 on human trafficking.
45. supported the general secretary’s proposal to work further with CWM, the LWF and the WCC on a new international financial and economic architecture and, in cooperation with these organizations, to look for a part-time consultant for the joint project (with the WCRC’s share of the costs to be covered by funds raised by the office of justice and partnership).
46. asked the constitution and membership committee to work out, in relation to Article IX of the constitution, a practical model for the delegations of member churches to the general council in line with the decision of the uniting general council (Grand Rapids, 2010) to have a balanced council.
47. expressed appreciation to Dora Arce Valentin for her work as executive secretary for justice and partnership.

## **Communications**

48. received the report of the communications core group (*document 14*).

49. asked member churches to link their websites to the WCRC website where they have not yet done so; and to update the links from their websites to the pages of the WCRC website wherever necessary.
50. agreed to start a weekly blog, with all staff committed to sharing responsibilities to ensure content is available; executive committee members encouraged to participate and to seek to stimulate wider contacts with Reformed bloggers or others who could contribute.
51. agreed that the WCRC make every effort to ensure that the assets of ENI are properly and effectively distributed amongst its stakeholders.
52. mandated the general secretary, together with the finance office and finance committee and the communications secretary, to determine appropriate measures to ensure there are sufficient resources to develop existing and new communications media to compensate for the loss of ENI.
53. thanked Kristine Greenaway, the former communications secretary (demitted office on 31 August 2013) and Philip Tanis, the new communications secretary, for their energetic work.

### **Constitution and membership**

54. received the report of the constitution and membership committee (*document 15*).
55. admitted the Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ into membership of the WCRC.
56. lifted the suspension imposed on the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA) by the 21st general council (Ottawa, 1982).
57. agreed that those member churches that have neither contributed nor corresponded be deemed inactive and have the privileges of membership withdrawn.
58. requested executive committee members and regional councils, in communication with the general secretary, to make every effort to renew contact with inactive churches, to express concern about their inactive status and request information for prayer and to maintain the relationship.

### **Finance committee**

59. received the report of the finance committee (*document 16*).
60. endorsed the engagement of the EKD high audit office for the 2013 audit.
61. adopted the 2013 audited financial statements.
62. engaged the EKD high audit office to perform the 2014 audit.
63. agreed that, where possible, project funding should include funding for staff costs and asked programme secretaries to

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- negotiate a percentage (preferably in the area of 15%) of the project costs for this purpose.
64. agreed that as a general rule, a percentage of approximately 15% of programme revenue should be booked to the core budget to cover administrative costs.
  65. asked the secretariat to reactivate the theological education for women in the global south programme.
  66. approved the WCRC finance management policies (*annex C*).
  67. asked the general secretariat to establish a database of key contact information for member churches and donors.
  68. approved the revised 2014 budget.
  69. authorized the officers to receive the 2015 budget and submit it for electronic voting by the members of the executive committee.
  70. agreed that the Council for World Mission (CWM) gift be held as a designated reserve.
  71. authorized the general treasurer and general secretary jointly to invest WCRC monies.
  72. authorized Peter Borgdorff and Stephen Lytch jointly to dispense up to USD 4,000 annually for North American development efforts.
  73. authorized Peter Borgdorff, in consultation with the general treasurer, to dispense funds necessary for 501c3 tax filing.
  74. agreed to review the WCRC Michigan financial statements annually, beginning in 2015.

## **Partnership Fund**

75. received the report of the Partnership Fund committee (*document 17*).
76. accepted as a general requirement that the grant for a project shall not normally exceed €25,000.
77. approved that the project grant normally shall be transferred upon approval to the account of the church, in the case of member churches; to the account of the church that takes the lead in the application, in the case of regional groupings of member churches; to the account of the area council, in the case of WCRC area councils; and through the WCRC's internal accounting in the case of WCRC networks of programme offices.
78. accepted that a grant of €7,500 shall be given for *emergency aid*.
79. accepted that for small building projects, funding is limited to €25,000.
80. agreed that a letter be sent to the member churches in which they receive up-to-date information on the revised amounts of grants and the relevant criteria.

81. agreed that the mission projects of the Partnership Fund be related to the mission work of the WCRC theology, mission and communion office.
82. thanked Douwe Visser and Páraic Réamonn for their work and welcomed Viktória Kóczián in her new post.

### **Personnel committee**

83. received the report of the personnel committee (*document 18*).
84. amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter V, Article 3.4 to read as follows:  
*Annual leave:* Annual leave is authorized leave of absence with pay, and is calculated at the rate of twenty-nine days per year for staff below 55 years of age and 30 days for staff above 55 years of age. Annual leave may be taken subject to the requirements of the WCRC and on the authorization of the general secretary and appropriate supervisor. The maximum leave carried forward to the next year should not exceed 15 days. Annual leave may be taken in units of days and half days but at least 10 days of annual leave must be taken consecutively each year. Annual leave shall not accrue during periods of absence without pay.
85. amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter V, Article 3.5 to read as follows:  
*Christmas holidays:* The WCRC office is closed from Christmas Day (December 24) until New Year's Day (January 1). The days in between those days are also given as vacation days deducted from the annual leave.
86. amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter V, Article 4.1 to read as follows:  
*Working Hours*
  - a. The working week shall be from Monday to Friday for eight hours each day.
  - b. Working hours are based on flexitime system. So long as a staff member not on duty travel is working between a core time of 10:00 hours and 15:00 with a lunch break, the starting point and the ending point of the eight-hour working day can be left to the staff member.
  - c. During the day the staff member may take time for lunch and one or two short breaks. These will be deemed outside the eight hours.
87. amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter VI, Article 3.5 to read as follows:  
*Use of Private Car:* A member of staff may use his/her private car on his/her own responsibility for a duty-related travel or official home leave or taking up appointment or termination. For this the general secretary has to authorize. When a

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member of the staff is authorized to use his/her private car for duty an allowance of €0.30 per kilometre shall be paid. This is a global allowance and includes all expenses for the car. However, subject to the next point, where it is cheaper to use available public transport, the reimbursement of travelling expenses shall be comparable to the use of public transport.

88. agreed that the WCRC take leadership of the new international financial and economic (NIFEA) initiative as the process continues ecumenically with CWM, the WCC and the LWF and that the WCRC general secretary's input into the negotiations with the other general secretaries on where to anchor the coordinator to be engaged reflect this leadership.

## Officers

89. received the report of the officers (*document 19*).
90. expressed profound gratitude to the Council for World Mission (CWM) for its partnership and how this has strengthened the mission of the WCRC, noting with gratitude that the £1m in seed funds for the Endowment had been received and that the general secretary and general treasurer were making arrangements to investment the funds appropriately.
91. expressed gratitude to the *Reformierter Bund*, the other German member churches, the UEK churches and German agencies for the roles they played in making the WCRC feel welcomed and for helping to smooth the transition to the new location; and reiterated its gratitude for the gift from the UEK churches of €900,000 euros over four years towards stabilizing the WCRC
92. adopted the statement on the missing Nigerian girls and authorized it to be released.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WCRC MICHIGAN FOUNDATION

### *The executive committee*

*WCRC-MF 1.* approved the minute of the executive committee meeting in Dodowa, Ghana, 15 May 2013.

*WCRC-MF 2.* agreed that the actions of the WCRC executive committee during its meeting in Hannover, Germany, 11-18 2014, be fully concurred in and entered into the permanent record of the WCRC Michigan Foundation.

**NARRATIVE RECORD<sup>1</sup>**  
**of the meeting of the executive committee**  
**Hannover, Germany, 11-18 May, 2014**

**SUNDAY, 11 MAY**

The meeting of the executive committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) was preceded by visits to twelve congregations of its three German member churches—the Church of Lippe, the Evangelical Reformed Church in Bavaria and North-western Germany, and the Reformed Alliance—for worship and conversation, preaching and bringing greetings.

On Sunday evening the meeting was formally opened with worship hosted by the Reformed Church in Hannover. The sermon was preached by the WCRC president, Jerry Pillay. Leaders of WCRC member churches in Germany welcomed the executive committee members to the meeting: Hans-Martin Heinemann (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hannover), Martin Heimbucher (Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany), Dietmar Arends (Church of Lippe), Peter Bukowski (Reformed Alliance of Germany) and Gerold Klompmaker (Christian Reformed Church of Lower Saxony).

**MONDAY, 12 MAY**

The executive committee was hosted by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) at its church office in Herrenhäuser Strasse, Hannover. The committee was welcomed by Petra Bosse-Huber, bishop for ecumenical relations and German-language ministries abroad, who led the committee in morning worship. The sermon was preached by Cordelia Kopsch, responsible for the EKD dialogue on sustainable development.

**Plenary session: Monday morning**

The general secretary called the roll and confirmed there was a quorum. Apologies for absence were received from Robyn Goodwin and subsequently from Gradye Parsons.

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<sup>1</sup> The narrative record is the report of the proceedings in chronological order. Actions are not necessarily in numerical order. They can be found in numerical order in the actions of the executive committee, above.

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It was duly moved and agreed to approve the minutes of the executive committee meeting in Dodowa, Ghana, 7-15 May 2013.

**Action 1**

The president presented his address (*document 1*), which was intended to form the basis for discussion in the theme plenary on Wednesday, 14 May. Two key questions were posed: How does the WCRC become a platform of significance? And how does the executive committee conduct its business so as to create the space to encounter one another?

*The executive committee*

- received the report of the president (*document 1*).

**Action 2**

*Report of the general secretary*

The general secretary presented his report (*document 2*), with contributions from the executive staff. In discussion, it was noted that the executive committee was now in mid-term: it was time to evaluate how far the WCRC had come and where it was going. The risk of reporting in detail on the many activities of the organization was to miss the big picture of what was happening in the communion and justice discussion, in the theological work and in the ecumenical movement. Sometimes it was said that as the communion is clarified, the WCRC needed to continue focusing on justice. It was also pointed out that the WCRC had long encouraged its member churches to ordain women. But even when women were ordained, they found it hard to find their place in the church.

There was also discussion about the Global Christian Forum (GCF), mentioned in the report of the general secretary, as well as in its own report (*document 9.1*). Much appreciation was expressed for its work and that of Wes Granberg-Michaelson, the WCRC's representative to the GCF's steering committee.

*The executive committee*

- received the report of the general secretary (*document 2*).

**Action 3**

- received the report of the Global Christian Forum (*document 9.1*).

**Action 11**

- reappointed Wes Granberg-Michaelson as WCRC representative to the steering committee of the GCF.

## Action 12

### Plenary session: Monday afternoon

#### *Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)*

Sven Waske made a presentation on the mission and challenges of the EKD.

The EKD was a communion of 20 regional churches—Lutheran, Reformed, or United—organized in 15,000 congregations. Of their 23.4 million members, one million attended church on an average Sunday.

Waske listed some key dates in the history of the EKD. In 1919, the Weimar Republic separated church and state. In 1934, the Confessing Church issued the Barmen theological declaration against Nazi ideology. In 1948, following the second world war, the German churches adopted a constitution and formed the EKD. In 1969, the regional churches in the German Democratic Republic separated from the EKD to form the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR. In 1991, after the fall of the Berlin wall, the EKD was reunified.

In 1973, the Leuenberg agreement established pulpit and altar fellowship between Lutheran, Reformed and United churches in Europe; in 2003, the Leuenberg Church Fellowship became the Conference of Protestant Churches in Europe.

The Reformation decade (2008 to 2017) leads up to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Each year in the decade was devoted to a particular theme: (2009, confession; 2010, education; 2011, freedom; 2012, music; 2013, tolerance; 2014, politics).

The mission of the EKD included proclamation of the gospel and theology, *diaconia* and development, pastoral care and counselling, education, social responsibility, ecumenical relations, interfaith relations and communication.

As with many churches in Europe, the EKD faced the challenge of a declining membership. This was due in part to a decreasing population but also to a decline in the religious socialization of



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young people, growing indifference to religion and the difficulty of retaining members: only a minority was highly committed to the church.

The EKD sought to combat this decline by strengthening the religious competence of families. Since 2006, it had also been engaged in reforming itself to become a “church on the move.” Advantages it had included the good reputation of its social work and its schools and pre-school institutions, the strong voluntary commitment of its highly committed members and the ordained ministry as the “key” to how the church was perceived.

He attributed the growing indifference in part to the discouragement of religion by the GDR, which let a lot of people to lose their religion, but also to a general disenchantment with institutions. What was the EKD doing to challenge secularization? Mission programmes reinforced the commitment of existing members but didn't bring new people in. Education could help, but normally it was too late. If faith was not learned in the family, it was not learned. People didn't just forget they were Christians; they forgot that they forgot.

#### *Regional reports*

It was agreed to return to regional reports later in the meeting.

#### *Greetings*

Cyril Ritchie, president of the John Knox International Reformed Centre brought greetings from the centre and reported on its work. The executive committee received his report (*document 9.2*)

#### **Action 13**

Greetings from Martin Junge, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, were presented to the committee by Norbert Deneke (*document 9.5*).

### **TUESDAY, 13 MAY**

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

Morning worship was led by Allen Nafuki.

*Election of new general secretary*

The executive committee met in closed session to elect a new general secretary.

*The executive committee*

- received the report of the general secretary search committee (*document 10*).

**Action 15**

- elected Christopher Ferguson unanimously as general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches for a seven-year term beginning 1 September 2014, in accordance with the position description and conditions of service.

**Action 16**

- agreed that the general secretary-elect start work on 1 August 2014, to have a one month overlap together with the current general secretary; and that the outgoing general secretary finish his term of office on 31 August 2014 and the incoming general secretary assume office on 1 September 2014.

**Action 17**

- dismissed the general secretary search committee with thanks.

**Action 18**

The executive committee noted that this election means that in accordance with the constitution, Rev. Christopher Ferguson becomes legal signatory on behalf of the WCRC as of 1 September 2014.

**Core groups and committees**

The executive committee broke into core groups and committees for the rest of the day.

**WEDNESDAY, 14 MAY**

**Plenary session: Wednesday morning**

Morning worship was led by Cheryl Meban.

*26th general council (1)*

The committee discussed the proposal from the officers for the upcoming general council (*document 11*).

*On the venue:* Lydia Aku Adajawah noted that there were only two invitations to host the council and asked if interest was waning in member churches and whether there were more invitations in 2010. Setri Nyomi said that the uniting general council had a different process. WARC and REC were uniting, so it was decided, without soliciting any invitations, to meet in Grand Rapids. Jerry Pillay said that it was not easy for a church to invite - a group of churches in a region might find it easier. The WCRC should perhaps be more proactive in the future, recognizing that the council had not met in a particular region for a while and actively soliciting invitations.

Peter Borgdorff asked how realistic it was to ask the German churches to underwrite the cost of the council. Johann Weusmann said that fundraising would be necessary, as always. Approaches had been made to the German government emphasizing the cultural purpose of the council—visiting the Reformation sites. The government would be requested to invest in this cultural programme and also give a special reception in Berlin. The total cost of the council would be higher than the uniting general council, but the government contributions should cover that difference.

Clayton Leal da Silva said that the 26th general council could visit Wittenberg without meeting there. The 24th general council (Accra 2004) visited the Elmina slave castle without meeting there. Johann Weusmann responded that Wittenberg was a very small place. It would be necessary to go outside Wittenberg to find a place where 900 delegates could assemble, along with other participants. The people who organize the Kirchentag would take responsibility for the logistics.

Clifton Kirkpatrick observed that holding the PC (USA) general assembly in locations where there were relatively few Reformed people created complications. Johann Weusmann said that in Leipzig, there was one Reformed congregation; in Erfurt, the church was a united church (the Evangelical Church in Central Germany) that would be a good host.

*On the dates:* Peter Borgdorff was concerned that the dates proposed might conflict with member church assemblies. Kyeong-

Shin Kang (NEAAC) asked about the length of council: the WCC assembly in Busan was 10 days – this was longer. Setri Nyomi said that the last three general councils were the same length. The council itself was 12 days; with the pre-conferences, it was two weeks. The programme also included pilgrimages to different places.

Clifton Kirkpatrick said that if the timetable could be shortened a little, this might save money and help with lay participation. Allan Buckingham suggested that we look again at the structure of the meeting, particularly the beginning and the end. If we moved things around a little, with (for example) Wittenberg as an optional extra at the end, this might help.

Peter Borgdorff said that worse than a two-week meeting was a council that was rushed from beginning to end, especially when it meets only every seven years. Peter Bukowski said it was foolish to spend so much money flying delegates in from all over the world just to meet for one week in a hurry.

Setri Nyomi reminded the committee that the uniting general council was rushed at the end in its decision making. The committee could give the planners a broad direction that agrees on the proposal and to include instruction to explore slightly shortening the general council if possible.

*On the theme:* The many and various suggestions in *document 11* on how the theme might be worded had been reduced by the officers and senior staff to a single proposal: “Spirit of the living God, transform us through your word.” This led to extended discussion.

Did “us” refer to the church, or the world, or both? Should we speak about the word of the Spirit or about the word of the living God? Would cutting the initial words make the theme shorter and more powerful? Given the *semper reformanda*, should we say “reform” rather than “transform?” Why a prayer? Was the theme proposed too similar to “God in your grace, transform the world,” the theme of the WCC assembly in Porto Alegre? The theme didn’t sing. It didn’t mean much when translated into Korean.

It was agreed to do some further reflection and return to this point.

*The executive committee*

- agreed to hold the council in Erfurt, Germany, on condition that a substantial part of the costs be covered by funds to be raised in conjunction with civil and church authorities in Germany.

**Action 20**

- agreed the dates of 13-28 June, with the possibility of shortening this a little.

**Action 21**

- agreed in principle the proposed flow, with the possibility of adjustment.

**Action 23**

*On relations with the Lutheran World Federation:* Disquiet was expressed about the lack of progress in WCRC-LWF relations. A joint assembly/council had been proposed by WARC already in 1997 and strongly reaffirmed by the WCRC. Now this had been downgraded by the LWF to a proposal for a joint LWF council-WCRC executive committee meeting and, for the reasons stated in *document 11*, downgraded still further by us to a joint meeting of the officers—who are, in our structure, not even a separate entity but represent the executive committee between meetings. All our proposals since Debrecen have been met by the response, “next time.”

The most recent Lutheran-Reformed dialogue report showed a high level of theological agreement and said “Let us celebrate our communion:” how was it possible that we had so many practical difficulties? It was noted that ecumenically the LWF faces in many directions. In Germany, the Lutheran churches looked to the Reformed; but in Scandinavia, more to the Anglicans. Relations with the Roman Catholic Church (*Joint Declaration on Justification*) were also important. For Clifton Kirkpatrick, the question really was theological, with a move within the LWF towards Christian identity defined around “apostolic succession” that made some Lutherans reluctant to identify with the Reformed. He suggested the need for Anglican-Lutheran-Reformed dialogue to get to grips with this.

It was suggested that the 26th general council issue a declaration from Wittenberg calling for full communion between the Lutheran and Reformed families, as already exists in most of Europe, in the Middle East and in the United States.

Bas Plasier proposed that the committee return to this after discussion of the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue report in the theology mission and communion core group.

It was agreed that the officers prepare a recommendation on relations with the LWF for discussion on Thursday.

*Theme discussion: "Behold, I make all things new"*

The committee broke into groups to discuss four questions: What are the contexts in which we live and work and witness? What for you were the highlights of the president's address? How can these points be brought alive in our contexts? How can these points be brought alive in the structures of the WCRC?

Among the points that emerged in the discussion: We want to dramatize the WCRC working in collaboration. Some of our language may not work in the way it once did; we may need to reframe our work so that it resonates; we may need language more specific than justice and texts that communicate more effectively than confessions. Renewal means going back in order to go forward—connecting with youth and those who are estranged from the church—regaining some of the symbolism we may have thrown out with the Reformation. Do we need a theology for interfaith relations? The ecumenical nature of the sacraments is important in symbolizing and realizing a church open to everyone, a communion open to everyone.

Communion and justice is our mandate from 2010. More and more we need to understand what these two things mean and how they interconnect. Our traditions are unhelpful to the extent that they play to the periphery rather than the heart of the gospel. Communion and justice are rooted in relationship. Understandings differ between rich and poor, between nations. Communion needs to change us. We need to move from paper to practice, focusing on projects in different regions that can improve the lives of people.

How do we hold ourselves to account for our beliefs? How serious are we about changing the way we do things, so that our meetings reflect our beliefs? Does the structure we have used for the last few years help us to deal with the new questions? How do we connect on the ground? What are the benefits of belonging? What would it mean to "call out" member churches who fail to challenge the degradation of other human beings?

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We are still on a journey where we are trying to find answers together.

### **Core groups and committees**

The executive committee broke into core groups and committees for the rest of the day.

## **THURSDAY, 15 MAY**

### **Plenary session: Thursday morning**

Worship was led by Bas Plasier.

*26th general council (2)*

*Second discussion of the theme:* “God reforming and transforming us” was proposed but met a mixed response. It didn’t work in German or Dutch. How did we distinguish reforming and transforming? In Spanish there was a clear distinction: to fix vs. to transform radically. “God, reform and transform us” was suggested as an alternative. It was agreed to ask the communications secretary to review suggestions.

### **Core groups and committees**

The executive committee broke into core groups and committees for the rest of the day. In the late afternoon an opportunity was given to participants who had not yet visited the new WCRC offices to do that.

### **Presbyterian Foundation dinner**

At a dinner for the executive committee hosted by the Presbyterian Foundation, Tom Taylor and Greg Roussos made an inspiring presentation on the foundation and how it might work with the WCRC.

## **FRIDAY, 16 MAY**

### **Plenary session: Friday morning**

Worship was led by Lisa Vander Wal.

The committee moved to reports from core groups and committees.

*Finance (1)*

Johann Weusmann explained some of the difficulties under which the finance office had worked since the last committee meeting. A special word of thanks was due to Gerhard Plenter and Anna Krüger for their hard work to resolve these problems.

Gerhard Plenter led the committee through the new WCRC financial architecture—the financial statement and budget (*annex A*). Anna Krüger added further clarifications.

Kobus Gerber referred to the difference between what was budgeted for 2013 in the membership contribution grid and what was received. In 2014 we were still working with the grid. Was it realistic to expect we should get what was asked for? He suggested the need for a financial risk analysis. His request was noted.

In response, Johann Weusmann made a distinction. We ask member churches to pay contributions according to the grid, but there is a shortfall of about 10% between what is in the grid and what we get, as shown in the audited accounts. And this is taken into account in the budget for 2014, because we must have a realistic budget. In 2014 we work in 2014 from the grid and then have a minus line to indicate the shortfall; but this inflates our budget unnecessarily. From 2015 we shall work from the actuals.

It was clarified that this did not imply that it was acceptable for churches to pay less than requested. Invoicing according to the grid would be pursued vigorously; the only valid reason for paying less was a communicated and demonstrated inability to pay at that level.

Answering a question about the special contribution of €900,000 from the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK), Johann Weusmann said that €200,000 (the allocation of 2013) would be used for the costs of relocation to Hannover with the rest going to the reserves.

The WCRC investment strategy would be revised in 2014. We had lost a lot of money through holding our own shares; we should invest in an investment fund.

The committee turned to the recommendations.



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*The executive committee*

- endorsed the engagement of the EKD high audit office for the 2013 audit.

**Action 60**

Recommendation 2 was briefly discussed. In future the executive committee would receive the audited financial statements in advance of the meeting; for the reasons explained, this had not been possible this time. The finance committee had discussed the statements line by line and looked at the matters arising. Johann Weusmann took the committee quickly through the statements, and it was agreed to table the recommendation to give committee members more time to read them themselves.

*The executive committee*

- engaged the EKD high audit office to perform the 2014 audit.

**Action 62**

In discussion, recommendation 4 was expanded. This was universally desirable (without staff, there are no programmes) but could not be a universal rule. Major donors often agreed to it, but it was always a matter for negotiation as staff raised programme funds.

*The executive committee*

- agreed that, where possible, project funding should include funding for staff costs and asked programme secretaries to negotiate a percentage (preferably in the area of 15%) of the project costs for this purpose.

**Action 63**

- agreed that as a general rule, a percentage of approximately 15% of programme revenue should be booked to the core budget to cover administrative costs.

**Action 64**

On recommendation 5, the secretary for justice and partnership said that it was not as though nothing was happening: some women were still receiving grants from the programme. But in 2013 it had been put on hold, pending new funding and a search for new candidates. The intention was to relaunch it.

Clifton Kirkpatrick observed that holding funds without using them threatened our credibility: the usefulness of the new model of financial reporting was that the committee could see where there was a problem and redress it.

*The executive committee*

- asked the secretariat to reactivate the theological education for women in the global south programme.

**Action 65**

- approved the WCRC finance management policies (*annex C*).

**Action 66**

- asked the general secretariat to establish a database of key contact information for member churches and donors.

**Action 67**

This was part of a project to create a more extensive database, including financial information about past years and contact details for church leaders and communications staff. The executive committee could play a part in keeping the secretariat informed of changes in member church personnel.

*The executive committee*

- approved the revised 2014 budget.

**Action 68**

Recommendation 9 was proposed because, exceptionally, the 2015 budget was not yet ready. Peter Borgdorff objected that this was a responsibility of the executive committee, which could vote electronically.

*The executive committee*

- authorized the officers to receive the 2015 budget and submit it for electronic voting by the members of the executive committee.

**Action 69**

- agreed that the Council for World Mission (CWM) gift be held as a designated reserve.

**Action 70**

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On behalf of the committee, the president expressed thanks to CWM and to Collin Cowan.

On recommendation 11, Johann Weusmann said that our investments should be safe, have a good return, and be ethical. The finance committee was drafting an investment policy that would draw on church and ecumenical policies already in existence.

### *The executive committee*

- authorized the general treasurer and general secretary jointly to invest WCRC monies.

**Action 71**

- authorized Peter Borgdorff and Stephens Lytch jointly to dispense up to USD 4,000 annually for North American development efforts.

**Action 72**

- authorized Peter Borgdorff, in consultation with the general treasurer, to dispense funds necessary for 501c3 tax filing.

**Action 73**

- agreed to review the WCRC Michigan financial statements annually, beginning in 2015.

**Action 74**

*On regional council finances:* Jan-Gerd Heetderks reminded the committee that some years ago, it had been accepted that there should be a single system for financing the regional structures, but this hadn't happened yet. The committee agreed to refer this to the officers for report back.

### *Regional reports*

The executive committee returned to reports from the regions.

On the Africa report (*document 8.1*), Clifton Kirkpatrick pointed out that the conflict in South Sudan was almost within the WCRC family. What role might the churches play in reconciliation when there were Reformed and Presbyterian Christians on both sides?

The general secretary responded that, together with the WCC, the Communion had been trying to help the church to play a more constructive role.

On the question of the abducted Nigerian girls, the general secretary said that the officers had drafted a statement and would be bringing it to the floor with their report.

For Asia, Kyeong-Shin Kang underlined the importance of inter-country disputes (China, Korea, Japan). When the NEAAC met in Tokyo, the focus was on peace and reconciliation. Cheh Liang Mok spoke of Islamization: Christians who use Malay in worship should not be denied the right to call God Allah.

Structural incoherencies in the regional arrangements were raised several times in the discussion: differences in the way member churches contributed to their region and the global WCRC had not yet been harmonized; CANAAC worked as a single region, but when it came to the general council, it was treated as two; linguistic fault-lines complicated the boundaries between AIPRAL and CANAAC; in the executive committee regional meetings, the Middle East was bundled with Europe, and the Pacific with Asia.

WCRC Europe emphasized that the US way of fundraising would not work in Europe, where it was nearly impossible to get contributions to institutions—to support programmes was a different matter. WCRC Europe therefore tried to support the WCRC in another way.

#### *The executive committee*

- received the report of the African Communion of Reformed Churches, ACRC (*document 8.1*).

**Action 4**

- received the report of the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Latin America, AIPRAL (*document 8.2*).

**Action 5**

- received the report of the Caribbean and North American Area Council, CANAAC (*document 8.3*).

**Action 6**

- received the report of the Communion of Reformed Churches in Indonesia (*document 8.4*)

**Action 7**

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- received the report of the Northeast Asia Area Council, NEAAC (*document 8.5*).

**Action 8**

- received a verbal report on the South Asia region, SARC

**Action 9**

- received the report of WCRC Europe (*document 8.6*).

**Action 10**

### *Constitution and membership*

Cheryl Meban presented the report of the constitution and membership committee (*document 15*).

#### *The executive committee*

- admitted the Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ into membership of the WCRC.

**Action 55**

On the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA), it was clarified that the church had met and was meeting the conditions laid down by the 21st WARC general council, at the cost of losing some of its congregations, and that other member churches in South Africa were aware of the process and had raised no objections. A change in the constitution of the NHKA was still needed, and the WCRC expected this to be carried through.

#### *The executive committee*

- lifted the suspension imposed on the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA) by the 21st general council (Ottawa, 1982).

**Action 56**

The committee sought a pastoral approach to member churches in arrears on their contributions, wrestling with the tension between holding our churches accountable to one another and recognizing the real difficulties some churches face. The constitution allowed for and even encouraged such an approach.

Churches deemed inactive would not be eligible for the benefits of WCRC membership; but an application to attend the Global Institute for Theology, for example, would provide an opportunity to restart a conversation. Where special arrangements were

needed to cope with a backlog of arrears, the executive committee had already authorized the general secretary, the convener of the constitution and membership committee and, where appropriate, the vice-president from the region concerned to agree on these (*Minutes 2013, Action 48*).

Picking up the notion of bearing one another's burdens, William Koopmans suggested that in some cases, twinning arrangements between member churches could help struggling churches meet their contributions. This had been done in the past.

Clayton Leal da Silva disagreed with the recommendation. The approach was wrong: "Sorry, you are not my friend any more. If you want to be my friend, you need to be in contact. How do you feel about that?" It was better so say "Hey, I haven't heard from you for a while, how are things going?" than to say "You are not my friend anymore" and then try to rebuild relationships.

#### *The executive committee*

- agreed that those member churches that have neither contributed nor corresponded be deemed inactive and have the privileges of membership withdrawn.

#### **Action 57**

- requested executive committee members and regional councils, in communication with the general secretary, to make every effort to renew contact with inactive churches, to express concern about their inactive status and request information for prayer and to maintain the relationship.

#### **Action 58**

On recommendation 5, Jan-Gerd Heetderks wondered how many members of the current committee would be excluded if the bylaw proposed were already adopted. His own church (the Protestant Church in the Netherlands) paid below the grid.

Clifton Kirkpatrick said some churches – in North America for example – should be ashamed of how little they paid, but these were sometimes in other ways the most effective churches. The nominations committee might be asked to give preference to churches that pay the full contribution or take lack of contribution into account.

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Cheryl Meban said it would be wrong to take a hard line with small struggling churches that paid nothing but give large and comparatively wealthy churches a pass when they underpaid.

Johann Weusmann supported this. As treasurer he had spoken with underpaying churches, but whether a church paid in part or in full didn't make a difference at present. The general secretary needed some support from the executive committee to negotiate. If the five largest under-payers were to pay in full, the 10% shortfall in contributions would almost be met. We should target these five.

The president suggested the executive committee ask the general secretary to discuss with churches that are underpaying and report to the next meeting.

The recommendation was referred back to the committee.

- received the report of the constitution and membership committee (*document 15*).

**Action 54**

## **Plenary session: Friday afternoon**

### *Finance (2)*

The committee returned to the audited financial statements.

### *The executive committee*

- adopted the 2013 audited financial statements (*annex B*).

**Action 61**

- received the report of the finance committee (*document 16*).

**Action 59**

The committee thanked Anna Krüger, Gerhard Plenter and Johann Weusmann for their work.

### *Communications*

Yvette Noble Bloomfield presented the report of the communications core group (*document 14*).

*The executive committee*

- asked member churches to link their websites to the WCRC website where they have not yet done so; and to update the links from their websites to the pages of the WCRC website wherever necessary.

**Action 49**

- agreed to start a weekly blog, with all staff committed to sharing responsibilities to ensure content is available; executive committee members encouraged to participate and to seek to stimulate wider contacts with Reformed bloggers or others who could contribute.

**Action 50**

- agreed that the WCRC make every effort to ensure that the assets of ENI are properly and effectively distributed amongst its stakeholders.

**Action 51**

- mandated the general secretary, together with the finance office and finance committee and the communications secretary, to determine appropriate measures to ensure there are sufficient resources to develop existing and new communications media to compensate for the loss of ENI.

**Action 52**

- thanked Kristine Greenaway, the former communications secretary (demitted office on 31 August 2013) and Philip Tanis, the new communications secretary, for their energetic work.

**Action 53**

- received the report of the communications core group (*document 14*).

**Action 48**

The committee hoped that the communications secretary would enjoy his work and take it along with him.

*Justice and partnership*

Helis Barraza Diaz and Yueh-Wen Lu presented the report of the justice and partnership core group (*document 13*).

On recommendation 1, Chris Ferguson asked what was implied by the addition. In response it was said that there was a lot of



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controversy at the time about whether the analysis presented in 2004 was correct. The aim is to refresh the Accra statement, not just celebrate it.

### *The executive committee*

- approved “Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Accra confession” (*appendix 1*), with the addition of having an analysis of the Accra confession’s assessment of social reality, as a guideline for organizing regional and global consultations.

**Action 42**

- approved “Global consultation on the Accra confession” (*appendix 2*) as a guideline for the global consultation on the Accra confession in Hannover, 2-6 November 2014.

**Action 43**

- agreed, to the extent funds are available, to organize a Lent campaign in 2015 on human trafficking.

**Action 44**

- supported the general secretary’s proposal to work further with CWM, the LWF and the WCC on a new international financial and economic architecture and, in cooperation with these organizations, to look for a part-time consultant for the joint project (with the WCRC’s share of the costs to be covered by funds raised by the office of justice and partnership).

**Action 45**

On recommendation 5, Salome Twum said that when churches inform us of their delegates, we should check that they meet our standards.

### *The executive committee*

- asked the constitution and membership committee to work out, in relation to Article IX of the constitution, a practical model for the delegations of member churches to the general council in line with the decision of the uniting general council (Grand Rapids, 2010) to have a balanced council.

**Action 46**

- expressed appreciation to Dora Arce Valentín for her work as executive secretary for justice and partnership.

**Action 47**

- received the report of the justice and partnership core group (*document 13*).

**Action 41***Partnership Fund*

Kobus Gerber presented the report of the Partnership Fund committee (*document 17*).

Cheryl Meban asked for information about which projects were supported and where they were. The answer was: a mix of projects in churches and regional agencies, mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Some were carried out through churches in the global north working in the global south. In 2013 we had spent almost €350,000 on A projects, but substantially less on B projects. The fund had regular stories about its work in *Reformed Communiqué* and the annual report.

Clifton Kirkpatrick asked about possibilities for growth in funding and encouraged the committee to be imaginative. Johann Weusmann agreed that we needed to have the capacity to cope with significantly increased funding, but there was a huge opportunity to assist our own justice work.

In response, it was said that the main goal of the fund was the mission of our member churches. Funding from Bread for the World was limited in its purposes; with other church agencies, there were broader opportunities for our own work. The main problem was the very high level of reporting requirements from donor agencies. With the cooperation of the finance office, we were entering into a new era. Once the fund got used to the rhythm and system, it would aim to grow both its A and B funds. We should evaluate this in 2015.

*The executive committee*

- accepted as a general requirement that the grant for a project shall not normally exceed €25,000.

**Action 76**

- approved that the project grant normally shall be transferred upon approval to the account of the church, in the case of member churches; to the account of the church that takes the lead in the application, in the case of regional groupings of member churches; to the account of the area council, in the case

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of WCRC area councils; and through the WCRC's internal accounting in the case of WCRC networks of programme offices.

**Action 77**

- accepted that a grant of €7,500 shall be given for *emergency* aid.

**Action 78**

- accepted that for small building projects, funding is limited to €25,000.

**Action 79**

- agreed that a letter be sent to the member churches in which they receive up-to-date information on the revised amounts of grants and the relevant criteria.

**Action 80**

- agreed that the mission projects of the Partnership Fund be related to the mission work of the WCRC theology, mission and communion office.

**Action 81**

- thanked Douwe Visser and Páraic Réamonn for their work and welcomed Viktória Kóczian in her new post.

**Action 82**

- received the report of the Partnership Fund committee (*document 17*).

**Action 75**

### *26th general council (3)*

A further brief discussion on the wording of the theme failed to produce consensus. Those making comments were asked to talk to the wording group to see if they could bring an agreed proposal to the committee on Saturday.

### *Greetings*

Doug Chial brought greetings on behalf of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its general secretary, Olav Fykse Tveit. It was his joy, as a child of the Reformed tradition, to be with the committee.

For many decades the WCC and the WCRC had been colleagues working and praying together in the same house – the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. There was a sadness in Geneva for what felt like

their loss, but being with the WCRC in its new house, he could feel the excitement for this next chapter in Hannover and with the Reformed churches in Germany.

What bound the WCC and the WCRC together was not the house they worked from, but their common faith in Christ and deep commitment to the unity of the church and to justice for all. The growing partnership between the WCRC, CWM, the Lutheran World Federation and the WCC to work together in promoting economic justice was another sign that God is making all things new.

Greetings on behalf of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC), an associate member of the WCRC, were brought by Robert Welsh, its general secretary (*document 9.4*). He spoke about the DECC and its closeness to the WCRC, and why it is now an associate member. He also celebrated what the WCRC and the DECC had been able to do together. He expressed his joy at being present in this Executive Committee meeting.

Greetings from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were brought by Gregory Fairbanks, who noted that dialogue with the Reformed had long had a prominent place in the Vatican's dialogue with western churches. Reflecting on the resignation of Benedict XVI and the subsequent election of Francis, he said that John XXIII opened the windows of the Roman Catholic Church to let the air in, and it had been almost like that again with Francis.

Greetings from the Council for World Mission (CWM) were brought by Collin Cowan, who said that CWM was delighted to be in partnership with the WCRC and to see the readiness of the WCRC to find its place in its new context. Walk around Hannover and look at the history, he added, speaks volumes for how the church may want to interpret doing ministry in the world today.

The WCRC contributed to the spiritual strength, theological understanding and mission formation of CWM member churches. It was this reason that CWM made the financial contribution to the WCRC. If the Communion took its ministry seriously, it shouldn't be hindered by lack of financial means.

#### *Conversation with the outgoing general secretary*

Reflecting on his 14 years' service with WARC and the WCRC, Setri Nyomi said that in April 2000 he set himself six priorities:

## Executive Committee 2014

- ensuring that programmes, actions and statements were relevant to member churches and to the world
- leading a united staff team that felt appreciated and committed to making a difference
- moving the confessing process (*processus confessionis*) on economic injustice and ecological destruction from an action of the 23rd general council to the hearts of our churches and to concrete outcomes in the 24th general council
- developing close relationships with leaders and key sectors of the member churches that make them feel confident in the organization they own
- resourcing the president, officers, and executive committee so that they can provide the leadership and policy oversight they are called to
- using the resources at our disposal efficiently and inspiring confidence so that we can continue to receive and to develop new sources of funding

This clear focus led to a general council in Accra with some notable outcomes including the Accra Confession.

The years following Accra saw a search for greater unity among Reformed Christians, resulting in the unification of WARC and the Reformed Ecumenical Council in a new Reformed body, the WCRC, and the entry into associate membership of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC). Over the whole period, the relationship with the Council for World Mission (CWM) grew. We are, he said, a communion on the move.

He concluded with six prayers:

- that his successor would enjoy the support of all—member churches, the executive committee, the staff team, and all WCRC partners—to enable him to build on what has been done and achieve far greater things still
- that the WCRC, operating from its new base, would be freed from financial constraints to be the Christian world communion it is called to be—international in nature and ethos, cross-cultural and gender-balanced in its leadership and staff, and committed to justice in its internal structures and in the transformation of society
- that the WCRC would be committed to sound theological reflection that leads towards even greater commitment to justice

- that the staff team would be united around the new general secretary, working professionally under his management
- that the executive committee exercise policy oversight in a manner that creates space for management and strengthens the whole organization
- that the next three years of commemorating 500 years of the Reformation and gathering for the 26th general council would be an inspiring and fulfilling time of renewal enabling the WCRC to be a source of transformation in the world

In responses, members of the executive committee thanked the outgoing general secretary for his combination of management with pastoral concern, his calmness and patience, his ability to listen with open ears, his gifts as an ambassador, his role in bringing people together.

Lydia Adajawah said he had shown what an African can do.

Najla Kassab said that that when someone was elected in her church, people said, “We won’t congratulate you now; we’ll congratulate you when you finish.” And she congratulated him.

## **SATURDAY, 17 MAY**

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

Worship was led by Yael Eka Handiputeri.

#### *Theology, mission and communion*

Bas Plaisier presented the report of the theology, mission and communion core group (*document 12*).

Discussion of the first two recommendations raised a question of process. Jan-Gerd Heetderks found it odd to ask the executive committee to receive reports it hadn’t seen. Peter Borgdorff thought it hard for the committee to receive with joy when it didn’t know what it was receiving. William Koopmans was surprised that only the core group got the reports. Bas Plaisier acknowledged the problem with current practice. Clifton Kirkpatrick said the reports should be made available to the whole executive committee online, and it would be good to develop an archive of back documents on the website.

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The uniting general council said it was the task of the executive committee to evaluate the communion. Bas Plaisier agreed on the need to talk about important documents in the committee itself. The general secretary said that since the meaning of communion had implications for the WCRC, he would commend it for in-depth discussion at the committee meeting in 2015.

Peter Bukowski said the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue brought to the global level what was already said in the Leuenberg agreement or the Formula of Agreement. It came with recommendations the Reformed had been advocating for since Debrecen: it was really in our interest to adopt it.

### *The executive committee*

- received with appreciation the reports of three consultations on “mission on the front line,” “faith confessions in the life of WCRC member denominations,” and “the meaning of communion,” noting the importance of these topics for future discussions; resolved to make the reports available on the website, and encouraged ongoing work in these areas.

#### **Action 28**

- received with joy the report on the second round of the Working Group between the WCRC and the Lutheran World Federation and adopted its recommendations; affirmed the implications of already existing ecumenical unity described within it; and agreed to facilitate the implementation of these principles for unity wherever practicable and to continue to explore ways to embody this reality in the life of the WCRC.

#### **Action 29**

In response to Jan-Gerd Heetderks, Douwe Visser said that the preparatory group for the Anglican dialogue was aware of the Anglican-CPCE dialogue; this had formed part of the preparatory document in 2011.

### *The executive committee*

- agreed to engage in a dialogue with the Anglican communion on the theme of communion.

#### **Action 30**

- approved the proposed team for the dialogue with the Anglican communion.

#### **Action 31**

The Reformed team members approved are:

- Royce M Victor: Faculty Member (Old Testament), Kerala United Theological Seminary (Church of South India).
  - Elizabeth Welch: Minister of Clapton Park United Reformed Church (UK), undertaking research at Kings College (London) on the Holy Spirit and worship (co-chair).
  - George Hunsinger: Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of Systematic Theology, Department of Theology, Princeton Seminary.
  - Iain Torrance: Former president of Princeton Seminary, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, Dean of the Chapel Royal in Scotland, Honorary Professor of Early Christian Doctrine and Ethics at the University of Edinburgh.
  - Helené van Tonder: Lecturer at the University of the Free State Cape Town Area, 2012 GIT student.
  - Carola Tron Urban: Deputy moderator of the Waldensian Church of the River Plate, member of the WCRC executive committee and theology, missions and communion core group.
  - Douwe Visser: Theology, missions and communion secretary.
- requested the secretary to report in 2015 on mission projects in which the office is engaged in conjunction with the Partnership Fund.

**Action 32**

- mandated the secretary to write to the regions to explain our understanding and framework for mission and invite them to use the materials published in *Together Towards Life: Missions and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.

**Action 33**

- mandated the secretary to invite input from theologians for opinions and reactions to the WCC perspective on mission expressed in *Together Towards Life: Missions and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, with the goal of publishing response articles in *Reformed World*.

**Action 34**

In response to Lydia Aku Adajawah, Bas Plasier said that as a mainline communion we tended to focus too much on other mainline church communities, but the world around us was changing. Mainline churches were shrinking, while around us was



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an ocean of evangelical, independent or Pentecostal churches. A difficulty with these emerging churches was to find a representative group for conversations.

Cheh Liang Mok drew attention to rising Chinese interest in the Reformed tradition. Could the core group explore what could be done in developing Reformed theology in Mandarin-speaking churches, especially in mainland China? Bas Plasier agreed that one of the main developments in Christianity today was in Asia and specifically in China.

On recommendation 9, Clifton Kirkpatrick hoped the other regions would be involved. These churches were also popping up all over in North America. Peter Bukowski said the idea was to include some people from outside Africa in a conversation initiated by the African region. It was agreed to revise the recommendation to say “in partnership with other regions where possible.”

On the grounds that it was bad practice to rule that we were putting something in the budget when we had a separate budget process, recommendation 10 was withdrawn.

Underlying recommendation 12 was the need for the secretary to continue working with the *Fondation pour l'aide au protestantisme réformé* (FAP) and the John Knox International Reformed Centre. But in the decision to relocate from Geneva to Hannover it was already written that contact would be maintained, so the recommendation was withdrawn as redundant.

On recommendation 14: Johann Weusmann was concerned about the focus on the meaning of Reformation. Going to Wittenberg gave us a unique opportunity to focus on the Reformed-Lutheran dialogue and on what we have in common. Theologically there is no separation between us: so what follows? With such a focus, a Wittenberg declaration could be a beautiful thing. Peter Bukowski said that this was the intention of the recommendation. It was added that the declaration should focus on the churches of the Reformation, not exclusively on Reformed-Lutheran relations.

Johann Weusmann, Clifton Kirkpatrick and the general secretary were mandated to draft revised wording to reflect the discussion.

*The executive committee*

- encouraged the secretary to explore what is happening in new expressions of Christianity and report back with a view to possible engagements.

**Action 35**

- encouraged the African region, in partnership with other regions where appropriate, to explore contacts with the African instituted churches.

**Action 36**

- endorsed plans to add more theological documents to the WCRC website.

**Action 37**

- asked the WCRC office, in cooperation with the local host committee, to compile various publications for member churches and the public, in preparation of the Reformation Jubilee and on the way to 2017.

**Action 38**

- asked the same team to be responsible for drafting a proposed statement, along with the Lutheran and other Reformation churches (Wittenberg declaration) to
  - a. move Lutheran-Reformed full communion to the global level
  - b. articulate a common understanding of the meaning of Reformation and its future prospects

**Action 39**

- noted with appreciation the work of the theology, mission and communion office under the leadership of Douwe Visser, secretary.

**Action 40**

- received the report of the theology, mission and communion core group (*document 12*)

**Action 27**

The committee thanked Bas Plaisier and William Koopmans and singled out Douwe Visser, who bore an enormous workload.

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*Constitution and membership (2)*

Cheryl Meban returned to recommendation 5: Rules can't change hearts. What rules can do is assist us in our behaviour. She asked the committee to refer the proposed bylaw change to the general secretary to consider how best to proceed, and this was agreed.

*Personnel*

The committee turned to the report of the personnel committee (*document 18*).

*The executive committee*

- amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter V, Article 3.4 to read as follows:

*Annual leave:* Annual leave is authorized leave of absence with pay, and is calculated at the rate of twenty-nine days per year for staff below 55 years of age and 30 days for staff above 55 years of age. Annual leave may be taken subject to the requirements of the WCRC and on the authorization of the general secretary and appropriate supervisor. The maximum leave carried forward to the next year should not exceed 15 days. Annual leave may be taken in units of days and half days but at least 10 days of annual leave must be taken consecutively each year. Annual leave shall not accrue during periods of absence without pay.

**Action 84**

- amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter V, Article 3.5 to read as follows:

*Christmas holidays:* The WCRC office is closed from Christmas Day (December 24 until New Year's Day (January 1). The days in between those days are also given as vacation days deducted from the annual leave.

**Action 85**

This meant a net gain in holidays and leave of one, two, or three days depending on which day of the week Christmas fell.

*The executive committee*

- amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter V, Article 4.1 to read as follows:

*1. Working Hours*

- a. The working week shall be from Monday to Friday for eight hours each day.

- b. Working hours are based on flexitime system. So long as a staff member not on duty travel is working between a core time of 10:00 hours and 15:00 with a lunch break, the starting point and the ending point of the eight working day can be left to the staff member.
- c. During the day the staff member may take time for lunch and one or two short breaks. These will be deemed outside the eight hours.

**Action 86**

8.5 hours, as previously, was against German labour law.

*The executive committee*

- amended the *Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC* Chapter VI, Article 3.5 to read as follows:  
*Use of Private Car:* A member of staff may use his/her private car on his/her own responsibility for a duty-related travel or official home leave or taking up appointment or termination. For this the general secretary has to authorize. When a member of the staff is authorized to use his/her private car for duty an allowance of €0.30 per kilometre shall be paid. This is a global allowance and includes all expenses for the car. However, subject to the next point, where it is cheaper to use available public transport, the reimbursement of travelling expenses shall be comparable to the use of public transport.

**Action 87**

- agreed that the WCRC take leadership of the new international financial and economic (NIFEA) initiative as the process continues ecumenically with CWM, the WCC and the LWF and that the WCRC general secretary's input into the negotiations with the other general secretaries on where to anchor the coordinator to be engaged reflect this leadership.

**Action 88**

- received the report of the personnel committee (*document 18*).

**Action 83**

*Officers*

The committee turned to the report of the officers (*document 19*).

On the terms of reference, Peter Borgdorff said the number of delegates was determined by the constitution (see Article IX.B). The general secretary said this was right, but it remained for the

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planning committee to determine in detail how many delegates each member church was allowed, depending on its membership. Likewise, Article IX.C laid down guidelines for the composition of the delegations, but it remained for the planning committee to determine in detail whether these guidelines were being followed. Jan-Gerd Heetderks said that the committee had already mandated the constitution and membership committee to draw up a practical model for the composition of the general council to ensure that it would be a balanced council. Cheryl Meban pointed out that as both convener of the constitution and membership committee and a member of the planning committee she could avoid crossed wires by talking to herself. Stephen Kendall proposed adding “in consultation with the constitution and membership committee,” and this was agreed.

The committee agreed to delete the specific reference to the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship from the recommendation on the worship committee, allowing the officers in constructing this committee to consult as widely as needed.

The committee made various proposals for modest changes to the draft statement on the missing Nigerian girls and it was agreed that these should be incorporated in the final text.

### *The executive committee*

- appointed the following general council planning committee:
  - Lisa Vander Wal, convener
  - Jerry Pillay (WCRC president)
  - Cheryl Meban
  - Doug Chial
  - Dario Barolín
  - Aiko Sumichan
  - Chris Ferguson (WCRC general secretary from 1 September 2014)
  - the general council coordinator (when appointed)
  - two (2) representatives of the German host committee

### **Action 24**

- gave the planning committee the following terms of reference:
  - a. to be responsible for the broad plans of the 26th general council within the framework set by the executive committee in 2014. This includes working with the WCRC general secretary and staff to develop a detailed programme, timetable, budget, fundraising strategies, publications (including guidelines for several

of the general council processes), subthemes, flow, discernment processes, meaningful decision-making tracks (including subgroupings they may decide on) and symbolic events of the general council.

- b. to develop recommendations for decision of the executive committee on the number of delegates (including balances), and participants in other categories.
- c. to work with representatives of the host committee in Germany for all aspects of the hosting operations, ensuring that the housing and conference facilities are adequate for the general council.
  - It is understood that the general secretary and staff, including a general council coordinator when engaged, will take the lead in the practical initiatives that feed the deliberations of the planning committee and will in turn take their directions from the planning committee.

**Action 25**

- authorized the officers to appoint a worship committee for the general council.

**Action 26**

- expressed profound gratitude to the Council for World Mission (CWM) for its partnership and how this has strengthened the mission of the WCRC, noting with gratitude that the £1m in seed funds for the endowment had been received and that the general secretary and general treasurer were making arrangements to invest the funds appropriately.

**Action 90**

- expressed gratitude to the Reformierter Bund, the other German member churches, the UEK churches, and German agencies for the roles they played in making the WCRC feel welcomed and for helping to smooth the transition to the new location; and reiterated its gratitude for the gift from the UEK churches of €900,000 Euros over four years towards stabilizing the WCRC.

**Action 91**

- adopted the statement on the missing Nigerian girls and authorized it to be released.

**Action 92**

- received the report of the officers (*document 19*).

**Action 89**

Executive Committee 2014

*26th general council (4)*

The favoured proposal for the theme was now “Come Lord, renew and transform us.”

Peter Bukowski said in Germany renew was better than reform, because reform was a contaminated word. But come Lord, *komm Herr*, would stir up trouble among the feminists. In the US too, added Clifton Kirkpatrick.

Yueh-Wen Lu said that without Lord—or some similar word to indicate who was renewing and transforming—you got into trouble with Asian languages. Mary Fontaine preferred a theme based on the year of the Lord.

After further discussion, “Living God, renew and transform us” was proposed and agreed.

## **Action 22**

The general secretary closed the meeting with prayer.

*Executive committee of the WCRC Michigan Corporation*

The executive committee adjourned with prayer and constituted itself as the executive committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation.

*The executive committee*

- approved the minutes of the meeting of the executive committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation in Dodowa, Ghana, 15 May 2013.

## **Action WCRC-MF 1**

- agreed that the actions of the WCRC executive committee during its meeting in Hannover, Germany, 11-17 May 2014, be fully concurred in and entered into the permanent record of the WCRC Michigan Foundation as constituting decisions of 2014.

## **Action WCRC-MF 2**

The meeting of the executive committee of the WCRC Michigan Foundation was closed with sung prayer.

*Close of meeting*

The president resumed the meeting of the executive committee. The committee expressed its gratitude to the German member churches for hosting the meeting and thanked all who had contributed to the work of the meeting, especially the stewards who again were excellent.

*Conversation with the general secretary-elect*

In conversation with the executive committee, Chris Ferguson said he was grateful to be stepping into a role filled with such distinction by Setri Nyomi. What he wanted was to be inspired by the clarity of theological vision and the capacity, as a pastor, to move beyond rigid positions and to see not only where we are going but to get there together.

Renewal wasn't just freshening up the house, he said. We are called to be part of the transformation of the world, and the shape of that transformation has a particular name: justice and peace, naming the gap between the world we have and the world God calls us to have.

There is no duality between communion and justice, but we are a work in progress. Our need to have an investment policy should be a model for the whole Communion—a form of public witness. The leadership of women and men in the general council is not just a matter of getting the balances right but of modelling the kind of church God wants to see. Management should reflect theology.

We are struggling with ways to make the struggle for justice integral to every congregation in every church in our Communion. This means a new way of working with regions. We can do so much more in public witness as a whole communion, offering the Reformed perspective in the ecumenical movement, but also showing up wherever there is pain in the world.

Last point: there are new church-dividing issues—human sexuality, or the Israel-Palestine conflict. We should not be afraid of these. When Isaiah speaks of walking and not fainting, the promise is not that we won't have a long way to go, but that God will lead us there.



Executive Committee 2014

*Closed session*

The executive committee moved into closed session to discuss some of the complexities of leadership and management that had surfaced during the course of the meeting. Among other things the executive committee came to a conclusion that it is important for the WCRC to operate in a manner in which governance and management roles are not mixed up. That this principle was breached by a few people was acknowledged, and there was a commitment to ensure that under a new general secretary such breaches would not occur.

*Dinner in honour of the outgoing general secretary*

Dinner was a celebration of Setri Nyomi's 14 years of service as general secretary, first of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and then, following the uniting general council (Grand Rapids, 2010), of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Many messages of affirmation and gratitude to Setri and his wife Akpene came from the WCRC leadership, staff, partners and sister organisations.

The *Reformed World*, Volume 64, No 1, dedicated to Setri Nyomi was launched at the dinner.

**SUNDAY, 18 MAY**

**Closing worship and service of installation**

At 10 a.m., the executive committee joined the congregations of the Reformed Church in Hannover for a service to close the meeting and to install the general secretary-elect, Chris Ferguson. The pastor, Elisabeth Griemsmann, led the joint congregation in prayer. The general secretary-elect was introduced by the outgoing general secretary, Setri Nyomi; presented by Clifton Kirkpatrick, chair of the search committee; and installed by the WCRC president, Jerry Pillay.

Isaiah 59.14-16 was read in Arabic by Najla Kassab, and Luke 4.16-21 was read in English and German by Susan Ferguson. The sermon was preached by Chris Ferguson. Greetings were presented from the United Church of Canada, the World Council of Churches, the World Student Christian Federation, Religions for Peace, the Evangelical Church in Germany and the WCRC staff.

## ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Pillay

1. In Psalm 136 the psalmist says: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." He goes on in this psalm to recount the many things that God did, starting with creation and continuing in the history of Israel. He constantly affirms the presence of God in those powerfully resounding words: "His love endures forever."
2. As we reflect on the life, work and witness of the WCRC in 2013 we join with the psalmist in offering all thanks and praise to God for wisdom, strength and presence. It is truly by God's grace that we have managed to succeed in stabilizing and sustaining our organization. It is here that the words of the Psalmist, "His love remains forever" become meaningful and true.
3. In May 2013 the executive committee affirmed the big decision of moving from Geneva to Hannover and took steps to continue implementing it. While we continued with our regular work, what remained a challenge for the rest of that year was preparing for the physical move from the one location to the other.
4. The decision to move obviously affected our staff in Geneva more than anyone else. I am personally pleased to report that I was able to spend time with each member of staff once the decision was made and to discuss their own future with the WCRC. In the end only three members of staff decided to move, one of them being the general secretary who will complete his second term in 2014.
5. I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff for their absolute cooperation and wish those who did not move to Hannover all the best for their future endeavours. We note with joy and appreciation their service and work with the WCRC.
6. The officer requested Dr Nyomi to continue at least until the end of August 2014 so that we could set in motion the election and commencement of a new general secretary by 1 August 2014, with August as a month of overlap and handing over. We are glad that Dr Nyomi agreed to this request, and we believe that it will help us to keep the WCRC stable during this period of transition.
7. The general secretary search committee has completed its work and is bringing a recommendation to this executive committee

## Address of the president

- for approval. If this goes well then the time frames we have set for the transitional process will remain intact and further assist us in settling down.
8. I am personally impressed with the smooth move and relocation of the WCRC office. I have personally chatted with the staff and it is quite amazing how they seemed to have taken to the new environment and offices quite easily. Indeed, by the very nature of its design and setting, the new office and its facilities present a more conducive atmosphere for good communication and relationship-building than what we had in Geneva.
  9. While the staff have settled down well, there are some details that we have to attend to for staff that have come with us from Geneva. We trust and pray that these things will be attended to in the best interest of all concerned.
  10. I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the work and effort of Johann Weusmann and his team in Hannover in enabling the smooth and effective relocation. This is clearly evident not only in the WCRC office we currently enjoy but also in the legal status and privileges we have received as an organization based in Hannover, Germany.
  11. I am pleased to note that we are currently financially stable and healthy, as will be shown in the finance report, but this does not mean that we can take things for granted. If we are not careful in our forward planning and sustainability efforts we can run the risk of finding ourselves again in a similar position to 2012.
  12. We are now five months down the line in our new office in our new location in Hannover and, indeed, we thank Almighty God for where we are now as an organization and we express our gratitude to all those who have helped and aided our transitional journey in a variety of ways. May God truly bless and prosper you in all that you do!

## **From transition to transformation**

13. This is the fourth meeting of the executive committee since our election at the uniting general council in Grand Rapids in June 2010. We gather to worship, celebrate, fellowship and, more significantly, to prayerfully discern God's direction for the WCRC as we dialogue in our core groups and committees and chart the way forward together. We assume this privilege and responsibility with joy and humility as we open our hearts and minds to the work of God's Holy Spirit and to one another so that we may hear what God is saying to us in and through the other.

14. As we reflect on the movement of the WCRC since 2010 we discover that we have gone through different stages, which may have overlapped at times. If I were to describe these stages in particular words, without reading too much into them, I would say that 2011 was more a time of *discernment* as we as the new executive committee attempted to seek God's direction for the WCRC as a new body. It was the year in which we adopted a new vision and mission statement and established programme priorities. The year 2012 was very difficult as we contended with financial challenges and constraints. These discussions undoubtedly dominated the executive committee agenda that year. Perhaps 2012 can be described as the year of *decision* since it was then that we decided that we would move the WCRC office away from Geneva. In 2013 we affirmed the formal decision to move to Hannover. Hence it would be true to say that 2013 was more a time of *transition* as we prepared for our move to Hannover.
15. I would like to humbly submit that 2014 and beyond must be a time of *transformation and renewal* – a time in which we relook at the life, work and witness of the WCRC through new lenses. We need to consider what challenges and opportunities our new location offers us and assess its impact on our continued work. Perhaps it provides us the opportunity not to continue with business as usual, especially as we participate in God's *unusual* business in the world in relation to God's values and mission.
16. The world context in which we meet is marked by uncertainty, instability on a number of fronts, violence, religious conflict, poverty, HIV and AIDS, inequalities, secularization, materialism, globalization, the abuse of women and children, and many other things that impact on the world in different ways. We are concerned about Syria, Sudan, North Korea, Nigeria, Rwanda, Egypt, Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine, the Middle East and many other places where there is restlessness, factions, natural disasters, and the list goes on.
17. In this context we must ask: "What does it mean to be church today?" The ecumenical movement is about "being church" in the world. How we can help transform a world of sin, suffering and struggle so that it may reflect the glory and will of God?
18. However, before we set out to transform the world we need to first pray for, and work for, transformation within the church. His Holiness Aram 1 made the following observation in his report as president of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 2006: "Mainstream Christianity is ageing and falling in number, and Christianity is re-emerging with new faces and forms. The formation of non-denominational congregations and para-

## Address of the president

church and mega-church organizations has dramatically changed the Christian panorama. Major changes are taking place also inside the churches: the institutional church is losing much of its strength and impact on society; tensions and divisions in many churches on ethical, social and pastoral issues are creating confusion and estrangement; the divide between “belonging” and “believing” is growing; and we hear more and more in the mass media about the church in “confusion”, the “polarized” church and the “silent” church. Many people, particularly the youth, seem to be disappointed with what they perceive as the incapacity of the institutional church to respond to the challenges and problems of new times. They are looking for a church that is capable of meeting their spiritual yearnings; a church that can serve their pastoral needs; a church that can provide answers to their questions.”

19. He took this further by stating what “being church” requires in the 21st century: It means perceiving the church as a missionary reality and not a frozen institution. It means a church going beyond itself, reaching out to the poor and outcast, sharing their concerns, identifying with their sufferings, and meeting their needs. It means becoming a community of and for all where all forms of discrimination are destroyed: women are heard, youth are encouraged, and the physically disabled are embraced. It means addressing issues related to bio-ethics, bio-technology, human sexuality, and other areas of ethics and morality. It means bringing healing and reconciliation to broken humanity and creation and rediscovering the centrality of unity.
20. In this context of the challenges within the church, what can we offer to a broken and suffering world? In our confusion and divisions, how do we become signs of hope and life as we seek to transform the world? These are questions, I believe, that the WCRC needs to give attention to in a deeper and more focused way.

### **“Behold, I make all things new”**

21. The theme for this executive committee is: “Behold, I make all things new”. This is timely and appropriate given our changed and changing circumstances. One of the striking words for me in this promise is the word “I”. It is God who makes all things new through Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is thus imperative that we take time to prayerfully discern what God is calling us to do as the WCRC in this new environment in which we find ourselves.

22. In 2011 the executive committee accepted a new vision and mission statement for the WCRC through a very wide process of consultation and engagement. We also set out priorities and established time frames for some of these. I am not suggesting that we abandon this in any way when I call us to 'discern what God is calling us to do'. On the contrary, I am proposing that we evaluate and refresh this in the light of our new dynamics. We may need to sharpen, shape and steer the strategy for delivery in new ways. It is my view that this should not be left entirely to the staff and the new general secretary but that the officer should also play a vital role in this exercise.
23. The task before us is to examine how this sense of "newness" would impact on the work of the WCRC theologically, missiologically, ecumenically, structurally, operationally and even programmatically. We do this bearing in mind the changing world context for mission and the challenges encountered by the church today, both were briefly outlined earlier.
24. Allow me now to share a few thoughts on this by focusing on the mandate from the uniting general council: *called to communion and committed to justice*.

### **Communion/koinonia: The church-creating community**

25. One of the major areas of complexity and confusion in ecumenical relations is the terms and words we use. One such term is communion or *koinonia*: the scriptural term for the relationships of fellowship we share as fellow members of the body of Christ. I have seen even within our own circles as the WCRC how people often struggle to define what we mean by communion.
26. I have personally found the Anglican Communion's definition of ecclesial communion quite helpful. It is worth quoting in full as recorded in *The Principles of Canon Law*:
- Ecclesial communion between two or more churches exists when a relationship is established in which each church believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith and recognizes the apostolicity of the other.
  - Full communion involves the recognition of unity in faith, sacramental sharing, the mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries, and the reciprocal enjoyment of shared spiritual, pastoral, liturgical and collegial resources.
  - Inter-communion is an ecclesial relationship in which at least one but not all of the elements of full communion is present.
  - Churches in communion become interdependent but remain autonomous.

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- The relationship of communion does not require the acceptance of all theological opinion, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice characteristic of another church.
27. The Greek word *koinonia* describes a close fellowship and sharing of life, frequently including the sharing of resources. The corresponding verb either means 'to participate' or 'to enable others to participate'. In sacral language it related to the sharing between the God's and humans, particularly on the occasion of sacral meals. In the New Testament the Apostle Paul made most reference to this word *koinonia* in his letters. Let's briefly look at this to see how it can impact on our understanding of communion.

### **Koinonia and Holy Communion**

28. The idea of *koinonia* meaning to participate in something comes out quite clearly in Paul's comments on the celebration of Holy Communion: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?" In Holy Communion believers thus participate in the life of the crucified and risen Lord. At the same time this participation changes their relationship towards one another.
29. Thus in Paul's account of the institution of Holy Communion believers are warned not to marginalize Christians who come late to their worship meetings (probably the slaves or the poorer members who had long working hours). Holy Communion thus is a special occasion at which the crucified and risen Lord encounters his disciples in order to nurture and strengthen them for the task they have in the world. He encounters them with the wounds of his Crucifixion. This means that he carries the wounds of all the excluded and crucified people with him. We cannot encounter him in Holy Communion without encountering them and being reminded of our obligation towards them. The New Testament scholar Ernst Käsemann points out: *"The practice of brotherhood is also a feature of genuine worship service. And every disciple who abandons his neighbour in the earthly inferno without extending care and love to him is caught up in superstition. He is, as Paul says, guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and in his own way causes Calvary."*
30. It is regrettable that the Lord's table has become a place of division and exclusion and, at times, even Christians from different faith traditions are not able to celebrate at the same table. This is a really sore point for the WCC, if not so much for the WCRC. However, we are not completely exempt from this for I have seen how some members from within the Reformed

- family find it difficult to celebrate at the same Lord's table for supposedly theological reasons and, worse still, I have seen Reformed Christians refuse to take Holy Communion when it is administered by a female minister.
31. Theological diversity and ethical issues continue to divide us as Reformed Christians. It is sad to see these things destabilizing, fragmenting and disintegrating churches today. We are witnessing splits in denominations, severance of long-standing denominational partnerships, and a "zero-tolerance" approach justifying separation and disunity. These have already found their way into the WCRC and our tendency is to shy away from these realities without choosing to get too involved in specific matters and situations. This, of course, is the 'safe' option but one wonders for how long it would be possible to maintain this stance.
  32. In my view the WCRC should be a platform and a facility to help embrace diversity and difference. However, it would be required in time to do more than this – or rather to do it with more effort, energy and care. In my opinion the WCRC would need to play a role in the following ways: 1) *guiding* scriptural and theological interpretations, 2) creating a *safe space* for honest engagement, 3) helping to *sustain* church or denominational partnerships and relationships, and 4) *shaping* a new direction in addressing diversity and differences.
  33. Central to the goal of ecumenism is Christian unity. This should thus be a priority for the WCRC. When we muster this among ourselves we can then have a stronger witness as we talk to other communions and ecumenical bodies.
  34. A lot of emphasis in Christian unity is placed on formal dialogues intending to focus on questions of faith and order. For many ecumenical unity is no longer an ecumenical priority but, rather, an academic topic or, at best, an eschatological goal. Unity is often linked to ethical, social and missiological issues and thus loses that central focus of value and significance.
  35. In light of what I have said above, I believe that the WCRC focus should be on *fellowship-building* that should stir and steer the desire for Christian unity. This focus would impact on how we attend to diversity and difference. We would discover that the quest for Christian unity overcomes what divides us and strengthens the focus on the Lord Jesus Christ who unites us. This knowledge would lead us to an invitation of grace, hospitality and love as the guiding principles to lead us on.
  36. "Behold, I make all things new!" We need to establish what new thing God is calling us to do in the interest of Christian unity. This may have some "newness" to shed on our theological and



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missiological thinking and even on our programmatic activities as the WCRC.

### **Koinonia and the sharing of resources**

37. The apostle Paul links *koinonia* to the sharing of resources. We see this in 2 Corinthians 8:9 where he calls for a collection for the Christians in Jerusalem: "For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." In this Paul seeks to establish that God has gone out of his way to overcome our forsakenness by entering our situation in Jesus and he uses this to motivate the Christians in Macedonia to give generously to the Christians in Jerusalem. The apostle points out that such *koinonia* will enrich the lives of those who contribute to the collection: "I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance." (2 Cor 8:13-14)
38. Dieter Georgi, a New Testament scholar, describes the objective of Paul's collection as follows: *"Certainly the money collected for the Jesus congregations in Jerusalem was also seen as part of a process of growth. However, what was growing was the common good and not in the first instance the money. What was growing was the universal worship service... In this process the subjection of the universe to the rich one who has become poor begins. Here begins the unification of humankind."*
39. Perhaps Luke describes this Christian community more aptly in Acts 2: 42-46: *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."* The picture that emerges here is that as part of their faith experience they shared their resources with those in need.
40. The WCRC consists of 229 member churches in 108 countries throughout the world. It is a joy and a privilege to have such a wide connection and fellowship. It helps us to understand and appreciate the universal nature of the church and enables us to relate to fellow Christians across the globe. It helps us to embrace the great diversity of God's creation and avails us the

- opportunity to deepen and expand our own faith experiences and encounters.
41. But such diversity also reveals to us the vast discrepancies and inequalities that prevail in our world. We see how this impacts on peoples' economic, social and political circumstances and lifestyles. This, too, is evident in the life and work of the WCRC. We have had first-hand experiences of this within the executive committee that made us realize that we cannot naturally expect the same things from everyone: the ability and potential to give is not adequately present everywhere.
  42. At our last executive committee meeting we decided to implement the constitution to address member churches that have defaulted on their membership fees. Consequently, there are a sizeable number of member churches that now stand suspended from their membership privileges. This was, indeed, a painful exercise that was treated with great sensitivity and caution. Those churches that wrote and shared their financial challenges with us helped us to find a way forward with them. However, quite a few did not respond, even after we sent them at least three letters or contacted them in other ways. These have been suspended. There is a difference between inability and irresponsibility. I mention this only to point out that there are huge differences in economic ability and gifts brought into the WCRC. We must not only measure the gifts we offer by economic readings but by the gifts found in people themselves.
  43. Embracing diversity and gifts within our Communion requires that we build our fellowship mindful of inequalities, exclusions and economic power. Our relationship must be centred in Christ who taught us the way of humility, love and care. This is what Paul calls for in the sharing of resources as part of creating *koinonia*: *"Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."* (Phil 2:4). He then goes on to plead: *"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness."*
  44. Our challenge is to build our fellowship as we address inequalities, embrace diversity and share resources. Our giving to another is not to be a burden but a gift: the gift of blessing, caring and joyfully offering the gifts of God given to us to others.
  45. We need to consider seriously how to encourage this within the WCRC. We should ensure that all our programmes, workshops and activities consciously embrace the variety of gifts, contexts, diversity and differences we have within the Communion. We need to provide space for people to share, learn and discover

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new things from one another. These are important initiatives for our own transformation and renewal.

### **Koinonia as solidarity in sharing suffering**

46. In Paul's proclamation of the Gospel, *koinonia*, the participation of Christians in the life of the crucified and risen Lord through the Spirit is the counterforce against all forces of exclusion and division that disrupt humankind and creation. Jesus was crucified because he defied the political, economic and religious structures of exclusion from life. By raising him from the dead God has overthrown the judgment that the great ones passed against him. As the risen Lord he reassembles his disciples and empowers them to take up the struggle.
47. Christians are called to participate in the suffering of Christ and at the same time in the new life brought about by his resurrection. In his letters Paul frequently uses the preposition 'with' in connection with verbs stating that the believers are allowed to partake in the experiences of their Lord. In his letter to the Philippians (3:10-11) the apostle expresses this wish: *"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing (koinonia) of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead."*
48. Equally the apostle speaks about Christians who are far removed in distance from one another and nevertheless together share in the suffering as well as in the comfort they experience. The term taken from the *koinonia* word-family here refers to the mutual support Christians give one another in suffering and to the sharing of joy and of suffering.
49. John Calvin spoke of a "human chain" to describe how Christians are connected one to the other, stating that if one link was affected every other one was affected too. This is the kind of fellowship, care and solidarity we need to foster within the WCRC. We should be concerned and caring about what happens in the life and world of the other. We should participate in efforts to eradicate poverty, injustices, inequality, and oppression and to help in situations of natural disaster. Yes, these things require money and resources, but the most significant thing is that people know that we care.
50. If we are to succeed in creating community within the WCRC from a strategic and structural point of view we will need to strengthen the global and regional lines of communication and, most significantly, from member churches to member churches and regions to regions. We need to revisit our regional empowerment plan and seek ways of making it work effectively and meaningfully. We need to encourage a 'culture of sharing' resources, people and experiences. We need to facilitate

- opportunities for people to share their stories and life experiences across the globe.
51. I have already suggested that we must continue doing this in our programmes and activities, but what about regions taking the initiative in this as well? There are member churches of the WCRC within the same region or even country that have very little or no contact with one another, yet are part of the same Reformed family. How can we turn a blind eye to this? I believe that the executive committee needs to put time and energy on the ground into bringing these churches and people together. Could we not create the desire for member churches to engage in mission together, work for unity and justice on the ground?
52. We need to realise that creating community is not a top-down approach but bottom-up. It needs to start from the ground if it is to be meaningful and true. The global leadership needs to consciously connect churches and people locally and our local leaders need to connect with each other more intentionally. Once we are successful in achieving this on the ground then we will move away from the idea of connecting as the WCRC once in every seven years at the general council, as happens for many. Our work will become integrated, relevant, impactful and continuous as we live out the Communion wherever we are found. We need to ask some serious questions about how we can breathe new life into our structures so that we can empower, connect and revitalize ministry within the WCRC family.
53. Our task is not only to work for unity and fellowship within the WCRC family but to work for Christian unity at large in the world. We need to continue to cooperate, collaborate and work with other Christian communions, ecumenical organizations and churches. We cannot rest content, if we are to take the prayer of Jesus seriously in John 17: "Father that they may be one." The call for Christian unity is both a gift from God and the prayer of Jesus. We need to always keep this in mind as the goal for ecumenism and the creating of community.
54. In this section I have attempted to show that we need to understand and appreciate what it means to be a communion. Our focus should be on building and creating community. We do this more effectively as we discover what it means to share in Holy Communion, for here we are called to be truly one with Christ and with one another, share resources (which implies that we should carry each other), and express solidarity as we care for one another in our contextual experiences and as we work for unity within the WCRC family and Christian unity in general.

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### **Committed to justice**

55. We have always maintained within the WCRC that communion and justice go together. You cannot really have the one without the other. If you are to have true communion then there have to be just relationships and you have to address injustices and inequalities. This is precisely what I attempted to show in the above discussion on communion. And to have justice you have to work for true unity, fellowship and relationships that speak of caring, sharing and building community. Again this is what emerges in the above discussions. Consequently, in this section on justice I do not intend to say much more except to focus on the ACCRA Confession.
56. But let me first take us back to the theme of this executive committee: "Behold, I make all things new!" In Revelation 21:1 the writer says: *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more."* He then describes the 'new Jerusalem' in which *"...the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away... See, I am making all things new."* The Revelation to John was written at a time when Christians were being persecuted because of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. The writer here envisions a time when there will be peace and justice and where the faithful will be blessed with a new heaven and a new earth when victory is complete.
57. Justice is at the heart of the gospel. There are so many biblical references to the fact that God longs for justice in Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Matthew, Luke, etc. Jesus located his own ministry in the context of justice as he took up the plight of the poor and needy (Luke 4:18-19): *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*
58. The Accra confession is perhaps the WCRC's clearest statement on justice in the world. The confession was adopted by the then WARC in 2004 and this year we celebrate its 10th anniversary. It speaks strongly about the need for justice in three specific areas: *economic justice, gender justice and eco-justice.*
59. And now a decade later it may be necessary to evaluate and assess what we have done to implement the observations and recommendations of the Accra confession. Perhaps it is also time to ask: "What new things is God calling us to do in the

- area of justice?” How can we strive to live out the Accra confession? What are the things we have learnt from this? What are some of our ‘success’ stories and what are some of our failures?
60. We rejoice knowing that many other ecumenical organizations have taken the Accra confession and used it to draw up theological statements, stir conversations on justice issues, write books and develop programmes. The WCRC is pleased to participate with the WCC and CWM in the new economic and financial architecture and Oikotree programmes. The confession is even factored into the teaching curriculum of some universities and theological seminaries. We commend these initiatives and sincerely hope and pray that they will help us to see, learn and do new things to address injustice and care for the earth.
61. While we appreciate the way the Accra confession has created new inspiration and justice initiatives, I cannot help but wonder how many of our member churches have taken it and used it within their context. It is often alarming in public meetings to discover that many of our congregants have not even heard of the Confession. My call is for us to accept that it is a gift to us as well and not just for others out there. May I encourage you to share this with your own churches if you have not already done so? Perhaps we also need to take some time at this executive committee to share our stories on how we have used the Accra confession or not used it and why not.

**Summary: Points to consider**

62. In summary, I would now like to offer some points for consideration for the future vision and work of the WCRC:
63. We are an organization in transition and in need of transformation as we seek to transform the world to reflect the glory of God. Our move to Hannover gives us the opportunity to ask new questions, navel-gaze a bit, and discern what new things God wants to do to us and through us. We must not lose this opportunity!
64. We need to look at our strategy in the light of our Vision and Mission statement and assess our achievements. One thing is clear: we need to look at how we are “creating community” as we focus on communion and justice. Are we adequately fostering fellowship and unity within the WCRC? This must not be limited to the WCRC family but to the task of Christian unity at large that begs us to continue our cooperation and work with other ecumenical organizations and churches.
65. In the light of diversity, differences and divisions within the WCRC family, generally emanating from theological and ethical

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- issues, we need to assess the role the WCRC can and will need to play to create community and encourage unity in such circumstances.
66. As part of our strategy, we need to have a vision to empower and mobilize regions and member churches to connect and 'create community' with one another on the ground so that they are actively involved in ministry together, as a visible Christian witness to our unity, where it matters most. We need to establish a communication strategy in which regions can talk to regions and member churches to one another. Part of this task would be to avail ourselves of opportunities and facilities in which people can share their stories as part of the "creating community" endeavour. Here modern technology and communication tools can play a significant role.
67. In creating community, we need to consider inclusion and exclusion, power dynamics related to economic advantage and how these things can either consciously or unconsciously be at play in our Communion. Here we need to consider seriously the issues of justice and assess the impact of the Accra confession within the life and work of the WCRC and more particularly in member churches.
68. I have not said much about embracing children, youth and disabled people in the work of the WCRC, but this is an important matter on which we need to strategize carefully if we are to ensure the continued life, work and witness of the Communion. It is really pleasing to see the youth contributing to our programmes and consultations and this is primarily through the successful development of young people in the GIT. We need to build on this and encourage the involvement of young people a lot more.
69. The 2010 uniting general council took the decision of bringing equal numbers of male and females to the next Council. However, this is not going to materialize if we are not strategically working with our member churches in this regard. Here we will need to consider the issue of education and development of women within member churches. We will need programme orientation and definite work in this direction lest we fall short of implementing the decision made in 2010.

## **Concluding remarks and acknowledgements**

70. As president I was quite occupied with transitional issues during 2013, attending to matters associated with the move to Hannover. Of course this was not the only thing on the agenda: I managed to represent the WCRC at important gatherings, preach at the general assemblies of some of our member churches, give addresses on specified themes at conferences

- and church gatherings, attend workshops and consultations arranged by the WCRC staff, and attend to issues within the Communion.
71. It was quite a memorable experience to participate at the farewell service in Geneva in December and to preach at the packed opening Service we had in Hannover on 12 January 2014. I must admit that the farewell service was a little disappointing in that many from the Ecumenical Centre were not present. In spite of this it was a great service and a fantastic way to pass the "light" from Geneva to Hannover. In Hannover we were greatly overwhelmed by the packed church and the presence of our ecumenical partners both from Germany and beyond. It was really a very great welcome and we thank all those who worked very hard to make it incredibly special.
72. At this executive committee meeting we will be electing the next general secretary as recommended by the general secretary search committee. My prayer is that God will guide and bless our conversations on this and that we would be able to celebrate the way forward in this regard as we look forward to the new things that God wants to do to us and through us as the WCRC. In this regard, I also wish to thank the executive committee for its journey with me on the general secretary matter and for your gracious understanding in the eventual decision. Your friendship, support and understanding are appreciated and valued more than you can possibly know or imagine.
73. As we welcome the next general secretary we will be bidding farewell to our current incumbent, Setri Nyomi, who has served WARC and the WCRC over the last 14 years with pride, joy and distinction. I count it an absolute pleasure and joy to have worked with Setri in the last four years or more. I have always marvelled at his work ethic, sacrificial service, wisdom, leadership and humility. Indeed, his servant heart and love for the WCRC exudes in abundant measure. I am certain that he will continue to connect and serve the WCRC in different ways. I wish to thank his wife Akpene and the family for giving him to us over these years and for all the sacrifice they made in allowing him to be freely available to conduct his work with the WCRC. May God bless and guide them into the future, and may they find peace and joy in whatever ministry they will now enter into. I have said only a little here but at this executive committee meeting we will say much more at different times.
74. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Douwe Visser and Dora Arce-Valentín for their work and service as the executive secretaries with their respective portfolios. I realize that the



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move from Geneva was not easy for them on many levels but they remained constant in their commitment and service to the WCRC. In the midst of personal struggles and conflict they continued to do their work faithfully, and this will be seen in the reports that will be presented to the executive committee. I wish to also express our thanks and appreciation to other staff members, full-time and part-time, who left us during the course of 2013 or at the time of the move for their valuable service and commitment: Kristine, Yueh, Hartmut, Sybille, and Ida. Páraic will continue with us until the end of June 2014, and we are most grateful to him for his remarkable work. Indeed, we were also blessed by the presence and work of our two interns: Frans and Viktória. Viktória has continued with us as assistant to Douwe. We say a hearty welcome to Phil (executive secretary for communications), Claudia (assistant to the general secretary), Anna (finance), and Paul (our new volunteer helping us connect with the German context), who have already started to show their worth and value to the WCRC in many ways. We trust that you will have a wonderful and rewarding time with the WCRC office.

75. I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the WCRC officer for their commitment and contributions to the organization. I have appreciated your personal journey with me through the year, especially in the agonizing time of responding to the call of the executive committee offered to me, your understanding, prayers and support are all valued and remembered with gratitude and thanksgiving. Thank you for the team spirit and team work!
76. In the same breath, I also wish to thank all members of the executive committee for your diligence, faithfulness and commitment to the work and witness of the WCRC. It is you who give leadership and presence of the WCRC on the ground and in your regions. I trust and pray that you will continue to play this vital role to close the gap between the global leadership and the local context of the WCRC. May God continue to bless you with wisdom and strength!
77. Last but not least, I like to thank my church (the UPCSA) for releasing me into the work of the WCRC without any moan or complaint. They have carried me in many significant ways for which I am truly grateful. I cannot express adequate thanks and appreciation to my wife, Sandra, and my children for putting up with my periodic travels and constantly occupied mind as I dived from one thing into another. They have truly borne the brunt of my often busy lifestyle with grace and love and released me for long periods to fulfil my duties as WCRC president. Thank you so much!

78. In these past years we have travelled a long way as the WCRC, and particularly in the past year. Now as we find ourselves in a new venue in Hannover, we have opened a new chapter in the history of the WCRC. As we continue to write this history, I invite you to take seriously the words of God contained in the theme of this meeting: "Behold, I make all things new!" Let us continue to prayerfully seek and discern the 'new things' into which God may be leading us. Let us trust the Holy Spirit to lead us as we offer ourselves in obedience and love to the ongoing work of God in and through the WCRC, knowing with full assurance that the "love of the Lord endures forever". To God be the glory!

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Setri Nyomi

1. I deliver my last general secretary's report to the executive committee meeting with a sense of gratitude to God for how far we have come together. Three months after I took over as general secretary in the then World Alliance of Reformed Churches, I attended the assembly of the other of our predecessors, the Reformed Ecumenical Council, in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The theme for that assembly was "*Behold, I make all things new.*" Now in 2014, three months before I leave office, the executive committee is meeting under the theme, "*Behold, I make all things new.*"
2. One of the scripture passages that articulate the ideas from which this theme comes is Revelation 21.5 where the One who sits on the throne is quoted as saying: "Behold, I make all things new." As we all know, the book of Revelation was written at the time of great persecution, where the empire of the day thought it had absolute power. To affirm the earliest confession of the church "Jesus is Lord" could also be interpreted as being subversive – you are saying the "emperor is not Lord." So against this background to hear the words the One who sits on the throne proclaims anything also points towards the fact that there was a throne mightier than the one on whom any earthly emperor sits. It is this One, who we know as our Lord and Saviour who proclaims, "Behold, I make all things new!"
3. This proclamation is itself subversive. Against the forces of oppression, destruction and death, the Lord is making something new. Our world is filled with so much turmoil. In the last year, we have seen new faces of the vicious forces of suffering and death come to add to the existing one. The war in Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, turmoil in South Sudan, violence in the Central African Republic, forced border changes in and around Ukraine, regime change in Egypt, earthquake in the Philippines, eruption of volcanoes in Indonesia, and mudslides in Washington state and other places are just a part of a long list of events in 2013-2014 that remind us of the oppressive environment in which we find ourselves. These add to the struggles posed by injustice in various forms (economic, gender, climate, racial, etc.). People, in fact the whole of creation, are yearning for something else to replace these predominant forces. Can we dare to proclaim that God is

making something new? Is God indeed able to make something new?

4. The writer of Revelation placed this as a quotation from God. And if such a proclamation was made at a time of another vicious empire, and held to be true, it can be true for our times, too. Its truth, however, is not in a magical belief that God will say the word and then everything will be new. Its truth involves how we as believers are prepared to respond to God's calling to participate in the creation of a new reality. How prepared are we to read the signs of our times in a manner that when God calls us to be agents of change, we will respond faithfully and effectively? How willing are we to bear the cost of such prophetic actions in a similar manner that believers at the time of the writing of Revelation had to face? Yes, the World Communion of Reformed Churches has been pointing to injustice and its devastating impact on millions of people for years and has even made prophetic statements and taken actions to make a difference. How ready are we to continue this path as God continues to make a new thing for our times?
5. This year, we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Accra confession. We see this as part of God's new project. This is what we understood 10 years ago. This is why we confess, God is God, and we can do no other but to speak clearly even if it means offending the empire of our days. Ten years later, can we assess how far we have come and are we prepared to take new steps alongside the God who is in the process of making all things new?
6. The World Communion of Reformed Churches has a good tradition of moving with God in any direction – old or new – on the basis of sound theological engagement. Our commitment to strengthening the mission of our churches, to building the communion and contributing to the formation of new leadership all come from a strong sense of the role sound theology plays in how we fulfil our calling today. The general secretary's office, as well as the two colleagues who lead our programmes, are committed to this.
7. One specific way in which I have enjoyed seeing God do new things in the last several years has been ways in which the WCRC has been carving its niche as a safe space in which its member churches can feel free to encounter one another – sometimes over very painful issues. We have not always done this perfectly. However, we have as a calling to be that safe space. It is our hope that the WCRC will continue to sharpen this aspect of our ministry as an important way of embracing the new thing God is doing today in a world in which

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polarization and division has been the norm with which people handle differences – even in the church. The Reformed family has seen its share of this, and we as the WCRC need to continue finding creative ways in which we could be that body that helps member churches overcome the destructive tendencies of handling differences.

8. As we gather in this year's executive committee meeting, I hope we can raise these and many more questions in the hope that our reflections will lead us towards being more faithful to God in participating in the new thing God is doing.

## **Strategic plan**

9. It is in the light of our commitment to participating in the new thing God is doing that we have been serving you. In the year 2013-2014, we continued to be guided by the mandates outlined in our strategic planning 2011-2017 approved by the executive committee in 2011, and by the decisions of the executive committee meeting in Dodowa.
10. The following sections of this 2014 report demonstrate efforts made to live out these mandates of the vision and mission to which we have been called and to continue the journey on the key directions approved by the executive committee in the strategic plans.

## **Work with the regional councils**

11. Four of our regional Councils met in assemblies during the period under review – one in 2013, and the other three in March 2014. Our president Jerry Pillay and I were able to attend one together, and I attended two others and sent a message to the fourth.
12. The African Communion of Reformed Churches (ACRC) had its assembly in Kampala, Uganda, in the latter part of May and early June 2013, just before the general assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches. Our member churches in Africa through this assembly made new commitments to working together. Activities in 2013 showed that the ACRC is resurrected and has poised itself to serve the African churches better.
13. In March 2014, the Caribbean and North American area council (CANAAC) and the Caribbean and North American council for mission (CANACOM) had a joint assembly. We are glad to see the ways in which CANAAC and CANACOM are cooperating together. This is the second joint assembly they have organized – having worship, Bible studies and other thematic sessions together and doing business sessions separately. This

- is a model we have been encouraging as a sign of actors in the ecumenical movement with common vision moving together.
14. The Northeast Asia area council (NEAAC) had its meeting in Japan from March 24 to 26. Among other things, they are planning to have a consultation on the tenth anniversary of the Accra confession in Taiwan later this year.
  15. In its meeting in Warsaw, Poland, WCRC Europe had a discussion on the post-communist era in Eastern and Central Europe. They also made plans for a consultation on human trafficking for later this year.
  16. While the *Alianza de Iglesias Presbiterianas y Reformadas de América Latina* (AIPRAL) did not meet, they continued to serve our member churches in Latin America well.
  17. Our new regional councils for Southern Asia Region and Indonesian Region have not been very active. We continue to encourage them to engage actively.
  18. The leadership of the regional councils have participated actively in our work of getting the member churches which have not been paying their contributions to do so. This has been a tedious process and we appreciate the regional councils working with us.

### **Networking and strategic partnerships**

19. Our work with strategic partners continues to deepen. Our close partners continue as the Council for World Mission (CWM), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), *Brot für die Welt* (BfW) and the *Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland* (EMW).
20. I attended the trustee board meeting of the Council for World Mission in Glasgow, Scotland, in June 2013 and led in their Bible studies. Following our joint senior staff meeting in November 2012, we have made the beginning steps in inviting one another to participate in programmes. We still need to further develop this area into intentionally planning together.
21. Following the São Paulo conference on new economic and financial architecture, we have continued to work with CWM, the WCC and the LWF in setting up a high level panel to move the process forward. The panel met twice – in August 2013 and January 2014. We are in the process of working together on resourcing this process with a part time secretariat. Another outcome of the São Paulo process that is being worked on is an educational opportunity that will provide space for new directions in the economic and financial architecture. We continue to work on all these ecumenical fronts with the strategic partners we have in these areas.

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22. We are in the process of completing our evaluation of the first phase of the joint partnership agreement with the EMW in Germany. The partnership has so far enabled us to carry out some of our mission emphases more effectively. It is hoped that following the evaluation, we will increase that profile and to include the mission aspect of the Partnership Fund in this. The strategic partnership with BfW has also strengthened our ministry through the development aspect of the Partnership Fund.
23. Our working with strategic partners is in line with our fulfilling our strategic plans.

### **Programme priorities**

#### **Theology, mission and communion**

24. The executive secretary and his colleagues focused on preparations for the GIT 2014 in Costa Rica. A preparatory meeting was held from 16-20 September in San José, Costa Rica, at the campus of the Biblical University of Latin America, where the GIT will take place from 5-28 July 2014. They have chosen a theme, composed a teaching staff, and worked out the steps for student enrolment. Since then, the fundraising has started. By the end of the application deadline, around 70 applications were received for 30 positions. The selection was done in January this year. Unforeseen challenges including getting visas for some of the students arose and are being worked through.
25. We produced only two issues of *Reformed World* in 2013 instead of three. The difficulties in producing three can in part be attributed to the challenges involved in relocation since our executive secretary had to operate from Germany while his assistant was in Geneva. The first *Reformed World* of 2014 is scheduled for May 2014.
26. In 2013, we produced a Reformation Sunday brochure as a downloadable PDF on our website. This was a brochure that could give inspiration to member churches to celebrate Reformation Sunday, concentrating on the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. We also wanted to show how this Reformation time document still inspires the *Reformed World* to confess its faith today – for example in the Belhar and Accra confessions.
27. A highlight for the theology, mission and communion office was the consultation “Living in the frontline” that was organized from 25-30 November in Breklum, in the north of Germany. The participants came together mainly from member churches that live in situations of interreligious tension and violence. We had participation from the WCC, the LWF and the Programme

- for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). The evaluations received indicate that the participants found this consultation inspiring and helpful for members of our communion who live “in the frontline”. It also made us affirm that being in communion means to be there where the Communion suffers and faces great challenges. There is a call for a follow-up consultation, which will be processed in this executive committee meeting.
28. Through the theology, mission and communion office, we sponsored five former GIT students to participate in the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) organized by the WCC in conjunction with its 10th assembly. It had an ambitious programme and a large ecumenical student population.
  29. From 4-7 February we held a consultation in Grand Rapids, Michigan (United States) on “the meaning of communion.” The consultation was organized by the general secretary’s office and the office for theology, mission and communion. We had around 45 participants. This consultation, strategically placed halfway between the uniting general council and the next general council, was meant to take stock of how we are doing as a communion and to deepen how we relate together within the Communion. The report will be presented to this executive committee through the theology, mission and communion core group for action. It would be good if this evaluation process of the state of communion could be taken up by the executive committee. We are very grateful to the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) for their great support financially and logistically to this consultation.
  30. The communion consultation took place right after a consultation organized by the CRCNA on the “ecumenical faith declarations.” Cooperating in this way is consistent with our commitment to meeting the needs of our member churches in accordance with our strategic plans. In this case, one of our member churches wanted to consult with others with whom they share communion on an issue that is important for their Synod, and the WCRC helped gather the community that could participate in this.
  31. The report of the second round of dialogue between the WCRC and the LWF is now ready and will be processed through the theology, mission and communion core group. Once adopted by the respective executive committee it can be the real final report, and the dialogue can be closed. There are no further plans for a dialogue, but we have regular contacts, especially concerning the 2017 Reformation Jubilee.
  32. The fourth meeting of the dialogue between the Roman Catholics and the Reformed took place on 6-12 April in



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Scotland hosted by the Church of Scotland. This year the concentration is mainly on two themes: 1. Holy communion and justice; 2. Sanctification as a middle term between justification and justice.

33. The global network of theologians continues to do its work. A series of four theme group meetings is planned for this year. Two of these are already scheduled for this year: 26 June-2 July (theme group *Sola Scriptura*) and 2-8 November (theme group *Church and Society*). Both theme groups will meet in Hannover, and the second meeting is jointly organized with the justice and partnership office.
34. The executive secretary for TCM has also responded positively to the request of the president of WCRC Europe to set up a network of theologians in Europe and to organize a first consultation in the coming months. This network will guide the area council in dealing with relevant theological themes and questions. The first meeting will take place on 22-26 April in Hannover.
35. The executive secretary for TCM was also involved in some other events. One example is the Reformation Jubilee 2017 Congress in Zürich organized by the Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches and the Evangelical Church of Germany. He gave a presentation in one of the workshops. The title of his presentation was, "Reformation and politics: between prophetic voice and blind authority obedience".
36. The executive secretary for TCM also plays a key leadership role in developing programmes for the John Knox Centre with which we have been in partnership.

## **Justice and partnership**

### *Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth*

37. 2014 marks the tenth anniversary of the Accra confession. A series of regional consultations have been planned to culminate in a global consultation in November 2014. The global consultation will have the theme "Called to communion, committed to justice: The Accra confession ten years later".
38. The first of the regional consultations was for our Caribbean and North American Region. This took place in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 19-23 March. As part of the commitment to open the discussion and invite our ecumenical partners to this journey of reflection and celebration, we invited CANACOM to join us in the consultation. This consultation engaged in discussions about the history and the context of the Accra confession and its implications for our world today. The Open Letter that came out as a result of the discussions is available at this meeting.

39. Our commitment to justice includes working in partnership with other ecumenical bodies. Our engagement in the Oikotree movement is in this spirit. As a result of the working groups approved in the last Oikotree Global Forum (Johannesburg, March 2013) our justice and partnership office is facilitating the Communication Working Group. As active members of the Transformative Theological Education Working Group our justice and partnership office has worked in developing the content of the concept paper for the next Roving Faculty Workshop scheduled for February 2015. In addition, we have been very active in the Facilitating Group, especially in the planning of the Madang workshops we conducted during the WCC assembly in Busan, in November 2013.
40. The Dodowa executive committee gave some priority to working on human trafficking. Our justice and partnership office engaged in a mapping exercise on networking with churches, groups and NGOs currently working on issues of human trafficking. Our executive secretary for justice and partnership was in touch with Esclavitud XXI (Spain), CAREF (Argentina), Presbyterian Woman (PCUSA), our regional councils, and some other groups with some history of working ecumenically on human trafficking. In addition we are working closely with our United Nation office in New York, not only including them in our Human Trafficking Working Group but also having them as consultants for possibilities for more professional advocacy work related to human trafficking. Ryan Smith of the UN office has been very active within the justice network task force for the human trafficking project.
41. We have begun working on the Human Trafficking Lent campaign for next year. We had a workshop in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with the cooperation of the Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata (IERP) and Comisión de Apoyo a Refugiados y Migrantes (CAREF). A working group within the justice networks came together to reflect on and prepare a concept paper for the Lenten campaign "Broken for You". We base our actions against human trafficking on theological premises and also link it with the Accra confession.
42. New Economic and Financial Architecture: The follow up of the São Paulo Conference on New Economic and Financial Architecture, in partnerships with our ecumenical bodies CWM, LWF and WCC continues. The high profile panel recommended in the São Paulo meeting was organized. It has so far held two meetings at Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Geneva. The first meeting was held 23-26 August 2013 and the second one 14-16 January 2014.

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43. After the second meeting of the panel, an action paper was developed. It includes recommendations for actions within the member churches of each of the ecumenical bodies involved and for the general secretaries to follow up. Actions also include the recommendation for the panel to continue working but with a coordinator as a link person in between the panel of the general secretaries and their staff in programmes related to the content. There is a process now on how to engage the coordinator and which of the four organizations will constitute the primary “employer” of the coordinator on behalf of the others.
44. The executive secretary for justice and partnership represented the WCRC during the Latin American Council of Churches assembly and presented a copy of the São Paulo statement to the former president Bishop Julio Murray. The executive secretary was invited to participate and to preach at the opening devotion during the migration, faith and economy event held in Quito, Ecuador. This event was organized by the NCCC (USA), CLAI with representation of AIPRAL. In that event the executive secretary presented a copy of the São Paulo statement to the vice-minister of migration (Movilidad Humana) of Ecuador.

## *Gender justice*

45. Our justice and partnership office continues to manage the theological education scholarship fund for women. We suspended moving forward in terms of new applicants since last year. We are focusing now on the ones already using the funds. We are preparing a new request for funds, and hopefully we will be able to resume taking new applicants. We will also need to improve the information for our member churches on the availability of these funds.
46. We continue our engagement in the networks we work with to raise awareness of violence against women. We are part of the “We will Speak out Coalition” – a “global coalition of Christian-based NGOs, churches and organizations, supported by an alliance of individuals, who together commit themselves to see the end of sexual violence across communities around the world”. Our executive secretary for justice and partnership participated in the planning meeting of the We Will Speak Out coalition (WWSO) held in London from the 23-26 July 2013. The strategies developed in this meeting and the Activity Plan of the WWSO coalition represent the added value of working collectively across the diversity represented in the coalition that brings together a broad range of members, united in their mission to end sexual violence.

47. In addition, in partnership with our United Nation office, we continue to promote the “Orange Day”, “SayNO-UNITE to end violence against women” and “HEforSHE” campaigns, all of them with the same general objective but different emphases.
48. Our executive staff participated actively in the 58th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The WCRC was part of a panel within the Ecumenical Women Orientation programme and then as one of the speakers during the Parallel Event Presbyterian Panel organized by Presbyterian Women PCUSA. We also had the chance to present our Gender Justice programme to the many women representing different countries and NGOs around the world.
49. Silvia Michel Prize for Women. We are in conversations with the Swiss women presidents of the Reformed Churches in Switzerland (PANKS) now in the process of becoming an independent association. Despite the challenge of being located in Germany, we are committed to working with the Swiss women presidents for the Sylvia Michel Prize and other engagements. This year – 2014 – we will be nominating and selecting the group or person that will be award with the prize.

**Theology, mission and communion / Justice and partnership**

50. As usual, the two programme offices worked closely together during the year under review. The two executive secretaries have involved one another in planning and executing programmes. Both executive secretaries are convinced that we cannot engage our member churches in questions of justice without theological tools to support their commitment. On the other hand, there can be no theological reflection, from the Reformed perspective that does not take seriously the prophetic content of mission – including raising our voices to further justice – because this is at the heart of our Christian faith.
51. The theology, mission and communion and the justice and partnership offices have both opened Facebook pages. This is meant among other things to facilitate access to information among WCRC member churches and networks that each of the offices works with. The executive secretaries have been working with the executive secretary for Communications to increase the amount of programme related information on our website – including press releases.
52. One of the actions recommended in the São Paulo statement was the establishment of an ecumenical school of Governance, Economics and Management (GEM) “to develop economic competencies and empowerment within the ecumenical

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movement. In addition, educational materials should be developed to enhance the economic and financial literacy of church members". Our Theology executive secretary is representing the WCRC in the facilitating group for this initiative. Meetings to develop the curriculum and to move forward with concrete proposals for dates have been organized.

53. Our bilateral theological dialogues continue to clearly demonstrate that for us in the WCRC our theological reflections and commitment to justice go together. Justice is an important element of the current theme of the Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogue. Mission is at the heart of the theme for the upcoming Reformed-Pentecostal dialogue.
54. The Global Institute of Theology is the theological formation programme that also continues to forge this strong bond. As a theology programme, it also creates space for young people to see the links between communion and justice.
55. The way we carry out all our engagements and the ways in which our colleagues Dora and Douwe work together all indicate that when we say the WCRC is a communion committed to justice, we are not simply using empty words. We stand true to our conviction that there can be no communion without justice, and there can be no justice without communion.

## Communication

56. This part of work was under the watch of two executive secretaries. Kristine Greenaway brought to completion a very productive tenure of service to the WCRC on 31 August 2014 and left behind comprehensive handover notes. Philip Tanis began his tenure on 1 February 2014 on a very active note ensuring that all the communication responsibilities are performed in a timely fashion. The professionalism of both of them made the transition smooth.
57. A "double issue" of the *Reformed Communiqué* was produced covering June–September. The last issue of the Reformed Communiqué in 2013 with Stephen Brown as guest editor came out in December 2013. The first edition for 2014 came out in March 2014. It is amazing that in spite of the transitions in the communications office, we were able to produce these issues of the *Reformed Communiqué*. The *Reformed Communiqué* continues to be published in both English and French, although this will be re-evaluated once results of the communications survey are reviewed (see below). In addition, articles from the *Communiqué* are distributed in German

- through the Reformed Information website (reformiert.info) and into Spanish through AIPRAL.
58. The new WCRC website came online in October 2013. We are grateful for the hard work done by Kristine, Allan Buckingham and Frans Du Plessis. The website will be reviewed again. The new site offers great potential, especially with its fresh design and ease of use. Additional work needs to be done on it, since it was completed without a communications secretary in office. Items that will be focused on include:
- requests to restore material from the previous site
  - development of an online “store”
  - evaluation of text (incorporating updated text from the brochure)
  - general clean-up and completion of pages
59. While the new website was brought online in the four European-based languages in October, the other global languages (Indonesian, Korean, Arabic and Chinese, as well as Japanese) were not implemented on schedule (which was to have been by early January 2014). As of the writing of this report, both the Arabic and Chinese translations have been received; it is anticipated they will be live by the executive committee meeting in May. Efforts are continuing on the remaining languages for both the basic translations and to implement methods for ongoing translation work.
60. Under the guidance of Hans von Rütte and Ann Manuel Tankam, archivists with the World Council of Churches, Frans du Plessis also worked to re-archive both WARC and REC material using scopeArchiv, a highly developed archiving system. Materials were evaluated, filed and brought into this digital system.
61. The move from Geneva to Hannover happened over the Christmas 2013 to New Year 2014 holidays. Unpacking and organizing of printed materials continued into February. We continued to work on electronic files from servers in both Hannover and Geneva. Files from the Geneva computer servers were moved at the end of April 2014.
62. Ecumenical News International (ENI) ceased operations in 2013 after failing to find necessary funding to continue. Discussions have been opened with the last president of ENI, David Harris, about obtaining the contact list ENI used for news release distribution. Our Communications executive secretary is also discussing other aspects of ENI’s assets (archives, stringers, brand, etc.) to clarify ownership, control and usage. We continue to support the French Ecumenical News service – Protestinfo – based in Switzerland.

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63. With the coming in of our new executive secretary for Communications, our visibility in the social media has received a new life. He reignited the online presence of the WCRC. Posts to Facebook are now happening on a near daily basis (and more often if warranted), tweets (via Twitter) are on a twice-daily schedule, a Flickr account was created and has dozens of uploaded images, and a Vimeo account was set up for video transfers. Response to the WCRC's re-emergence on social media has been positive, with "likes" of the WCRC Facebook page quickly passing 2,000 and the number of followers on Twitter climbing steadily. Two social media topics that are to be brought to the communications core group for discussion are the future of the WCRC blog and the use of YouTube.
64. Press releases and letters to churches (calling for prayer and/or offering support) were steady throughout the year, with releases falling off slightly between September 2013 and January 2014. It is anticipated that releases will be posted to the website and distributed in more than just the four European-based languages this year, with assistance from regional translators. At the same time, there is little doubt that German will become an increasingly important language to utilize, as contacts with German news media grow.
65. The Annual Report also remains an important means of communication, sharing some of the best stories of the past year with supporters of the WCRC. It is also one example of how the Communications executive secretary assists the fundraising efforts of the organization, especially the North American Trustees.
66. The strategic plans will continue to drive communication projects. For the immediate future, emphasis will be given to:
  - increasing networks among communicators, especially professionals in member churches;
  - enhancing contact lists for and relationships with both religious and secular media professionals; and
  - building communication connections to the regions, including hopefully growing the e-newsletter list significantly.
67. The transition between general secretaries is likely to be the "big" story this year. The executive secretary is developing plans to fully capitalize on this change over.
68. An updated introductory brochure/leaflet will be presented to the communications core group for feedback. With the WCRC several years old and in a new home, the text is being rewritten to reflect the current reality and is being given a redesign, too. Once the English version is finalized, it will also

be translated into the core languages, as well as any others needed.

69. The communications office is currently conducting a communications survey. Communication methods have changed dramatically in the last decade. At the same time, communication needs of WCRC member churches differ greatly. The survey will hopefully provide insights into how best to communicate with members in their various contexts.

### **Partnership Fund**

70. The WCRC Partnership Fund continues to respond to the needs of our member churches. The three categories that have been most meaningful are the development projects (A), mission projects (B) and emergency fund (E).
71. The year 2013 was a challenging year. In 2013 we had been given a grant of 400,000 euros from Brot für die Welt (BfW) in Berlin. The grant had to be spent in 2013-2015. These funds are only meant for development activities that do not have an exclusive religious character. The criteria for reporting on the development funds are very complicated, and it took some time for clarity to be established both from the side of Bread for the World and from our side. Another complication is that our member churches often do not have the structure to report in this way. All these meant a steep learning curve for Páraic Réamonn, the deputy PsF coordinator who worked hard to complete the work for the previous grant. The 2013-15 grants were released only after the reports were completed. Although the funds were released so late, we had a fast process of spending the funds since so many projects were in the pipeline.
72. The strict reporting standards were required since BfW wanted us to qualify for German government funding to bring an end to church funding.
73. Another challenge was the move of the office from Geneva to Hannover. The executive secretary in charge of the Partnership Fund had to move already by the end of August, while his deputy was still in Geneva. In the first four months of operating from Hannover, Páraic was still in Geneva. Working from two places was challenging – but they did work well together. From 1 April, what Páraic used to do has now become the responsibility of Viktória Kóczian – part of her responsibilities as the full time assistant in the office of theology, mission and communion.
74. A very difficult part of the work on the Partnership Fund was the fact that the Finance office was not cooperating in the way



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that was good for the PsF operations. Both the executive secretary and the deputy felt their inputs into how the donors expected things to run were not taken up the way they should have been.

75. The mission projects need new sources of funding. Efforts we are making seem to hold some promise. The new funding is necessary because after all the missionary projects are the typical niche of the Partnership Fund.
76. The executive secretary in charge of Partnership Fund continues to be an advisory member of the board of the *Fondation pour l'aide au Protestantisme réformé* (FAP). This is a highly valuable cooperation and the extra work of going to Geneva three times per year to attend the meetings is well worth it.

## Finance

77. The financial year 2013 had many challenges. It was the final year in Geneva. The dynamics of how relocation efforts adversely impact any office was most felt in our finance operations. We were able as usual to take good care of the finances that passed through the office and faithfully applied them to the purposes for which the funds were given. However, the transition between the former finance coordinator and the new team was not smooth. This resulted in all the entries for 2013 needing to be made afresh. This took much energy and time of the new finance coordinator and his assistants. It was good that we brought the new assistant in the office of Finance, Anna Krüger, to Geneva for a few weeks before the move. This was to ensure a smooth transition. But even this good intention was not fulfilled in reality. We are grateful to them for the time and dedication they gave this task.
78. WCRC finances are structured in such a way that its core part consists of income and expenditure related to the general secretary, the executive secretaries as well as supporting staff and the core operations. For financial purposes this makes up the Core budget. In addition, there is a series of programmes mainly under the direction of executive secretaries.
79. The organization's main income is booked under Core. Membership fees, grants and donations are the main income sources. Most programmes are funded in their entirety with earmarked grants and donations. Others, such as the general secretary Programmes, draw part of their funds from Core. Core funds are used to cover payroll, operational and administration costs, publications, governing body meetings and such other activities. The core budget area was balanced

in the 2013 budget year. Here it is important to point out that a special grant of 200,000 euros was received from the UEK churches. These funds for 2013 were applied to cover the costs of the WCRC's relocation from Geneva to Hannover. Out of that 200,000, we still have a substantial portion to be applied to relocation-related expenses in 2014. That amount is currently in the general reserve. It is necessary to point this out because the main part of the relocation costs will be settled in 2014, and funds needed will be taken out of the reserve for this purpose.

80. Overall, there was a slight increase in membership contributions in 2013 compared with 2012. In 2013, there was a considerable decrease in membership contributions in Latin America, CANAAC and Asia. The regions that experienced increase in 2013 are Africa, the Pacific and Europe.

	2012	2013
Africa	EUR 32,699.87	EUR 49,292
Latin America	EUR 9,827.13	EUR 4,784
CANAAC	EUR 264,598.33	EUR 228,394
Asia	EUR 79,515.45	EUR 60,770
Pacific	EUR 7,618.25	EUR 12,054
Europe	EUR 388,055.86	EUR 458,455

81. We discovered after the audits that the European membership contribution is actually 412,688 euros which still represents a slight increase. This is because 44,144 euros was actually a contribution from Swiss Cantonal churches. We also found two other booking errors that necessitated the move of 1,622 euros from Europe to CANAAC and Africa. This adjustment will be made in next year's account.
82. The WCRC has begun to use the new finance management policies which were reviewed last year and which will be presented to the 2014 executive committee meeting. We had to apply the new finance budgeting and accounting system scheduled to begin in 2014 for the 2013 financial year, as well.
83. In the 2013, the executive committee reappointed the *Compagnie fiduciaire de revision SA* as the auditors for the 2013 accounts. Due to the relocation and changing of the

## Report of the general secretary

previous system of accounting we were unable to complement that decision. The previous accounting system was done according to Swiss GAAP standards. Now that we are in a new location, it is important to start doing it according to the standards that are in Germany. The new system adopts the essential principles of the finance management policies of the EKD as already adopted in our new finance management document. Having done that, we had discussions with the *Compagnie fiduciaire de revision SA* in Geneva and came to a mutual conclusion that it is better to find a good auditing firm in Germany to audit even the 2013 accounts.

84. It is on this basis that on the recommendation of the general treasurer, the EKD high audit office was appointed to do the auditing for the year 2013. This proposal from the general treasurer was discussed with the president and the general secretary, and we all felt this was in the best interest of the WCRC. Please note that the EKD high audit office is the same auditing organization that the WCRC executive committee chose in the 2012 Berastagi executive committee placed its trust in. They audit the EKD and also the accounts of our German member churches.
85. The WCRC will continue to carry out all tasks in a balanced manner that demonstrates how we manage our resources in a careful and frugal manner, following the principle of good stewardship. We believe an effective administrative organization is always essential.
86. In this report, we have an obligation to point to a great obstacle in doing the programme work. In spite of guidance and directives from the general secretary's office, the finance office found it difficult to furnish programme staff with regular financial overviews of income and expenditure of programme funds. It made fundraising and reporting to donors very difficult. In the end it appeared that there were problematic bookings of income and expenditure which took some effort to unravel. A similar lapse is found in the lack of meetings for the finance committee. Both the Berastagi and Dodowa executive committee meetings called for regular finance committee meetings. We were unable to fulfil these meetings. We made every attempt to get the data we need so that at least after the third quarter of 2013, we could have one such meeting. Even this proved difficult. We apologize for such lapses. The last few weeks have proven that we are in a new era, and these lapses are a thing of the past.
87. A good part of our energy was directed towards following up on member churches which have not been contributing and therefore which risk suspension. A few more came on board

with their contributions. As of now, we have to assume 44 churches stand suspended since they have not contributed in the last years and have also not responded to correspondence. We still need the guidance of the executive committee on the group that have also not contributed but have been in constant communication on their financial difficulties.

88. We thank God for the current equity of the WCRC. Last year, we reported that if you put together the funds that we could call our own – the general reserves, the general council fund and the endowment fund, we have equity of a little over a million Swiss francs. This year, in spite of the challenges of relocation and all the extra expenditure we had to make, we are still at the same position. Our commitment to being good stewards of our finances is certainly showing dividends. We continue to thank God for the United Churches in Germany whose generous contributions have contributed to our holding that line because their funds for 2013 were the resources from which we did the main part of our relocation expenses, and we continue to use it to that effect. We thank the Evangelical Reformed Church in Leer, and the Lippe Church for their specific contributions to the relocation in 2013.
89. Earlier, there has been some concern that there would be a major shortfall on expected donations from the Swiss cantonal churches. We did not quite reach the amount budgeted for 2013, which has made a negative impact on what our final year results could have been. However, it is remarkable that the Swiss cantonal churches which continue to donate in a major way to our core budget understand that our relocation to Germany does not make us any less an international organization which belongs to all its churches and that the Reformed family worldwide continues to cherish the specific gift of the Swiss Reformation. I am very grateful to the Swiss churches for this, and I am sure my successor will continue to follow up on this.
90. We still have financial challenges. Yes, we are in a healthier, more sustainable space financially than we were in 2011. But it does not mean we should relax. We need to continue to be good stewards of our resources. Our total equity is now a little over 1 million Swiss francs (we will soon be calculating it in euros). We crossed that one million mark at the end of 2012 – thanks to the funds from the UEK. We are still there. This is a far cry from the 2011 situation when our equity was actually only 327,481 Swiss francs. Our feelings about that bad situation were further aggravated when what was constantly emphasized was that our equity was 73,240. We are also grateful to those who have given specifically to make possible

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bringing the executive secretary for justice and partnership fully on board. We thank the Council for World Mission, WCRC Europe and *Kerkinactie* for this. We thank all for your relentless efforts at ensuring that this organization is financially resourced to do what we are called to do. The work is not finished yet. Let us continue that commitment.

### **Development**

91. The development office was discontinued as a result of the actions of the 2013 executive committee. In the three months following the executive committee, our colleague Stephens Lytch organized the pastors gathering. He worked with colleagues in the Presbyterian Foundation of the PCUSA. We continue to follow up the outcomes of that meeting with the Presbyterian Foundation and with Steve Lytch as the president of the North American trustees.
92. A mailing was sent out under the auspices of the North American/Caribbean Endowment Fund trustees inviting contributions to the annual fund.
93. We have continued in conversation with the Presbyterian Foundation and the Barnabas Foundation on each of them managing one-third of the endowment funds seed money. Each has agreed. The last third of this will be invested with a fund manager in Europe to be recommended by our general treasurer and our finance coordinator.
94. The goal of raising 10 million Swiss francs for the sustainability fund remains a decision of the WCRC executive committee. Now that we are receiving the 1 million pounds from CWM, it is very important for us to make plans for how the funds can be developed. We are grateful to the CWM for its commitment to the WCRC and for this gift that goes a long way in providing stability to the WCRC. In our conversations with the Presbyterian Foundation, we are discussing the role they can play in the challenging task of raising the endowment. This will be further developed when their president and vice-president meet with us during the executive committee meeting. The Presbyterian Foundation, the Barnabas Foundation, and a yet to be identified fund manager in Germany are the ones that we have approached to host and manage the endowment.

### **Location**

95. Since the last meeting of the executive committee in May 2013, the office has tried to focus on its mandates and programmes and to prepare for relocation. We were intentional about doing things in that order. As far as relocation is concerned, we had many tasks to accomplish – new staff to

- recruit, documents (print and electronic) to organize so that none is lost, archives to bring up-to-date, staff housing to find, agreements to sign, moving companies to consult, packing to do, etc., etc. These activities were indeed on top of the usually busy schedule of staff. But we did it.
96. At the end of August our former executive secretary for Communications completed her service. The communication work that was absolutely necessary was managed directly from the general secretary's office with some of it being carried out by the intern Frans du Plessis and some farmed out to experts outside the office.
  97. Just at that same period, our colleague Douwe Visser relocated to Germany where he had already found his new home. He operated from Germany from early September on. This posed some challenges, but he and his assistants were able to handle them effectively.
  98. The key challenging month was December. We appointed our colleague Sybille Graumann as the coordinator of the move. She worked with colleagues to ensure efficiency in the packing. Files and folders were cleaned up and rearranged. Items were clearly marked in three categories: those bound for Hannover, those staying in Geneva and those earmarked for recycling. All these made the tasks of the movers easier when they arrived on December 17. The moving truck loaded and set off from Geneva on December 18.
  99. The service of thanksgiving and farewell on 11 December 2013 from Geneva was well attended. This symbolically marked the end of 65 years of operating from Geneva. The preacher was our colleague Douwe Visser. Good will messages came from the Geneva and Swiss church leaders, as well as from the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. Our president, Jerry Pillay, gave thanks to God for the chapters of the "WCRC book" that God continues to write.
  100. 2 January 2014 began the new era in the life of the WCRC. Staff old and new converged in the office. Two hours later the moving truck appeared with "all our earthly goods". By the end of the day, every space in the offices was covered with boxes. In the next couple of days, our time was occupied with unpacking and shelving. The settling in Hannover was well underway.
  101. On 12 January 2014, we had a very meaningful welcome service in the Reformed Church in Hannover followed by dedication of the offices. The president, Jerry Pillay, preached at a well-attended service. Among participants were leaders of German churches, civil authorities and the general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

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102. We have just completed signing the agreement between the German Federal Government and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. This agreement spells out the relationship between us and the German state and the basis of our operating from here. It is a good agreement. We thank our general treasurer, Johann Weusmann, for all the work he has done on the agreement.
103. We have been made to feel welcome here by the Reformed Alliance of Germany general secretary and staff with whom we share the premises. Our volunteer, Paul Oppenheim, has been so helpful in making sure that our settling goes well. His service to the WCRC and to each staff member settling into Germany and in linking us with German churches is very much appreciated.
104. Here in Hannover, we have begun building a new team. The last four months have proven that we are well on the way to having that solid team that serves the Communion well. I am sure my successor will find the team here a great asset, as I am finding.

## **United Nations**

105. We are grateful for how the office of the PCUSA ministry to the United Nations continues to serve us in following the critical issues that come through the UN. Our gratitude goes especially to Mark Koenig and Ryan Smith, who have been faithfully and diligently keeping us abreast with issues and bringing what we need to do to our attention.
106. This year, they have also facilitated the participation of our colleague Dora in UN activities that have to do with justice.

## **Ecumenical relations**

107. In this report, I have indicated already how we engage ecumenically. In this session I will highlight a few more.
108. As an expression of how seriously we take our ecumenical commitments, we planned for our offices to participate in the 10th assembly of the WCC in Busan. We also had all our executive staff participating in different capacities in the WCC assembly. While there we participated fully in the WCC assembly and also held four sessions of officers meetings. We also gathered in Busan executive committee members who were participating in the WCC assembly. Our input was also felt at many levels in the assembly from leading the Reformed confessional meetings to being committee members and speakers at various events of the assembly. Our Theology executive secretary was also heavily involved in the GETI (the

- WCC equivalent of the GIT), and our justice and partnership executive secretary was part of the Women's pre-assembly.
109. From the inception of the Global Christian Forum, we have been very active. In 1998, we asked Wes Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America to represent us on the Steering Committee. We renewed this again when the Steering Committee was redesigned 7 years ago. I have asked Wes to provide a report which I have attached to this report. Wes is doing a good job as our representative. This year, I am asking again that the executive committee reaffirm him as our representative on the Steering Committee of the Global Christian Forum. We continue to support the Global Christian Forum.
110. The annual meeting of general secretaries of Christian world communions remains a key forum for sharing informally as colleagues as we encourage and strengthen one another.
111. Douwe Visser represented us in the assembly of the Conference of European Churches. This is the assembly in which CEC reorganized itself and among other things also took some decisions on relocation.
112. We continued to work together with the World Council of Churches in the ecumenical accompaniment on Colombia as well as on South Sudan. German Zjilstra represents us on the Columbia forum and Veronica Muchiri represented us in one meeting on South Sudan and Jesse Kamau represented us in the most recent meeting on the South Sudan crisis.

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

113. My visits to member churches and to resource events of strategic partners continue to be an important feature of the office of general secretary. These play a role in bringing the WCRC closer to its member churches and partners. I have continued to use my travels and visits to member churches and partners. Where my visit coincides with a Sunday, preaching in a local congregation has always been an important means of making the WCRC visible to member churches at the local level.
114. Between the last executive committee meeting and this, my visits to churches and partners took me to the following countries: Uganda, the USA, Scotland, Italy, Zambia, South Africa, Ghana, Korea, Switzerland, Germany, Jamaica, Cayman Islands and Poland.
115. As noted earlier, I attended three regional council meetings. ACRC, CANAAC and WCRC Europe. I was unable to attend the NEAAC meeting, but I sent a message.



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116. We have also received many visits in our offices in Geneva as well as in our offices in Hannover.

### **Internship programme**

117. Our internship programme is now in its third year. Last year was an unusual year. We had the interns for 10 months instead of for the usual 12 months. This was because of the relocation. Each of the interns also found their functions metamorphose into something other than what they originally signed up for. Frans du Plessis took more responsibility for archiving and photo-documenting. Viktória Kóczyán took on more responsibility as Douwe's assistant. In the end, as a result of the transition we were in, Frans' term was extended for 4 months so that he could complete his photo-documenting and archiving work. Viktória applied for the position of one of the assistants in the office and was engaged in that capacity.

118. We have just selected the third set of interns – one from South Africa and the second from the United States.

119. During this third year, there is a need for evaluating the internship period and if the evaluation points towards continuing, then new efforts need to be made at fundraising for it. We are grateful to all who have supported the internships so far.

### **South Africa task force**

120. Since 1982, South Africa has been on the agenda of most executive committee meetings. In September-October this year the South Africa task force made a visit to follow up on two fronts.

121. Our president, Jerry Pillay, has been the mediator for the reunification process of the URCSA-NGK-RCA-DRCA family. The task force met leaders of the churches. There was reason to celebrate the progress that has been made ever since the Dutch Reformed Church decided to adopt the Belhar confession, and the URCSA lifted the moratorium. While there were still some challenges to overcome, it was clear that the leadership of the two churches were committed to the process towards unity. In the meeting, the two churches were also clear that the two other churches – RCA and DRCA – need to be part of the process. Shortly after the visit, we heard with concern that the category in which the Belhar confession was placed in the Dutch Reformed Church raised new concerns for the URCSA and therefore spelled a setback. Our president once again has been following up, and we understand that the dialogue around such hurdles continues to bear fruit.

122. The process of evaluating the readiness of the NHKA for readmission continues. The task force visited the NHKA and had discussions with its leadership. The atmosphere this time around was quite different from past visits. The task force was encouraged to see that the NHKA was working harder on the issues that were pointed out in previous visits, and that they were now more ready for consideration for readmission. While they shared their own integral struggles, they also were clearly committed to doing what it takes to have the NHKA re-join the Reformed family worldwide again.

### **Concluding remarks**

123. This work would not have been possible without the prayers and the engagement of our member churches. So as I bring my last executive committee report to a close, I do so with gratitude to all our member churches. The WCRC belongs to its member churches, and they have kept it going. Their prayers, encouragement and actions have been wonderful inputs to what we have been able to do this year and all other years.
124. We have navigated some turbulent waters even in this past year. We thank God for the good and inspirational leadership of our president Jerry Pillay. His pastoral accompaniment of staff through these times is very much appreciated. All officers have put in so much through these turbulent times. I believe this year 2013 to 2014 marks the time when we have had more officers meeting than any other time in our history. Your commitment and wisdom as officers have brought us through the challenges of the year. I want to thank the general secretary search committee under the leadership of Clifton Kirkpatrick for the meticulous work it did in the process of discerning who is being called to the office of general secretary in the next era. We thank God for the result, which I believe is God-sent. We thank God for all executive committee members for your leadership for this organization. In the last couple of years you have taken key decisions which will continue to place this organization well so that it can focus on our calling. In this meeting, you will continue to take at least one important decision in calling the person nominated to take the mantle to become the general secretary. Thank you for your leadership.
125. The challenges we have been through in the last three years to four years have often brought some blurring of lines between governance and management. Some of it have been very unhealthy. I give credit to the officers and executive committee members who have resisted this. The time has come – in a new location, with the main financial turbulence

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behind us, with new leadership – to correct this. We need every executive committee member to be committed to this. In this way you can give healthy space to the new general secretary to lead this organization in the most efficient manner. This too is a part of embracing the new thing God is doing with the WCRC.

126. At this juncture, I would like all of you to join me in giving thanks to God for the dedicated staff team that serves this organization with great professional gifts and a passion to make a difference. Everything we do from the office is possible because we have such a good team. So let us give thanks to God for Douwe, Dora, Phil, Páraic, Claudia, Anna, Viktória and Paul. We give thanks to God for those who have also been part of this team covering a part of the year under review: Kristine, Hartmut, Ida, Sybille and Yueh. I want to mention again Douwe and Dora for their sacrifices for the WCRC. To move with the WCRC from Geneva to Hannover takes much more sacrifices than anyone including you could ever imagine. I would not want that to be taken for granted. So join me in giving thanks to them for being the ones who have given the most for this organization during this move.
127. Join me in giving thanks to my dear wife Akpene who has been of tremendous support to me throughout the year under review and all the other past years. She too has borne part of the burden of relocation as we now have to work mostly from two different cities. Her support in prayer and in many other ways has made this ministry possible.
128. We thank God for everything that we did in this year under review. While the formal vote has not taken place yet. I still want to thank God for Chris Ferguson who has been nominated to become the next general secretary. From the time I met him in the year 2000, his passion for justice and his gifts in leadership have been striking. His contributions to our work on the Accra confession and other engagements are remarkable. I give thanks to God that he is the person being named to succeed me as general secretary. I can confidently say that this organization that I love so much is in good hands.
129. God bless the World Communion of Reformed Churches. God bless the team that is now called to lead it into the future. May we be granted wisdom to embrace the new thing that God is doing in our era.
130. Thank you.

## THEOLOGY, MISSION AND COMMUNION OFFICE

Douwe Visser

1. The first matter I had to focus on after the executive committee in 2013 was the preparation for the GIT 2014 in Costa Rica. We held a preparatory meeting on 16-20 September in San José, Costa Rica, at the campus of the Biblical University of Latin America, where the GIT will take place on 5-28 July 2014. During the meeting a theme was chosen, a teaching staff was composed and we worked out the steps for student enrolment. Then the fundraising started. That is always a tough process. In my experience, you need to arm yourself for disappointments. Requests are ignored (which I find worse than declined) or met with no donation at all or with a very small amount. But it's a sport, and we have almost reached our goal. The student application process was also tough, and sometimes I wondered whether we would get enough applicants. But we did: we had around 70 applicants for 30 positions and made the selection during a meeting in Hannover on 22-25 January. But now, unfortunately, we have problems with visas. Many of our students can easily enter Costa Rica without a visa. Some, however, need a visa and of those a few come from the so-called restricted areas that makes it almost impossible for them to get an entry permit. The problem with Costa Rica is also that, being such a small country, there are only a few embassies or consulates in some parts of the world. For example, our two Nigerian candidates need to go to South Africa to get their visa (and that means another difficult process, i.e. to get a South African visa). It means that the GIT 2014 is affected by some obstacles.
2. With *Reformed World*, we had some problems concerning the September issue that became in the end the December issue. It meant that we had only two issues of RW in 2013.
3. For Reformation Sunday 2013, we published a brochure to inspire the member Churches to celebrate this Sunday concentrating on the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. We also wanted to show how this Reformation time document still challenges the *Reformed World* to confess its faith up to e.g. Belhar and Accra.
4. A highlight was the consultation "Living in the Frontline" that was organized on 25-30 November. In Breklum, in the North of Germany, 21 participants came together, mainly from member churches that live in situations of inter-religious tension and violence. Touching stories were heard, but we also worked

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together on: religious identity and its visibility; how we can live together in peace as believers from different religions; equal citizenship as a key concept in plural societies; and, finally, how in these situations of tension mission is still possible. We had daily Bible study and worship. We had participation from the WCC, the LWF and the Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). In the evaluation, it became clear how inspiring and helpful this consultation was for those of our communion who live 'in the frontline'. It also made us aware of what communion is: to be there where the communion suffers and faces great challenges. The report of this consultation is presented to you as an attachment to this report. I will come with a proposal for a follow-up conference on this theme, scheduled for the beginning of December. The presentations given at the Breklum consultation will be published as articles in one of the next RW issues. And for this consultation, I was greatly helped by Viktória, but also by Sybille Graumann, retired from the LWF, who temporarily worked as an assistant in our office.

5. I attended, with so many others from our communion, the WCC assembly in Busan. For me, it was the first time at a WCC assembly. I found it a great ecumenical 'circus'. Everyone is there. It is a great place to network. Content-wise, there were, I found, some real inspiring highlights, but I also left Busan with some feelings of disappointment.
6. We sponsored five former GIT students to participate in the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI). This was a sort of a GIT in conjunction with the assembly. It had an ambitious programme and a large ecumenical student population. Our GIT participants enjoyed it, but, in comparison with the GIT, sometimes missed the interaction with other students and staff that can be better organized at a GIT that lasts longer and has a much smaller student and staff population.
7. There were some other events I attended or was involved in. I only mention a Reformation Jubilee 2017 congress in Zürich organized by the Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches and the Evangelical Church of Germany. I was asked to give a presentation in one of the workshops. The title of my presentation was, "Reformation and politics: between prophetic voice and blind authority obedience".
8. On 4-7 February in Grand Rapids (USA), the WCRC consultation on 'the meaning of communion' took place, right after a consultation organized by the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) on the 'ecumenical faith declaration'. The WCRC consultation was organized by the general secretariat and the office for

- theology together. We had around 45 participants. During the consultation we had to adapt the programme here and there, because the expectations of participants were not always met. Discussions, especially in the five small groups, were lively and honest. They formed basic material for the report that you find attached. It would be good if this evaluation process of the state of communion could be taken up by the executive committee. We are very grateful to the CRC for their great support financially and logistically to this consultation.
9. I can now finally present to you the report of the second round of dialogue between the WCRC and the Lutheran World Federation. This dialogue came to an end with a last meeting in Slovakia in 2010. The report took very long but you may now find it as attachment. Once adopted by the two executive committees it can be the real final report and the dialogue can be closed. There are no further plans for a dialogue, but we have regular contacts, especially concerning the 2017 Reformation Jubilee.
  10. The fourth meeting of the dialogue between the Roman Catholics and the Reformed took place on 6-12 April in Scotland. The Church of Scotland hosted us. This year we concentrated on (mainly) two themes: 1. Holy communion and justice; 2. Sanctification as a middle term between justification and justice. We also worked on a draft of the final report that will be fully tabled for the last meeting in 2015.
  11. I have been asked by the president of WCRC Europe to set up a network of theologians in Europe and to organize a first consultation in the coming months. This network will guide the area council in dealing with relevant theological themes and questions. A first and very fruitful meeting took place on 22-26 April in Hanover.
  12. For our own global network of theologians, a series of four theme group meetings is planned. Two of these are already scheduled for this year: 26 June-2 July (*sola scriptura* theme group) and 2-8 November (church and society theme group). Both theme groups will meet in Hanover and the second meeting is jointly organized with the justice and partnership office.
  13. The first issue of *Reformed World* in 2014 is planned for May. I cannot say more about the theme of this issue yet.
  14. The first meeting of our dialogue with the Pentecostals is scheduled for 16-22 November. We have not decided the venue for this meeting yet.
  15. Much attention is paid to preparing for the Reformation Jubilee 2017 events. I have also drafted some ideas myself and I want to present that during the meeting of our core group.

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16. The Anglican Communion has again invited us to start a round of dialogue. On their side a co-chair and team have been appointed. I also table again the proposal to enter into this round of dialogue. In 2012 the core group could not agree mainly because of the high load of work and two dialogues going on. In 2015 however we will have the last meeting of the 4th round of dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. For the dialogue with the Anglican Communion there is therefore more time and money. It can be an important dialogue with the proposed theme of *koinonia*/communion.
17. Although facing a different situation with the move from Geneva to Hannover, I have been asked to stay involved in the programmatic work of the John Knox Centre. I have not yet fully decided whether that is possible taking into consideration that this involves regular travel to Geneva, although I have to be there already quite frequently. I would like to discuss this matter with the core group in order to come to a final decision.
18. A good deal of my time is spent for managing the Partnership Fund. We have had a complicated year behind us of getting used to a new way of reporting we have to work with for our largest donor, Bread for the World. The deputy coordinator Páraic Réamonn has worked hard to get used to it and we have come far. Páraic will retire this year.
19. A great obstacle in doing my work has been the handling of programme finances. I never received financial overviews of income and expenditure of programme funds. This made fundraising and reporting to donors very difficult. In the end, it appeared that bookings of income and expenditure were not done correctly. I expect that with the new staff composition in Hannover this situation – in fact unworkable – has come to an end.
20. The move to Hannover gives opportunities for new and more intense relations within Germany. We closely work together with the Reformed Alliance, based in the same building as we are. Sabine Dressler has been appointed by the Reformed Alliance to develop the contacts with the global Reformed work. From the WCRC side it will be especially me who will work with her for that. It means of course some extra work.
21. I come to my conclusion. It has been a turbulent year. Working from a distance gave me reason to think thoroughly about the work we do, 'my own work' for theology but also the work of the organization as a whole. With the new situation of working in the office in Hannover, we have already within the staff a process of rethinking our work: the way we operate and on what we concentrate. I have no doubts that with a new general secretary we shall have renewed inspiration for this process.

## JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP OFFICE

Dora Arce-Valentín

This report on the work of the office follows the priorities approved during our last executive committee meeting in Ghana, 2013. Each is related to the general content of the Strategic Plan approved in 2011 and forms part of the emphases for the office until 2015.

Some are more important for the year under review; others are more under development because of their character as strategies; but all have been crucial for the content of this programme.

### **10th Anniversary of the Accra confession**

1. To reflect together on our commitment to justice as WCRC member churches in a world of violence, injustice, and degradation of both human beings and nature, we are holding a series of regional consultations, culminating in a global consultation, with the theme: "Called to communion, committed to justice: The Accra confession ten years later". The first area council with which we consulted was CANAAC, in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 19-23 March 2014. To open the discussion and invite our ecumenical partners to this journey of celebration and reflection, we invited CANACOM to join us in the consultation. We had very interesting discussions about the history and the context of the Accra confession and its implications for our world today. The open letter that resulted is attached at the end of this report.
2. As part of the strategy approved for this 10th anniversary, we took steps to facilitate access to information for the members of our justice networks and our member churches. We created a closed Facebook group for the WCRC justice networks and an open group on covenanting for justice ([facebook.com/groups/18478059730/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/18478059730/)), on which group members post items related to justice issues around the world. With our new Communications Secretary in place, we are now able to increase the information available on our website.
3. Our commitment to justice includes working in partnership with other ecumenical bodies. We see our engagement in the Oikotree movement as part of that. As a result of the working groups structures approved in the last global forum (Johannesburg, March 2013) we are facilitating the communication working group. As active members of the transformative theological education working group we worked on developing the concept paper for the next roving faculty



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workshop in February 2015. We have been active in the facilitating group, especially in planning the *madang* workshops during the WCC assembly in Busan, in November 2013.

### **Human trafficking**

1. Under this priority we approved (1) mapping available resources and (2) networking with churches, groups and NGOs currently working on human trafficking (HT). So far we have connected with *Esclavitud XXI* (Spain), *CAREF* (Argentina), Presbyterian Women (PCUSA) and some other groups in our area councils with a history of working with ecumenical organizations. We are working closely to our UN office in New York, including them in our HT working group and using them as consultants to develop more professional advocacy and to provide information to our member churches about signed protocols on HT.
2. In preparation for the Lent 2015 campaign, “Broken for you”, and in cooperation with the *Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata* (IERP) and the *Servicio Ecueménico de Apoyo y Orientación a Migrantes y Refugiados* (CAREF), we held a workshop in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where a working group within the justice networks reflected and participated in an immersion programme. A small group prepared a concept paper for the Lenten 2015 campaign, which was shared with the other members of the networks after the meeting. See the revised text: [wrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BrokenForYouProposal.pdf](http://wrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BrokenForYouProposal.pdf)
3. To link our actions against HT with theological bases, the HT working group prepared an introductory document to develop the theological connections between the Accra confession and human trafficking, under the lens of a call for human dignity. Fundraising is needed and we will count on financial support to develop the resources needed.

### **New economic and financial architecture**

1. The panel recommended by the São Paulo Conference on new economic and financial architecture has been organized, in partnership with CWM, the LWF and the WCC. It held two meetings, 23-26 August 2013 and 14-16 January 2014, at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey.
2. One of the recommendations in the São Paulo statement was to establish an ecumenical school of governance, economics and management (GEM) “to develop economic competencies and empowerment within the ecumenical movement. In addition, educational materials should be developed to enhance the

- economic and financial literacy of church members”. Our colleague Douwe Visser represents the WCRC in the facilitating group, and there have been several meetings to develop the curriculum and move forward with concrete proposals for dates.
3. After the second panel meeting, an action paper was developed. At the time of writing, it is still being finalized. It makes recommendations for action to the general secretaries and the member churches of each of the ecumenical bodies involved. It also recommends the appointment of a coordinator to serve as a link person between the panel, the general secretaries and the relevant programme staff. The general secretaries have requested the four programme staff to draft a job description for the proposed coordinator and present it to the general secretaries for them to take action.

### **Gender justice**

1. *Scholarships for women.* Our office continues to manage the theological education scholarship fund for women. We have been focusing on the women who are currently using the fund but not yet seeking new applicants. We are preparing new requests to donors, and hopefully we will be able to improve the information to our member churches once we receive the funding we expect.
2. *Gender violence.* We continue our engagement in the We Will Speak Out (WWSO) coalition – “a global coalition of Christian-based NGOs, churches and organizations, supported by an alliance of individuals, who together commit themselves to see the end of sexual violence across communities around the world” ([wewillspeakout.org](http://wewillspeakout.org)). We participated in the WWSO planning meeting in London, 23-26 July 2013. We worked in the development of the strategic plan 2013-2016, expanded our networks, and organized ourselves in working groups. We also re-wrote our vision and mission:
 

“The strategic plan and the activities foreseen for the WWSO coalition are designed to supplement and add value to the strategies and activities pursued by the individual members of the coalition in respect of the prevention and elimination of sexual violence. This strategy and the activity plan of the WWSO coalition represent the added value of working collectively across the diversity represented in the coalition that brings together a broad range of members, united in their mission to end sexual violence.

*VISION:* Transformed, just and reconciled communities where the lives of men and women, girls and boys are no longer shattered by gender-based violence.

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*GOAL:* Church communities and leaders – male and female – proactively working with survivors and others, to address effectively the causes and consequences of sexual violence, including within the church.”

The WCRC is part of two of the working groups, and we are really active in promoting the different chapters around the world.

In partnership with our UN office, we continue to promote the “Orange Day”, “Say NO - UNITE to end violence against women” and “HeForShe” campaigns, all with the same general objective but different emphases.

3. The executive secretary participated actively in the 58th session of the UN commission on the status of women. She took part in a panel in the ecumenical women orientation programme and was one of the speakers in the parallel-event Presbyterian panel organized by Presbyterian Women (PCUSA). We had a chance to present our gender justice programme to the many women representing different countries and NGOs around the world.
4. *Silvia Michel Prize for Women.* We are in conversation with the Swiss women presidents of the Reformed Churches in Switzerland (PANKS), now becoming an independent association. Despite the challenge of our now being located in Germany, we expressed to them our commitment to our historical links. This year (2014) we will be nominating and selecting the group or person to be awarded the prize.

## **Other activities**

1. The executive secretary represented the WCRC during the Latin American Council of Churches assembly and presented a copy of the São Paulo statement to the former president Bishop Julio Murray.
2. The executive secretary participated actively in organizing and during the Outreach Foundation-sponsored Presbyterian pastors' visit to Geneva, 17-22 August 2013.
3. The executive secretary was invited to present a conference on economic justice at the Bossey interfaith course, 27 August 2013.
4. The executive secretary participated actively in the WCC pre-assembly of women and men in Busan, as well as in the *madang* workshops organized by the Oikotree movement and in the Reformed confessional family meetings. She also had the chance to network with representatives of our member churches and ecumenical partner's presents at the assembly.

5. The executive secretary was invited to participate and preach at the opening devotion during the Migration, Faith and Economy event organized by the NCCC (USA) and CLAI, with representation from AIPRAL. She presented a copy of the São Paulo statement to the Vice-Minister of Migration (*Movilidad Humana*) of Ecuador.
6. The executive secretary participated in the CANAAC-CANACOM joint assembly and had the opportunity to present the justice programme to participants.
7. The executive secretary travelled to Hanover on several occasions before the move, participating in the interviews of the candidates for assistant positions, office arrangements, etc.
8. The executive secretary worked in fundraising for the justice and partnership programme.

### **Conclusion**

As the word of God reminds us, “Ebenezer” - thus far the Lord has helped us (I Sam 7.12). After a very challenging two years, we are finally leaving behind the uncertainties and anxieties of the transition and settling down with an almost complete staff team. Thank God for the challenges that strengthen us in our commitment to the worldwide family and bind us together as a team!

We are ready to move forward by the grace of God and to fulfil the mandates we received from the uniting general council and the executive committee. We are looking forward to proclaim to the world our commitment to justice and communion and to continue our work with member churches and our ecumenical partners in speaking out against the injustices that separate us as human beings created in the image of God and estrange us from creation itself.

Thanks also to our amazing staff, brothers and sisters in Jesus but also in our commitment with this organization, in friendship and deep respect of one another. Douwe, Viktória, Gerhard, Páraic, Anna, Claudia and our new colleague Philip – it is an honour and a blessing to work with them. Especial thanks to our outgoing general secretary, Setri Nyomi, for his leadership, his friendship and his testimony as a servant of Jesus Christ. His commitment to this organization and the gift of his prophetic witness to this family has been a blessing and an inspiration for all of us.

To God be the glory!

## **CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACCRA CONFESSION**

*CANAAC consultation: Called to communion, committed to justice:  
the Accra confession ten years later*

### **An open letter to the WCRC, with proposals for action for CANAAC and CANACOM**

As we, the consultation on the Accra confession, gathered in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 20-22 March 2014, we had occasion to reaffirm the tenets we confess in the confession. What was acknowledged in the “Letter from Accra” is as true now as it was at its creation: “In today’s world the divisions between the North and the South, the rich and the poor, and the powerful and the powerless, grow sharper and seek to isolate us from one another.”

As we began, we were led in study of Mark 10, in which many of the themes of the Accra confession find biblical expression. As we reflected together, we were encouraged to examine our present reality, the losses we grieve as we consider the ten years since the creation and adoption of the Accra confession and the hopes we continue to hold for a new reality of social, economic, ecological and political justice. Finally, we considered the call to action for the church in the Caribbean and North American context.

#### *The present reality*

In the ten years since the Accra confession was adopted, nothing much has changed; in fact,

- many of the economic, ecological, social and political realities have deteriorated and become deeply entrenched
- there still is a disconnect between North and South
- among member churches there is a general lack of awareness of what the Accra confession is and what it calls us to do
- in North America, there is the reality that people are being paid to ignore the negative effects of empire (trade agreements and recessions, unemployment, inequality, and erosion of democracy and sovereignty)
- in the Caribbean, with its history of colonization, slavery and resistance, the Accra confession’s statement is still true, that “the cries of ‘never again’ are put to the lie by the ongoing realities of human trafficking and the oppression of the global economic system”

- often church perpetuates empire, so church also is complicit in continuing inequities
- empire is not clearly delineated between North vs. South; ideologies of empire are present in both regions

*The things we grieve*

- Our failure to live according to the Accra confession as a region
- Our failure to raise awareness of the confession within local contexts to the extent that we could
- Our failure to translate belief into action
- Instead of improvement, we have seen a worsening in economic and political realities

*The hope that sustains us*

- We desire restoration of relationships
- We seek security and abundant life for all
- We recognize the need for redistribution of power
- The Bible calls us to confess not only what we believe but also the ways in which we have harmed one another; through such confession and subsequent action we can forgive and be restored.
- To that end, we call ourselves to awareness, advocacy and action which will again focus us upon the Accra confession's call to social, economic, ecological and political justice.

We therefore propose these three areas of partnership toward justice that can bring action to the tenets we confess in the Accra confession,

*Human trafficking*

Human trafficking exploits people socially, economically and physically, turning people into commodities for economic and sexual gain. The Accra confession calls us to reject this exploitation and commodification of people; in the words of the confession, "We believe that God is a God of justice. In a world of corruption, exploitation and greed, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, the exploited, the wronged and the abused (Ps 146:7-9). God calls for just relationships with all creation."

We must address this injustice through awareness, advocacy and action:

- network with civil agencies with existing resources to address this issue

Justice and partnership office

- provide resources for education and sensitization: bring awareness of subliminal messaging (song lyrics and the like); church resources for recognizing signs of abuse and exploitation within itself and the wider context; ad campaigns against human trafficking to build awareness
- develop/contribute/utilize resources for the WCRC's "Broken for You" campaign (Lent, 2015)
- distribute CWM and Cuban resources developed about human trafficking.

### **Poverty, inequality, and unemployment**

As the Accra confession says, "We reject the current world economic order . . . and any other economic system . . . which defy God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable, and the whole of creation from the fullness of life."

- Develop cottage industry: making use of internet capabilities: mentoring; micro-lending; expertise-sharing and capacity building; opportunities for marketing
- Expand fair trade
- Living wage: advocate for a wage that allows people to thrive; join campaigns elsewhere with resources regarding living wage.

### **Seeds for life**

As the Accra confession states, we "reject any ideology or economic regime that puts profits before people, does not care for all creation and privatizes those gifts of God meant for all." Therefore we support efforts to de-centralize control of food and farm systems and work with global civil society to strengthen local and regional food economies that are just and sustainable.

Therefore we will support:

- efforts to shift control of food and farm systems back into the hands of people and communities
- work with civil society to build just and sustainable local and regional food economies everywhere
- ensure abiding access to water, land and resources necessary to ensure sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food, fair prices for producers and abundant livelihoods for all.

Seeds for Life as gifts from God – not for privatizing and commodifying – can serve as a universal theme around which

member churches can contribute, teach, preach and act according to their context. We will:

- develop resources for preaching and teaching using the central touchstone of Seeds for Life and including related issues, such as trade, corporate consolidation, commodification, etc.
- join other faiths, alliances and people's movements and take advantage of and contribute to existing resources and campaigns
- support local, national and global efforts to promote and scale up small and medium-scale farming, fishing and livestock production using agro-ecological approaches.

Finally, as stated in the "Letter from Accra": "If confessing what we believe as Christians requires our spiritual and practical resistance to economic injustice as well as environmental destruction, then we need new depths of spirituality. This isn't mere political activism; we're being called to a spiritual engagement against evil, and for that we need our lives to be deeply rooted in the power of God's Spirit. To put it simply, we need, as never before, the transformation of our lives promised through Jesus Christ.

March 2014



## COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Philip Tanis

I am pleased to submit this report, despite being executive secretary for communications (at the time of writing) for less than two months. This report, however, does attempt to accurately reflect the office's work over this past year.

### **A year of transition**

The previous executive secretary for communications, Kristine Greenaway, completed her service on 31 August 2013. In her final months in the position, she successfully produced a double issue of *Reformed Communiqué*, oversaw near-final work on the WCRC's new website, trained WCRC intern Frans Du Plessis, and created copious notes for both the office transition and secretarial handover.

All of her work was critical to ensure communications continued during the office transition and secretary search period. Also of great assistance during the fall and winter was the work of Frans, Allan Buckingham and Stephen Brown, the last of whom produced the December 2013 edition of *Reformed Communiqué*. Allan and Frans brought the new WCRC website online in October, with Frans updating it (along with the help of Anna Krüger, the new communications assistant).

Under the guidance of Hans von Rütte and Ann Manuel Tankam, archivists with the World Council of Churches, Frans also worked to re-archive both WARC and REC material using scopeArchiv, a highly developed archiving system. Materials were evaluated, filed and brought into this digital system.

While the new website was brought online in the four European-based languages in October, the other global languages (Indonesian, Korean, Arabic and Chinese, as well as Japanese) were not implemented on schedule (which was to have been by early January 2014). As of the writing of this report, both the Arabic and Chinese translations have been received; it is anticipated they will be live soon. Efforts are continuing on the remaining languages for both the basic translations and to implement methods for ongoing translation work.

The move from Geneva to Hannover happened over the Christmas to New Year holidays. Unpacking and organizing of printed

materials continued into February. Files from the Geneva computer servers were moved in April along with the database. The website move is still pending.

The new communications secretary was interviewed, selected and hired in December, with a start date of 1 February 2014. The first five months of work are a combination of telecommuting and commuting, with the secretary in Hannover for 6½ weeks of the five months (plus a week at the consultations on communion). While in the United States, the secretary has been given an office in the Christian Reformed Church in North America's headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The secretary and his family will move to Hannover at the beginning of July.

### **Ecumenical News International**

One transitional note with a certain finality: Ecumenical News International (ENI) ceased operations in 2013 after failing to find necessary funding to continue. Discussions have been opened with the last president of ENI, David Harris, about obtaining the contact list ENI used for news release distribution.

### **Updates on continuing communications projects**

Inevitably, given the length and size of the transitions mentioned above, not all communication efforts were able to be maintained through the fall and winter: postings to the blog ceased, news releases slowed, and social media went dormant.

One of my first priorities as secretary was to re-ignite the online presence of the WCRC. Posts to Facebook are now happening on a regular basis, tweets (via Twitter) are at least daily, a Flickr account was created and is fast approaching 100 uploaded images, and a Vimeo account was set up for video transfers. Response to the WCRC's re-emergence on social media has been positive, with "likes" of the WCRC Facebook page quickly passing 2,000 (though we've still got a ways to go to catch the WCC).

Two social media topics that are to be brought to the communications core group for discussion are the future of the WCRC blog and the use of YouTube.

Press releases and letters to churches (calling for prayer and/or offering support) were steady throughout the year, with releases falling off slightly in the fall/winter. It is anticipated that releases will be posted to the website and distributed in more than just the four European-based languages this year, with assistance from regional translators. At the same time, there is little doubt that

Communications office

German will become an increasingly important language, as contacts with German news media grow.

*Reformed Communiqué* remains an important means of communication. There was a double issue produced last summer, a regular issue in December, and another in March 2014. It continues to be published in both English and French, although this will be re-evaluated once results of the communications survey are reviewed (see below). In addition, articles from *Reformed Communiqué* are translated into German (and shared through the Reformed Alliance website) and into Spanish through AIPRAL.

The annual report also remains an important means of communication, sharing some of the best stories of the past year with supporters of the WCRC. It is also one example of how the secretary assists the fundraising efforts of the organization, especially the North American foundation.

### **Plans for the future**

Many communication projects in the coming year will be driven by the strategic plan. Emphasis will be given to:

- increasing networks among communicators, especially professionals in member churches;
- enhancing contact lists for and relationships with both religious and secular media professionals; and
- building communication connections to the regions, including hopefully growing the e-newsletter list significantly.

Just as the move from Geneva to Hannover created communication possibilities for the WCRC, the transition between general secretaries likely will be the “big” story this year. Plans are being developed to fully capitalize on this changeover.

An updated introductory brochure/leaflet will be presented to the communications core group for feedback. With the WCRC several years old and in a new home, the text is being rewritten to reflect the current reality and is being given a redesign too. Once the English version is finalized, it will also be translated into the core languages, as well as any others needed.

The website will be given a going-over. The new site offers great potential, especially with its fresh design and ease of use, but it is no surprise that additional work needs to be done, since it was completed without a communications secretary in office.

Items to be focused on include:

- requests to restore material from the previous site
- development of an online “shop” or “store”
- evaluation of text (incorporating updated text from the brochure)
- general clean-up and completion of pages

And, as mentioned above, the future of the blog needs to be discussed by the communications core group.

All of this will be influenced by the results of the communications survey, currently being conducted. Communication methods have changed dramatically in the last decade. At the same time, communication needs of WCRC member churches differ greatly. The survey will hopefully provide insights into how best to communicate with members in their various contexts. Preliminary findings may be presented to the communications core group.

In the few weeks in this position, I have learned a great deal – and know there is much more to learn. Thus, an important part of my communication work this year will be to ask questions and to listen not only to answers but also to all other advice and input. So please do offer your thoughts (and prayers!)

## FINANCE OFFICE

Gerhard Plenter/Anna Krüger

WCRC finances are structured in such a way that the core budget covers the general secretary, the executive secretaries, and support staff. In addition, there is a series of programmes under the direction of the executive secretaries.

The organization's income is booked under core. Membership fees, grants and donations are the main sources of income. Most programmes are entirely funded through earmarked grants and donations; others, such as the general secretary programmes, draw part of their funds from core funds.

Core funds are used to cover payroll, administration fees, publications and membership contributions. This area of the budget was balanced in the 2013 budget year. Here, it is important to point out that a special grant of EUR 200,000 was received from the UEK churches. These funds were provided to cover the costs of relocation of the WCRC operational office from Geneva to Hannover, among other things. Approximately EUR 144,0000 was allocated to the reserve. This was necessary, as the main part of the relocation costs will be settled in 2014 and the funds needed for this will be taken out of the reserve.

Programme expenses could be covered through existing funds. Two programmes, the general secretary programmes and the youth programme, do not have any funds left. Funds need to be raised to continue these programmes.

There was a considerable decrease in membership contributions in some regions in 2013, while an increase can be observed in others.

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Membership Africa	EUR 32,699.87	EUR 49,292
Membership Latin America	EUR 9,827.13	EUR 4,784
Membership CANAAC	EUR 264,598.33	EUR 228,394
Membership Asia	EUR 79,515.45	EUR 60,770

Membership Pacific	EUR 7,618.25	EUR 12,054
Membership Europe	EUR 388,055.86	EUR 458,455

We discovered after the audit that the membership contribution from European member churches is actually EUR 412,688, which still represents a slight increase. This is because EUR 44,144 euros actually a contribution from Swiss cantonal churches. We also found two other booking errors that necessitated a move of EUR 1,622 from Europe to CANAAC and Africa. This adjustment will be made in the 2014 accounts.

The WCRC received a substantial donation of EUR 1,211,500 euros (£1,000,000) from the Council for World Mission (CWM) to be used as foundation assets, i.e. invested in foundations, in such a way that we only use the dividends. We are now looking into foundations that comply with our investment policies and, taking into account security and sustainability aspects, will give us the best dividend distribution.

The WCRC has adopted new finance management policies. As a result of the relocation, the previous system of accounting according to Swiss commercial law (Swiss GAAP standard) no longer makes sense. The new policy adopts the essential principles of the finance management policies of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD).

Because of the relocation, the WCRC books were audited by the EKD high audit office (*annex B*). The first part of the audit of the budget year 2013 took place on 10 April 2014, in the WCRC's Hannover offices. The audit was concluded on 30 April.

We do not yet have a clear picture of the challenges we face following relocation, and we currently lack sufficient input from 2014 on which to base next year's budget. Accordingly, and in order to do our work well, we have decided to delay presentation of a budget for 2015. We ask for an extension that will allow us to prepare a draft for the 2015 budget on solid grounds, which we will present to the finance committee in October 2014, to be subsequently approved by the executive committee, as required by WCRC policies.

Relocation provides an impetus to scrutinize all administrative expenses. At the same time, we need to ensure that all the

required tasks can be carried out and that staffing levels are adequate for this purpose. Given that the WCRC is obliged to manage its resources in a careful and frugal manner, following the principle of good stewardship, an effective administrative organization is essential.

## REFORMED PARTNERSHIP FUND

Douwe Visser

The year 2013 was a challenging year for the WCRC's Partnership Fund (PsF). In 2013 we had been given a grant of € 400,000 from Brot für die Welt (BfW) in Berlin. The grant had to be spent in 2013-2015. Conditions for receiving the grant were:

- a. Reports of the PsF activities 2010-2012 according to criteria of BfW
- b. Full financial and audited reports of these activities

It should be well understood that the BfW donation can only be used for development activities that do not have an exclusive religious character. In our accounting we call these PsF projects A. The more missionary character projects are PsF projects B.

The criteria for reporting to BfW are very complicated and – worse – these criteria are not always explained to us clearly. They tend to change. Therefore reporting was complicated and took a long time, not the least because our partners, i.e. member churches, often do not have the structure to report in this way. Difficulties in our own finance office also complicated our work. We tried however to report as wanted. Páraic Réamonn, the deputy PsF coordinator, went through a steep learning curve and – we thank him for that – was able to finish the report in the 4th quarter of 2013. Only then the grant was released.

Since the grant was released so late we had a fast process of spending the funds since so many projects were in the pipeline. The grant is more or less spent now.

The strict way of reporting was put on us since BfW wants us to qualify for German government funding to bring an end to church funding. About this I had a discussion at the office of BfW on 16 January 2014.

Another challenge was the move of the office from Geneva to Hannover. I had to move already end of August. It put the cooperation between me and Páraic under an unusual pressure that did however not hinder us from working well together. Páraic has now ended his work as deputy PsF coordinator. We thank Páraic very much for his work and wish him well.



## Partnership Fund

The PsF B account needs new funds. It is promising that we can maybe find ways of greater funding coming in again. It is necessary because after all the missionary projects are the typical niche of the PsF.

I continue, even having moved to Germany, to be an advisory member of the board of the *Fondation pour l'aide au Protestantisme réformé* (FAP). This is a highly valuable cooperation and the extra work of going to Geneva three times per year to attend the meetings is rewarding.

I thank the Partnership Fund committee very much for their support in the work of taking decisions on the sponsoring of projects.

## **AFRICAN COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ACRC)**

Lydia Adajawah

The general assembly of the African Communion of Reformed Churches met successfully at the Green Valley Hotel in Kampala, Uganda, from 29 May to 2 June 2013 under the theme “God of life, lead Africa to peace, justice and dignity”. We are glad to report that the objectives of the ACRC general assembly were all met and the assembly provided an opportunity for member churches to meet the following requirements of a regional council stipulated in article 16 of the WCRC constitution:

- To promote the closest possible community and cooperation among member churches and the effectiveness of the total work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches
- To appoint an administrative committee, and elect officers and the ACRC president.
- To elect a secretary and a treasurer to serve the regional council

### **The following executives were elected**

President	-	Lydia Adajawah
Vice-president	-	Jean-Samuel Hendje Toya
Treasurer/programme secretary	-	Bhule Mpofu

### **Subregional coordinators**

West Africa	-	Uma Agwu Onwunta
East Africa	-	Wilberforce Wabulo
Central Africa	-	Jeans Ntita
South Africa	-	Thabile Lola

### **Challenges and lessons**

- Communication proved to be a great challenge as French and Portuguese speaking member churches felt left out. Although we had a French interpreter for the assembly deliberations, one delegate from Angola struggled as none of us could speak Portuguese. We were glad that Professor Jean-Samuel Hendje Toya offered his services as a French interpreter and committed to working with the committee to bridge communication gaps.
- The second major obstacle was related to travel arrangements as most people could not afford to purchase their own flight tickets. ACRC was not able to make flight bookings for people outside South Africa from Johannesburg and we requested delegates to fund their travel and make claims for reimbursements in Kampala. As a result some member churches

ACRC

could not send representatives and we ended up with 40 delegates instead of the expected 60 participants.

A detailed report and financial statements have since been submitted to the Partnership Fund and we wish to express our indebtedness for their support.

The assembly was held after regional consultations in East and West Africa which mobilized member churches ahead of the assembly. The West African consultation took place in Kpalime, Togo, from 17 to 21 September 2012 under the theme “The journey of the African Communion of Reformed Churches (ACRC)”. It was followed by a meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 to 29 December 2012, under the theme “God of life, our Communion prays for justice and peace”.

These two consultations were scheduled to build up towards the ACRC 2013 general assembly in Uganda and identified key areas for engagement that led to the assembly theme focusing on “human life and dignity”.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches organized a global consultation on the meaning of communion from 4 to 7 February 2014 in the Prince Conference Centre in Grand Rapids (USA). The consultation was organized by the WCRC general secretariat and the theology, mission and communion office and graciously hosted by the Christian Reformed Church North America. Around fifty participants attended: mainly representatives of WCRC member churches and WCRC officers. The ACRC was represented by the president and the regional secretary.

### **Way forward**

There will be a workshop on the 10th anniversary celebration of the Accra confession in July under the auspices of the executive secretary of the justice and partnership office. Venue and specific dates will be fixed later.

## ALLIANCE OF PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES IN LATIN AMERICA (AIPRAL)

Dario Barolín



### **AIPRAL departments**

The department of *justice and communion* continues its scheduled activities.

An encounter in Chile (November 2013) with participants from the Southern Cone churches focused on:

- Water as a main concern in the north of Chile, because of mining activities in the highest Andes affecting the glaciers
- The extension of agribusiness, especially in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil, with a high concentration of landed property and impoverishment of peasants
- The impact of global warming and need for a process of adaptation as a result.

This department also gives continuity to the process organized in Central America in recent years. It met in Tegucigalpa in July and as result of AIPRAL's initiative created an interdisciplinary group on global warming to follow up this process.

Carlos Tamez, coordinator of this department, is currently preparing a meeting in Cuba for the Caribbean region.

The department of *theology and mission* organized a meeting in Guatemala in January 2013, reported on last year. Now, Jenner Miranda is setting up a meeting in Buenos Aires in November for the Southern Cone, in collaboration with the youth department.

The department of *women* prepared the material for the Latin-American Women's Day of Prayer, celebrated in September. Last year it was prepared by women from Paraguay; this year the responsibility was assumed by the women of National Presbyterian Hispanic Latino Caucus. María Gimenez organized a meeting for the Mesoamerican region on "Women, Builders of Peace". It was held in Honduras in September 2013.

## AIPRAL

The department of *youth*, coordinated by Gustavo Quinteros, is working on an encounter of Mesoamerican youth in Nicaragua in August this year. Gustavo also collaborates with the theology and mission department for the meeting in Buenos Aires.

### **Accompanying national churches**

The executive committee took the opportunity of being in Chile to meet the Presbyterian Church in Chile and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Chile. The conversation was about their relationships with AIPRAL and the WCRC and between themselves because there is still a conflict over property and other matters as a result of their separation 30 years ago.

AIPRAL considers that accompanying the national churches is fundamental to facilitating and empowering their relationship with the WCRC and AIPRAL. It becomes even more necessary when several organizations and churches are working to move the churches out of the WCRC and AIPRAL.

The executive secretary also visited Cuba and had the opportunity to visit the leadership of the church and the seminary of Matanzas. As result of this conversation we have a dialogue about the positive impact of the GIT and started to think about the possibility of organize something similar to it but for LA region. We are also in conversation with the Moravian church in Cuba, which has shown interest in becoming a member of AIPRAL.

### **CLAI**

Through the executive secretary we were present at the general assembly of CLAI in La Havana. Dario Barolín presented one of the Bible studies and coordinated the meeting of Presbyterian and Reformed churches' delegates at the assembly.

In December we were invited to participate in a meeting on faith, economy and migration organized by CLAI and National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA in Quito, Ecuador. Carlos Tamez and Dario Barolín represented us.

We also have a dialogue with CLAI about the need for coordination and common strategies between their programme on Faith and Economy and our department of communion and justice. Dora Arce-Valentín also was part of this conversation.

### **La Voz**

In June and December we published our 40-page magazine, *La Voz*. Number 58 in June focused on Reformed theology and

mission, number 59 on unity and diversity in the Reformed family. As in 2013 last year, our email directory continues to grow.

### **ALC Noticias**

As AIPRAL we participate in the governing board of ALC Noticias, the news service of the Latin American and Caribbean communications agency, in an effort to facilitate communication of social and ecclesial issues inside the church and in society, especially related to human rights in Latin America. Leonardo Felix from the Methodist Church in Argentina was elected as the new director of ALC. AIPRAL thinks that this project may be significant for the WCRC to reach a bigger number of people and also to collaborate with it.

### **Compañerismo en Misión**

As AIPRAL we continue to participate in this editorial enterprise through our former president, Clayton Leal Da Silva.

### **Programme of ecumenical accompaniment in Colombia**

Germán Zijlstra represents the WCRC/AIPRAL in the programme of ecumenical accompaniment in Colombia (PEAC). This programme is much needed, given the ongoing history of displacement and violence in Colombia. In June, the AIPRAL executive committee will meet in Colombia and will have the opportunity to know more about the present situation of PEAC and the next steps to be taken.

### **Religions for Peace**

Our president, Gabriela Mulder, represented AIPRAL in the 9th world assembly of Religions for Peace, on 20-22 November 2013 in Vienna, Austria, with the theme "Welcoming the other: Action for human dignity, citizenship and shared well-being".

### **The WCRC**

Clayton Leal da Silva from Brazil and Dinorah Espinoza from Honduras represented AIPRAL in the two consultations organized by the WCRC in Grand Rapids in February 2014.

The issue of double membership fees of AIPRAL churches is still unresolved. Our churches pay as WCRC members but also as AIPRAL members. We should work to resolve this issue as soon as possible.

Latin America has been historically a place where churches from the northern hemisphere have been present. We are very thankful for that. At the same time, however, we encourage these churches

AIPRAL

to create spaces of dialogue with AIPRAL to facilitate their presence and to avoid any conflict between our national churches and the WCRC/AIPRAL.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest appreciation for Setri Nyomi's vocation and gifts given to the WCRC during his fruitful ministry with us. We hope God keeps blessing him abundantly in his life.

## **CARIBBEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AREA COUNCIL (CANAAC)**

Karen Georgia A. Thompson

The CANAAC assembly in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, in March 2014 reconnected the CANAAC member churches around the theme “do justice”. Our time in joint plenary and mission with the Caribbean and North America Council on Mission (CANACOM) was well spent, visiting communities addressing justice issues in Jamaica and worshipping with the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

In addition to focus on the assembly theme, reports were received from the WCRC and the work of CANAAC within the relationship with the WCRC was discussed. The presence of Setri Nyomi, Yvette Noble Bloomfield and Dora Arce-Valentín was helpful in discussing the role and work of the regional councils and in recommitting to engaging in ministry with member churches in the region.

The assembly built on recommendations provided by the outgoing steering committee in naming the priorities to guide the work in the region to the next assembly. The new steering committee is charged with carrying forward these priorities with the support of the member churches. The following is a brief synopsis of the work to be done.

### *1. Communication*

- Website, email address, and social media
- Between CANAAC leadership and member churches
- Sharing about upcoming events in member churches
- With the WCRC

### *2. Building relationships*

- With and among member churches
- With partners
- With CANACOM
- With other regional councils
- With ecumenical officers

### *3. Justice*

- Human trafficking (using the lens of the Accra confession)
- Partnering with others (WCRC, CWM, CANACOM, etc.)

### *4. WCRC general council 2017*



## CANAAC

- Preparing for the next general council
- Reformation Jubilee
- 5. *Structural*
  - By-laws revision
  - Working groups on aspects of the work
- 6. *Youth*
  - Building relationships
  - Intentionally engaging youth and young adult concerns

### **Challenges**

Since 2011, CANAAC has faced challenges with its leadership, with the effects of changes within the WCRC, and with the lack of capacity to fulfil some of the goals that were identified by the assembly in 2011. Many of these goals were too vague and intangible to carry forward. Having manageable, attainable goals is important for the future.

The work of CANAAC rests between assemblies in the hands of the steering committee, which is tasked with carrying forward the goals of the assembly within the stated priorities of the WCRC. Being a regional expression of the WCRC requires a close working relationship between the two entities.

The past three years have witnessed many changes in the WCRC. We heard some of these expressed in the reports presented to the assembly by Setri Nyomi and Yvette Noble Bloomfield. These changes have impacted life in the region. We have a connection with the WCRC in part through the regional Vice-president and the CANAAC Convenor who sit on the WCRC executive committee. There is further connection through the WCRC staff, including the general secretary.

The steering committee in 2011-2013 was entirely new, none of its members having previously served in CANAAC leadership. It was slow in adapting to the challenges of distance and disparity in access to technology.

Eventually it was realized that the experiences of the steering committee were not unique but were a dynamic related to life in the region. Members had different levels of access to emails, to the internet, to conference calls and to Skype. They checked email with varying frequency: some at the beep, others once a week. Some worked for congregations or in other aspects of church life, which allowed time during the day to be engaged in the life and

work of CANAAC. Others were in non-church related work and were only available after work hours.

Life in the Caribbean and North American region tells a similar story. Our churches are various sizes with different staffing patterns. Not all CANAAC member churches have websites. We have different levels of resources. Some are readily able to find individuals to participate and come to meetings. Others have difficulty in sending delegates to meetings and lack the resources to cover travel expenses.

### **Communication**

We have identified communication as a critical element in the life and future of CANAAC. This is true in the future iteration of the steering committee and for the life and work of this regional council. We must use multiple forms of communication to cope with the diversity of who we are. The regional expression in the Caribbean spans a multiplicity of cultures and societies that must be acknowledged for the council to be successful. We must have a vital and viable internet presence and be willing to engage new forms of social media, while still putting pen to paper and stamp to envelope to ensure that all member churches hear from CANAAC. Distance prevails, so we will send emails and must be willing to find the time for conversation via phone, Skype and magicJack.

### **Relationship-building**

Along with communication is the priority to build relationships with member churches in the region. We serve in different roles in our churches. We have heads of communion, ecumenical officers, members of denominational ecumenical councils, lay ministers, laity, and people from many places of service in the life of the church. The CANAAC convenor must be willing to communicate regularly with member churches and to establish relationships with church leadership in the region.

We must also find ways to breathe life into the commitment of CANAAC to be the regional expression of the WCRC. CANAAC worked closely with Dora Arce-Valentín, the WCRC executive secretary for justice and partnership, in planning and implementing the Accra consultation. There must be continued opportunities of such partnership if CANAAC and the WCRC are to meet the mandate of the uniting general council, which stipulated that the work of the WCRC must be done through the area councils.

CANAAC

### **Moving forward**

"Building the communion through theological, youth, mission, networking at all levels as a north-south movement" was the overarching priority identified going into the 2011 assembly. This priority is still relevant for us in 2014. As we do the work of critical self-examination as a regional council we are still confronted with the need for: theology; mission and theology; youth and education; justice; worship and Reformed theology.

A new chapter awaits us. The past provided many learnings that we take forward in hope for the future that lies ahead. We have met one challenge that hindered our work by appointing steering committee members to continue in service and avoid a total turnover in leadership. Before us are new opportunities as we look toward the 2016 CANAAC assembly and the WCRC general council in 2017.

The Global Institute of Theology (GIT) is a short intensive academic programme designed to give theological students and faculty from all over the world an opportunity to learn, teach, and do theology in an intercontextual and ecumenical way, situating the theological task in local, regional, and world contexts. The WCRC theology, mission and communion office convenes the GIT every two years. The next GIT will be held in Costa Rica, 5-28 July 2014. CANAAC will support this event in partnership with the WCRC and get the word out for individuals to attend.

CANACOM's young adults in mission (YAM) work camp is currently scheduled for July-Aug 2015 (with a possible shift to 2016). CANAAC is invited to send participants to the camp as well as to the planning committees. These YAM camps are a triennial event for young adults, between 18 and 30, usually hosted within the Caribbean because of difficulties with visas for North America. They aim at engaging our young adults in understanding what mission is, how it must be contextual, and how they can plan and implement effective mission projects in their communities. It's also a great opportunity to network with other youth across the region for an exchange of ideas. We will continue to work with CANACOM as we have in the past.

Justice issues in the region are not in short supply. Human trafficking and sex trafficking are on the rise. Poverty is escalating. Food justice demands that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. We must find ways to speak

boldly against systems of injustice. We must be willing to take risk to educate, raise awareness and *do justice*.

There is the possibility for new relationship with the WCRC as it welcomes a new general secretary and settles into its new location in Hannover, Germany. We must find our way to speaking boldly to and with the WCRC regarding concerns we have in this region. Justice lies at the heart of our Reformed tradition and must remain a priority.

### **New leadership**

The assembly elected a new steering committee to provide leadership during the next two years.

#### *Officers*

Convenor	Lisa Vander Wal, Reformed Church in America
Co-Convenor	Valeska Austin, Guyana Congregational Union
Secretary/treasurer	Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ (USA)

<i>At-large:</i>	Bill Thomas, United Church of Canada
	Kelvin Marte, Dominican Evangelical Church
	Robina Winbush, Presbyterian Church (USA)

## **COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES IN INDONESIA (In Formation)**



Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Reform di  
Indonesia

### **Communion of Reformed Churches in Indonesia**

Zakaria J. Ngelow (moderator)

Arliyanus Larosa (secretary)

Olvi Prihutami (treasurer)

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www.oaseintim.org/wcrc-indonesia

1. On 6-9 May 2012, a national WCRC mission consultation was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, with the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) as co-sponsors. The consultation was attended by 70 participants, representing 47 Indonesian member churches of the three ecumenical bodies. Two delegations came from the Protestant Church of East Timor (IPTL), a member of both the WCRC and the CCA. Setri Nyomi, WCRC general secretary, also attended. The consultation studied Christian mission under the theme "The church's mission in the context of change and pluralism: Struggling for justice and peace for all". The findings of the consultation (see attachment) were sent to Dr Nyomi in Geneva.
2. The WCRC member churches at the consultation took time to discuss a suggestion to form a WCRC regional council in Indonesia and, as witnessed by Dr Nyomi, agreed to do so. I was appointed as moderator and asked to find a secretary and a treasurer to work together on creating bylaws to submit to the WCRC executive committee: Arliyanus Larosa (Indonesian Christian Church Synod) as secretary and Ms Olvi Prihutami (Christian Churches of Java) as treasurer. Our draft bylaws were accepted by the delegates from WCRC member churches during a meeting of the PGI executive board in Kupang (January 2013) and after translation into English were sent to the WCRC general secretary (April 2013). The name adopted is Communion of Reformed Churches in Indonesia (CRCI).
3. Until now we have received no official information from the WCRC office about our Indonesian regional council. Yael Eka Hadiputeri, WCRC executive committee member from Indonesia, informed us that in Ghana (May 2013) the

committee approved our bylaws as a regional council, but we have to wait for official recognition from the next WCRC general council in 2017.

4. While awaiting official recognition, the CRCI executive committee meets now and then to exchange ideas and information. We have gathered information from the WCRC website, blog and Facebook, and from resource people such as Yael Eka Hadiputeri. We have developed a website in Indonesian ([www.oaseintim.org/wcrc-indonesia](http://www.oaseintim.org/wcrc-indonesia)) with information on the WCRC for member churches.
5. We shared information about the Indonesian regional council at the PGI executive board in Merauke, West Papua, in January 2014. All Indonesian WCRC member churches are also members of the PGI. The 16th general assembly of the PGI is scheduled for November 2013 in Nias Island, North Sumatra. We will find time to have a short Indonesian WCRC meeting during the assembly.
6. Ms Olvi Prihutami will move abroad for work in August 2014: We shall need to appoint a new regional council treasurer.
7. I was informed that a number of Indonesia WCRC member churches are in default on their membership dues. A WCRC document lists the defaulting churches are 15, more than half of all Indonesian members; they were given a grace period until the end of 2013. But until now we do not get any further news. We are waiting information from the WCRC general secretary concerning their membership status. [As the WCRC operational office has moved from Geneva to Hannover, Germany, please inform us if you have a new WCRC bank account in Hannover.]
8. From information on the WCRC website we learn that Setri Nyomi will conclude his ministry as WCRC general secretary this year and a new general secretary will be installed. On behalf of Indonesian member churches, let me express our deep appreciation of Setri Nyomi's leadership. We wish him the best on his 60th birthday, and we pray God's blessings on his life and future ministry. We also pray that the WCRC be blessed with a successor of the same dedication and leadership capability.
9. We pray for the success of the executive committee meeting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**A common home for all creation  
The church's mission in the context of change and pluralism  
in Indonesia and East Timor**

National consultation on mission 2012

WCRC, CCA, PGI

Jakarta, 6-9 May 2012

**Preface**

The era of reformation in Indonesia (since 1998), although marked by a welcome transition toward democracy, has nonetheless failed to resolve the problems of poverty, corruption, injustice, environmental destruction, and violations of human rights. A similar situation is faced by East Timor since it gained its independence from Indonesia after a referendum in 1999. In our present condition, the churches of Indonesia and East Timor struggle with the following realities:

- a. A large number of citizens living below the poverty line, facing the threat of malnutrition, unemployment, and decline in human resources
- b. A culture of corruption that is increasingly entrenched, especially among state actors
- c. Destruction of the environment: deforestation, replacement of native forest by plantations, mining and its poisonous waste
- d. Destruction of the marine ecosystem due to overfishing and pollution
- e. New industrial areas displacing people from their traditional cultures, while at the same time attracting prostitution and a consequent increase in the number of people with HIV/Aids
- f. A rise in the incidence of domestic violence, in which women and children are the chief victims
- g. Weak efforts at prevention and enforcement against the distribution of dangerous drugs

These problems present a challenge to the mission of the church to struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation as signs of the kingdom of God in human society.

In response to these challenges a consultation on mission was held in Jakarta on 6-9 May 2012, under the theme "The church's mission in the context of change and pluralism: Struggling for justice and peace for all". The consultation was held jointly by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), the Christian

Conference of Asia (CCA), and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Participants included 70 people from Indonesia and East Timor representing 37 member institutions from the three sponsoring organizations, as well as a number of observers from other Christian institutions.

The participants in the consultation studied several related documents: (1) *Christian witness in a plural society*, issued jointly by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA); (2) a draft of the WCC statement on mission, “Together towards life: Mission and evangelism in changing landscapes,” which was formulated by the *Commission on World Mission and Evangelism* (CWME) in Manila in March 2012; (3) the results of the PGI’s 2011 consultation on mission (“Gathering community through evangelism”); and (4) the document, “Principles of our common calling”, from the *Document on the unity of the church* (PGI, 2009-2014). In addition, the participants took part in Bible studies and heard presentations from a number of resource people.

### **Context**

The churches of Indonesia and East Timor are aware that rapid and fundamental changes are taking place in human life. These changes have some positive aspects. However, the negative effects are deeply felt in the form of an erosion of values, norms, and human relationships, and the ecological crisis that has resulted from human abuse of nature.

The mission of God must be understood and realized within this context. The good news of the gospel becomes real when the church responds to these negative realities by acting to restore justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. The churches of Indonesia and East Timor have identified the following negative realities that must be addressed:

1. *Shifting values and behaviour.* The conviction that humanity is joined with nature as part of God’s creation has been replaced by human domination over nature, and indeed over fellow humans.
  - The technological revolution has given humanity the power to dominate other living things, and even to land on the moon. Such achievements symbolize how humans have “conquered” nature.
  - Domination over fellow humans is shown in the social constructs and power relations that place some groups in positions of power over others. In many cultures, for



## Indonesia

example, we find women and children marginalized by a mind-set that places men at the centre of civilization.

2. *Power over economic resources.* The logging industry, mining, and plantations have destroyed vast areas of forest, turning much of it into wasteland that is subject to flooding and other disasters. Furthermore, current economic developments have resulted in: (a) concentration of economic resources in the hands of a few; (b) rapid urbanization leading to (c) cities that have become concrete jungles with poor people living in crowded and polluted slums; and (d) a corresponding change in human relationships and attitudes toward life.
  - Not only is city life considered better than rural life (which encourages urbanization), but this attitude also brings about a change in human relationships when villages become cities. In villages, people know one another, but in cities people rarely know who their neighbours are.
  - The pace of cultural change can be seen in the rapid loss of many traditions. For example, the traditional children's games of *takadal*, *gasak*, and *congklak*, which provide experience in complex social relations, are replaced by individualistic games like PlayStation and other computer-oriented games that alienate the child from social interaction, and also require costly resources.
3. *A culture of consumption and corruption.* The development of a consumer lifestyle brings with it a temptation to corruption in certain parts of society, in particular among public officials and civil servants. Corruption has taken root in our culture and destroyed the bonds of common life, eroded the credibility of government, and stolen the people's right to social welfare.
  - People compete for political positions and government office, for example as legislators or regional executives, by condoning any means, including violence and bribery. A consumptive and materialistic mentality is also evident in lower-level civil servants, as evidenced by a number of tax officials who have been found to accumulate vast fortunes.
4. *Religious intolerance.* Among religious groups, an attitude of mutual suspicion, intolerance, hatred, and violence has developed in several areas of the country, and this has been condoned by law enforcement officials. This situation has been further complicated by: (a) a lack of significant interfaith dialogue at the local level, which would have the potential for developing a sense of common humanity; (b) a pattern of communication through formal, institutional channels that has created a gap between what happens among the elite and what happens in daily life; (c) post-conflict situations that make communication difficult between religious leaders and their

- respective communities; (d) interreligious forums that tend to have no roots among the local people. It often appears that local councils on religious harmony (FKUB) serve more to legitimate the discriminative decisions of an elite than to foster real dialogue.
5. *Privatization of the public sphere.* The post-Suharto euphoria of freedom to express individual, ethnic, and religious identity has given way to a radicalization that has taken over the public sphere, suppressing what ought to be a common home for all citizens. This is apparent in efforts to establish regional regulations that give preference to a particular religion and in the radicalization of the schools by propaganda based on religious ideologies.
  6. *Alienation from local culture.* In some areas of the country there continues to be an attitude of animosity toward traditional culture. This attitude impedes the church from engaging in productive dialogue with local traditional wisdom, and in turn prevents better relationships among churches and their members. At the same time, the tradition of tolerance and mutual respect has been replaced by a culture of violence that leaves no place for differences. Indeed this culture of violence has often been institutionalized in the form of organized groups who terrorize the people into conformity.
  7. *Internal challenges.* Weak leadership, internal conflict, and competition among denominations form the internal context that inhibits cooperation among the churches. This situation is further complicated by: (a) a weakening commitment to Christian unity and (b) a loss of local roots among ecumenical institutions (PGI and regional ecumenical bodies). This reality makes it more difficult for the churches to develop better cooperation with various parties. At the same time, the churches continue to struggle with the faith development of their members, beginning with Sunday school, youth and adult ministries.

### **The churches' calling**

In this context of social, political, and economic change, and in the face of a growing environmental crisis, the churches are called to:

1. *Work to restore God's creation.* The churches as people of God are called to work together in bringing God's work of salvation to all creatures (Mat 5:13-16). The presence of the church must be as a living witness to the reconciliation of all peoples with one another and with all of God's creation (Eph 1:10), and, as the church with others, to be a sign of God's solidarity with creation.

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2. *Practise the law of love.* The word of Jesus Christ concerning the commandment to love (Mat 22:34-40) is the church's guide in its witness and work in the world. The Holy Spirit empowers the churches to understand and realize the commandment to love in the midst of the many threats to life.
  - The church, as an agent of change, carries on the work of God in giving direction to the future development of human life.
  - From the missionary era, the churches have inherited important forms of ministry – in the fields of education, health care, and social work – that must be continued and improved. The churches also need to give attention to the specific needs of urban-industrial society as well as rural life. Diaconal ministry must be not only charitable, but also reforming and transforming.
  - An emphasis on the law of love does not reject the aspect of church growth; however, the call of the church is to proclaim the good news, the gospel of the kingdom of God concerning justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. The witness of the gospel changes human life by directing it toward the love of God, fellowship with all people, and the responsibility to care for the environment (Gen 2:15).
3. *Fellowship in a common home.* In carrying out their calling, the churches are required to work together, including with those who are outside the church, in the formation of the family of God, which sees earth as the common home of all God's creation (Eph 2:19-22).
4. *Justice and peace.* The call of the church is inseparable from its identity as a sign and instrument of the triune God to bring peace to all creation by reconciling it to God (Col 1:20). This calling reveals the role of the church in God's work of salvation (2 Cor 5:18-20), as a life directed toward the kingdom of God in the struggle for justice and peace.
5. *Solidarity with those who suffer.* The call of the church takes form within the realities of poverty, injustice, conflict, violence, and destruction of the environment. The gospel is the gift of abundant life (John 10:10), the peace of God in Jesus Christ for all those who suffer (Luke 4:18-19), and the power of God that brings people together to live in the fellowship of love (Rom 1:16).
6. *Striving for life.* The churches are called to strive for a culture of life and to oppose a culture of death that leads all creation toward destruction (Luke 1:78-79). The Holy Spirit empowers the churches to establish peace in communities based on love and mutual acceptance (Eph 4: 3-5). To this end, the churches

of Indonesia and East Timor must set priorities such as the following:

- a. To allocate church budgets, according to what each can afford, to support institutions and community efforts that aid victims, both of natural disasters, communal violence, and public health crises such as HIV/Aids;
- b. To work actively against the degradation of our humanity by upholding justice and human rights;
- c. To work actively against the destruction of the ecosystem through programs of public awareness and rehabilitation of the environment;
- d. To join in designing and implementing economic policies that are more just and conducive to social welfare, such as cooperatives and economic empowerment of the poor in a way that strengthens self-reliance, solidarity, and critical awareness;
- e. To reject all forms of corruption, including those that are disguised as aid to the churches, and to reject the mentality that leads the church to be dependent on hand-outs from the government.

### **Principles of implementation**

As servants and partners of God, the churches respect and support one another, and dedicate themselves to the following moral principles in carrying out their calling from God:

1. *All people and all of nature are partners with God.* The call of the church to be an agent of God's work of salvation means that we must place humans in a relationship of equality with all other living things as fellow creatures of God who support one another for the fulfilment of life.
2. *Mutual support.* God's call requires the churches to refrain from all desires to exercise power and domination over other people and over nature. On the contrary, the churches accept and support one another and work to protect fellow creatures as partners with God. In this context, the churches are reminded to avoid enmity, slander, coercion, and any other behaviour that is not in keeping with their call to proclaim the gospel.
3. *Partnership of women and men.* The churches are called to nurture the empowerment of women as equal partners with men, both in ministry and in the various professions. The church can no longer carry out its calling to establish peace and well-being without the partnerships of women and men. As a part of this calling, the church must give special attention to the many ways in which women are exploited, as in the case of human trafficking, the conditions of women labourers and

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- domestic servants both in Indonesia and abroad, and in the prevalence of domestic violence.
4. *Accepting one another as members of one body.* The churches are called to strive for unity amidst their diversity for the sake of the good news that has been entrusted to them (Rom 12: 4, 5; John 17: 20-21). The tendency of some churches to increase their membership by “taking in” members of other churches has damaged the fellowship among the churches and is not in accord with the nature of the church. Among the membership of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), the churches are urged to strengthen their commitment to mutual respect and acceptance, as expressed in the document “Covenant on Mutual Recognition and Acceptance”. The churches must improve their cooperative efforts in the areas of: (a) promoting life-values that transcend institutional and doctrinal divides; (b) developing a common vision; and (c) sharing of resources and information relating to our common calling. In this regard, the use of information and communication technology must be improved as a tool for ministry and effective witness.
  5. *Respect for religious freedom.* The mission of the church in these times calls into question various approaches to proselytization of members of other religious communities, which has had a negative impact on social relationships and has in fact hampered the witness of the church (see Mat 23:15). Changing one’s religious convictions is a personal decision that is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit in each person’s heart (I Cor 2:4; I Thess 1:5).
  6. *Building a common home.* The churches are urged to take an active role in developing frameworks for interchurch and interfaith relationships in their local contexts. Such religious networks will also serve to strengthen civil society and help to prevent the public space from being swallowed up by the fanaticism of identity politics. By contrast, the public space must be preserved as a common home for all people.

# REPORT OF THE NORTHEAST ASIA AREA COUNCIL

## Yoshi Fujimori, Former Moderator

### 1. Organization

New officers were elected at the area council meeting held in Tokyo in March 2014. This election needs to be ratified by the Executive Committee.

<b>Moderator</b>	Rev. KANG Kyung Shin PROK	
<b>Vice-Moderator</b>	Rev. Eric SO HKCCCC	
<b>Vice-Moderator</b>	Prof. Victor Hsu	PCT
<b>Vice-Moderator</b>	Rev. HEO Baekki	KCCJ
<b>Committee member</b>	Elder Yoshi FUJIMORI	CCJ
	To be appointed	PCK-
	Daeshin	
<b>Area Secretary</b>	Dr Joohee CHO	PCK
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mrs Songhee CHAI	PCK

### 2. Member churches

The NEAAC covers four countries or regions in northeast Asia: China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The following are the current member churches.

<b>China</b>	Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
<b>Japan</b>	Church of Christ in Japan Korean Christian Church in Japan
<b>Korea</b>	Presbyterian Church of Korea (Tong Hap) Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea Presbyterian Church in Korea (Daeshin) Presbyterian Church in Korea (Baeksuk)
<b>Taiwan</b>	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

NEAAC

PCK-Daeshin and PCK-Baeksuk were categorized as non-active member churches since they haven't responded to the Communion's request to contribute membership fees. We contacted both churches and confirmed their intention to maintain their membership with the Communion.

There have been communication problems between these two member churches and the Geneva office, and the Area Council is willing to assist to maintain stable communication. At the Administrative Committee meeting in August 2013, we nominated Rev. Chang-bae BYUN as a liaison with these two member churches.

The Japan Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church has been expressing its intention to become a member of the NEAAC, and we are hoping this will become a reality soon. We also maintain a close contact with the Reformed Church in Japan (a former REC member church). We shall keep inviting them for our future meetings.

### **3. Area Council 2014**

We had our 2nd Area Council meeting and theological consultation from 24 to 26 March 2014 in Tokyo, with the theme "Peace and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia."

Territorial disputes [e.g. between Korea and Japan (Takeshima/Dokuto Island), China, Taiwan and Japan (Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands)], disputes over traditional political sovereignty (China's claim over Taiwan's sovereignty, disputes between South and North Korea, China's claim over Tibet, South Mongolia and East Turkestan), and controversial historical issues between Japan and various Asian countries including Korea and China have been serious challenges to peace and stability in the region. These conflicts have become, not only serious political confrontations between governments, but also a serious source of xenophobia in each country. We have seen big anti-Japan demonstrations and violence in China and rising hate speech movements against Koreans and Japanese-Koreans in Japan.

We discussed the need to reconsider peace and justice in theological perspective in order to construct a true *koinonia*. We

concluded that as the body of Christ, who becomes our peace and brings real reconciliation to whole creation, the church is “to extend to the ends of the earth the concrete social project of effective reconciliation”.

#### 4. Website

The WCRC websites in Korean and Mandarin have been established. We are also planning to start some work to create Japanese version in the near future. These websites will make the WCRC more visible in the region. We also need to have the NEAAC website to maintain our past records, so that everyone has access to the activities of the NEAAC.

#### 5. Next meetings

We are going to have next Administrative Committee meeting in 2015 in Korea. The 3rd Area Council meeting and theological consultation will be scheduled sometime in 2016 in Korea.

#### 6. Financial Report

<b>Description</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Expense</b>
Balance from 2013	¥406,590	
Membership Fee	¥1,178,740	
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>¥1,585,330</b>	

NEAAC Administrative Committee Meeting		¥65,125
2nd Area Council Meeting		¥582,010
WCRC Ex Committee Meeting 2013/5 (Moderator)		¥252,305
WCRC Consultation @ Grand Rapids (Moderator)		¥140,020



NEAAC

<b>Expense Total</b>		<b>¥1,039,460</b>
<b>Current Balance</b>		<b>¥545,870</b>

## WCRC EUROPE

Jan-Gerd Heetderks

WCRC Europe met in council in Warsaw, Poland, in March 2014. The theme was: “Are the effects of communism still burdening our present in Europe, in terms of political relations, sociological findings and church fellowship?”

Among the questions discussed: Does “post-communism” mean anything or is it just an idea? Is there still a gap between east and west, two decades after the fall of the iron curtain? Is the communist past still a challenge to the European community? How are we, as churches, involved in this conversation?

Because the council was convened in an eastern European country, it was obvious to reflect together on both the past and the current position of the churches in eastern Europe, and about the impact of the past on individual churches and the relationships between them. The sociological developments of secularization and changes in the position of the church in society were also discussed. No conclusion could be drawn; but more than once it was clear how important it is that churches should be open to each other’s vastly different experiences. Only if we, as churches, are willing to understand each other’s past, will it be possible to build good relationships and work together on the mission of the church today.

Warsaw is a place with horrible memories. During the Second World War, it was the scene of two uprisings. The first was in the Jewish ghetto in 1943, followed by the Warsaw uprising of 1944. Both were brutally crushed by the German occupiers, who killed many thousands and set out to wipe Warsaw off the map of Europe as a punishment.

The uprising in the ghetto was the largest Jewish revolt during the war; after it was crushed, the entire ghetto was destroyed. In the middle of where it once stood is a monument in memory of the Jewish fighters and martyrs. Council participants visited the monument and remembered the cruelty that prevailed during the war.

Europe

### **Work during the year**

The steering committee reported at the council about the work done in the last year:

#### *Heidelberg Catechism*

The year 2013 was the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. In many of our member churches there were activities regarding this jubilee. Most of the activities focused not just on a historical retrospect but also on the meaning of the Heidelberg Catechism for churches today. The steering committee visited several events regarding this anniversary.

#### *Solidarity visits*

The steering committee has been making solidarity visits to member churches alongside its normal committee meetings. We are prioritizing smaller member churches, in particular those who have experienced recent difficulties. In 2013, the steering committee visited the Reformed Church in Transylvania, Romania, and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Lithuania.

#### *Theology*

One of the highlights of WCRC Europe is the theological work. At the Athens council in 2013, the steering committee wanted to focus on further development of the theme of hermeneutics. We think that it is very important to talk and think in our Communion about this question. In many member churches there are discussions with hermeneutic aspects (for example same-sex relationships and the ministry). How can we, in our churches but also in our Communion, work on this theme? Are we to be only a communion of the like-minded, who agree with one another, or can we maintain and build communion in diversity? What does it mean to do Reformed theology, and what is its impact on dialogue?

In the last years we have had a – sometimes changing – group of theologians who did work for WCRC Europe. Now it was decided to ask some young theologians to make a new start for the theological group. The first meeting of the new group was in Hannover in April 2014.

### **Asylum and migration consultation, October 2014**

Over 300 migrants died when the boat carrying them from Libya sank off the island of Lampedusa, Italy, in October 2013. This catastrophe brought the plight of those who seek to flee their countries into tragic focus. Refugees and asylum seekers are urgent questions for the countries of the European Union, which

faces the challenge of developing policies to address the specific situation of migrants, respecting human rights and giving protection to vulnerable people.

For the institutions of the EU, and also for national governments, it is highly important to consider their own situation and possibilities. But this often gives the impression that the EU is building its own power structures. A new iron curtain has descended on Europe, excluding people who are in need of help.

WCRC Europe, together with the Reformed Alliance, Germany, will organize a consultation on asylum and migration in Hannover, 9-10 October 2014. This will be the European contribution to the 10th anniversary of the Accra confession.

Presentations and discussions about the experiences of Reformed churches who are working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are planned. How do people react to the problems raised by asylum-seeking and migration? What programmes do churches and other institutions develop for giving help and support? What are the problems of congregations who are directly involved? What does asylum seeking and migration mean for their “being church”? What are their internal discussions and theological reflections? What forms of cooperation with NGOs or local governments are successful? How is the cooperation with national governments and what impact can churches have on shaping policy?

The conference will hear detailed reflections about the theology of migration and Reformed theology as theology of escape.

### **New steering committee**

The council elected a new leadership of WCRC Europe for the next three years.

President:	Jan-Gerd Heetderks
Vice-president:	Martina Wasserloos-Strunk
Vice-president:	Balázs Odor
Secretary:	Sandy Horsburgh

The other members of the steering committee are Kerstin Koch, who serves as treasurer, and Bas Plaisier, WCRC vice-president.

## GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

It is my privilege to serve on the international committee of the Global Christian Forum and to “represent” the WCRC in that process, linking information and communication about the forum to the Communion. Until now this has been done through conversations with the general secretary and with other members of the executive committee; but it may be helpful to have formal and regular reports to the executive committee as we go forward, especially as leadership changes and ecumenical memory needs to be recorded.

The Global Christian Forum began through an initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the Harare assembly in 1998 to provide an “ecumenical space” where leadership from all parts of the global Christian community - historic Protestant, evangelical, Pentecostal, Orthodox, and Catholic - could gather to build fellowship and explore what might be done together. The structure was designed to be independent of the WCC to provide a “neutral space” capable of such broad and unprecedented participation. All Christian world communions were also invited to be involved and supportive, and the WCRC (and WARC previously) has been a faithful participant.

Two major global gatherings have been held - the first in Limuru, Kenya, in 2007 and the second in Manado, Indonesia, in 2011. An impressive series of regional consultations and initiatives has also been undertaken. Full information at [globalchristianforum.org](http://globalchristianforum.org).

The Global Christian Forum is directed by an international committee of about 25 people representing the breadth of Christian organizations, world communions, and ecumenical bodies. Four primary or core bodies include the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF). I serve on the committee’s “facilitation team” of three, who function as its officers. There is one full-time staff person, Larry Miller, who formally directed the Mennonite World Conference. Hubert van Beek, who formally played a primary staff role in the forum, continues as a part-time consultant. Its budget, therefore, is extremely modest.

The next global gathering is planned for 2016, most likely in Latin America. Consultations with Latin American church leaders in the first half of 2014 will finalize these plans.

Following the Manado world meeting in 2011, the Global Christian Forum consulted with its partners and participants - particularly the WCC, the Vatican, the WEA, and the PWF - about what specific issues the forum could tackle in ways that would make a unique and helpful contribution. The results were two initiatives:

“Discrimination, persecution, and martyrdom: Facing the challenge together,” and “Mission and proselytism: A global conversation.” In each case, it was felt that the forum could bring together partners to explore these issues who previously had not been in ecumenical dialogue with one another. Planning is underway now for both of these initiatives.

Available on request is a full report of the Global Christian Forum’s activities from October 2013 to April 2014. This provides further background.

The WCRC’s participation in the Global Christian Forum has been deeply appreciated. I welcome any suggestions, questions, or advice and remain grateful for the opportunity to serve as a link between the forum and the WCRC.

## JOHN KNOX INTERNATIONAL REFORMED CENTRE

Cyril Ritchie, president

1. On behalf of the John Knox International Reformed Centre I greet our good friends of the executive committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The long-standing relations between the JKIRC and the former WARC, now the WCRC, are deeply rooted and very cordial. I look forward to the opportunity, in the short period I can be with you here in Hannover, to discuss with several of you how best we can perpetuate these good relations between our two independent organizations – overcoming any obstacles that may arise from the new geographic distance between our buildings and offices.
2. The good understanding between the JKIRC and the WCRC owes a great deal to your outgoing general secretary, Setri Nyomi. As I regrettably cannot be with you when the executive committee pay deserved tribute to Setri as he steps down from his post, I want at the outset to pay an organizational – and also personal – tribute to Setri for his uprightness, his many pertinent contributions to the policymaking and the programming of the John Knox Centre, and his invariable courtesy and cordiality. We wish you well in your new life, Setri, and we know that you are a John Knox friend for life!
3. Since I last spoke to the WCRC executive committee, the John Knox Centre has continued admirably to fulfil its mission statement, which I recall to your attention:  
“The John Knox Centre is an integral part of international Geneva. It aims to be a calm oasis for reflection, a neutral meeting place and a stimulator for dialogue across cultures, focusing on social justice in world issues, promoting peace, human rights and sustainable development. It is a place of dialogue between conflicting parties, replacing confrontation by dialogue, respecting the dignity of all. The Centre aims to bring out the best in people.  
The Centre provides facilities and services for all, in particular those actively engaged in promoting these values and goals.”
4. A highlight of this past year was undoubtedly the celebration in May/June 2013 of the centre's 60th anniversary, on which occasion we held receptions and colloquia; exhibitions of art, photographs and sculpture; and open-house events that, thanks to clement weather, were combined with open-air barbecues. The anniversary was a public relations plus, and an

- occasion for cordiality and solidarity. I hope you will all be available when the 70th anniversary comes around!
5. One of the few substantial shadows in the past year or more has been the centre's very slow pace of recovery from a disturbing financial downturn in 2012. International and some national economic difficulties had repercussions on the institutions that use – and therefore provide the income of – the centre. These institutions are intergovernmental, non-governmental, ecumenical, academic and others. Fortunately it looks as if in 2014 we are on the way to financial recovery. However a fundraising campaign that we initiated in 2013 to provide for some overdue upgrading and buildings renovations is struggling to get off the ground. WCRC members with institutional or personal spare cash are warmly invited to contribute!
  6. Before I leave the mundane chapter of money and administration, I do want you to know that we have made significant “routine” ameliorations: improved lighting; a greatly enhanced website; refreshed offices and meeting rooms; a reorganized laundry room and system (clearly a focal concern for a centre with 85 beds and a much-appreciated restaurant). I am also delighted to say that we have renewed the contract of our devoted director, Marc Appel, who will shortly complete his (first...) 16 years of service to the centre.
  7. As you know, the John Knox Centre is also a place for intellectual exchange, and a long series of seminars has been held under the aegis of the centre's programme commission. This commission was most recently chaired by the WCRC's Douwe Visser, who stepped down when he moved from Geneva to Hannover. Douwe's last major contribution was to organize the seminar in late 2012 on churches and the rule of law, and we are looking forward to Douwe's input 'from a distance' to an upcoming seminar on church-state relations.
  8. Within the framework of the centre's programme commission we also have the highly successful movement Witnessing Together in Geneva, bringing together some 70-plus 'non-local' communities and churches in the Geneva region (Ethiopian, Cameroonian, Brazilian, English-speaking Lutheran....). This highly participative grouping will in September this year mark for the third time the *Jeune genevois*, the annual Geneva Protestant fasting day, celebrating it as an international multicultural inclusive event. The established Geneva Protestant Church (EPG) is an active supporter of the Witnessing Together programme.
  9. Lastly, I revert to some housekeeping matters, since we all know that these are the procedures by which we 'keep our



## John Knox Centre

house in order'. We have updated our statutes for the first time in 15 years, making them more precise and augmenting the role of the centre's governing general assembly (which for example now directly elects the centre's president). We have brought all book-keeping in-house instead of being contracted off-site, to achieve greater efficiency and timeliness in our delivery and accountability. We face the future serenely, prudently and at the same time enthusiastically. The centre will welcome any 'brotherly' (or 'sisterly') input from the World Communion of Reformed Churches as we continue our journey in harmony.

## **PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRY AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mark Koenig and Ryan Smith

1. This report to the WCRC executive committee features elements of the witness in the name of Jesus made possible by an ongoing presence at the UN in New York. It is not an exhaustive report.
2. The report covers the time period from March 2013 through March 2014. Much of the work remains ongoing.
3. The Presbyterian Church (USA) holds special consultative status as a non-governmental organization with the economic and social council of the United Nations. This allows the church to speak to a truly global audience and to contribute to its agenda by attending international conferences and events sponsored by the UN, making written and oral statements at these events, and taking part in advocacy and networking. This recognition secures accreditation for specific consultation and participation at UN commissions and with individual programmes and agencies. The economic and social council reviews the status of NGOs every four years. The Presbyterian Church (USA) comes up for review in 2014. Our quadrennial review materials are submitted.
4. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations represents the Presbyterian Church (USA) at the UN. The ministry is guided by the policies of the general assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in its work. Staff members consult with colleagues in appropriate programs and ministries of the Presbyterian mission agency and the office of the general assembly in this work. PCUSA mission partners are also consulted.
5. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations represents the World Communion of Reformed Churches at the United Nations. Staff members consult Setri Nyomi, Dora Arce-Valentin, and WCRC statements.
6. The ministry's work falls into two broad areas: to equip individuals and communities to engage in global discipleship and to advocate for justice and peace in the name of Jesus Christ, based on policies of the general assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
7. Mark Koenig serves as the director of the Presbyterian Ministry to the United Nations. Ryan Smith serves as the Presbyterian representative to the United Nations. A number of volunteers and seminary field education students augment our ministry.
8. Rooted in the Reformed tradition, we affirm that God, creator and sovereign of all, so loved the world that Jesus the Son was

## United Nations

sent with a message of justice and peace, redemption and reconciliation. God calls us to serve as Christ's ambassadors, working for peace, justice, and reconciliation in a world where humanity and creation are wounded, broken, and in need of healing.<sup>2</sup> Together we seek life in all its fullness by:

- a) *Hosting Mary Mikhael of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon* in September 2013 and February 2014. In September, Dr Mikhael arrived at the time the United States was proposing a military strike against Syria because chemical weapons had been used. We accompanied her on a visit to Washington DC where she met with staff members of several senators and representatives. In the UN community, Dr Mikhael met with staff members of the permanent missions of Russia and France, the inter-agency task force for the Syrian crisis, and a representative from the office of the special representative of the secretary-general for sexual violence in conflict. Dr Mikhael met with a deputy permanent representative from the mission of the European Union in February. Public meetings were arranged for Dr Mikhael to speak to the UN NGO community and Presbyterians in both September and February.
- b) *Seeking peace for the people of South Sudan and Sudan*. Advocacy efforts focus focused on: an end to violence and a just peace for the border regions and Darfur, protection of Christians and other religious minorities in Sudan, and an end to violence in South Sudan. The violence that began in South Sudan in December 2013 has been a primary focus. Concerns for an end to violence, for justice, and for peace are regularly raised in meetings with representatives of security council member states arranged by the NGO working group on the security council. Partner churches in South Sudan provide information that shapes the concerns for which we advocate. Ryan visited South Sudan and met with our church partners, deepening the relationships. He also met church partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- c) *Working with the NGO working group Ecumenical Women* to address women's concerns in the United Nations community. The Association of Presbyterian Women Aotearoa/New Zealand is a member of Ecumenical Women.
- d) *Engaging the 58th session of the UN commission on the status of women (CSW)*. This year's theme was the

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor 5:18-20

“challenges and achievements in the implementation of the millennium development goals for women and girls”. Our participation takes place in partnership with Ecumenical Women. Ryan co-chaired Ecumenical Women this year. Churches and Christian-based organizations around the world were asked for input on how to address the theme. The results helped shape the talking points that centred on poverty and hunger; health; access to quality education; employment and decision-making; and ending violence against women and girls as well as the joint ecumenical statement to the Commission.

Highlights of our presence at this year’s CSW include:

- *Participation by Arce-Valentín as a member of the Presbyterian delegation.*
  - *Dora Arce-Valentín spoke on a panel at the Ecumenical Women’s orientation.*
  - *A parallel event on millennium development goals: reflections from Reformed churches, co-sponsored with Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (USA), featured a number of speakers addressing how the Reformed church (usually the PCUSA) is working to address various millennium development goals. Dora Arce-Valentín spoke on ways churches work to empower women around the world.*
  - *Ecumenical Women received the opportunity to make an oral intervention (statement) during a meeting of the commission, using the Presbyterian Church (USA) credentials.*
- e) *Taking part in the NGO working group on Israel-Palestine.* The group provided a number of educational events for the UN community on issues related to Israel-Palestine that included a presentation by Richard Falk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.
- f) *Participating as an NGO observer to the committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.*
- g) *Advocating for peace on the Korean peninsula and for the reunification of the peninsula.* Mark visited the Republic of Korea speaking to our church partners about why the church engages in the public arena and the importance of ecumenical work.
- h) *Hosting 18 seminars for various groups, among them a seminar for the Malawi mission network of the Presbyterian Church (USA).* Speakers included representatives of UN programmes working in Malawi. The seminar met with the

## United Nations

- permanent representative of Malawi to the United Nations, who is a Presbyterian.
- i) *Arranging presentations to the NGO community at the UN* by the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s regional liaisons to Southern Africa and the Caribbean.
  - j) *Offering worship resources* for the International Day of Peace (September 21), United Nations Day (October 24), and Human Rights Day (December 10).
  - k) *Partnering with UNICEF and the United States Fund for UNICEF* to work on behalf of children. Encouraging participation in trick-or-treat for UNICEF, which provides general funding to support children worldwide. Encouraging participation in the UNICEF tap project, which provides clean water.
  - l) *Promoting the Red Hand campaign* to end the use of children as soldiers. This effort seeks to establish an international consensus that children should not be used as soldiers. It asks states to ratify the optional protocol to the convention on the rights of the child on the involvement of children in armed conflict – an international treaty committing states to address this issue. Three member states ratified in the time covered by this report. There remain 39 member states to ratify. (Note: the state of Palestine, as it is called in the UN system, submitted its accession to the optional protocol in April 2014.)
  - m) *Participating in the UN observance of World Interfaith Harmony Week* at the UN: co-sponsoring with our office of interfaith relations conversations between Sikhs and Presbyterian Christians in three congregations, and promoting the week through social media.
  - n) *Inviting support for efforts to ban the use of landmines* on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (4 April).
  - o) *Working on human trafficking*. Ryan provided a keynote presentation to the WCRC gathering on human trafficking in Cuba. He also participated in the meeting in Argentina focusing on the 2015 Lenten emphasis to end human trafficking. We partner with End Childhood Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT) USA on local business commitments to stop trafficking and with the Freedom Network USA on a human rights based approach to trafficking. We also partner with the US department of state, the US office to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, and the US fund for UNICEF.
  - p) *Addressing issues related to religious freedom* through participation in the NGO committee on freedom of religion or

- belief and work with the office of international religious freedom at the US department of state.
- q) Participating in the NGO working group on food & hunger.
  - r) *Advocating that human rights be honoured and justice and peace pursued* in Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Philippines, and Nigeria, in addition to the countries previously mentioned.
  - s) *Addressing environmental justice* through participation in various UN meetings and forums. A Presbyterian Church (USA) staff colleague takes the lead in this effort.
9. There continue to be needs and opportunities for the Reformed family to work and witness for peace and justice within the context of the UN.
10. This year saw more effective collaboration on communications particularly in sharing calls to prayer in times of crisis. Statements on Syria and other crises were also shared.
11. Noting the enhanced collaboration, we see further possibilities to expand our witness:
- Improve upon how we share communications effectively.
  - Learn what connections WCRC member churches have to UN programmes in their countries.
  - Explore the possibility of a joint parallel event with representatives of other WCRC member churches who attend the commission on the status of women or similar UN events.
  - Work more effectively to solicit input for the ecumenical statement used during the commission on the status of women.
  - Explore the possibility of bringing one or two representatives of World Communion of Reformed Church member churches to the commission on the status of women. There would be financial implications that our ministry could not meet. But it seems worth a conversation.
12. We give thanks for all who have been partners in the work described above and who support the ministry through prayer, participation and financial gifts. We are particularly grateful for the ecumenical community at the UN.

Feel free to contact us with any questions:

Mark Koenig (mark.koenig@pcusa.org)  
Ryan Smith (ryan.smith@pcusa.org)

- Web page – [www.pcusa.org/un](http://www.pcusa.org/un)
- Blog – [www.pcusa.org/blogs/swords-plowshares](http://www.pcusa.org/blogs/swords-plowshares)
- Twitter – [@PresbyUN](https://twitter.com/#!/PresbyUN)

United Nations

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/PresbyterianMinistryUN>
- Email newsletter – email [mark.koenig@pcusa.org](mailto:mark.koenig@pcusa.org) to subscribe

## **Greetings to WCRC Executive Committee: Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council**

I am pleased to bring you greetings on behalf of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) as an associate member of the WCRC. Mark Toulouse, who had been named as the representative to the WCRC Executive Committee sends his regrets that he could not be with you today. He had planned to attend your meeting last year in Ghana, but unfortunately had a heart attack as he began that journey from North America to Accra, and his doctors instructed him to cut back on his schedule and, especially, his international travel. I was delighted to step in to attend this meeting – both to see your new “home” here in Hannover, and to be part of the celebration of Setri’s ministry these past 14 years and to share in the installation of your new General Secretary as you move into a new era of life in the “transformed” WCRC.

I bring you warmest greetings from the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC).

Setri asked if I might share a brief word about the DECC: who we are and what we do. Briefly then, quoting from our official document (1979) that set out the “purpose statement” of the DECC to be: “ a council of Disciples Churches/Churches of Christ throughout the world, together with United and Uniting Churches which Disciples have joined, to further and strengthen their common calling to visible unity and mission.” The 19 member churches, representing some 3 million Christians around the world, have identified four specific tasks for the ministry of DECC in fulfilling this purpose:

- (1) To deepen the fellowship of Disciples churches with each other and other churches in their work for the visible unity which God wills for his people;
- (2) To strengthen relationships between member churches and regional and national ecumenical bodies;
- (3) To encourage the participation of its member churches in the ecumenical movement through theological study and ecumenical dialogue; and,
- (4) To represent the worldwide fellowship of Disciples churches in the wider ecumenical movement and to appoint official representatives to ecumenical bodies and other world families of churches.



## DECC

Given this purpose and specific tasks, Why did the DECC apply to be an associate member of the WCRC? I would offer three specific responses:

- (1) Several of our member churches in the DECC are also member churches in the WCRC, especially those United Churches where both the Reformed and the Disciples are part of the union. I remember when Setri and I were setting up an earlier meeting between the WARC and DECC to discuss our growing partnership (with 3 persons representing each of our two CWCs), and Setri wanted to name Shernett Smith, who was serving at that time as the General Secretary of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. I had also identified Shernett, but to be a part of the DECC team. This illustrated for me that we already share a relationship in several national contexts; it seems right that we should do this on the international level.
- (2) We share a common vision and primary focus as CWCs in fostering the visible unity of the church. When Setri and I gather at annual meetings of General Secretaries of CWCs, we are often the voices expressing our commitment to working together to further the ecumenical efforts of the one ecumenical movement – rather than beginning with how we seek to build up our own “fellowship” as a Christian World Communion. Christian unity is part of our DNA as the DECC and the WCRC. The DECC joining as an associate member of the WCRC is one way to acknowledge and give expression to that fundamental calling as churches and as CWCs.
- (3) Disciples see ourselves as part of the reformed tradition – and also, as part of the catholic and evangelical traditions. Our associate membership is one way to signal the closeness we feel (both historically and theologically) in making the connection of the Reformed tradition as together we seek to build up the one church of Jesus Christ.

Let me conclude with one specific example of where I see a manifestation of our being in a special partnership as Disciples and the WCRC that took place at the Busan assembly of the WCC this

past October. During that Assembly the Disciples, who celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday in all of our churches around the world, wanted to have a celebration of Holy Communion there in Busan – as a witness to our understanding of the essential role of the common sharing in the Eucharist as the vision of our oneness in Christ, and therefore as an important sign of our unity within this ecumenical gathering of the global church. (Of course, we know that such a celebration is not possible for the whole of the WCC member churches – but, we were having concerns that being there in Busan as a significant global gathering of the church, those churches that could celebrate together should do so as a witness to our understanding of the central place of the Eucharist to our visible unity in Christ.) We invited the WCRC churches to join in such a worship service that would take place in the worship hall of the Assembly at mid-day on Wednesday of our last week in Korea. What became for me a significant highlight of the whole of the WCC Assembly was to join in worship together as Disciples and Reformed, and any others who wished to join with us in this celebration of Holy Communion, to share the common meal of our faith at an "open table" where all were invited to receive. And one element of that worship that was especially significant to me was that Setri presided at that table – a communion service arranged by the Disciples, with the General Secretary of the WCRC presiding, and Christians from a variety of communions (Methodists, Lutherans, Anglicans) sharing together in the common meal of our life as churches as a foretaste of the unity we cherish for all Christian and all churches. It was a small gathering of 60 some-persons (out of 3,000 who came together for the Assembly); but, it was for me a powerful witness to how we understand the role and place of the Eucharist in the ecumenical vision we hold as Disciples and as the WCRC.

Again, thank you for the invitation to be with you here in Hannover. I bring you warmest greetings from the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council.

*Robert Welsh*  
*May 16, 2014*



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

May 2014

Respected President,  
Respected members of the Executive Committee  
Dear colleague Rev.Dr. Setri Nyomi  
Dear sisters, dear brothers in Christ

It is with joy and thanksgiving that I greet you today as you meet in sessions in Hannover, the city that is becoming the home of the secretariat of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

I felt very encouraged by the theme you have chosen for your meeting: "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelations 21:5). It speaks in strong ways about our hope in all the new things that we may not always see because of what our daily lives and contexts seem to offer, but that we hold as true because of what God revealed in Jesus Christ to the entire creation. It is because of this hope that we continue engaged in ecumenical dialogues and processes so that we may see the unity that God holds for us; it is because of this hope that we want to deepen our commitment towards a new financial and economic architecture in our world, which won't operate anymore on the basis of exclusion, but on the basis of solidarity and mutuality. It is for this reason that we will insist on justice, peace and reconciliation to be the driving transformative force in our world.

As mentioned in our words of greetings both at the farewell service in the Ecumenical Center, and at your inauguration service in Hannover, we in the LWF want to see the new situation resulting from the move of your headquarters as an opportunity to be even more intentional in our efforts to keep communication and cooperation going. As I just mentioned, the ecumenical vocation and our commitments for justice, peace and reconciliation, which we hold together do not depend on physical closeness, but on the things that God is making new for us.

In this respect, I am so grateful that the Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission is now completed and will be presented to the public. The LWF Council at its meeting in June will formally receive it- an indispensable action for the sake of a solid reception process in our member churches.

We appreciate the leadership that the WCRC has taken on issue of economic justice, thereby in particular for the visionary meeting in Sao Paulo, Brazil and its strong Sao Paulo statement. The LWF Council has received this ecumenical gift with gratitude and has commended the study of the Sao Paulo statement to all its member churches. And our discussions about structuring a process around the New Economic and Financial Architecture (NEFA) are proceeding well. The LWF is committed to this important endeavor and is ready to offer its own contributions as you continue spearheading the process.

More discussions are still needed in order to identify relevant ways of expressing our shared sense of ownership of the Reformation in 1517 and its 500th anniversary that is coming so close already. Let me underline: for us in the LWF the word ownership does not equate to "exclusive property rights". Rather, it points at the fact that there is a sense of belonging, which we very well know is shared with many other denominations and movements within the church. I welcome ongoing discussions so that our shared sense of ownership is expressed in adequate ways as we approach the Reformation anniversary.

Let me conclude with a word of thanks and gratitude to your General Secretary, my colleague Setri Nyomi. It has been a great blessing to work with him and draw from his long experience and deep insights into the ecumenical movement. I pray for God's guidance and protection as he moves on to new stages in his life.

Your Committee will be taking decisions regarding the nomination that it has received for the General Secretary to succeed Dr. Nyomi. We look very much forward to connect with his successor and to continue working together for the sake of these things which we have seen becoming new in our world.

God bless your deliberations, discussions and decisions!

Rev. Martin Junge  
General Secretary

## **GENERAL SECRETARY SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Clifton Kirkpatrick

### **Recommendations**

1. That the WCRC executive committee elect Christopher Ferguson as general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches for a seven year term beginning 1 September 2014. (see attachments 1-5 introducing Ferguson, his letter of motivation, and professional and church letters of reference)
2. That Ferguson's Service as WCRC general secretary be in accord with the provisions of the attached Position description (see attachment # 7) and the conditions of service (to be shared in executive session).
3. That the general secretary-elect be expected to be in Hannover to start on 1 August 2014, to have a one month overlap together with the current general secretary.
4. That the current general secretary finish his term of office on 31 August 2014, and that the new general secretary assume office on 1 September 2014.
5. That the general secretary search committee be dismissed (with thanks!) following the election of the new general secretary.

### **Narrative report**

Following the completion of the discernment process by our president and officers when it became clear that the president would not be able to accept the invitation of the executive committee to serve as the next general secretary, the officers in October 2013 proposed to the executive committee (by electronic means) that a new general secretary search committee be constituted and the following members were elected to serve on this committee:

Clifton Kirkpatrick (convener)  
Jerry Pillay (president)  
Najla Kassab  
Clayton Leal da Silva  
Veronica Muchiri  
Bas Plaisier  
Robert Setio

The committee was instructed by the officers to bring a candidate to the May 2014 meeting of the WCRC executive committee for election as the next general secretary of the WCRC. The committee was also instructed to follow the procedures of the previous search committee with the addition of a mandate to do "headhunting" and

actively seek to recruit candidates to apply and be considered for this position.

Among the provisions suggested (and followed by the committee) were to send the vacancy notice to all member churches, to develop and bring for interview a shortlist of candidates, and to make use of a psychologist provided by the churches in Germany in evaluating potential candidates. The committee was also provided with a Position Description describing the responsibilities and qualifications for the general secretary and suggestions for the materials that should be included in the application packet which the committee did ask of candidates. These items included:

- a. An application and motivation letter
- b. Endorsement by the candidate's church (a member church of the WCRC)
- c. At least two professional references to be sent directly to the convener
- d. Relevant certificates and degrees
- e. A statement of the faith journey of the applicant
- f. A paper either written previously for a journal publication or specifically for this application process on a theme relevant for the Reformed family today

Following these instructions and procedures the search committee began its work very quickly with a strong emphasis on recruiting potential candidates and encouraging them to apply. The executive committee was specifically asked to be engaged in this process by suggesting potential candidates that the committee then followed up with by seeking to encourage their interest. While we would have hoped for more suggestions from the executive committee, we did receive a total of thirty-three nominations (including five self-nominations). All of these nominees were encouraged to complete the application process.

The committee held four meetings in the process of its work:

*4 November 2013* – Committee members who were in Busan for the WCC assembly and others connected by Skype met to review our mandate, adopt our basic procedures, and launch an active process of soliciting candidates. Among other things the committee decided that we wanted to nominate the best possible person from whatever part of the world, but that we also would engage in an intentional search process to be certain that we had strong pools of candidates, both male and female, from all parts of the world.

General secretary search committee

*3 December 2013* – The committee met by Skype to review the thirty-three names that had been proposed and begin discussion on how to move toward developing a shortlist. The committee decided that a face to face meeting would be essential given the considerable number of promising candidates and set that for early January 2014 in Hannover. The committee also extended the deadline for receiving applications to Dec. 31, 2013 with a particular concern to seek additional women candidates.

*11-14 January 2014* – The committee met in Hannover and reviewed seriously twelve candidates that had strong potential and narrowed that down to five candidates that we invited to come to Hannover in March for final interviews. The committee also worked on the process to be used in interviewing when we were to meet in Hannover in March.

*17-19 March 2014* – The five candidates on the shortlist (from five different continents) met with us in Hannover for an intensive (but much appreciated) process of presentation, interview, group exploration of the context in Hannover, meeting with core staff, and times of fellowship and prayer. The interviews focused on twelve questions (see attachment) that were asked of all candidates. (Att. # 6)

Out of this serious process of search, application and discernment of the leading of the Holy Spirit the search committee struggled to discern between two of the candidates. The committee is pleased to nominate, by majority vote, Chris Ferguson to be the next general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The committee believes that he has significant ecumenical experience and knowledge with his extensive networks to be able to assist the WCRC in this time of transition.

Chris was born in Canada, ordained to the ministry in the United Church of Canada, and has served in ministry in Canada, in the Middle East, in various parts of Latin America, and at the United Nations. He currently lives and works in Bogota, Colombia. Chris is no stranger to the WCRC or the ecumenical movement, so many of you may already know him.

Chris is a person of compassion, with a deep commitment to justice and to the well-being of the Reformed family. He has served over the years as a pastor, a mission worker in Latin America, a general secretary in one of the major units in the United Church of Canada, leader of accompaniment programs in Israel/Palestine and in Colombia, and as the WCC Representative

to the United Nations. Within WARC he served as a member of the executive committee in the period leading up to the Accra general council, and has been actively involved in drafting and implementing the Accra confession.

Most important, Chris is a kind and gentle person of deep Christian faith with incredible moral courage for justice and for the well-being of all people. We think the executive committee, our member churches, and our ecumenical partners will enjoy working with him and that we will all be blessed by his leadership in the WCRC. The search committee hopes you will join us in affirming his call to be our next general secretary and in welcoming Chris (and his wife, Susan) to Hannover and to this position.

### *Appendix*

#### **Introducing... Christopher Ferguson**

Christopher Ferguson plays a significant role in the global ecumenical movement having served with the World Council of Churches as the head of the United Nations liaison office in New York and having worked to establish the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre.

He is currently serving in Colombia with the programme for ecumenical accompaniment in Colombia (PEAC) as international ecumenical advisor to the programme, sent as global mission personnel of the United Church of Canada. PEAC accompanies communities in Colombia that are victims of violence and engages in global ecumenical advocacy for a just peace.

He serves as an advisor to the WSCF advocacy and solidarity committee and is the senior friend and treasurer on the WSCF Latin America and Caribbean regional executive committee. He is a founding member and serves on the working group of Peace for Life, a global interfaith people movement.

Ferguson is an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. From 2002 to 2004 he served as executive minister of the justice, global and ecumenical relations unit and as ecumenical officer of the UCC. Previous to that he served as the general secretary of the division of world outreach for three years, and from 1991 until 1999 was the area secretary for the Caribbean and Latin America. In these roles he provided leadership in the UCC's ecumenical, mission, justice, human rights, theological education, development and partnership work in Latin America, the Caribbean and globally.



General secretary search committee

Within Canada Ferguson participated actively in several national ecumenical justice and human rights coalitions and was a member of the founding board of directors of Kairos Canada as well as serving on the board of the Canadian Council of Churches. He also helped found local and national refugee rights groups.

From 1987 to 1991 he was appointed as global mission personnel to work with the Latin American Biblical Seminary in San Jose, Costa Rica where he was professor of theology and ministry, teaching and leading workshops throughout Central America in a context of war and civil conflict. He also served as a visiting researcher in human rights and the church at the Ecumenical Research Department (DEI).

Previous to his work in Central America, Chris was the Presbyterian-United Church chaplain and director of chaplaincy services at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec for 7 years. While at McGill he was adjunct professor at the United Theological College and the Montreal Institute for Ministry where he taught courses in ministry, counselling, and church and society. Prior to the years in Montréal he served as minister/rector of a joint United Church-Anglican parish in Northern Quebec and was a college teacher, counsellor and community worker in British Columbia where he founded a youth centre and a crisis intervention centre.

Over the last three decades Ferguson has been an active participant and leader in various WCC committees and commissions in Latin America and globally, and as a member of the heads of agencies network helped initiate the first WCC funding roundtable. He has taken an active lead in global ecumenical advocacy and public witness for peace, justice, ecological justice and human rights.

He served on the WARC executive for a period preceding the general council in Accra, participated in the covenanting for justice process and played an active role on the drafting committee for the Accra confession.

Ferguson is active as a speaker, preacher and bible study leader at major events around the world. He has written extensively and contributed articles and book chapters to various ecumenical journals and publications. With Ofelia Ortega he co-authored *Diaconía Ecuménica*.

Chris Ferguson is married to Susan Ferguson, a professional social worker who has served as UCC global mission personnel in

Colombia, Israel/Palestine and Costa Rica. Susan coordinated the UCC national refugee work and was executive director of an ecumenical refugee resettlement agency in Toronto. Susan and Chris have two children, Peter and Martha.

Chris Ferguson is a graduate of Antioch College/West and received his theological education (MDiv) at Vancouver School of Theology. His post-graduate theological studies were at the University of Montreal faculty of theology in the pastoral studies department. He also has advanced training and supervised practice in pastoral counselling and marriage and family therapy.

## THE 26th GENERAL COUNCIL

### *A proposal from the officers*

In the 2013 Dodowa executive committee meeting, the general secretary was directed to coordinate a process in which necessary research would be conducted leading to the proposal of a possible venue for the 26th general council and possibilities for a theme. The process could include indicating to the WCRC member churches that they could invite the WCRC's next general council.

The general secretary and the staff team have worked on this mandate and have processed it through the officers. This document and the proposals it conveys is the result of the work done by the staff as well as the process through the officers.

### **Venue**

In May 2013, shortly after the meeting in Dodowa, the general secretary wrote to all member churches informing them of the upcoming general council and giving them the opportunity to send in a proposal to host the general council. A deadline of 31 October 2013 was given. A few responses came in acknowledging receipt of the letter but saying that they were not in a position to host. We received two proposals to host:

1. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda
2. The *Reformierter Bund* (Reformed Alliance) of Germany on behalf of our German member churches

In November 2013, the officers received an update on this situation during their meeting in Busan. The officers received with gratitude the information on churches willing to host. At the same time they advised the general secretary to write again to member churches asking if they were interested in hosting. The second letter to all member churches was sent out with a deadline of 31 January 2014. This second letter yielded no additional member churches that were ready to host.

We are left with two proposals for hosting the general council:

1. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda's proposal was a very brief email indicating their readiness to host. A follow up letter asking them to provide further details of what facilities they expect to place at the disposal of the WCRC did not yield more information. In a direct conversation with the Moderator

of this church, they proposed the Munyonyo Commonwealth Complex Conference Centre in Kampala – the same venue that the All Africa Conference of Churches used for their assembly of June 2013. The numbers of participants are similar to those of the WCRC general councils. In that conversation, when questioned what resources the church expects to mobilize locally to host the general council, the response included a reminder that this is a small church, and therefore could face challenges in mobilizing support.

2. The *Reformierter Bund* proposed to host the 26th general council in either Leipzig or Erfurt. These are both close to Wittenberg where Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the Castle Church on 31 October 1517, 2017 being 500 years after this event. The executive committee will be asked to choose one of the two (see below for further details)

At this point therefore the only credible proposal that can be made is that of the German churches. The officers note that the executive staff supports this proposal unanimously. The idea of holding the 26th general council in a place close to Wittenberg is very attractive for three reasons:

1. It fits into the vision of how to commemorate the 2017 special year. The vision has always been to call on the WCRC member churches to celebrate the week of 31 October 2017 in their different locations. The Reformation event is not owned by one country or one confessional body. It is spread throughout the world and we need to celebrate that in all the places in which the church is found. However, choreographing this in a manner that tells that story could be very powerful. This is what the German hosting of the 26th general council offers. It makes it possible for the Reformed family to gather some time between late May and early July 2017 somewhere near the venue for the 1517 event and to launch the celebration from there. Thereafter churches in the different contexts can plan several events leading up to and climaxing in the week of 31 October 2017. This will be a powerful way of celebrating the Reformation worldwide. The WCRC is in a good position to facilitate this and make an impact worldwide.
2. We are three years away from 2017. The first year of this is consumed in adjusting to a new location and a new general secretary. Thus, having to prepare for a major event like the general council in the same country in which the office is located offers a better possibility for effective execution. There is precedence for this. The 16th general council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding on to the Presbyterian System (one of WCRC's predecessor bodies) was held in Geneva,

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Switzerland, shortly after the office moved from Edinburgh to Geneva. This would make preparations and fundraising more achievable.

3. It will give German communities an opportunity to experience the global nature of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and an affirmation that the Reformation heritage belongs to more than one confessional family.

The officers were unanimous in agreeing that since Latin America had not hosted a general council since 1959 and did not pick up on the invitation to host this time around, it would be important to signal to AIPRAL and the Latin American churches that they should prepare to pull together and propose an appropriate venue for the 27th general council. The 18th general council took place in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1959.

Given that hosting does involve major commitments, it would not be appropriate to impose hosting on any country or group of churches at this time. Churches can be encouraged to prepare for it for the next time around (2024/25).

## **Dates**

In the Dodowa executive committee the consensus was leaning towards having the general council in 2017, which is the seven-year cycle mark. The meeting, however, also held open the possibility of holding it in 2018 since the constitution provides for once every seven or eight years. One concern was that 2017 being the Reformation jubilee year it is likely to be crowded with many activities. Others felt that 2017 being the jubilee year is precisely the time to gather Reformed churches in a celebratory assembly.

If the executive committee agrees on a general council to be held in Germany, then it will make sense to do it as the launching pad for celebrating the 500th anniversary that will then be celebrated in the different contexts. In this case, it makes better sense to hold the council three to six months before 31 October.

The proposal is to hold the general council within the same time frame as the uniting general council was held in 2010. Therefore the proposed dates are 13-28 June 2017. Women and youth participants could arrive on 13 June for their 36-hour pre-councils before the general council itself begins. The general council itself could begin then on 15 June 2017. On Sunday, 18 June, participants could worship in various congregations in six historic cities in Germany, and on Sunday, 25 June, there could be a mass worship service in an arena that could be the main celebration of

the 500th anniversary by Reformed churches worldwide joined by German churches. A possibility is to hold this service in a suitable venue in Wittenberg.

### Theme

The theme of a WCRC general council should be theologically and biblically sound, inspiring, challenging, action-oriented and relevant to our times. It should build on past themes and be a platform for studies, reflections and discussions which will lead the WCRC into a future in which its member churches are more faithful to God. The past five themes of the WCRC and its predecessor bodies are:

1997	Debrecen	Break the Chains of Injustice
2000	Yogyakarta	Behold, I make all things new
2004	Accra	That all may have life in fullness
2005	Utrecht	I will be with you always
2010	Grand Rapids	Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace

The 26th general council needs to also take into account two other factors:

1. 2017 is the jubilee year for the Reformation – 500 years after the initiating of the 16th century Reformation. It is therefore important that the theme reflects the spirit of the Reformation, especially the Reformed family's take on it.
2. We are part of the ecumenical movement. One of the outcomes of the just ended World Council of Churches assembly in Busan is the call for a decade of pilgrimage for justice and peace. The WCC has therefore begun this decade of pilgrimage for justice and peace at the WCC assembly in Busan.

In March of this year, the office invited executive committee members to give inputs into the development of a theme. Out of all the inputs, the following emerged as possible themes:

1. *Semper Reformanda*: Called to Transformation and Renewal (Romans 12.2, Ezekiel 11.19-20)
2. Always Reforming: Called to Transformation and Renewal (Romans 12.2, Ezekiel 11.19-20)
3. *Sola Scriptura*: Renewed by God's Word
4. To be Reformed today: The quest for relevance and renewal
5. Always Reforming: Renewal for Transformation and Relevance
6. A Church Always Reforming for the Transformation of the World: God's call to build peace and seek justice

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7. Always Reforming: God's Spirit renewing the church towards the transformation of the World (Romans 12.2, Luke 4.16ff)
8. Always Reforming: Renewal for Transformation and Relevance
9. Renewed by God's Word for Transformation and Relevance (Ezekiel 11.19-20)
10. New Wine in New Wineskins
11. Vision in Mission

A theme proposal will be presented in a separate document that draws from the gems of all the inputs from executive committee members. It will be broad enough to accommodate all the other inputs. At the same time, the proposed theme make will be specific enough to avoid a general council that only comes out with bland generalities.

Whichever theme is chosen, subthemes can be selected to ensure that the WCRC commitments to participate in God's work of renewal and the pilgrimage for justice and peace come through. We can name justice and peace either in a subtheme or in the theme to build on our historic commitments and also for the WCRC to intentionally participate in the ecumenical decade of pilgrimage for justice and peace.

The theme to be proposed will be based on two Scripture passages which come out of the executive committee email exchanges. Romans 12.2 and Luke 4.16-19. The Romans passage underscores renewal transformation in every sense as the essence of response to the gospel. The Luke passage points to the self-understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ of his ministry as linked with justice and societal transformation. That is what He felt commissioned to do, and that is what the church which is always reforming needs to understand ourselves to be called to. It is also a passage that radically brings the call to renewal and transformation down to earth – it has to do with transformation that addresses the plight of victims and those in the margins – bringing life to replace the death and oppression and justice to replace injustice.

### **Possible flow**

In the invitation proposal from our German churches, they indicated that it would be good to have the general council touch several historic bases. The staff team agrees with this. This will both be symbolic in marking the significant year of 2017 and also inspire participants to continue the journey for the rest of the year.

*The cities suggested are:*

1. Wittenberg: where Martin Luther first nailed the 95 these to the door of the Castle church.
2. Leipzig: has some links with the Reformation and is also where the musician J. S. Bach lived and performed.
3. Erfurt: has the cloister in which Martin Luther was a monk.
4. Berlin: the historic and the current capital of Germany, a place which has a long Reformed history with arrival of the Huguenots in the 16th century.
5. Barmen/Wuppertal: associated with the Confessing church and the Barmen Declaration. Wuppertal has a Reformed institution which could host the first two weeks of the GIT.
6. Wartburg – Eisenach. The Wartburg Castle in Eisenach is where Martin Luther was sheltered away from the powers who would want to stop him or even want him dead. It is here that a good part of the New Testament was translated.

*A general council has the following elements:*

1. A constitutionally-mandated business meeting of the WCRC member churches to review the past seven years, plan for the next seven years, elect a new governing body and fulfill other constitutional mandates.
2. To celebrate the unity that we have been gifted with and to encourage and strengthen one another in the mission to which we have been called.
3. To reflect theologically and engage in analysis on what we are called to do in the face of current challenges.
4. A pastoral visit to congregations of our host churches.

It is important for the flow to include all these elements. Following what the German churches are offering, this is a possible proposal that would accommodate all these elements:

*Tuesday, 13 June*

Arrival of women and youth participants, as well as the executive committee

*Wednesday, 14 June until lunchtime on Thursday, 15 June*

*(Venue: Fair premises)*

Women and youth pre-councils

Final meeting of executive committee members present

Arrival of the rest of participants

*Thursday, 15 June (Venue: Fair premises)*

(Afternoon) Orientation for all participants

*Friday, 16 June (Venue: Fair premises)*

Opening worship for the general council

First day of business sessions



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*Saturday, 17 June (Venue: Fair premises)*

Worship, Bible study, business sessions, group work

*Sunday, 18 June – Different settings in Germany*

The day will start as early 6am and end around 9pm

Participants will visit different contexts for worship, conversations and visiting of significant sites

Potsdam and Berlin

Erfurt

Leipzig

Torgau

Wittenberg

Wartburg - Eisenach

*Monday, 19 June and Tuesday, 20 June (Venue: Fair premises)*

Worship, Bible Study, business sessions, group work

*Wednesday, 21 June (Venue: Berlin)*

Worship, plenary sessions could include a theme session as a session for European plenary. The day is likely to end with a late afternoon reception offered by the German Federal government

*Thursday, 22 June to Saturday, 24 June (Venue: Fair premises)*

Worship, Bible study, business sessions, group work

*Sunday, 25 June – Day in Wittenberg*

All participants move to Wittenberg for a day of celebration. The departure time can be set for 7.30 am. This is the day on which German churches can be requested to join the general council in hundreds and thousands for a big celebration. After the celebration, participants can have free time, taking in the experience of being in Wittenberg. Departure from Wittenberg can then be in the late afternoon.

*Monday 26 June and Tuesday, 27 June (Venue: Fair premises)*

Worship, business plenaries to receive reports

Closing worship can be scheduled for the afternoon of 27 June.

*Wednesday, 28 June*

Departures from early in the morning and throughout the day

### **A note on the Global Institute of Theology**

The GIT in a general council year is held in conjunction with the general council. In 2010 the GIT had a two-week session in Chicago before moving to Grand Rapids for the last two weeks. The proposal, if Germany is chosen for the 26th general council, is to have the GIT begin in Wuppertal where there is a Reformed institute and to have its sessions in the Barmen church, an historic venue linked to the Barmen declaration.

This will be good symbolically and also give us an opportunity to collaborate with the United Evangelical Mission. The link between Barmen and Accra will be very meaningful symbolically.

After the two weeks in Barmen/Wuppertal the students and faculty would then move to the venue for the general council, where they have the rest of their sessions in conjunction with the general council.

### **The proposed city**

The German churches have proposed either Leipzig or Erfurt. Both of these cities have beautiful fair premises that will be available as the venue with more than adequate conference facilities for around 1,200 participants that are expected.

*Leipzig:* With around 500,000 residents, it is a mostly modern international city with a small old part. It has a small Reformed congregation (part of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Germany). The main church there is Lutheran.

It is the city of the musician Johann Sebastian Bach, who served there from 1723 to 1740 and again from 1744 until his death in 1750. The Thomaskirche in Leipzig where he served and where he is buried is very famous for this. Leipzig is also home to the Nikolaikirche, which in 1989 gained fame for being a centre of prayerful resistance that eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

*Erfurt:* With around 200,000 residents, Erfurt is the biggest undestroyed historic (“old town”) centre in Germany. It is a beautiful city. It has no Reformed congregation. The closest is a Methodist congregation. It is considered a Luther city. The main church there is a United Church (UEK).

The *Augustinerkloster* where Luther was a monk is situated there. Erfurt also played a role in the 1989 revolution that led to the fall of the Berlin wall. Erfurt also has a large recreational park close to the fair grounds.

The Reformed Alliance of Germany has made thorough feasibility of both sites and is strongly recommending Erfurt. The general secretary has also visited both sites and affirms that recommendation. The officers are therefore recommending that the 26th general council be held in Erfurt. Among other things, it will make for a closer community among participants and also bring us close to a UEK church. The WCRC has been developing a close relationship with UEK churches.

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### **Logistics of travel to and from Erfurt**

1. Erfurt has a regional airport with connections to other German cities.
2. The main train station is about 2 hours, 30 minutes from Frankfurt Airport
3. Distance from Erfurt to some key cities:
  - a. to Berlin: 2 hours, 30 minutes by car; 2 hours by regular train; 1 hour, 30 minutes by high speed train to be available by 2017.
  - b. to Wittenberg: 2 hours, 15 minutes by car; 1 hour, 30 minutes by rented train
  - c. to Leipzig: 1 hour, 30 minutes by car or train
  - d. to Eisenach: 50 minutes by car or train

### **Conference facilities**

Erfurt has adequate facilities at the regional fair premises. The general council will use the whole premises by itself.

Plenary room (1)	1,200 people
Large conference rooms (8)	150 people each
Small conference rooms (40)	25 people each

These are in two buildings close to one another. Moving from one place to another is approximately five minutes.

### **Accommodation**

Bed and breakfast will be provided in hotels downtown. There are more than enough hotels to provide above 1,200 beds in the inner city of Erfurt. The distance from the fair premises to the city is approximately 4 kilometres. It will take participants around 10 minutes each way.

### **Some facts on Erfurt relevant to the general council**

1. It makes for a close-knit community since the conference facilities will be used only by the WCRC with no other groups around.
2. The distances between conference rooms are short since there are only two buildings close to one another.
3. The distance between conference facilities and the accommodation will take about 10 minutes and there is good public transportation, making getting to and from easy. Shuttles will also be arranged.
4. Hotels are close together downtown, and therefore in the evenings there will be good community of general council participants.
5. There is no Reformed congregation in Erfurt.

6. Holding the general council in Erfurt makes it possible for the WCRC to develop closer relationship with a UEK church – a WCRC desire.
7. The airport in Erfurt is not international. Therefore everybody has to arrive in a German airport and fly again or take the train.

### **Finance**

A full budget will be drawn once a decision is made. The cost of the meeting place in Uganda being proposed is actually higher than the costs in Germany. The cost in the Munyonyo Conference Centre in Kampala per person per single room is US\$ 120 per day (bed and breakfast). The cost of accommodation in Erfurt is on average less than this.

Fundraising is a normal part of the holding of a general council. The WCRC has been setting aside funds. In addition, many member churches also contribute to a special fundraising for a general council. Around 70% of the funds still need to be raised. Our German churches have been exploring fundraising possibilities and will be able to work even more concretely on this should Germany be chosen as the venue.

The recommendation of the officers is for the executive committee to take a decision to hold the general council in Germany on condition that a substantial part of the costs is covered by funds to be raised in conjunction with civil and church authorities in Germany. Should that not be possible, the executive committee will be forced to decide on another venue in its 2015 meeting which will also necessitate the general council being postponed for a year.

### **On the WCRC-LWF joint meeting**

The original mandate to the general secretary and the officers from the Dodowa executive committee meeting included the exploration of a joint assembly/general council with the Lutheran World Federation. The general secretary wrote a letter to the Lutheran World Federation on this proposal. They responded that it would not be possible to conceive of a joint general council/assembly at this time. They made an alternative proposal: to do a joint meeting of the WCRC executive committee/LWF council in 2016 in Wittenberg. Instead they made an alternative proposal: to have a joint governing body meeting in Wittenberg in June 2016. This was reported to the officers in Busan in November 2013. There was further conversation with the LWF general secretary and Associate general secretary for Ecumenical Relations.

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The officers welcomed the idea of having a joint governing body meeting with the LWF. However, it was pointed out that it will not be good to have the joint executive committee meeting in 2016 in Wittenberg – if the executive committee chooses to hold the 26th general council in Germany. It will be good for the 2016 executive committee meeting to take place in Latin America as originally planned. In this way the WCRC will not have two significant meetings in consecutive years in Germany alone.

However, the enthusiasm to have a joint governing body meeting with the LWF as soon as possible led the officers to propose the following:

- a) That the WCRC officers plan to have a meeting in June 2016 in Wittenberg, so that they can have a day of interfacing with the LWF council meeting.
- b) That the WCRC and LWF plan to have a joint executive committee/council meeting in 2019 at a common venue they will choose together.

## **THEOLOGY, MISSION AND COMMUNION CORE GROUP**

*Present:* Bas Plaisier (moderator), Peter Bukowski, Kobus Gerber, Yael Eka Handiputeri, Najila Kassab, William Koopmans (reporter), Viktória Kóczyán (staff), Elisée Musemakweli, Carola Tron Urban, Lisa Vander Wal, Douwe Visser (staff), Sabine Dressler (guest)

### **Materials**

- Report from the theology, mission and communion office (Douwe Visser)
- Mission (a discussion paper by Jet den Hollander)
- The new WCRC structure and mission issues (WCRC-CWM relations)
- Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes (edited by Jooseop Keum)
- The Meaning of Communion. Report of the consultation held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA 4-7 February 2014
- Faith Confessions in the Life of WCRC Member Denominations. Report of the consultation held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA 2-4 February 2014
- Communion: On Being the Church. Report of the joint commission between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), 2006-2012
- Living in the Frontline. Report of the consultation held at the Christian Jensen Kolleg, Breklum (Germany) 25-30 November 2013.
- Report of the exploratory talks between the Anglican Communion and the WCRC
- Proposed team for a dialogue with the Anglican Communion

### **Observations regarding activities and sectors of work**

The theology, mission and communion (TMC) core group began its discussion with a robust review of the essential engagements and work of the TMC office. We noted the theological nature of all the engagements in this office, including Reformed theology and identity, theological aspects of mission and communion. This work is carried out in many formats such as ecumenical dialogues, publication of *Reformed World*, Global Institute of Theology, global network of theologians, consultation(s) on mission, consultation(s) on communion, as well as in other publications, John Knox Programmes, and in relations with the German churches and the European network of theologians. These aspects of the work of the TMC office are reflected in the present report. We also note that

Theology, mission and communion core group

this workload constitutes the maximum that can be reasonably expected from this office.

The core group also engaged in a discussion on the nature of mission, guided by principles captured in reports that were provided by the secretary (see materials). We view mission as the overarching and holistic endeavour to apply the gospel of Jesus Christ in transformation of the world.

The core group, having reviewed the work of Douwe Visser, once again commends him for his accomplishments in the past year. We are pleased with the work that was accomplished despite the challenges posed by relocation of the WCRC offices from Geneva to Hannover.

The following items constitute our observations regarding work that has been accomplished, engagements that are anticipated, and a discussion of numerous items and connections pertaining to the ongoing fulfilment of the goals and objectives of the office of theology, mission and communion.

### **Overview of work done since May 2013**

#### *1. Preparations for GIT 2014*

Preparations are progressing well for GIT 2014 in Costa Rica (with the reality of visa issues being a complicating factor).

#### *2. Consultation on mission in the frontline*

This consultation was a highlight of work accomplished in the past year and now leads to the important question of what can be done with follow-up.

#### *3. Consultation on faith confessions in the life of WCRC member denominations*

This was a unique consultation that was arranged by the CRCNA, inviting input from representatives of member churches into a discussion on faith confessions. This theme dovetailed well with the consultation on the meaning of communion. The process was viewed by participants as exemplary within the Communion and ought to be noted as such.

#### *4. Consultation on the meaning of communion*

This consultation followed the consultation on Faith Declaration, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Feb. 4-7, 2014. The consultation faced some challenges in terms of getting focused but the final report was received with appreciation by those who attended and offers insight and a forum for discussion for the

WCRC to continue to explore the meaning and challenges of communion.

*5. Reformed–Lutheran dialogue report*

This report has a long history, going back to a dialogue that began in 2006 and carried through to the last meeting in 2010. The report was delayed, primarily due to issues in the Lutheran offices. We are thankful that it is now available. It is significant for a number of reasons. There is a natural connection with the Lutherans due to commonality in the Reformation, history and theology. In some ways we have grown together, and in other ways we have grown apart. We see this document as providing strong momentum to build relationships and bring us closer together.

The core group notes in particular the implications that are spelled out in terms of an already existing unity between Lutheran and Reformed believers even if that unity is not fully expressed in the ecclesiastical institutions. Ways should be found to embody this unity at various levels of the church.

*6. Reformed–Catholic dialogue, Glasgow, Scotland*

The discussion is ongoing and a report is expected to be ready for 2017.

*7. WCRC Europe network of theology*

The TMC secretary has been asked by WCRC Europe to set up a network of theologians in Europe and to organize a first consultation in the coming months. In this context, as well as the work of the global network, the core group recognizes the desirability of adding more theological documents to the WCRC website in order to facilitate distribution and ease of access for important studies to be offered to the broader audience.

*8. Publications: Reformed World & Reformation Sunday brochure*

There were some issues with publishing *Reformed World*, resulting in only two editions in 2013. The total number of copies distributed is ordinarily 1,800. We are grateful for generally positive feedback, including the focus on inviting participation of young writers. The core group would like to see the option of making it available free on-line explored.

The Reformation Sunday brochure was published to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg catechism, as well as to stimulate the *Reformed World* to confess its faith with more



Theology, mission and communion core group  
contemporary documents such as the Accra confession and the  
Belhar confession.

9. The TMC secretary attended the WCC assembly in Busan.

### **Planned activities for 2014/2015**

#### *1. Dialogue with the Anglican Communion*

Grounds were discussed for accepting the invitation by the  
Anglican Communion to start a round of dialogue. The proposed  
grounds include the following:

- we currently have one dialogue going (with the Roman  
Catholic Church) and one planned (with the Pentecostal  
community);
- the TMC workload provides room for this;
- there is an identifiable list of possible partners that could be  
included;
- a dialogue with the Anglican Communion is desirable because  
an invitation has been received, there was a preparatory  
meeting in 2011, there is an identified topic of focus  
(communion) and parts of our WCRC live with a close  
presence of the Anglican Communion;
- such a dialogue would give opportunity for ecumenical  
leadership training.

*Proposed theme:* “Communion” (*Note:* It is our understanding that  
this dialogue is to be conducted in the light of the new way of  
doing dialogue that has been outlined by the theology core group  
in recent years.)

*Proposed team:* the following committee members are  
recommended:

Royce M Victor: Faculty Member (Old Testament) Kerala United  
Theological Seminary (Church of South India)

Elizabeth Welch: Minister of Clapton Park United Reformed Church  
(UK), undertaking research at Kings College (London) on the Holy  
Spirit and worship (co-chair).

George Hunsinger: Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of  
Systematic Theology, Department of Theology, Princeton  
Seminary.

Iain Torrance: Former president of Princeton Seminary, Pro-  
Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, Dean of the Chapel Royal  
in Scotland, Honorary Professor of Early Christian Doctrine and  
Ethics at the University of Edinburgh.

Helené van Tonder: Lecturer at the University of the Free State  
Cape Town Area, 2012 GIT student.

Carola Tron Urban: deputy moderator of the Waldensian Church of  
the River Plate, member of the WCRC executive committee and  
theology, missions and communion core group,

Douwe Visser: theology, missions and communion secretary

*Note:* In the context of discussing the various dialogues, the core group also reflected on the changing dynamics of Christendom, emerging evangelical-type churches, and the implications that this might have for ecumenicity of the WCRC in various regions. These developments warrant exploration and study.

The core group will recommend that the WCRC executive committee should encourage the steering committees of the African and European regions partner to explore options for ecumenical engagement with various broad-spectrum emerging churches.

#### *2. School of economy (new financial architecture)*

This work will be ongoing; it is time consuming but provides a good example of partnering on a justice theme.

#### *3. Global theological network, theme groups & next meeting*

This network provides a valuable forum for theological exchange. A series of four theme group meetings is planned, two of which are already scheduled (one on *sola scriptura* will meet from 26 June to 2 July, and a second on *church and society* will meet on 2-8 November); a third on *places of epiphany* and a fourth called "*beyond the differences*" are yet to be scheduled. It is anticipated that next year there will be a global meeting.

#### *4. GIT 2014*

The planning is well underway and we look forward with optimism to another good GIT.

#### *5. First meeting Reformed–Pentecostal dialogue*

The first session is scheduled for 16-22 November 2014 and will deal with the theme of mission.

#### *6. Second mission consultation for churches on mission in the frontline*

Plans are being made for a follow-up second mission consultation in December.

#### *7. Reformed World*

Theology, mission and communion core group

The next issue will appear in May 2014 as a special feature, to be followed after that with a publication of the Breklum papers from the November 2013 mission consultation.

#### *8. Reformation Jubilee 2017 Activities*

Within the theology, mission and communion core group it became obvious that the Reformation Jubilee 2017 needs special attention with regard to publications for member churches but also for public interest. Even more so since the decision has been taken to hold the 26th general council in Erfurt and at the historic sites of the Reformation in Germany.

Regarding the theme, it is suggested to proceed with a Wittenberg declaration emphasis. A coordinator will be needed, perhaps also using human resources from an internship, and working with various groups, i.e. Reformed Alliance (hosting committee - moderator, Sabine Dressler). The TMC secretary is asked to come with a complete plan for the core group next year. The general secretary should also be involved. Other arrangements will need to be coordinated, e.g. with the Lutherans.

#### *9. Lombard Prize*

In 2015 there will once again be a Lombard Prize essay competition.

#### *10. Involvement in NetACT*

Ideally it may be desirable that every region eventually would have a NetACT.

#### **Involvement in John Knox Centre programme activities**

The core group believes that ongoing programme involvement of the TMC secretary is important even after the relocation.

#### **Relations with the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva**

The move out of Geneva has terminated some of the day-to-day contact but the TMC secretary expects to be in Geneva about four or five times annually to maintain relations.

#### **Relations with the German churches and Reformed Alliance**

These are valued relationships that reflect the new reality of the local scene and context and warrant continued fostering.

#### **Relation of TMC office and justice & partnership office**

These offices work in different fields but interconnect and provide mutual support for work that overlaps.

## **Finance and fundraising**

Fundraising continues to be an important component. Travel costs related to the GIT were particularly high this time, creating increased financial need, but donations continue to come in and the financial responsibilities are being met.

## **Staffing**

The presence of interns will help with extra human resources.

## **Recommendations**

That the WCRC executive committee

1. receive with appreciation the reports on the three consultations that were held (“Mission in the Front Line,” “Faith Confessions in the Life of WCRC Member Denominations,” and “The Meaning of Communion”),
2. note the importance of these topics for future discussions, make the reports available through the website, and encourage ongoing work in these areas.
3. receive with joy the report on the second round of dialogue between the WCRC and the Lutheran World Federation and adopt its recommendations, affirm the implications of already existing ecumenical unity described within it, facilitate the implementation of these principles for unity wherever possible and practical, and continue to explore ways to embody this reality in the life of the WCRC.
4. support the decision to engage in a dialogue with the Anglican Communion, on the theme of communion, for the reasons delineated in the body of this report.
5. approve the proposed team for the dialogue with the Anglican Communion, as listed in the body of this report.
6. request the TMC secretary report next year on mission projects in which we are engaged in conjunction with the Partnership Fund.
7. approve that a letter be sent from the TMC secretary to the regions to explain our understanding and framework for missions and invite them to utilize the materials published in *Together Towards Life: Missions and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.
8. concur that the TMC secretary will invite input from theologians for opinions and reactions to the WCC perspective on mission expressed in *Together Towards Life: Missions and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, with the goal of publishing response articles in *Reformed World*.

Theology, mission and communion core group

9. encourage the TMC secretary to undertake an exploration study of what is happening in new expressions of Christendom and report back with a view to possible engagements.
10. encourage the African region, in partnership with the European region, to explore contacts with the African Instituted Churches.
11. rule that the publication costs of *Reformed World* continue to be included in the core budget for next year.
12. support plans to add more theological documents to the WCRC website.
13. encourage the staff to maintain contact with the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.
14. approve compilation of various publications for member churches and the public in preparation of the Reformation Jubilee and on the way to 2017. This should be done by the WCRC office in cooperation with the local hosting committee (chairperson Sabine Dressler, Reformed Alliance).
15. consider asking the same team to be responsible for a draft proposal of a statement (“Wittenberg declaration”) by which the general council expresses its understanding of the current meaning of Reformation as well as of future guidelines for the WCRC resulting from this. This draft document shall be ready for discussion at the next meeting of the Excom in 2015.
16. note with appreciation the work of the TMC office under the leadership of Douwe Visser, secretary.

## **JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP CORE GROUP**

*Present:* Helis Barraza Diaz (co-moderator), Yueh-Wen Lu (co-moderator), Clifton Kirkpatrick (North America), Subha Singh Majaw (Asia), Veronica Muchiri (Africa), Lydya Adajawah (Africa), Gabriela Mulder (Latin America), Jan-Gerd Heetderks (Europe), Johan Weusmann (Europe), Mary Fontaine (North America), Clayton Leal Da Silva (Latin America), Dora Arce-Valentín (staff).  
*Apologies:* Robyn Goodwin (Pacific)

### **Report of the justice and partnership office**

The core group received the programme report with gratitude to the staff.

### **Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Accra confession**

#### *Recommendation 1*

That the executive committee approves the document 'Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Accra confession' (see appendix 1), with the addition of having an analysis of whether the Accra confession was right in its assessment of social reality, as a guideline for organizing regional and global consultations.

#### *Recommendation 2*

The core group recommends that the executive committee approves the document 'Global consultation on the Accra confession' (see appendix 1) as a guideline for the global consultation on the Accra confession in Hannover, 2-6 November, 2014.

### **Human trafficking campaign**

The project on the human trafficking campaign started. There are connections with different NGOs and member churches. A concept-paper, 'Broken for you', was produced. Financial support for the campaign Lent 2015 is being sought from the Presbyterian Woman of the Presbyterian Church USA.

The material has to be sent to member churches very soon to use in Lent 2015. But churches can use the material also in 2016 or later.

The goal is to provide member churches with information about all kinds of human trafficking and help them to do what they can do against it. The material will be published on the website.

Justice and partnership core group

*Recommendation 3:*

The executive committee decides that we organize a Lent-campaign 2015 on human trafficking to the extend funds available.

**New international economic and financial architecture**

In this project, four partners are working together: the WCC, the LWF, CWM and the WCRC. The group discussed the memorandum of understanding from the four partners and the proposal for a coordinator for the programme. There is a need for a programme coordinator. The WCRC proposed a part-time consultant working from home (with a salary related to the country). This should be financed by the four organizations and the WCRC should pay its part by fundraising from the justice office. The WCRC will take the role of a lead agent in this venture.

*Recommendation 4*

The executive committee supports the proposal of the general secretary to work further with the other organizations on the joined project of the new financial architecture and to look – in cooperation with the other organizations - for a part-time consultant (for the part of the WCRC, paid by funds raised by the justice and partnership office).

**Gender justice**

*Ordination of women*

There is a need for a map of the ordination and participation of women in the member churches. A draft survey on the ordination of women has prepared by the secretary.

The core group supports the executive secretary to move forward with this survey.

*Gender balance at the next general council*

The group discussed possibilities to get a balance of men/women, ordained / not ordained and an adequate number of youth at the general council (see the decisions of the uniting general council 2010).

*Recommendation 5*

The executive committee asks the Constitutional Committee to work out – in relation to Article IX of the constitution – a practical model for the delegation of member churches to the general council which is a solution for the decision of the uniting general council 2010 to have a balanced assembly.

## **Network**

The church of Lebanon is willing to host the network meeting prior to the next meeting of the executive committee 2015.

### *Appendix 1*

## **CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACCRA CONFESSION**

### **1. Regional consultations: “Called to communion, committed to justice: The Accra confession ten years later”**

#### *General objective:*

- To reflect together through the lens of each regional context on our commitment to justice as WCRC member churches amidst the global context of violence, injustice and degradation of both human beings and nature.

#### *Specific objectives:*

- To focus on the diversity of challenges we face as a united body, to renew our commitment to justice.
- To reflect on the impact of the Accra confession within the churches and ecumenical partners and affirm the need to maintain our commitment for justice on deep biblical and theological roots.
- To refresh our memories of an experience like the one that produced the Accra confession.
- To put the current regional context under the lens of Accra and make connections needed.
- To take a critical look at our strategic plan and its impact on each region.
- To articulate suggestions for our justice and partnership programme for the coming years until the next general council.
- To present the 2015 Lent campaign “Broken for you” as part of our initiative against human trafficking.
- To celebrate our gifts as a communion of churches within the 10th anniversary of the Accra confession.

#### *Agenda*

Day 1: *Historical memories, theological perspectives*

1. Devotion and Bible study



Justice and partnership core group

2. Presentation of the memories of the Accra GA 2004 and the process till the birth of the Accra confession
3. Theological perspective on Accra and its impacts. Should be approached from different voices including Seminaries or Theological Education institutions related to our member churches within each region.
4. Reflections in small groups
5. Evening prayers

*Day 2: The regional context and its justice demands. How churches are responding to them*

1. Devotion and Bible study
2. Presentation of the regional economic-political-social and religious context and its challenges
3. The current situation in the light of the Accra confession. Implications for the churches in each context. The main challenges.
4. Reflections in small groups
5. Evening prayers

*Day 3: Connecting Accra with the context. Celebrating our call to communion and our commitment to justice*

1. Morning prayer
2. Critical reading of the strategic plan concerning the justice and partnership Programme. Where are the urgent matters for the region?
3. Reflection in small groups
4. Presentation of the 2015 Lent campaign against human trafficking. Connecting it with economic, ecological and gender justice.
5. Closing worship (with communion) celebrating the 10th anniversary of Accra and its commitment to justice.

*Dates*

CANAAC:	19-23 March (done)
AIPRAL:	2-6 June 2014
NEAAC/Pacific:	8-12 September 2014
ACRC:	25-29 September 2014
Europe:	8-10 October 2014
Indonesia/SEA:	15-19 October 2014

**2. Global consultation on the Accra confession  
Hannover, 2-6 November 2014**

*AGENDA***1 November: Pre-event. Ecumenical gathering**

2 November: Arrival of the international delegates from the area councils and others

3 November

8:30 Official opening of the consultation

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Agenda and time schedule
- Logistics (including naming a group of listeners)

9:00 Devotion and Bible study

10:00 Introduction to the Accra general council 2004 and the Accra confession

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 Panel: Theological perspectives on Accra and its impacts (including theological education institutions)

12:00 Plenary discussion

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Small group discussion

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 Reports from the small groups. Summary of the day

17:30 Evening prayer

18:00 Break

19:00 Dinner

**4 November**

8:30 Devotion and Bible study

09:30 Presentations of the area councils. Their context and challenges

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 Presentation of the area councils. Their context and challenges (cont.)

11:30 Plenary discussion

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Small group discussion

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 Reports from the small groups. Summary of the day

17:30 Evening prayer

18:00 Break

19:00 Dinner

**5 November**

8:30 Morning worship

Justice and partnership core group

9:30 Regional meetings to reflect about their engagement with the WCRC and its justice priorities. Developing strategies for their commitment with the global community

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 Regional meetings continue

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Report from the regional groups.

15:30 Release of the Lenten campaign.

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 The listeners report. Presentation and discussion of the final document

17:30 Break

18:00 Closing worship

19:00 Dinner

## COMMUNICATIONS CORE GROUP

*Present:* Yvette Noble Bloomfield (moderator), Peter Borgdorff, Allan Buckingham, Kyeong-Shin Kang, Yong-Kyu Kang, Cheryl Meban, Cheh Liang Mok, Allen Nafuki, Salome Twum, Philip Tanis (communications secretary), Anna Krüger (assistant for finance and communications).

The core group welcomed Phil and Anna. Appreciation was expressed to those who maintained the communications office in the interim period since Kristine Greenaway demitted office.

We would like to thank executive committee members for their continued efforts in sharing press releases and other WCRC material in their own churches and amongst other interested people. A reminder that the more people 'like' a post on Facebook, the more people end up seeing it. Keep up the good work!

The report of the executive secretary (*Document 5*) was reviewed.

### **Communications survey**

We received the current results of the communications survey and while they are interesting to date, a larger number of responses is needed to really glean worthwhile information. With that in mind we would like to encourage all executive committee members to take some time and *fill in the copy of the survey attached* to this report if you have not already taken it online. If you have, feel free to take the paper version home to remind you to ask others to take it as well.

### **Website**

The current iteration of the website was discussed. Some cosmetic and organizational changes will be made. We are committed to the continued development and enhancement of non-European languages.

*We also ask member churches to put a link to the WCRC on their website (if not already there) and encourage them to check that the main link and all other links are still correct.*

We discussed the use of a blog on the site that would feature some of the less formal goings-on of the Communion. This could be how projects are coming, an experience of a member church, a recent thought on Reformed theology, whatever. The goal is to help make real person-to-person connections with those interested in the

Communications core group

WCRC. It's much easier to connect with a person than with an institution.

*To that end we recommend that:*

- *a weekly blog be started with all staff committed to sharing responsibilities to ensure content is available;*
- *and executive committee members be encouraged to participate;*
- *and executive committee members seek to stimulate wider contacts with Reformed bloggers or others who could contribute.*

### **Regional council websites**

We would like to continue to partner with regional councils to develop their websites where desired. CANAAC has already approached the office with a request for help. The office will facilitate conversations with a developer as well as provide domain name and hosting services to the region for no fee. Free domain name and hosting services are available to all regional councils. This has the added benefit of all registration information being held by the organization, which will ensure smoother handovers of information as council members change.

### **Other online communication**

A note that the #BringBackOurGirls tweet and Facebook post raised engagement levels above those seen before. The announcement of the new general secretary was then engaged with even more. In 24 hours there were 5,000 combined views of the two posts.

### **New WCRC brochure**

We reviewed the new brochure being put together and look forward to being able to share it with our churches in multiple languages.

### **Budget**

We reviewed the proposed 2014 communications budget and believe it is adequate for the work to be done this year.

Ecumenical News International (ENI) was disbanded last year. The communications secretary has been in discussions about the assets of ENI but has yet to receive an adequate responses (this includes the distribution list, contacts for stringers, and the brand itself).

In addition, most of the money that was budgeted in 2013 for ENI (EUR 19,000) was not spent, and it is not included in the budget for this year. This is money that has historically been used for communications. In future years we would like to explore how that money could be used to replace some of the work done by ENI, most especially to engage the ex-ENI stringers or find other reporters to write articles in their own contexts tailored to our audiences.

*We have two recommendations:*

- *That the WCRC should make every effort to ensure that the assets of ENI are properly and effectively distributed amongst its stakeholders.*
- *That the finance office and finance committee together with the communications secretary determine appropriate measures to ensure there is sufficient resource for development of existing and new communications avenues, to compensate for the loss of ENI.*

## CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Present:* Cheryl Meban (moderator), Carola Tron Urban, Lydia Adajawah, Allen Nafuki, Yael Hadiputeri and Peter Borgdorff. General secretary Setri Nyomi and general secretary-designate Chris Ferguson joined the meeting. Apologies: Gradye Parsons.

### **Application for membership**

*Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ, South Africa* (formerly the “black” church of the NHKA, see below).

*Background:* the Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ (MRCC) was formed in 1923 when a group broke away from the Free Church of Scotland. Formerly known as the Hervormde Kerk in Suidelike Afrika (HKSA), it adopted its current name in 2006. Their membership application has been received and is endorsed by the NGK (per Kobus Gerber). If the executive committee requires a second endorsement, then the recommendation below is subject to the receipt of such a letter. The application did not meet the 15 March deadline but the committee is willing to recommend waiving the due date concern since Maranatha is responding to WCRC encouragement to seek membership.

*Recommendation 1:* that the Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ be admitted into WCRC membership.

### **Readmission**

The *Netherduitsch Hervormde Kerk von Afrika (NHKA)* or Dutch Reformed Church of Africa.

The history behind this request for readmission is long. In 1982 WARC stipulated three conditions that needed to be met for readmission to be considered. Many conversations and several decades later, the NHKA has met the stated conditions.

### **Churches in arrears**

The committee held a discussion about churches in arrears.

- 37 churches have not contributed or responded to communications in the last 4 years.
- 31 have responded but not yet paid.
- 6 churches have paid some but are asking for special consideration.

It seems to the committee that a strict adherence to the membership fee grid without the relational component is too rigid.

Last year we decided that the moderator of the constitution and membership committee, the president of the regional council and the general secretary shall approve any exceptions to the application of the grid.

*Recommendation 3: that those churches that have neither contributed nor corresponded be deemed inactive.*

*Recommendation 4: that executive committee members and regional councils, in communication with the general secretary, make every effort to renew contact with inactive churches, to express concern about their inactive status and request information for prayer and to maintain the relationship.*

### **Underpayers**

The committee discussed member churches that are contributing below the grid and urged the general secretary to continue working with them to rectify this. The committee recommends the following change in bylaw for churches which could afford but are paying below the grid.

*Recommendation 5: that a bylaw be adopted:*

*Member churches that could afford to pay according to the grid but fail to do so are precluded from being nominated to the executive committee.*

### **Constitution**

The committee is drafting a number of proposed changes to the constitution, which will be provisionally presented to the executive committee for consultation in 2015. The aim is to have a useful working document that will assist the WCRC in its functioning and accountability. Constitutional amendments agreed by the executive committee must be communicated to the member churches at least six months before the general council in 2017.



## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

*Present:* Johann Weusmann (convener and general treasurer), Gerhard Plenter (finance coordinator), Anna Krüger (administrator), Jerry Pillay, Clifton Kirkpatrick, Yueh Wen-Lu, Cheh Liang Mok, Stephens Lytch, Veronica Muchiri, and Stephen Kendall (recorder). Setri Nyomi and Chris Ferguson also joined the committee.

The finance committee is grateful for the services of the Evangelical Reformed Church in facilitating bookkeeping for the WCRC. In particular we give thanks to Gerhard Plenter for his careful and enthusiastic oversight of the transition to German accounting standards and to Anna Krüger for her tireless facilitation of the day-to-day bookkeeping during a complicated transition over the past six months. This involved entering all transactions for 2013 from bank statements in order to create the new financial system.

### **Financial statement 2013** (*annex A*)

Financial statements, including the revenue and expenses for 2013 (budget and actual) and the 2014 budget are presented to the executive committee for discussion.

*Note:* While the youth programme category has no entries, youth are included in as many area of the programmes of the WCRC as possible. There remains an ongoing need to fund raise for this programme area.

### **Audit 2013** (*annex B*)

The transition from the Swiss financial system to the German system proved to be a challenge, but has now been completed.

Notwithstanding the approval by the executive committee of the usual Swiss auditing company to carry out the 2013 audit, it was determined to be both possible and expedient to have the EKD high audit office carry out the 2013 audit. This audit has been reviewed in detail by the finance committee and found satisfactory. The audited 2013 accounts have been distributed to the executive committee.

Because the executive committee previously approved a different audit firm than actually carried out the audit, this change needs to be approved.

*Recommendation 1: That the engagement of the EKD high audit office for the 2013 audit be approved.*

The audit offered recommendations for improvement of the financial management of the WCRC. Each of the recommendations (found in annex A) has been reviewed by the finance committee and a plan for acting on each of them has been formulated and will be reported to the officers and a future executive committee meeting.

In particular the substantiation of the final amount of EUR 49,439.04 finally attributed to the Reserve Fund will need to be carried out (see pp.15 -16, annex B). This is an accounting clarification.

Outstanding cash advances within the organization have been noted in the amount of EUR 2,756.84. These will be concluded shortly and reported to the auditor.

An additional audit of personnel social costs (see annex B p.20 section 3.3 point 2) is warranted, since the information was not available at the time of the audit. The finance committee will arrange for this.

The executive committee is asked to adopt the financial statements as audited.

*Recommendation 2: That the 2013 audited financial statements be adopted.*

*Recommendation 3: That the EKD high audit office be engaged to perform the 2014 audit.*

### **Further recommendations from review of 2013 accounts**

#### **Programme administrative costs**

Project funding should wherever possible provide funding to the core budget for staff costs. Programme secretaries are asked to negotiate a percentage (preferably in the area of 15%) of the project costs for this purpose.

*Recommendation 4: As a general rule, a percentage of approximately 15% of programme revenue should be booked to the core budget to cover administrative costs.*

Finance committee

### **Theological education for women**

The finance committee noted that the funds raised for theological education for women in the global south are not being spent.

*Recommendation 5: That the secretariat be asked to reactivate the theological education for women in the global south programme.*

### **2013 finance committee report follow-up**

Recommendation 7 in the finance report to the 2012 executive committee (p.206) called for a review by the EKD high audit office of the WCRC financial management system and a risk assessment of financial operations. In 2013 the executive committee agreed to defer the application of this recommendation until 2015, with a progress report in 2014.

Because the transition to the EKD financial system has now taken place, including the completion of the audit, the finance committee reports that in effect this recommendation has now been fulfilled.

### **Financial management policy (annex C and D)**

A finance management policy (in English and German) was presented for information and provisional approval at the 2013 executive committee meeting. This has been subsequently refined and, while still open for future refinement, is ready for approval in order to provide policy direction immediately.

In addition to this, a compilation of existing policies (*annex D*) is presented for information. This will be further refined through the year by the finance committee for consideration by the executive committee at the 2015 future meeting.

*Recommendation 6: That the WCRC Finance Management Policies (annex C) be approved.*

## **Fundraising**

### **WCRC database**

In order to be effective in contacting member churches and establishing relationships with those churches, an expanded database will be very useful. Such a database could be used not only for financial purposes but also for general contact with churches regarding programmes, heads of churches and donors.

*Recommendation 7: That the general secretariat be asked to establish a database of key contact information for member churches and donors.*

**2014 Budget** (*annex A*)

The 2014 budget was approved in 2013 by the executive committee subject to adjustment if necessary. A revised budget is presented with the financial statements.

*Recommendation 8: That the revised 2014 budget be approved.*

**Membership contributions**

The grid of membership fees has been implemented and will continue to be used as approved. For the purpose of preparing future budgets (2015 and forward), the finance committee will base membership fee revenue amounts on the history of what has been actually received.

**2015 budget**

Given the transition to Hannover, it is premature to formulate a 2015 budget. Now that the 2013 statements have been received and a financial structure is in place in Hannover, the 2015 budget will be prepared by the finance committee and can be ready later this year for consideration of the officers. Since the budget is the purview of the executive committee, it must authorize the officers to approve the 2015 budget.

*Recommendation 9: That the officers be authorized to approve the 2015 budget.*

**Investment policy**

The finance committee has drawn up a list of criteria for interviewing prospective banks and fund managers in order to ensure that our investments are safe, ethically screened and will provide maximum return. Because the WCRC is now the recipient of a substantial £1,000,000 gift from the Council for World Mission to assist in the establishment of the WCRC Endowment, this is an urgent priority. The finance committee is also eager to divest the individual stocks current held so that those we are holding can also benefit from a more rigorous investment policy. In order to facilitate the investment of the CWM gift, the following recommendations are presented:

*Recommendation 10: That the Council for World Mission gift be held as a designated reserve.*

*Recommendation 11: That the general treasurer and general secretary be jointly authorized to invest WCRC monies.*

Finance committee

The current investment policy that guides the organization is contained at page X of annex D and will be reviewed by the finance committee and any proposed changes brought to the Executive.

**WCRC Michigan Foundation accounts**

In order to support North American development efforts and provide tax receipts in the United States, the WCRC has a corporate office in Michigan that conforms to US tax laws. The Michigan corporation holds an annual fundraising campaign that has raised approximately \$10,000 each year; the US trustees have made plans in collaboration with the Hanover staff to expand this campaign. It also receives general and designated donations for the WCRC and invests the US portion of the endowment fund in the Barnabas Foundation. All funds held by the Michigan corporation are reported in the consolidated WCRC financial statements but must also be reported separately for US tax registration purposes (501c3). In order to fund the annual campaign, two officers of the Michigan corporation must be authorized to spend funds.

*Recommendation 12: That Peter Borgdorff and Stephen Lytch be jointly authorized to disperse up to \$4,000 annually for North American development efforts.*

*Recommendation 13: That Peter Borgdorff in consultation with the general treasurer be authorized to disperse funds necessary for 501c3 tax filing.*

*Recommendation 14: That the WCRC Michigan financial statements be reviewed annually by the executive committee, beginning in 2015.*

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMES CHURCHES  
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

SECTION	DESIGNATED ACCOUNT	EUR			Difference 2013-2014
		BUDGET 2013	BUDGET 2014		
1100 REVENUE	CORE	1.378.600,00	1.375.875,78	1.438.400,00	59.800,00
1100 EXPENSE	CORE	1.378.600,00	1.375.642,60	1.438.400,00	59.800,00
1100 DIFFERENCE	CORE	-	233,18	-	-
2200 REVENUE	THEOLOGY & MISSION OFFICE PROGRAMS	299.800,00	206.101,11	319.400,00	19.600,00
2200 EXPENSE	THEOLOGY & MISSION OFFICE PROGRAMS	299.800,00	206.101,11	319.400,00	19.600,00
2200 DIFFERENCE	THEOLOGY & MISSION OFFICE PROGRAMS	-	-	-	-
3300 REVENUE	JUSTICE & PARTNERSHIP OFFICE PROGRAMS	388.800,00	454.444,04	447.300,00	58.500,00
3300 EXPENSE	JUSTICE & PARTNERSHIP OFFICE PROGRAMS	388.800,00	454.444,04	447.300,00	58.500,00
3300 DIFFERENCE	JUSTICE & PARTNERSHIP OFFICE PROGRAMS	-	-	-	-
4400 REVENUE	PARTNERSHIP FUND	534.300,00	497.194,07	467.100,00	67.200,00
4400 EXPENSE	PARTNERSHIP FUND	534.300,00	497.194,07	467.100,00	67.200,00
4400 DIFFERENCE	PARTNERSHIP FUND	-	-	-	-
5500 REVENUE	GENERAL PROGRAMS	151.600,00	174.006,95	131.200,00	20.400,00
5500 EXPENSE	GENERAL PROGRAMS	151.600,00	174.240,13	131.200,00	20.400,00
5500 DIFFERENCE	GENERAL PROGRAMS	-	233,18	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE,		2.753.100,00	2.707.621,95	2.803.400,00	50.300,00
TOTAL EXPENSE,		2.753.100,00	2.707.621,95	2.803.400,00	50.300,00
DIFFERENCE		-	-	-	-



EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND

(EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN GERMANY)

OBERRECHNUNGSAMT

(HIGH AUDIT OFFICE)

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**(English version)**

## **REPORT**

ON THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2013

**WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WCRC)**

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GENEVA / HANOVER

## **I. AUDIT BASICS**

### **Audit assignment**

The High Audit Office of the Evangelical Church in Germany (ORA) audits the budget and asset accounting of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

The audit assignment is based on an oral agreement between the WCRC General Treasurer, Dr. Johann Weusmann, and the Director of the ORA, Mr. Harald Weitzenberg. It is intended to concretize the assignment promptly by an administrative agreement between the EKD and the WCRC.

The Standing Budget Committee of the EKD synod approved the acceptance of this audit assignment in its conference on 12th/13th March 2014.

### **Audit subject and aim**

The report at hand is for the purpose of preparing the decision about the approval of the General Treasurer and the General Secretary for the management in the accounting year 2013 by the Executive Committee of the WCRC.

Possible reporting duties resulting from the hitherto status as a non-profit institution according to Swiss law to the Swiss authorities are not covered by this report.

Subject of the audit was the annual financial statement of the WCRC for the accounting year 2013.

For this, it was precisely audited,

- whether the budget and economic management as well as the asset administration in the accounting year 2013 took place correctly and according to applicable law and
- whether the annual accounts 2013 essentially convey an appropriate image of the results and asset situation.

The correctness of accounting was the audit standard in this case. In this respect, the audit aim was to determine whether there were considerable differences between the amounts mentioned in the accounting and those proven in the books and whether the approval and authorization of the annual accounts as well as the approval of the WCRC General Treasurer and the WCRC General Secretary by the Executive Committee can be recommended.

It is furthermore the assignment of the audit to check the budget and economic management of the WCRC. This specifically includes the administrative action, which is not directly reflected in the annual accounts to be presented. In this case, the audit standards are the correctness and cost effectiveness of the actions.

For this, it was precisely audited

- whether the entrusted resources were deployed in an adequate, economic and thrifty way,



## Audit

- whether and in which cases of relevance the regulations and principles applicable to the budget and economic management were not complied with and
- what recommendations of action are to be derived from the audit results for the future, if applicable.

As a whole, it is the intention of the audit to support the church-leading persons and organs in the execution of their functions and stimulate economic thinking as well as responsible action concerning the handling of the resources entrusted to the church.

### **Type, extent and execution of the audit**

The ORA carried out the audit based on a risk-oriented audit approach.

Accordingly, the audit must be planned and executed in such manner that incorrectnesses and infringements in the accounting and the budget and economic management of the WCRC are recognized with adequate certainty. It was not the aim and task of the audit to trace discrepancies without significance in single cases or the whole.

The audit was carried out according to the dutiful judgment of the auditor in samples and according to certain focuses. These were selected so that they allowed for the significance of the different audit topics, conveyed a meaningful image of the corresponding section and facilitated the conclusion as to whether applicable law had been complied with.

In this context, the following audit focuses were determined:

- correctness and completeness of the annual financial statement (appropriate reproduction of the asset and result situation, adherence to the budget),
- correctness of the asset evidence (correct compilation and applicable recording of the essential asset positions),
- inspection of single fields of high significance (labour cost accounts, project/program budgets among others).

If action was taken against existing regulations in the case of single measures of those proven in the accounts and this remained without audit objections, no approval is to be deduced from this fact.

The audit was – with interruptions – carried out by Mr. Soeren Rischbieter in the period from 10th and 30th April 2014. It temporarily took place in the WCRC office in Hanover (Knochenhauerstr. 42). The following documents were available for the audit:

- a) the 2013 budget for the WCRC,
- b) the financial statement presentation (annual financial statement KFM, SB 00) including the advances and transit accounts (SB 52) as well as the capital account (SB 92) for the budget year 2013 of 17th April 2014 (ZB closure no. 0036),

In addition to that further WCRC files, especially the accounting documents (invoice documents and bank statements), were available. The records requested within the audit were submitted resp. access to the corresponding documents was allowed.

On request of the WCRC it was intended to base the audit on the draft of a budget code ("WCRC General Finance Management Policies"), which has not yet effectively been set into force by the WCRC boards but has been taken as a basis for the 2013 accounting in analogue application after an internal vote. The compliance with the hitherto applicable Swiss accounting regulations (Swiss GAAP RPC 21 regulations) was not subject of the audit.

The information required on the occasion of the audit was provided by Mr. Gerhard Plenter (Evangelical Reformed Church, Leer) as well as Ms. Anna Krueger (assistant for finance and communication). In addition, further WCRC staff members were available for further enquiries.

## **II. ORGANIZATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) is a non-profit-oriented, international non-governmental organization representing 229 member churches from 108 countries with a total of approx. 80 million Christians as a united ecumenical body for reformed churches.

It developed from the association of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in 2010 and succeeded them legally.

The current WCRC constitution was approved by the Uniting General Council in 2010. The organization is officially based in Geneva.

In its self-concept, the WCRC follows the tradition of the Reformers Johannes Calvin, John Knox and Huldrych Zwingli as well as the reformation movements around Jan Hus and Pierre Valdo.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches is to foster its member churches in their community and support them in the social discussion. In addition, it is also to contribute to the ecumenical movement and the transformation of the world by standing up e. g. for economic and ecological justice, world-wide peace and conciliation, promoting and protecting religious, civil and all other human rights; appealing for emergency relief and continuous development in the world and promoting them as well as pointing out reformed perspectives for unity among the churches (see article V of the constitution).

In terms of articles 60 and the following of the Swiss Civil Code, the WCRC is constituted as an association. In Germany, its status is that of a public body in terms of article 140 GG in conjunction with article 137 paragraph 5 S. 2 WRV, awarded by the Federal Government of Lower Saxony, order issued on 11th December 2012. It is subject to state supervision by the Ministry of Culture of Lower Saxony.

The organs of the WCRC are:

- the General Council (with President and General Treasurer),
- the Executive Committee and

## Audit

- the General Secretary.

The Chief Executive Officer of the WCRC is the General Secretary elected by the Executive Committee. According to article XII of the constitution, he bears the responsibility for the management and coordination of their work towards the General Council and the Executive Committee. The current office holder is Dr. Setri Nyomi (Ghana).

The current WCRC President is Dr. Jerry Pillay (South Africa), the office of General Treasurer was assigned to Dr. Johann Weusmann (Germany).

The current administration of the WCRC is assumed by an operational office directed by the General Secretary. It was based in Geneva (Switzerland) during the audit period. At the turn of the year 2013/2014, the office moved to Hanover (Germany) - while maintaining a branch in Geneva.

The accounting year (budget year) is the calendar year.

### **III. PRESENTATION OF THE ACCOUNTING RESULTS**

During the audit period, the WCRC accounting initially took place according to commercial principles in the former branch in Geneva. At this, the ERP solution "WinBIZ 8.0" of the company LGE AG (Martigny, canton Wallis, Switzerland) was applied.

During the preparation of the relocation of the organization's operational office to Germany, the accounting was continued only rudimentarily from August 2013 on and no longer updated promptly by the meanwhile resigned accountant.

Within the frame of the year-end tasks, it was internally decided not to carry out the accounting update with the old system but to use the new software "KFM - Kirchliches-Finanz-Management" of the company KIGST GmbH (Offenbach am Main, Germany) retroactively for the year 2013 while the use of this software was originally to start on 1st January 2014. At the same time, a change of the invoice style was carried out from commercial to cameralistic accounting.

In the first quarter of 2014, the entire transactions of the year 2013 were entered retroactively based on the available documents and account files in the Hanover office. A cameralistic year-end closing was compiled based on this.

An audit of the two applied IT-procedures was not carried out by the ORA. Within the audit activities, however, there were no signs suggesting the existence of fundamental errors in the software applications.

According to general financial principles, the annual accounts are to convey an adequate image of both the asset and the result situation.

This can be summarized as follows:

#### **Presentation of the result situation**

The accounts results of the audit period according to the documents presented for the audit are as follows:

	Revenues	Expenses
	EUR	EUR
Budget (valuations according to KFM)	2,753,100.00	2,753,100.00
<b>TARGET COSTS 2013</b> (plan valuation)	<b>2,753,100.00</b>	<b>2,753,100.00</b>
According to the annual financial statement the following amount to:		
the actual receipts	1,990,653.93	
the transfers from program reserves	716,968.02	
the actual expenditures		1,845,105.51
the allocations to program reserves		728,260.46
the surplus 2013 (allocation to the Reserve Fund)		134,255.98
<b>ACTUAL COSTS 2013</b> (result)	<b>2,707,621.95</b>	<b>2,707,621.95</b>

### Advances and transit accounts

The advances and transit accounts (SB 52) of the WCRC were randomly audited. They were predominantly balanced within the year-end tasks. This especially refers to the passage accounts. The audit revealed no indications concerning any relevant cases of delayed accounting.

As far as any audit-relevant circumstances arose, these were broached resp. spoken about during the audit statements.

### Presentation of the asset situation

The total asset stock of the WCRC amounted to **2,018,094.07 EUR** for the year-end closing as of 31st December 2013. Compared with the previous year (final stock 2012: 1,761,106.94 EUR), this stock has increased by 256,987.13 EUR (+14.59 %).

The asset accounting of the WCRC (SB 92) according to the documents presented for the audit are as follows as of 31st December 2013:

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<b>Reserve assets</b> (incl. trust assets, according to SB 92)	<b>Opening stock</b>	<b>Final stock</b>	<b>Difference</b>
	<b>EUR</b>	<b>EUR</b>	<b>(versus previous year)</b>
<b>WCRC Capital</b>			
Reserve Fund	49,439.04	79,359.94	60.52%
North American Reserve Fund	29,804.51	29,804.51	0.00%
IT Provision	12,063.59	12,063.59	0.00%
WCRC North American Trustees	11,012.44	11,012.44	0.00%
21 <sup>st</sup> century reformation fund	3,964.36	3,964.36	0.00%
Alliance for life fund	2,973.51	2,973.51	0.00%
Relocation fund	0.00	143,989.29	100.00%
<b>UEK special donation</b>	296,089.12	296,089.12	0.00%
<b>General Council Fund</b>	347,475.16	406,665.56	17.03%
<b>Theology &amp; Mission office programs</b>			
Global Institute of Theology (GIT)	48,856.26	39,724.53	-18.69%
Theological Dialogs	4,520.70	17,075.77	277.72%
Mission	25,878.94	33,229.63	28.40%
Madip	27,965.33	27,965.33	0.00%
Georges Lombard Prize	16,771.80	15,967.08	-4.80%
<b>Justice &amp; Partnership office programs</b>			
Covenanting for Justice	36,752.11	4,346.22	-88.17%
Gender Justice	121,997.33	142,680.31	16.95%
Theological Education for Women	167,564.88	174,752.08	4.29%
New econ. & financial Architecture (NEFA)	73,620.41	42,918.46	-41.70%
Oikotree (KCTE)	15,269.47	15,269.47	0.00%
<b>Partnership Funds</b>			
Partnership Fund A	-21,972.67	37,446.80	270.42%
Partnership Fund B	53,717.33	42,725.43	-20.46%
Partnership Fund D	17,984.11	14,176.62	-21.17%
Partnership Fund E	59,574.25	40,734.21	-31.62%
<b>General Programs</b>			
WCRC regional support	0.00	40,000.00	100.00%
General secretary programs	9,377.07	0.00	-100.00%
Youth program	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Global South Internship support	31,800.96	11,958.78	-62.39%
North American Internship support	11,862.96	11,862.96	0.00%
Native American project	3,164.33	3,164.33	0.00%
Regional Communication support	12,262.45	12,262.45	0.00%
<b>WCRC Europe</b>	214,206.35	226,800.45	5.88%
<b>Custodian funds</b>			
Cooperation & Witness	18,016.30	18,016.30	0.00%
Calvin Publications fund	26,638.17	26,638.17	0.00%
Publications fund	6,204.11	6,204.11	0.00%
UCC Death	5,175.70	5,175.70	0.00%
Provision la pensée économique	16,858.47	16,858.47	0.00%
Equatorial Guinea	4,218.09	4,218.09	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,761,106.94</b>	<b>2,018,094.07</b>	<b>14.59%</b>

## **IV. AUDIT STATEMENTS**

### **Preliminary remark**

The audit was carried out on request of the WCRC based on the cameralistic year- end closing, which was retroactively compiled after the end of the accounting year 2013. Any data from the hitherto existing commercial accounting system were only used when necessary to enable the comprehension of a correct compilation of the opening stocks.

Since the lead currency in the accounting was converted from Swiss Francs (CHF) to Euros (EUR), the documents had to be entered with the converted values. At this, average values were taken as a basis compiled from the exchange rates as of 1st January, 1st July and 31st December 2013.

### **1. General statements**

#### **1.1 Legal status / Audit by the ORA**

The WCRC is constituted as an association as evidenced by article XVII of its constitution according to article 60 and the following of the Swiss Civil Code. Simultaneously, the organization was awarded the right of a public body in Germany as determined by the federal state government of Lower Saxony as of 11th December 2012.<sup>1</sup>

As evidenced by information from a Swiss auditing company (Chancery Experiaudit SA, Geneva), the WCRC is not subject to any obligatory audit duty according to Swiss law. Against this background, an assignment by the ORA was already effected short-term for the audit of the annual financial statement 2013.

It was not subject of the audit to clarify to what extent there may be interference resp. opposing legal obligations resulting from the above mentioned legal constellation in any other respect.

#### **1.2 Applicability of the (future) budget code**

By request of the WCRC, the audit of the year-end closing 2013 was already to be carried out in analogue application of the planned budget code, which is available as a draft.

In the course of the audit, however, it became obvious that some formal requirements were not retroactively implementable by the WCRC office and, thus, the rules and standards offered partially no adequate scale for an audit. As an example in this context, we refer to the regulations for the handling of budget differences (§ 28), budget supervision (§ 39), accounting directives (§ 35 et seq.), accumulation of reserves and accruals (§ 48 et seq.) and the year-end closing (§ 51 et seq.).

Therefore, the ORA geared its audit mainly to the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and paid special attention to the continuity of the accounting.

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<sup>1</sup> see announcement of the Ministry of Culture of Lower Saxony as of 16th January 2013 (Nds. MBl. 4/2013, page 67)

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## **1.3 Correctness of the accounting / documentation**

The accounting and also the documentation were carried out according to the bank statements. The invoice documents were archived chronologically, separately for each bank account.

The documents were randomly audited and generally presented in an orderly and well-arranged manner. The traceability of the audited transactions was mainly given.

The traceability was complicated by the different currencies that correspond to the accounts because the documents were not marked with the accounting amount transferred to the accounting lead currency. For increased transparency, the ORA suggests that the documents should be completed accordingly in future.

As previously explained, due to the special accounting situation for the year 2013, the retroactive accounting compilation of the transactions was based on average exchange rates. Currency fluctuations were, thus, eliminated so that normally resulting currency losses and gains were not shown.

In future, there should be a prompt entry of the bookings with the corresponding daily rate, thus registering possible currency fluctuations by corresponding expenditure and receipt bookings.

Apart from the obligatory year-end closing documents, further, differentiated analyses were presented on request within the frame of the audit.

## **1.4 Accounting directives**

During the audit, it became evident that the majority of the booked accounting documents bore no signatures justifying their execution. Generally, according to the four-eyes principle it is to be confirmed on the documents that

1. the thus resulting revenue or expense is correct in content and amount (declaration of the factual and calculative correctness) and
2. the revenue or expense is actually to occur (directive).

The ORA recommends the implementation of this aspect of an internal control system by means of corresponding organizational measures in future.

Concerning the bank transfer of payments, it was explained to the ORA on enquiry that the four-eyes principle is already applied in this case and payment orders to the WCRC relationship banks are already legitimized by the accounting and the General Secretary (see Tz. 1.5).

## **1.5 Authorisation of bank transfers**

Since the WCRC accounts are kept in different currencies, the recording and bank transfer of payment orders occurs additionally to the booking in the accounting via a banking software. According to information from the WCRC office, the powers of disposition for the accounts are generally designed in such a way that orders from the

banks are only executed, if two (digital) signatures are presented. In this respect, the so-called four-eyes principle is ensured.

An exception is the American account of the WCRC with the 5th3rd-Bank (account no. 2154967, ZW 05). Due to organizational reasons, the responsible person in the USA bears a single power of disposition. Supervision is carried out subsequently. This practice seems to be justifiable, since only 73 transactions were registered on this account in the year 2013.

The dual recording of payment data in accounting (KFM) and in the banking software creates an increased administration effort and bears an increased error risk. The proposal of the ORA is to check whether KFM can be upgraded by a foreign payment module resp. to what extent the existing foreign currency accounts are actually necessary for the WCRC activities and can possibly be reduced.

## **2. Statements about the year-end closing**

### **2.1. Correctness and completeness of the annual financial statement**

The 2013 year-end closing of the WCRC was compiled dated 17th April 2014 (ZB closing Nr. 0036). It shows a volume of **2,707,621.95 EUR**.

For the audit, the documentation from accounting (KFM SB-lists) was provided as annual accounting document. Close inspection and checking of the proven year-end closing results gave no indication for differences of relevant significance. There is, however, need for clarification in single areas. This especially refers to the accounting of personnel costs. In this regard, a correct assignment of the social costs and the (privately secured) insurance contributions is still pending. This is currently being clarified by the WCRC office in cooperation with the personnel accounting provider and the insurance broker responsible (see Tz. 3.3).

As a result, according to the findings of the ORA the annual financial statements for the accounting year 2013 shows no fundamental breaches.

### **2.2. Budget balancing / utilisation of the 2013 profit**

The balancing of the ordinary budget was induced by an allocation of the remaining surplus of **134,255.98 EUR** to the Reserve Fund (SB 92, BSt. 5110.00 UK 1).

This amount is composed of three allocations to the Barnabas foundation with a total of **18,848.46 EUR** and the actual annual surplus of **115,407.34 EUR**.

### **2.3 Transition of the opening stocks from the previous system**

Within the framework of the conversion of accounting from the hitherto commercial accounting to the cameralistic accounting style, a transition of the final stocks from the balance sheet of the organization had to be carried out as of 31st December 2012 so as to ensure the continuity of accounting. At this, some balance positions (accounts receivable and payable, accruals and deferrals et. al.) were not considered due to the system.

During the audit, the ORA pointed out that the supervision of these assets is to be ensured appropriately unless they have already been dealt with in the meantime.



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### Transition of the business accounts

In the transition, the stocks of the running business accounts were booked into the new system as payment methods first. In this regard, a revision resulted in the following statements:

- Since these accounts are partly kept in foreign currencies, they had to be converted into the lead currency EUR (previously: CHF). At this, the following average currency rates were used as a basis after previous coordination with the ORA:

Original currency	Abbreviation	Average exchange rate 2013
Swiss Franc	CHF - EUR	0.817496667
US Dollar	USD - EUR	0.750116667
Pound Sterling	GBP - EUR	1.200283333

The calculation of these average rates was well-documented and reproducible within the audit.

- The opening stocks of the business accounts were correctly entered in the books as of 1st January 2013 considering the previously mentioned exchange rates. The accounting collection occurred via the BSt. 8210.00 (SB 52). At this, differences with the daily rate on the balance valuation date were consciously accepted. However, this seems justifiable in the overall view.
- During the audit, it stood out that, apart from the registered accounts with the Swiss Bank UBS AG registered as payment methods, there are two further accounts which showed neither a stock nor account movements in the business year 2013. These are foreign currency accounts with the IBAN CH530024024014698771W (currency: GBP) and the IBAN CH180024024014698760G (currency: USD). The ORA suggests questioning the necessity of these accounts critically and possibly closing them. Otherwise, they would have to be registered as payment methods in accounting.

### Transition of the investments

Apart from the business accounts the WCRC has a number of capital investments of various types at its disposal. The opening stocks resulting from the balance confirmations and custodian account statements were converted according to the system described and entered into the WCRC balance sheet (SB 92).

Institute	Name	Currency	Stock (according to bank)	Stock EUR
Lombard Odier	Depot	USD	18,208.00	13,658.12
<b>Total Lombard Odier</b>			<b>18,208.00</b>	
BNP Paribas	Royal Dutch Shell PLC	CHF	81,130.00	66,323.50
	ING Groep NV	CHF	29,804.00	24,364.67
	Lloyds Banking Group PLC	CHF	5,816.00	4,754.56
	Prudential PLC	CHF	98,364.00	80,412.24
	Deutsche Post	CHF	15,415.00	12,601.71
	United Utilities Group PLC	CHF	3,928.00	3,211.13
<b>Total BNP Paribas</b>			<b>234,457.00</b>	
OIKOCredit	Depot	USD	1,343.19	1,007.55
<b>Total OikoCredit</b>			<b>1,343.19</b>	
Swiss Life	Depot no. 4032287	CHF	1,456.80	1,190.93
<b>Total SwissLife</b>			<b>1,456.80</b>	
Barnabas Found.	Account no. 19744	USD	49,936.89	37,458.49
<b>Total Barnabas</b>			<b>49,936.89</b>	

The audit of the stock transfer of the investments produced the following statements:

- The opening stocks of the financial assets were not entered via the stock-changing posting key but normally as a cash-in (BS 035). Therefore, the opening stocks are not stated at the usual location in the system. They can, however, be reproduced clearly by means of the booking texts. Therefore, the entry procedure is justifiable.
- The opening stocks of the financial assets were mainly correctly entered. An exception from this is the credit balance with the Barnabas foundation (USD 49,936.89). According to the average course used as a basis, the stock is 37,458.49 EUR. However, an opening stock of 37,367.52 EUR was entered as of 1st January 2013 (difference: 90.97 EUR). The reason for this difference was not detectable during the audit. In this regard, the WCRC office should carry out a clarification and possibly a correction.

## 2.4 Development of the financial assets

The balance confirmations and the custodian account statements as of 31st December 2013 had been presented by the institutes so that a comparison could also be carried out in this regard. At this, it was detected that an accounting entry of the changes concerning the performance of the financial assets had only been carried out in part. The following cases showed differences between the accounting value and the market value of the assets:

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Institute	Name	Closing stock (converted)	Closing stock (according to SB 92)
		EUR	EUR
BNP Paribas	Royal Dutch Shell PLC	69,189.65	66,977.51
Swiss Life	Depot no. 4032287	1,816.80	1,190.93
Barnabas Foundation	Account no. 19744	57,635.57	56,216.16

To the end of the business year, the assets mentioned showed hidden reserves of a total of **4,257.42 EUR**. In this context, a decision concerning a (uniform) handling of value adjustments should be brought about (possibly within the framework of the budget code to be determined).

### 2.5 Development of the Reserve Fund

Within the hitherto commercial accounting, the Reserve Fund had the nature of equity capital and was changeable according to the balance development. As evidenced by the balance as of 31st December 2012, the Reserve Fund showed a stock of converted **120,871.35 EUR**, which was composed as follows:

Reserve Fund	Closing stock 2012 (according to balance)	Exchange rate	Closing stock 2012 (converted)
	CHF	EUR / CHF	EUR
Stock	132,686.73	0.817496667	108,470.96
Surplus 2012	15,168.73	0.817496667	12,400.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>147,855.46</b>		<b>120,871.35</b>

In the context of the transition to the accounting style of cameralistic, a number of hitherto balance positions were omitted. This applies to capital assets, outstanding debits and debts as well as the accruals and deferrals. Passage accounts, however, were entered in the advances and transit accounts (SB 52).

As a result, the WCRC office detected an "adjusted closing stock" of the Reserve Fund of a total **49,439.04 EUR**, which was entered as opening stock in the balance sheet (SB 92, BSt. 5110.00 UK 1). This amount, however, could not be reproduced during the audit. An offsetting and reconciliation provided as proof was not balanced.

Therefore, the opening stock of the Reserve Fund entered as of 1st January 2013 should be checked once more and possibly corrected retroactively.

In 2013, the reserve developed as follows:

<b>Development of the Reserve Fund</b>	
	<b>EUR</b>
<b>Preliminary Opening stock 2013</b>	<b>49,439.04</b>
Difference from financial investments	39,654.21
Appropriation surplus 2013	134,255.98
Transfer into the "Relocation fund"	-143,989.29
<b>Preliminary Closing stock 2013</b>	<b>79,359.94</b>

A closer examination resulted in the following statements:

- The opening stock is to be retroactively checked concerning its correctness (see above).
- Earnings and changes in value from financial investments (e. g. from the sale of the share "Prudential Plc"), which were not booked via the ordinary budget, were credited to the Reserve Fund. In principle, it is essential that revenues and expenses are transacted via the ordinary budget. This should be respected in future.
- The Reserve Fund contains an earmarked asset stock which is identified as a WCRC fund with the "Barnabas foundation" on the active side. The background of this capital was orally explained to the ORA during the audit. The ORA rates that this asset ought, due to its specific function, also to be separately identified on the passive side. The ORA suggests it to be identified at a separate reserve. Concerning the correct amount, please refer to the explanations under Tz. 2.4.

## **2.6 Advance and transit accounts**

The following stocks in the advance and transit accounts (SB 52) were not processed in the context of the year-end closing:

- Advancements (SB 52, BSt. 0200.00)

Advancements, which were only partly finally accounted, were paid to various persons in the accounting year 2013 and partly in the accounting year 2012. At the moment of the year-end closing, a total amount of 2,756.84 EUR was still open, which - according to the WCRC office - referred to three persons. This information was not verifiable, since, on the basis of the provided documents, the other bookings entered in the accounting system could only be partly reproduced. The WCRC office has promptly started to reprocess the whole circumstances of this problem.

- Custody (SB 52, BSt. 8200.00)

At the year-end closing the custody section of the SB 52 included (along with liquid parts of the capital investments) a stock of 8,184.24 EUR resulting from interest revenues was established. During the audit, it remained unclear why these revenues had not flowed into the ordinary budget resp. into an interest distribution. This should be caught up

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promptly.

### 3. Audit focuses

#### 3.1 Membership fees

The development of the WCRC membership fees poses itself in absolute figures in the period audited as evidenced by the documents provided as follows:

Region	Plan	Result	more / less
Africa	57,600.00	48,556.28	-9,043.72
Latin America	16,000.00	4,784.48	-11,215.52
The Caribbean and North America	240,800.00	227,507.74	-13,292.26
Asia	142,400.00	60,770.16	-81,629.84
Pacific	22,400.00	12,054.37	-10,345.63
Europe	400,200.00	435,532.34	35,332.34
	<b>879,400.00</b>	<b>789,205.37</b>	

The figures shown include all the membership fees. A separation of the current payments from the subsequent payments for previous years was not carried out by the WCRC office, neither was a current overview over existing payment backlogs available at the time of the audit.

In the overall view, it becomes obvious that the planned earnings could not be achieved, except in the region of Europe. In total, the shortfalls from membership fees (excl. special donations and additional allocations) amount to a total of approx. 10 %.

#### 3.2. Development of the program budgets

Within the ordinary WCRC budget (SB 00), the processing of the organization's program budgets being provided with earmarked reserves as well as additionally partly fees from a third party takes place. The various program budgets are separately administered and accounted correspondingly in the single plans 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the budget. For the accounting year 2013, the program budgets are as follows (all amounts in EUR):

Program budgets	Opening stock (Reserve)	Revenues	Expenses	Closing stock (Reserve)
<b>Theology &amp; Mission office programs</b>				
Global Institute of Theology (GIT)	48,856.26	27,655.04	36,786.77	39,724.53
Theological Dialogs	4,520.70	43,453.04	30,897.97	17,075.77
Mission	25,878.94	11,000.00	3,649.31	33,229.63
Madip	27,965.33	no activities		27,965.33
Georges Lombard Prize	16,771.80	0.00	804.72	15,967.08
<b>Justice &amp; Partnership office programs</b>				
Covenanting for Justice	36,752.11	8,174.97	40,580.86	4,346.22
Gender Justice	121,997.33	22,072.41	1,389.43	142,680.31
Theol. Education for Women	167,564.88	8,992.46	1,805.26	174,752.08
New econ. & fin. Architecture	73,620.41	0.00	30,701.95	42,918.46
Oikotree (KCTE)	15,269.47	no activities		15,269.47
<b>Partnership Funds</b>				
Partnership Fund A	-21,972.67	364,756.55	305,337.08	37,446.80
Partnership Fund B	53,717.33	23,134.50	34,126.40	42,725.43
Partnership Fund D	17,984.11	0.00	3,807.49	14,176.62
Partnership Fund E	59,574.25	0.00	18,840.04	40,734.21
<b>General Programs</b>				
WCRC regional support	0.00	40,000.00	0.00	40,000.00
Justice/partnership office support	0.00	0.00	184.67	0.00
General secretary programs	9,377.07	20,014.27	29,439.85	0.00
Youth program	0.00	no activities		0.00
Global South Internship support	31,800.96	45,524.91	65,367.09	11,958.78
North American Internship supp.	11,862.96	no activities		11,862.96
Native American project	3,164.33	no activities		3,164.33
Regional Communication support	12,262.45	no activities		12,262.45
	<b>716,968.02</b>	<b>614,778.15</b>	<b>603,718.89</b>	<b>728,260.46</b>

The earmarked stocks of the program reserves were rebooked from the WCRC asset reserves into the ordinary budget as of 1st January 2013. The capital remaining at the end of the accounting year 2013 was, considering the ongoing revenues and expenses of the projects, transferred back to the reserves.

Concerning the program budgets, the following statements have resulted within the context of the audit:

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- No financial activities occurred in a total of six of the twenty-two programs in the year 2013.
- In the programs "Support of the justice and partnership office" (GLD 5520) and "Programs of the General Secretary" (GLD 5530), the available budgets were insignificantly surpassed by 184.67 EUR resp. 48.51 EUR. The balance occurred in the context of the full coverage of the budget.
- The program revenues received (apart from the existing capital from previous years) originates from the following sources (all amounts in EUR):

Composition of the program revenues		
385,193.98	63%	Subsidies of the EWDE e. V., Berlin
102,000.00	17%	Subsidies of the EMW e. V., Hamburg
127,584.17	21%	Other revenues
<b>614,778.15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Program revenues (total)</b>

- The program expenditures in total are composed as follows (all amounts in EUR):

Composition of the program expenditures		
119,717.37	20%	Travel costs
62,898.15	10%	Personnel costs
314,946.30	52%	Allocations to third parties
106,157.07	18%	Other material costs
<b>603,718.89</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Program expenditures (total)</b>

To what extent the expenditures were assigned correctly to the programs eludes an evaluation by the ORA. In this respect, it falls to the responsible managers to supervise in detail. A cursory revision of the program costs has not, however, resulted in any indications for a misappropriated use resp. assignment of the capital.

### 3.3. Personnel expenses

The WCRC payroll accounting was carried out by an external provider (Antex, Geneva branch) during the audit period. Within the context of the audit, the ORA inspected the documents of the payroll accounting to the extent that they were available in the WCRC office.

A cursory examination resulted in the following statements:

- The basic salary entered in accounting was reproducible based on the payment lists of the provider.
- The social costs booked could not be compared based on the lists available. In this regard, it was explained that the provider's final account for the year 2013 was still pending and the intention was to clarify any unclear amounts

posted in this context.

- Payments for provision duties secured under private law also take place in the context of the payroll. In this regard, the payment of contributions is carried out directly via the WCRC office. The contributions are, however, indicated within the framework of the payroll. In this case, the final account with the responsible insurer (Axa-Winterthur) is still pending for the year 2013. This is complicated by a change of the broker. It is intended to book possibly arising corrections during the accounting in the year 2014. The suggestion of the ORA is to use this context to clarify to what extent proportionate payments resp. proportionate reimbursements of the employees also have to be effected apart from the payments by the WCRC as employer concerning the insurance contributions.

For the rest, no other statements have arisen concerning the payroll.

### **3.4 General notes**

Various questions and problems which had arisen during the audit were discussed orally. Any further handling of these points within the scope of this audit is unnecessary since the questions were clarified resp. future observation is to be expected. Essentially, the following points were discussed:

- OIKO credit balance of the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches (forwarding of the depot statements via the WCRC office),
- Foundation balance in favour of the WCRC at the Presbyterian Foundation (Jeffersonville, Indiana, USA) – payment of the annual dividends to the WCRC.

## **V. FINAL REMARK**

### **Final talk**

Due to appointment shortages in preparation of the immediately imminent meeting of the WCRC Executive Committee, a final talk on the audit before finalizing the audit report was renounced.

However, the ORA is available for queries and an exchange on the contents and the result of the audit at a later stage.

### **Audit result**

According to the result of the audit by the ORA, the WCRC annual accounts convey an image of the asset and result situation which corresponds to the actual circumstances considering the general fiscal principles. The annual financial statement for 2013 is developed correctly from the (subsequently administrated) accounting of the WCRC to a large extent.

Concerning the budget and economic management of the WCRC it can – as the result of the audit by the ORA and independently from the questions raised in the audit statements and the recommended actions named in this report –, be confirmed, that the budget approved by the Executive Committee of the WCRC was generally executed in a correct, economic and thrifty way.



## Audit

According to the dutiful discretion of the ORA, there are no objections against the approval and authorization of the annual accounts by the Executive Committee according to articles X and XIV of the WCRC constitution.

In the overall view, the exoneration of the General Secretary and the General Treasurer for the budget and economic management as well as the asset administration of the WCRC for the accounting year 2013 can be recommended. This recommendation occurs under subordination of concerns due to the merely subsequently kept books.

Hanover, 30th April 2014

(OKR WEITZENBERG)

HIGH AUDIT OFFICE OF THE

EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN GERMANY

## Annex C

### **WCRC GENERAL FINANCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

#### **§ 1 Purpose of the budget**

The budget plan forms the basis for budgeting and management; it serves to determine and cover within the approved period the foreseeably necessary financial requirements for the fulfilment of tasks.

#### **§ 2 Duration of validity**

- (1) The budget shall be established for a period of one or two years. A two-year budget must be separated into individual years.
- (2) The budgetary year coincides with the calendar year.

#### **§ 3 Effects of the budget**

- (1) The budget contains all the financial means necessary for covering funding and resource requirements and confers the authority to deploy these means in order to fulfil tasks and meet commitments. Should there be prior approval conditions they remain unaffected.
- (2) "Budgetary means" in the sense of these rules shall mean all income and expenditure, including investments and the cash-effective increases and decreases related thereto, as well as transfers to and from reserves.
- (3) The budget shall neither justify nor rescind either claims or liabilities.

#### **§ 4 Efficiency and good stewardship**

- (1) In the preparation and execution of the budget, the principles of efficiency and good stewardship must be observed.
- (2) For costly financial measures, attempts to identify appropriate economic ways must be undertaken.
- (3) In appropriate areas, a cost and performance statement may be made.

#### **§ 5 Assets**

- (1) Assets shall be administered economically and in harmony with the WCRC's mission. Their volume and value are to be basically preserved. The

## Finance management policies

consumption of resources associated with their use shall be covered by generating additional income.

- (2) Assets shall only be acquired insofar as they are required in the foreseeable future for the fulfilment of the WCRCs tasks.
- (3) Assets shall only be sold at their fair market value. The Finance Committee may authorize exceptions.
- (4) Any transactions related to tangible fixed assets and financial assets that have not been foreseen in the budget require the approval of the Finance Committee, unless the measure involves a mere portfolio realignment as part of financial management in accordance with the investment guidelines for financial investments.
- (5) Financial resources must be invested securely, profitably and according to ethically sustainable criteria and in harmony with the mission of the WCRC. Cash in the bank is to be administered on the basis of a liquidity plan.

### **§ 6 Grants**

- (1) Grants shall only be budgeted and approved if the intended purpose of the grant constitutes a substantial interest for the WCRC.
- (2) The grant request shall be accompanied by the documents necessary for making an informed decision. Grants shall only be awarded to individuals and legal persons able to ensure sound management and to demonstrate the use of the resources for the intended purpose.
- (3) The grant approval shall be made in writing and must include at least:
  - a. the kind and amount of the grant;
  - b. the period for which approval has been given;
  - c. the purpose of the grant;
  - d. the mode of financing;
  - e. the obligation to report on the use of the grant, the reporting deadline, and the monitoring of use by the beneficiary;
  - f. the donor's right to request repayment and
  - g. the grant recipient's right of inspection;
  - h. in the case of transfer of funds to third parties, the obligation on the part of the grant recipient to legally inform the third party of the stipulations attached to the approval and to ensure a right of inspection.
- (4) Due diligence will be given to funding agreements with specific donors.

### **§ 7 Statement of fund utilization**

- (1) Grant recipients shall submit a statement of the use of the funds promptly after the purpose has been fulfilled or at latest by the date stipulated at the time of approval.
- (2) In the statement, the grant recipient shall indicate that the funds granted have been used in an economic manner for the intended purpose. Upon request, the grant recipient shall be required to supplement the report with supporting documents and facts.

### **§ 8 Principle of universality**

The principle of universality means that, in the budget, total income must cover total payment appropriations; earmarked funds are excepted.

### **§ 9 Medium-term financial planning**

- (1) The budget shall be based on a three-year financial plan (medium-term financial planning). This period includes the last approved budgetary year and the two following years.
- (2) The medium-term financial plan shall present the nature and amount of the foreseeable resource requirements and the means of covering them.

## **Section 2 Preparing the budget**

### **§ 10 Funding applications**

Funding needs shall be identified after consultation between the Finance Coordinator and the organizational units. The purposes for which the funds are requested shall be stipulated.

### **§ 11 Budget preparation procedures**

- (1) On the basis of the identified funding requirements the General Secretary with the assistance of the Finance Coordinator shall prepare the draft budget for consideration by the Finance Committee. The outcomes of deliberations shall be incorporated into the draft document. Should the committee take decisions in disagreement with the General Secretary or without the latter's vote, the General Secretary shall have a right of objection. Should the General Secretary avail himself of this right, he shall present his dissenting opinion together with the draft of the budget to the Executive Committee.
- (2) Before the draft is presented to the Executive Committee for adoption, it shall be discussed in the Finance Committee.
- (3) The Executive Committee approves the budget on the basis of a recommendation of the Finance Committee.

### **§ 12 Balancing the budget**

- (1) Income and expenditure in the draft budget must balance.
- (2) In the plan, an annual shortfall is admissible if it can be balanced with funds taken from reserves constituted for that purpose.

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### **§ 13 Completeness, maturity principle, classification, budgetary appropriation**

- (1) In the budget for the financial year, all anticipated income and foreseeable expenditure, as well as budgetary resources associated with investments and the financing thereof and authorizations to commit resources in future budget years (authorized future obligations) shall be estimated.
- (2) The budget shall be subdivided according to thematic category.
- (3) Income and expenditure as well as budgetary resources associated with investments and the financing thereof, within the categories stipulated in paragraph 2, shall be grouped according to the G/L accounts defined in the chart of accounts. In so doing, budget-line items may be condensed.
- (4) Authorized future obligations shall be estimated separately. When it is feasible to make commitments over several budgetary years, the annual amounts shall be indicated in the budget.

### **§ 14 Gross estimates, individual estimates**

- (1) Income and expenditure as well as budgetary resources associated with investments and the financing thereof shall be estimated to their full value and separately from each other: they may not be offset against each other in advance.
- (2) Budgetary resources for the same purpose must not be estimated at different positions in the budget. Exceptions shall be listed separately in the budget.
- (3) In the budget plan, income shall be estimated according to its origin and expenditure according to its intended purpose. For the sake of comparison, the planned figures from the previous year's budget and the profit and loss results of the year before the previous year must be indicated.

### **§ 15 Components and contents of the budget, annexes**

The budget is composed of:

- a. the budget summary, with

1. the date of entry into force;
2. the total amount of income and expenditure for the budgetary year or, in the case of a two-year budget, for the individual years;
3. the income and expenditure of every year in a two year budget;
4. the amount of contributions from member churches;
5. the amount of authorized future obligations;
6. the maximum amount by which the bank account might be overdrawn;
7. indications concerning the treatment of annual profit or loss;

b. Annexes to the budget resolution, namely

1. the budget plan with
    - a. an asset summary;
    - b. medium-term financial planning;
    - c. the staffing plan;
    - d. an overview of the budget, budget classifications and coverage capacities;
    - e. an overview of planned investment-related expenditures including the planned amounts of own capital and loans;
  2. the previous year's annual financial statement;
  3. an asset summary including an overview of contingency reserves and authorized future obligations.
- (2) The budget shall be explained in a report (commentary). It must present potential risks for and prior charges on future budgetary years, and anticipated future financial burdens.
- (3) The elaboration and presentation of the budget and annual financial statement must be uniform and follow the principles of the WCRC accountancy system.

### **§ 16 Budget plan**

The budget plan shall contain all income and expenditure, as well as transfers into and out of reserves.

### **§ 17 Asset summary**

The schedule of assets must contain all asset items. This includes all accounts, deposits and petty cash. Recent statements must be

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attached unless an audited report has been provided.

### **§ 18 Staffing plan**

- (1) The staffing plan binds the administration to a fixed number of posts at any given time.
- (2) It must show all established posts.
- (3) Posts that in the subsequent budgetary year will become completely or partially redundant shall be flagged in the staffing plan with the comment "to be abolished". Posts scheduled for revision shall be flagged in the staffing plan with the comment "to be revised."

### **§ 19 Earmarking of budgetary resources**

Use of resource must be restricted to specific purposes if there is a legal obligation to do so.

### **§ 20 Budget classification**

Budgetary resources for investments and from earmarked income are transferable. Other budgetary resources may be declared to be transferable by means of a budget memorandum (transferability memo), if this does not lead to a negative year-end result.

### **§ 21 Loans**

Loans are not allowed.

### **§ 22 Investments**

Resources for major investments may only be budgeted if there are plans, cost calculations and explanations indicating the type of execution, the proposed funding, the follow-up costs and the timetable. An economic comparison shall be carried out.

### **§ 23 Adoption of the budget, transitory budget management**

The budget shall be prepared and approved before the start of the budgetary year. It shall be made public.

### **§ 24 Supplementary budget**

- (1) The budget may only be amended by means of a supplementary budget until the end of the budgetary year.
- (2) A supplementary budget shall be drawn up when it

becomes apparent that

- a. considerable deficit will be incurred and a balanced budget, even while exploiting every savings possibility, can only be achieved by amending the budget;
  - b. budget overruns occur that are considerable in relation to the total budget.
- (3) The supplementary budget must contain all important changes that at the time of its drafting are identifiable.
  - (4) The provisions applicable to the budget shall, by analogy, also apply to the supplementary budget.

### **Section 3 Budget execution**

#### **§ 25 Recognition of income and management of expenses**

- (1) Income shall be identified and recorded in full, and accounts receivable collected on time. Their receipt is to be monitored.
- (2) The budgets shall be managed in such a way as
  - a. the goals set are achieved economically
  - b. the thrift needed is exercised.
- (3) Resources shall only be used for the fulfilment of tasks.
- (4) Deposit payments shall only be agreed to or carried out if this is generally customary or justified because of extraordinary circumstances. The commonly used safeguards shall be required in the case of advance payments.

#### **§ 26 Commitments for major investments**

Commitments for major investments may, without prejudice to other provisions, only be approved if their funding is assured. However, the funding of other measures must not be affected.

#### **§ 27 Internal loans**

Should funds allocated to cover the reserves or provisions for liabilities and charges temporarily not be needed for their intended purpose, they may be used for the time being as liquid funds (internal loan), provided that their availability in case of need is not compromised.

#### **§ 28 Budget variances**

Exceeding planned expenditure or extraordinary expenditure resulting in budget overrun is permissible only in the following cases:

- (1) there is an inescapable, legal obligation to incur the expenditure;



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- (2) an unforeseeable, inescapable need arises and the prior authorization of the president and General Treasurer has been obtained; the request for approval must include proposals for covering the cost.

### **§ 29 Budget Monitoring**

- (1) The use of authorizations contained in the budget shall be monitored. Resources still available in the budget lines must be reported by the Finance Coordinator on a regular basis.
- (2) In the course of the budgetary year, it must be ensured that budgetary equilibrium is guaranteed.
- (3) If budgetary equilibrium is in jeopardy, the necessary measures must be taken in order to ensure equilibrium.

### **§ 30 Material and temporary earmarking**

- (1) Budgetary resources may only be used for the purpose designated in the budget and for as long as that purpose subsists, but not beyond the end of the budgetary year.
- (2) Transferable funds may constitute unexpended balances available to be used for the given purpose through the end of the next budgetary year.
- (3) Earmarked resources as per § 23 also remain earmarked beyond the budgetary year, provided the purpose continues to exist.

### **§ 31 Separation of budgetary years and budgetary resources**

- (1) Imbursements and disbursements shall be assigned to the budgetary year in which they occur.
- (2) Income and expenditures for investments shall be assigned to the investment measure for which they were necessary.

### **§ 32 Awarding of contracts**

Contracts shall be awarded by means of transparent procedures complying with the principles of efficiency and good stewardship and in accordance with the procurement rules of the WCRC.

### **§ 33 Contractual commitments over several budgetary**

**years**

- (1) Commitments over several budgetary years may be entered into if the budget so authorizes.
- (2) By derogation from paragraph 1, commitments, may, with the prior authorization of the General Secretary, be entered into, insofar as the corresponding resources have been included in the medium-term financial plan. Moreover, in individual cases, the president and the General Treasurer may issue authorizations.
- (3) Commitments related to ongoing business may be entered into, even in the absence of the conditions specified in paragraphs 1 and 2.

**§ 34 Deferral, write-off and remission of accounts receivable**

- (1) Accounts receivable may only be:
  - a. deferred if immediate collection would inflict undue hardship on the payer and the claim is not jeopardized by the deferment;
  - b. written off if it is apparent that the collection has no chance of success or the cost of collection is disproportionate to the amount of the claim;
  - c. remitted (forgiven) if, according to the particular payer's situation, collection would result in severe hardship to that person. The same shall apply to the repayment or crediting of amounts paid.
- (2) Decisions taken by the General Secretary, the president and the General Treasurer about deferrals, write-offs and remissions should be made known to the Finance Coordinator without delay. Deferred amounts should be charged appropriate interest.
- (3) The General Secretary, the president and the General Treasurer take decisions with regard to deferrals and write-offs. The same applies in particular cases to remissions of accounts receivable up to EUR 25,000. Remission of greater amounts requires the approval of the Finance Committee.

**§ 35 Orders**

- (1) The execution of the budget through entries and payments shall be carried out on the basis of orders. Payment orders must be in writing and may be individual, collective or standing. Documentation supporting the payment or entry must be attached.
- (2) If the Finance Coordinator or Assistant has reservations with regard to the form or content of an order, the originator must be informed of this in writing. If these reservations are rejected, this must also be done in writing. The order must be attached to the exchange of correspondence.

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- (3) The Finance Coordinator and the assistant shall be informed in writing about all persons authorized to make orders and sign for the accuracy of facts and accounts.
- (4) The Finance Coordinator may be mandated, by means of general orders, to make entries or payments that recur regularly within a given budgetary year and the nature and amount of which are determinable.
- (5) Income and expenditure, as well as financial resources associated with investments and the financing thereof shall be listed separately and for their full amount; because of the prohibition to offset income against expenditure, they may not be used to balance each other.
- (6) The office issuing the order must give the Finance Coordinator ample advance notice of large imbursements that are expected or large disbursements that will need to be made.
- (7) By derogation from paragraph 1, disbursements without an order may be made if:
  - a. the amount demonstrably had been paid in by mistake and is being reimbursed to the payer;
  - b. the payments concerned must be forwarded to the entitled recipient because of legal requirements or according to agreements entered into.

### **§ 36 Order-issuing authority, certifying authority**

- (1) The Finance Coordinator or the Finance Assistant acting on his/her behalf is authorized to issue orders (order-issuing authority). The General Secretary designates the persons authorized to issue certifying memoranda pertaining to the accuracy of facts and of accounts (certifying authority). The person who certifies the material and accounting accuracy must not be the same who issues orders. In case the Finance Coordinator certifies accuracy of facts and accounts the General Secretary shall issue the relevant order.
- (2) Persons with the responsibility for executing payments may certify the accuracy of facts and of accounts if and to the extent they are the only ones capable of assessing the situation.
- (3) Persons authorized to issue orders may not issue orders for which the beneficiary is either themselves or their spouse. The same applies to persons who are family

relatives of up to the third degree of persons with authority to issue orders or are related to them through marriage or adoption up to the second degree, or are living in the same household with the person with authority to issue orders.

#### **Section 4 Book-keeping and payment transactions**

##### **§ 37 Accountancy**

- (1) The accounting system
  - a. makes possible the elaboration of the annual statement of accounts;
  - b. provides the information required for preparation and execution of the budget;
  - c. provides for the verification of the legal, economical and frugal handling of WCRC resources.
- (2) To comply with the goals mentioned in paragraph 1, the WCRC keeps books within the expanded public accounting system in which:
  - a. all income and expenditure,
  - b. the amount and the composition of, and changes in, assets and debts, as well as
  - c. third-party funds

are reported according to good accountancy principles.

##### **§ 38 Organization of the Finance Office**

- (1) The WCRC Finance Coordinator is responsible for the execution of all payment transactions and entries, for the collection of documents and for the preparation of the accounts. The Assistant to the Finance Coordinator assists him in this and does the actual practical duties involved.
- (2) Subsidiary ledgers should only be established if an unavoidable need arises. The establishment of a subsidiary ledger requires the approval of the General Secretary.
- (3) The General Secretary has the oversight authority and exercises technical supervision over the Finance Coordinator.
- (4) The tasks of the Finance Office may in cases that warrant it, be transferred entirely or in part to another office. In

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such a case, it must be ensured in particular that:

- a. the applicable provisions are complied with;
- b. the units responsible for oversight have sufficient monitoring capabilities, including over automatic processes and
- c. the other office is liable for damages in case of a fault committed toward the mandating office or third party

Oversight of the finance office must be guaranteed.

### **§ 39 Finance operations office personnel**

(1) The Finance Coordinator is responsible for the proper execution of money transactions. Correspondence directed to the Finance Office must be forwarded immediately and unopened.

(2) Only persons of established suitability and reliability may be employed in the Finance office.

(3) Finance office employees may not, either among themselves or with persons having authority to issue orders or who are in charge of finance office supervision, be family relatives of up to the third degree, or related through marriage or adoption up to the second degree, or be living in the same household.

### **§ 40 Distribution of duties within the Finance Office**

(1) If several people are employed in the finance office, bookkeeping and the execution of payments must be handled by different persons. These persons may not routinely replace each other.

(2) In justified cases and upon the recommendation of the Finance Coordinator, the General Secretary may approve exceptions.

### **§ 41 Accounts for payments transactions**

(1) The General Secretary makes decisions with regard to the establishment of accounts and deposits in financial institutions and regulates which employees have authorized access. As a rule, the accounts must be established in the name of the WCRC.

(2) Generally, authority over the accounts shall at least be given to the General Secretary and the Finance Coordinator or the Finance Assistant jointly.

(3) Debit orders and direct debit authorizations may only be issued by the General Secretary and the Finance Coordinator.

**§ 42 Payment vouchers**

- (1) A payment voucher (receipt) must be issued to the payer, or requested of the payee, for every payment received or made by remittance or transfer of means of payment. In particular cases, the Finance Coordinator may authorize proof of payment in another form.
- (2) The receipt from the payee for the remittance of means of payment shall be written directly on the order or attached to it.
- (3) If disbursements are made in a form other than remittance or transfer of means of payment, the order must state on which date and by which means of payment the sum had been disbursed.
- (4) If transfers are made by means of automated procedures, the individual payments must be summarized in a list. The agreement between the list and the orders shall be certified.

**§ 43 Bookkeeping**

- (1) Book entries must be complete, correct, orderly, periodic, timely and verifiable.
- (2) Books must be balanced annually. As a general rule, they must be closed one month after the end of the budgetary year. After that time, only entries that do not affect cash flows may be entered.
- (3) The accounts must be such that they may give a competent third party, in a reasonable amount of time, an overview of transactions, resource utilization and consumption and the economic situation of the WCRC.
- (4) A book of original entry and a general ledger (G/L) must be kept. Entries in the book of original entry are made in chronological order by order of type in the general ledger. The keeping of subsidiary ledgers is permitted.
- (5) The books are to be kept in such a way that:
  - a. together with vouchers, they constitute documentary evidence for the budget and the annual statement of accounts;
  - b. as far as possible, irregularities are excluded because of internal monitoring systems;
  - c. all payment transactions and entries may be verified in a reasonable amount of time by a competent third-party.
- (6) From the accounts, together with the supporting documents, it must be possible to identify the reason for the entry, as well as the person making or receiving the

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payment.

- (7) Bookkeeping must be such that entries and records may not be altered in a way such that their original content is no longer identifiable. Similarly, changes must not be made that make it uncertain as to whether they existed at the outset or were made later. Adequate measures must be taken to protect the account books from loss, damage, removal or unauthorized changes.
- (8) Entries shall be based on documents that provide proof of the correct and full reporting of claims and commitments. Accounting documents must include indications that establish the connection with the booking entries. The Finance Coordinator shall determine the order in which the documents are to be filed.
- (9) If the accounts are kept using an automated procedure, it must be ensured, in accordance with the principles of proper IT-assisted accounting systems, that
  - a. the procedures used have been cleared by the Finance Committee;
  - b. the programs used are documented;
  - c. data are collected, entered, processed and stored completely and correctly and are at all times, within a reasonable delay, readable and electronically analysable until expiration of the retention period;
  - d. no unauthorized access to the automated procedure is possible and a traceable record is maintained of which data have been entered or altered, by whom and when;
  - e. the documentation needed to prove the electronic processing of the accounting processes and the documentation related to the programs used must be available until expiry of the retention period;
  - f. corrections to the accounts shall be minuted and the minutes kept as documentation;
  - g. the technical administration of the procedures used is separated from their technical utilization.

### **§ 44 Entries**

- (1) The order in which entries are made by type shall follow the budget's scheme of classification according to content.
- (2) Accounting shall be based on a classification of accounts. The chart of accounts shall be developed on the basis of the WCRC standard accounting system; it may be expanded if necessary. A list of the accounts created must be drawn up. Modifications to the chart of accounts require the joint approval of the General Secretary and the General Treasurer.

- (3) Unexpended balances shall be credited to the account positions from which they arise.

## **Section 5 Allocation and valuation of assets and liabilities**

### **§ 45 Stock-taking and inventory**

- (1) For the end of the budgetary year, WCRC shall make a list of its land holdings, accounts receivable, extraordinary items and debts, liquidities and all other asset items (stock-taking) and present them in a table with their respective individual value (inventory). The inventory shall be drawn up within a period of time compatible with the proper conduct of business.
- (2) As a rule, physical assets must be recognized by means of a physical inventory. The physical inventory may be waived if existing records make it possible to make an accounting of these items according to type, quantity and value with sufficient certainty (book inventory).
- (3) Assets of little value need not be included.
- (4) Tangible assets and stock items may, if they are renewed on a regular basis and their total value is not significant, be assigned a constant quantity and a constant value, to the extent that, in terms of size, value and composition they change very little.
- (5) Inventories that have left storage are considered to be consumed.
- (6) Inventories of a similar nature as well as movables and debts that are similar in kind or nearly equal in value may be gathered into one group and assigned a weighted average value.
- (7) Economic ownership is determinant with regard to the obligation to conduct an inventory.

### **§ 46 General valuation principles**

- (1) When valuing assets and debts, the following apply:
  - a. The estimated values in the statement of assets for the budgetary year must match those of the previous year.
  - b. The assets and debts shall in principle be assessed individually on the balance sheet day.
  - c. The evaluation must be made with great care, in particular, it must take into account all foreseeable risks and losses that arose up to the balance sheet date, even if they only became known between the balance sheet date and the date of preparation of the annual financial statement; accruals should be taken into account only if they occurred on the balance sheet date.
  - d. Expenditure and income in the budgetary year shall



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- be recognized in the annual statement of accounts, independently of the point in time at which the corresponding payment had been made.
- e. The estimation and evaluation methods used in the previous year should be retained.
- (2) In exceptional cases, the principles set forth in paragraph 1 may be departed from. In such cases, the reason for the departure and the impact on the asset, financial and income/loss situation must be indicated in an annex.

### **§ 47 Value estimation of assets and debts**

- (1) Assets shall be estimated according to acquisition or production cost.
- (2) Acquisition costs are the expenses incurred to acquire an asset and to put it into operational condition, insofar as they may be allocated individually to assets. Acquisition costs also include incidental expenses and supplementary acquisition costs. Reductions in the acquisition price must be deducted. Grants received from third parties for the acquisition of fixed assets shall not be deducted from acquisition costs.
- (3) In the case of unremunerated transfer of assets (benefits in kind), the attributed value at the time of transfer, plus costs and retro-active acquisition costs may replace the acquisition costs as provided for in paragraph 2, sentence 1.
- (4) Securities that at maturity must be reimbursed at 100% shall be assessed at their nominal value. Above and below-market purchase prices must be disclosed. Small discrepancies may, in the year of the acquisition, have an impact on income and expenditure. Other financial assets shall, at purchase or the time of access, be assessed at the market value, otherwise the lowest value principle applies. Should a sustained loss in value occur, the asset shall be depreciated to the lower value. Readjustments up to the cost of acquisition or the market value at the time of purchase are permitted.
- (5) Accounts receivable shall be assigned their nominal value. In the case of doubtful accounts or those tentatively written off, corresponding individual adjustments in value shall be made. Accounts that are uncollectible, non-time limited write-offs or remitted, shall be written off completely. Lump-sum adjustments are permitted.
- (6) Provisions for liabilities and charges shall be assessed to the amount of the sum necessary and determined

according to appropriate mathematical procedures.

- (7) Liabilities shall be booked in full on the balance sheet.

#### **§ 48 Reserves**

- (1) To secure financial viability, the following reserves must be constituted (mandatory reserves):
- a. a working capital reserve
  - b. a solvency reserve
  - c. an asset maintenance reserve
- (2) The working capital reserve ensures the solvency of the WCRC. Its value should be at least one 12th of the average total payments resulting from on-going WCRC activities of the previous three budgetary years
- (3) To guarantee budgetary equilibrium, an operating expense reserve must be created. Its value shall be at least 15% of the average total expenditure of the previous three years.
- (4) In order to offset the consumption of resources associated with the utilization of fixed assets the asset maintenance reserve must be increased each year by the amount of notional depreciation.
- (5) Other special, earmarked reserves may also be created. The purpose of the reserve shall be specified in the budget at the time it is set up.
- (6) The allowable amount of reserves shall be determined by the Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Reserves may only be reported to the amount for which there are corresponding, sufficient financial resources to cover them (the principle of financial coverage).
- (7) The earmarking of a reserve may be changed by the Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Finance Committee when and if it is no longer needed for the original purpose, or is needed for another purpose and the change of purpose of the reserve is materially and economically justifiable, including vis-a-vis third parties who have contributed significantly to the reserve.

#### **§ 49 Treatment of annual profit or loss**

In the annual statement of accounts, annual profit or loss is the difference between total income and total expenditure adjusted for mandatory changes in reserves, unexpended balances, advances on budget allocation and surpluses brought forward. Utilization of

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the end-of-year result shall be booked into the operating reserve unless otherwise decided by the Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

### **§ 50 Provisions for liabilities and charges**

- (1) Provisions of a sufficient level are to be set aside to cover contingent liabilities and anticipated losses from transactions pending. Sufficient provisions must be constituted to cover employee-related obligations (pension fund contributions, aid grants, etc.). The adequateness shall be verified at regular intervals.
- (2) With regard to liquidity management, it must be guaranteed that the provisions contain, if needed, the necessary financial resources required for meeting liabilities.
- (3) Provisions may only be liquidated if the reason for their constitution no longer applies.

## **Section 6 Opening and closing annual balances**

### **§ 51 Obligation to report and principles pertaining thereto**

- (1) The WCRC must at the end of each budgetary year provide statutory financial statement in compliance with good accountancy principles.
- (2) Beyond what is expected in the statutory financial

statement, the report must be comprehensive including:

- a. the profit and loss statement
- b. the balance sheet including the asset summary
- c. the list of expenses in excess of budgeted amounts and extra-budgetary expenses
- d. the list of resources carried forward
- e. the investment summary
- f. explanations

The annual statement of accounts should give a true and fair picture of budget execution and the asset, financial and income situation.

- (3) All budgetary resources shall be presented in the annual statement of accounts under their respective thematic category. For the sake of comparison, estimates are to be listed and discrepancies disclosed. The statement of assets must report all holdings and liabilities in full. Unexpended balances and advances on budget allocation must be taken into account, if applicable.
- (4) The structure of the income and expense statement shall comply with the principles of the WCRC budgeting

system.

Further subgroupings are permitted. An item for which no planned or actual amount is to be reported need not be listed, unless an amount for this item was reported in the previous year's annual statement of accounts. The presentation of the asset summary shall contain the previous year's values and value adjustments, if applicable, as well as additions and retirements. The form of presentation, namely, the categorization of the successive profit and loss statements and asset summaries, is to remain constant to the extent that no exceptional cases due to special circumstance make departure from this rule necessary. Such departures shall be explained.

### **§ 52 Profit and loss statement, investment and financial statement**

- (1) The annual financial statement closes the budget. In it the income received and expenditure incurred during the budgetary year are disclosed and on this basis annual profit or loss is determined. Income and expenditure must not be used to offset each other. The income and expense statement concludes with the annual balance of income and loss.
- (2) The asset statement concludes with the asset summary. In it, the increases or decreases of budgetary resources associated with investments and the financing thereof attributable to the budgetary year shall be recorded. Transfers to and withdrawals from reserves and provisions for liabilities and charges shall be disclosed.
- (3) The balance sheet shall be produced in compliance with adopted accounting standard.

### **§ 53 Annex**

- (1) In the annex to the annual statement of accounts, the main positions of the annual financial statement and the asset summary shall be elucidated. In addition to content-related clarification, explanations with regard to major discrepancies between extrapolated, planned results and actual results shall be given.
- (2) The annex to the annual statement of accounts shall also include:
  - a. the valuing methods used;
  - b. departures from the valuation methods used heretofore and their justification;
  - c. contingent liabilities that are not recognized in the balance sheet, as well as prior charges, in particular, guarantees, warranty contracts, unused

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- commitment appropriations and loan commitments and obligations resulting from legal loan-like transactions;
  - d. the value of assets administered in trust;
- (3) The annex shall include the following summaries:
- a. the investment summary;
  - b. the summary of accounts receivable and accounts payable;
  - c. the summary of reserves;
  - d. the summary of provisions;
  - e. the summary of budgetary overruns together with explanations.

### **§ 54 Summary of investments, accounts receivable and accounts payable**

(1) In the summary of assets, the asset balance at the beginning and at the end of the budgetary year shall be presented, as well as additions and retirements, and appreciations and depreciations.

(2) In the accounts receivable and accounts payable summaries, the respective total value at the beginning and at the end of the budgetary year, as well as the respective residual maturities, shall be indicated.

With regard to residual maturities, the individual total values of accounts receivable and accounts payable shall be separated into maturities of up to one year, from one to five years, and of over five years.

(3) In the reserves summary, the total value of each individual reserve at the beginning and at the end of the budgetary year, and additions and withdrawals shall be presented.

(4) The provisions for liabilities and charges must be accounted for in the contingency reserves summary. The aggregate value at the beginning and at the end of the budgetary year shall be indicated, as well as allocations, liquidations, and uses.

### **§ 55 Annual report**

The annual statement of accounts shall be accompanied by a report. The report on the annual statement of accounts shall contain in particular:

- a. information with regard to the status of task performance and goal achievement and
- b. events of particular importance that have occurred since the close of the budgetary year

### **§ 56 Preparation of the annual statement of accounts**

At the end of the budgetary year and after the closing of the books, the annual statement of accounts must be prepared promptly and approved by the Executive Committee.

### **§ 57 Retention periods**

- (1) The initial statement of assets, annual statements of account, the book of original entry and the main ledgers must be kept permanently; other books and documents must be kept for a period of at least ten years. The period begins from the date on which the discharge was given.
- (2) The archiving may also be done using visual media or other data media as long as conformity with the original texts and legibility are assured. Budgets, the first opening balance sheet and the annual statement of accounts must also be archived in printed form.

## **Section 7 Transitory and final provisions**

### **§ 58 Implementing provisions**

- (1) The Executive Committee shall issue implementing provisions in order to ensure proper budgeting and accountancy. They must include at least the following:
  - a. provisions concerning assets and debts,
  - b. administrative instructions with regard to stock-taking
  - c. administrative instructions with regard to orders
  - d. administrative instructions for the WCRC finance office
  - e. investment guidelines for financial investments
  - f. instructions regarding the awarding of grants and procedures for verifying utilization
  - g. procurement rules
  - h. budgetary classification
  - i. a budget and annual statement of accounts report template.
- (2) The budgetary and economic management of the WCRC shall be audited.

## Annex D

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The financial management of the WCRC is based on principles enshrined in the WCRC constitution and good governance and good stewardship. It undergirds the building of a communion committed to justice. The operational office facilitates the manner in which the WCRC carries out its mandates between general councils by being a good and efficient steward of its finances. This is what shapes the services it renders to its member churches and partners.

In this sense, all funds that come through the WCRC are “trust funds” and are to be treated as such. WCRC expenditure respects the principles enshrined in the constitution. The constitution also guides the governance and management systems so that limited resources can be put to effective use. It is a tragedy when governance and management are confused. A comprehensive financial management policy helps avoid this confusion so that people charged with governance do not find themselves micromanaging. Rather they can focus on providing the broad policy context within which managers can manage and in turn expect proper accountability from management.

#### B. WCRC FINANCE OFFICE FUNCTIONS

##### 1. Reports

- a) The WCRC and its programme offices are constantly required to give reports. The finance office is required to furnish a report to a programme office or the general secretary’s office whenever it is required. Such a finance report (an income and expenditure report) is normally generated by the Finance Office to complement a narrative report. While the production of this report may be contingent on accounting close schedules, it may also be subject to provisions in the agreement signed with a particular donor. The reports are in standard format and are distributed on paper print-out and/or electronically.
- b) The finance office is required to give regular reports to programme offices. The reports should be issued from the finance office at least once every quarter. In addition, whenever needed, the general secretary or a programme officer can request a report. Whenever such a request is made, it needs to be met within three business days.

##### 2. Payments/claims/advances

- a) **The finance office processes claims and advances.** Money can be wired directly to staff’s bank accounts in each case. This method is preferred to cash on the grounds of security, cost and operating efficiency. The cash option is still a possibility where a transfer is deemed difficult or inappropriate. **Ordinarily, an authorized staff member or delegated WCRC person may:**
  - i. take an advance, which is retired against receipts and invoices
  - ii. incur expenses and submit claims for reimbursement

- b) Netting: Where expenses are advanced, the finance office will reconcile the claims with the advance and will book the net amount into the accounting ledger.

### 3. **Banking transactions**

The finance office conducts banking transactions on behalf of the WCRC.

### 4. **Budget and accounting**

Under the guidance of the general secretary, the finance office is responsible for the preliminary preparation of budgets and the preparation of accounts and seeing them through the auditing process.

### 5. **Leadership**

The finance coordinator heads the finance office. The finance coordinator is assisted by the assistant of the finance office, who does the detailed work. As with all WCRC staff, they work under the leadership of the WCRC general secretary.

## C. **GENERAL BUDGET PROVISIONS**

**Please refer to the general budget provisions document**

## D. **PAYMENT METHODS AND PRINCIPLES**

1. Disbursements occur in four ways: by expense claim, by corporate card, by accounts payable (bank wire initiated by finance office and duly approved) and by recharge from specific service providers.
2. *Roles*: It is important to distinguish three different roles in disbursement: the **payee** who receives money (the expense claimant or a grant beneficiary), the **approver** (the staff member who placed a purchase order with full supporting documentation, or the general secretary) and the **payer** (the processor in the finance office) with due approval.
3. What WCRC should not be paying: Basic accounting rules require that all inflows into and outflows out of WCRC bank accounts are accounted for on the ledger. If a journal entry should not stay on the WCRC ledger, this means the WCRC should not be making the payment in the first place.
4. Travel tickets: WCRC staff members are free to book duty trips themselves (online, etc.) or through the designated travel agency who will then invoice the WCRC. Staff members are allowed to use the designated travel agency for private purposes but need to ensure that these invoices are sent to them privately.
5. Hotels & restaurants: When duty entails staying in a hotel (or using hotel facilities) or dining out, it is normal practice to pay the full cost on the spot. The staff members concerned should, preferably, pay with their corporate card or pay personally and then make a claim. A staff member may nonetheless decide otherwise and request the caterer to issue an invoice instead.



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6. Down payment: It is not unusual for a service provider to require down payment prior to starting the work. It is, however, the responsibility of the staff member who places the order to make sure the terms and conditions of the order are clearly defined and agreed upon and the down payment amount is reasonable (given the overall agreed price). The finance office will pay on the instruction of the *approver*.
7. Four eyes principle: The WCRC values the four eyes principle as the standard practice for its financial transactions.
8. Other categories of payment:
  - a. **Payment on commitment**: this category includes Partnership Fund grants, scholarship grants, advance payment for programme consultation, payments to organisations we have jointly created or to which we have some commitment (for example, the French ecumenical news agency *Protestinfo*, the Global Christian Forum, Globethics, etc.)
  - b. **Recharges**: When a sister organisation makes payments on behalf of the WCRC, or an authorised partner (e.g. payroll services), makes payments, they can recharge the WCRC. The recharge can be seen as a payment obligation.

## E. PROCUREMENT POLICY

1. Within the limits of the WCRC constitution and abiding by the principles of good stewardship of resources,
  - a) procurement authority lies with the general secretary who can in turn give delegation on procurement to other WCRC staff members.
  - b) individuals outside the WCRC staff team cannot become delegated purchasers and are therefore not authorized to commit WCRC resources.
2. A special set of *established partners* may be created from time to time. These may include sister organizations that provide certain services, travel agencies, guest facilities, publishing and/or printing companies, transport companies, and credit card companies with long-standing relationships or which have been approved as established partners. The approved list of established partners should always be in the general secretary's office and the finance office.
  - a) The WCRC pays these service providers on invoice after the ordered services / goods are rendered / delivered, mostly for pre-defined business needs.
  - b) An essential service provider such as telephone or electricity company is in the category of established partner and may choose to use the direct debiting scheme with the bank details we have supplied them.
  - c) There is minimum risk for WCRC when dealing with this category of service providers so no special procurement procedure is needed. WCRC staff (assistants, in particular) are fully delegated to place purchase orders as their management-defined routine work requires.
  - d) All staff members can act as delegated purchasers when dealing with this set of providers – but only *in their own areas of responsibility*.

3. For all others, due procurement process needs be followed.
4. For purchases of goods and services valued under 2,500 euro, an authorized purchaser can make a procurement decision provided the following criteria are met:
  - a) it does not involve a multi-year commitment (a subscription type of purchase).
  - b) it does not require payment prior to delivery or rendering of goods/services.
  - c) so long as it is within budget, for core and programme activities
  - d) the delegated purchaser signs off the invoice for payment first.
5. All other purchases require a *contract* or a *Memo of Understanding (MoU)*. To satisfy the four eyes principle, appropriate consultations need to take place before the procurement decision is made.
  - a) the MoU/contract signatory on the part of the WCRC is accountable for ensuring that the most cost-efficient purchase is made. This may be assured for example by asking for three bids or quotations before the procurement decision is made
  - b) payment can be made on the basis of a duly signed MoU/contract.
6. At the moment, only the general secretary can sign any MoU/contract committing core funds.
7. The general secretary can choose to delegate executive secretaries to negotiate and sign an MoU/contract when programme funds are involved. Such an MoU/contract must be signed only within the prescribed budget.
8. Before the MoU/contract is signed, the general secretary or his delegated purchaser should consult the finance office in order to satisfy the four-eyes principle. In case the finance office disagrees with the draft MoU/contract (in total or on certain clauses), the final decision belongs to the general secretary.
9. A MoU/contract should be ideally drafted in *English* or at least in one of the three other WCRC official languages (French, German and Spanish).
10. All duly signed MoU/contracts are effective and enforceable immediately.
11. The WCRC standard payment term is 30 days net (unless otherwise agreed) and standard payment method is by *bank transfer*. The initiator of the procurement is responsible for providing the finance office with valid payee bank account details. In exceptional situations and for amounts below 1,000 euro, the delegated purchaser can settle the invoice in cash before claiming reimbursement.

## **F. EXPENSE POLICY**

1. Business expenses as defined in this policy are expenditures that have been incurred and have been initially paid for by WCRC staff, members/advisors/consultants of the executive committee as well as all other individuals who are requested by the general secretary to attend to official WCRC missions. It primarily concerns the expenses of WCRC duty trips and miscellaneous petty expenditures.
2. Principles

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- a) The general secretary undertakes traveling to visit member churches and regional councils, to respond to challenging and difficult situations, to resource events and meetings, to represent the WCRC in ecumenical events, to foster peace and reconciliation and for other purposes consonant with the aims and purposes of the WCRC. These times of official duty travel must stay within the annual budget provision for this purpose.
- b) Executive staff undertake travel as delegated by the general secretary or in connection with programmes linked to their work. Such official duty travel must be approved by the general secretary and must stay within the programme budget, or else an appropriate budgetary provision must be made for it within the core budget.
- c) The general secretary may also designate executive committee members, consultants or other individuals to engage in an event or process on behalf of the WCRC.
- d) Duty trips also include meetings in which not only travel but also accommodation, meals, ground transportation, conference facilities and other expenditures are made.
- e) The WCRC pays in full the expenditure incurred.
- f) The WCRC appreciates participants and/or their churches who offer to cover all or part of such expenditure. As they wish, these contributions in kind can be formally recognized on the ledger upon presenting necessary supporting documents.

### 3. Duty trip approval

The general secretary alone approves duty trips against the core budget. Executive secretaries in charge of WCRC programmes are delegated to approve duty trips against WCRC programmes.

4. Claim currency and payment method
  - a. Expenditure may be incurred in different currencies. The WCRC's normal payment currency is the euro. However, where possible other major currencies may be considered by the finance office. The currency conversion needs to be based on the effective exchange rate on the date of the transaction and in line with the chosen payment method.
  - b. Reimbursement shall normally be made by bank transfer.

### 5. Claim submission

- a) Expense claims using the standard form need to be filled properly and submitted to the finance office directly without intermediary. They may be submitted electronically (preferably) or as a paper-based signed claim. Whether electronically or on paper, unless questioned by the finance office at the time of submission, all scanned receipts or other supporting documents are deemed as true and authentic.

- b) Unless the claim includes flight fares whose amount can be significant for the submitter, the claim should be ideally submitted only when all the expenditures the claimant intends to claim are known (most likely after the trip is completed) so that the claim is processed only once.
- c) When the executive committee meets outside Hannover, expense claims should be received preferably either before or after the meeting. In exceptional cases they may be received during the meeting.

#### 6. Claim approval

- a) WCRC does not normally operate a per diem system. Reimbursements are claimed and made on the basis of actual expenditures only.
- b) WCRC does not run an exclusive list of reimbursable items and the admission of the claimed item is first subject to the approval of finance coordinator or the finance assistant and ultimately, the general secretary on a case-by-case basis.
- c) Claims need to be approved before any reimbursement can be made. The valid claim needs to be approved or rejected within the shortest possible time upon submission.
- d) The finance coordinator or finance assistant is delegated to receive, verify and approve all expense claims that are properly substantiated by receipts. Other claims require special approval from the general secretary.

#### 7. Reimbursement

The finance office is responsible for reimbursement of approved claims, generally within three working days.

- 8. Flights: Only economy class is allowed, unless it is absolutely necessary to fly otherwise. Tickets are either purchased and are paid for by the WCRC staff responsible directly (regulated separately by procurement policy) or reimbursed providing that the ticket purchase is pre-authorized by the responsible WCRC staff member.
- 9. Accommodation & local transportation: For executive committee meetings or other events that WCRC coordinates, accommodation (lodging, meals) and local transportation in the meeting venue are generally arranged and paid for directly by the general secretariat. All other expenditure such as long-distance calls or personal consumption at the lodging facility is not considered as duty related and thus is not reimbursable. In other cases, traveller are expected to exercise moderation when booking their own accommodations. Taxis or car rentals are allowed and will be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- 10. Other accessory expenditures: Other necessary expenditures such as visa fees, airport taxes or local transportation (from the traveller's domicile and the airport) are reimbursable upon presenting valid receipts together with the duly filled and

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signed expense claim form. In exceptional cases, when there is a reasonable explanation, the general secretary may admit a claim without a receipt. For non-staff who are travelling, we appreciate our member churches and partners who bear these costs.

11. In case the normal itinerary is altered for personal reasons, an independently verifiable benchmark that estimates the reasonable original origin-destination costs needs to be established first. The itinerary alternation is allowed provided that any extra cost (compared against benchmark) is paid for by the traveller – unless upon reasonable explanation this is waived in exceptional cases.

### **G. ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPENSES**

1. The expense policy here applies to all, including executive committee members. However there are some further elements established to govern the expense claim and reimbursement process for members of executive committee travelling to attend executive committee or officers meetings.
2. Principles: The by-laws of the WCRC stipulate that its core budget pays for all expenditures incurred for the executive committee and officers meetings. In some cases, the travelling executive committee members waives their entitlement to reimbursement. This voluntary contribution is much appreciated and recognized as a valuable contribution of the travellers or to their home church. Following generally accepted expense management practice, only expenditures incurred by the travellers themselves are admissible upon verification and approval.

### **H. PROCEDURES FOR DUTY TRIP BOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS IN WCRC EVENTS**

1. All confirmed participants to a given event and travelling at WCRC core or programme expense should receive as early as possible a notice from the WCRC office (e.g. from the programme assistant), which naturally includes a section on travel arrangements. They shall be informed that, as a principle, we will buy the ticket. But because of good stewardship we need to compare costs. We will research for the best price (usually through our preferred travel agent) and propose the most cost-effective direct itinerary to the participant. We will ask them to check the itinerary and see if it suits them. At the same time we will ask the participants to search for a good air fare and itinerary in their own context. The WCRC will compare the prices and choose the best fare.
2. If the price and conditions of flight (whether changes to ticket are allowed or cancellations are possible, etc.) available to a participant are better than the WCRC travel agent's proposal, the principle is to choose the most cost effective. In certain circumstances where making a transfer to the traveller would be problematic, the WCRC can choose its preferred travel agency even if the cost from the traveller's side is lower.

3. The programme secretary organizing the event may decide to proceed with reimbursement by cash at the event and in such case the participant should be informed in advance.
4. For security reasons, we should not make down-payments to unknown travel agencies in unfamiliar locations.
5. A holder of a WCRC corporate card has the authority to purchase a flight ticket using the corporate card for any guests after assuring proper coordination within the provisions stated here.

## **I. FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT**

Regular *financial risk assessment* is important so that leadership and management can have a clear picture of the organization's financial risk profile.

## **J. INVESTMENT POLICY GUIDELINES**

### **1. Policy**

The WCRC affirms the concept of using investment as a tool for mission and includes in its policy theological, social and ethical considerations.

- a) WCRC has received and invested funds in support of its continuing mission.
- b) Like its other functions, investment must also be part of WCRC's mission. Church investment policy involves not only sound economic but also theological considerations. Its central goal should match effective investment management with imaginative and efficient allocation of resources to programmes that contribute positively within the Christian understanding of humanity's spiritual and material well-being.
- c) The fundamental requirement for an acceptable investment is that it should provide goods or services of value to humanity, which are produced and marketed without misusing people, animals or the earth's resources.

These principles are in line with the social and ethical teachings of the Reformed constituency as they focus on peace, racial justice, economic and social justice and the protection of the environment.

### **2. General funds**

General WCRC funds, such as financial assets, general reserves and fund balances, which are not currently required, are invested in order to generate income, while maintaining the value and availability of the resources to meet liabilities as they arise. The general funds and reserves are held to support WCRC's cash-flow and to purchase other assets as required. They may also be required sometimes to fund deficits.

### **3. Guidelines**

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (following guidelines determined over the years by Christian organizations such as the World Council of Churches) finds the following types of investment unacceptable:

- a) nuclear power—the supply of specialist equipment or services to the nuclear power industry;
- b) armaments—the production, supply, or offer and supply of weapons, their components and ancillary equipment and services;

## Financial management policies

- c) gambling—the operation of casinos, betting shops, amusement arcades, etc., or the production of equipment for them;
- d) alcoholic drinks—production of alcoholic drinks, ownership of public houses or specialist retail shops;
- e) tobacco—growing, processing, packing or retailing tobacco products;
- f) investment in support of oppressive regimes;
- g) the exploitation of animals—manufacture or specialized retailing of fur products, the manufacture or sale of animal-tested cosmetics and
- h) investments that have a directly negative effect on people or activities which have a negative effect on the environment.

In order to be credible these criteria should be capable of being applied in practice. This requires information to be available. Wherever possible, the services of institutions capable of supplying such information should be secured (e.g. the Ethical Investment Research Service, EIRIS).

### 4. **Asset mix**

Up to 30% of the portfolio may be held in shares of individual companies. If the portfolio is held in a unit trust, providing a managed spread of equities, this proportion may be increased to 40%. A minimum amount as shall be indicated from time to time by the general treasurer in the light of anticipated short-term commitments shall be held in cash or money-market investment up to 12 months. The balance of the portfolio shall be held in bonds.

### 6. **Terms of Investment**

In order to give stability to the income earned and to provide regular availability of return of the principal, the maturity of investments should be spread over several years.

### 7. **Reporting and evaluation**

Quarterly reports on performance should be made to the general treasurer, with a full evaluation and report to the finance department once a year.

### 8. **Decision-making process**

The investment policy guidelines shall be approved and may be amended from time to time by the executive committee on the recommendation of the finance office. The general treasurer, in consultation with the general secretary, shall be responsible for their implementation.

[Note: These guidelines on investments are from the policy adopted by WARC executive committee in 1994. They are based on material taken from the WCC and UPCUSA Investment Policy Guidelines and the Religious Society of Friends (GB), 'Profit and Principle'.]

## **PARTNERSHIP FUND COMMITTEE**

*Present:* Kobus Gerber (moderator), Yvette Noble Bloomfield, Najla Kassab, Subha Singh Majaw, Bas Plaisier, Salome Twum and Clayton Leal da Silva. *Staff:* Douwe Visser (coordinator) and Viktória Kóczyán (assistant).

At the beginning of the meeting, the moderator invited members to share significant events in their lives or countries. The agenda was accepted and Viktória Kóczyán was appointed as reporter. The report of the Partnership Fund (*Document 7*) was introduced by Douwe Visser and discussed in detail.

The Partnership Fund makes small grants to member churches, particularly in the global South, for mission and service projects they otherwise cannot afford. It works with a mix of funds: *A funds* from *Brot für die Welt* (BfW) in Berlin that are restricted to development projects and *B funds* from other sources that can be applied to any purpose but are mostly used for mission projects that fall outside development, however broadly defined.

### **Difficulties in 2013**

The committee noted that the approval of projects in 2013 was a more difficult process than in the previous years due to complications in the fund's relationship with the finance office and in the normal way of working together between the coordinator, Douwe Visser and the deputy coordinator, Páraic Réamonn, caused by the move to Hannover and the split-site working that resulted.

### **Personnel**

From 1 April, due to the pending retirement of Páraic Réamonn, Viktória Kóczyán took over his work as assistant for the Partnership Fund. With the relocation process, a new finance assistant, Anna Krüger has been appointed who has taken over the work from the previous finance coordinator, Yueh Cho. Anna Krüger is responsible now for the financial reports for BfW.

### **2014 and beyond**

#### *1) Funds*

With BfW, every year a new three-year project with a grant of €400,000 can be started. Normally however the Partnership Fund spends the amount in one year.

#### *2) Pending applications*



Partnership fund committee

The committee noted that all pending applications are being reviewed and according to the decisions taken, the applicants shall be informed shortly.

## **Recommendations**

### *1. WCRC Partnership Fund criteria*

According to the new situation of operating from Germany and applying the change of currency the committee makes the following recommendations for changes in the criteria:

- 1. as a general requirement, the grant for a project shall not normally exceed €25,000.*
- 2. the project grant normally shall be transferred upon approval to the account of the church in the case of member churches; to the account of the church that takes the lead in the application in the case of regional groupings of member churches; to the account of the area council in the case of WCRC area councils; and through the WCRC's internal accounting in the case of WCRC networks of programme offices.*
- 3. a grant of €7,500 shall be given for emergency aid. (For this amount, no local audit is required from BfW).*
- 4. for small building projects, funding is limited to €25,000.*

A letter to the member churches will be sent out in which they receive up-to-date information on the revised amounts of grants and the relevant criteria.

### *2. Bread for the World projects with government funding*

The possibility of receiving government funding through BfW is postponed because each project run from this kind of funding needs a complicated process of handling projects. Although BfW acknowledged the improving quality of the project reports, because of the necessity of the audited reports *it is recommended to postpone using this funding.*

### *3. The Partnership Fund and mission*

The committee agrees that the mission projects of the Partnership Fund shall be related to the mission work of the WCRC theology, mission and communion office.

The committee thanked Páraic Réamonn and Douwe Visser for their work and welcomed Viktória Kóczyán in her new post.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. The personnel committee was updated on how the staff was settling in the new location of Hannover. The relocation was carried out efficiently and was fairly smooth, apart from a few unforeseen circumstances. The personnel committee continues to offer pastoral accompaniment and support to the staff team during this time of transition.
2. Staff complement: The general secretary noted that the staff complement that the executive committee agreed to in 2013 is almost complete. Engaging the fourth administrative assistant was postponed for a few months, until our current financial position in the Hannover office was clearer. However, we have now engaged a 50% administrative assistant on a temporary basis until the financial picture is clear.
3. The general secretary reported that the WCRC has a very professional and dedicated staff team. This was affirmed by the personnel committee.
4. The personnel committee asked the outgoing and incoming general secretaries to take the lead in working on a needs assessment for the office especially in reference to support functions.
5. The personnel committee received a report on how the personnel policies and practices are working so far in the Hannover location. Based on the discussions, the personnel committee is recommending revision of four articles, so that they can be more in line with the practices of the location in which we are operating.
6. The personnel committee noted the need for the WCRC to take the lead in engaging a new international financial and economic architecture (NIFEA) consultant. This is a justice and partnership project being carried out ecumenically with CWM, the WCC and the LWF. The personnel committee urged the WCRC general secretary to take leadership in this and recommends that the executive committee endorses this direction.

*The following are the recommendations of the personnel committee*

1. *That the Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC Chapter V, Article 3.4 be amended as follows:*

Personnel committee

**Old Annual leave:** Annual leave is authorized leave of absence with pay, and is calculated at the rate of *twenty-four days per year*. Annual leave may be taken subject to the requirements of the WCRC and on the authorization of the general secretary and appropriate Supervisor. The maximum leave carried forward to the next year should not exceed 15 days. Annual leave may be taken in units of days and half days but at least 10 days of annual leave must be taken consecutively each year. Annual leave shall not accrue during periods of absence without pay.

**New Annual leave:** Annual leave is authorized leave of absence with pay, and is calculated at the rate of *twenty-nine days per year for staff below 55 years of age and 30 days for staff above 55 years of age*. Annual leave may be taken subject to the requirements of the WCRC and on the authorization of the general secretary and appropriate Supervisor. The maximum leave carried forward to the next year should not exceed 15 days. Annual leave may be taken in units of days and half days but at least 10 days of annual leave must be taken consecutively each year. Annual leave shall not accrue during periods of absence without pay.

2. *That the Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC Chapter V, Article 3.5 be amended as follows:*

**Old Christmas holidays:** The WCRC office is closed from Christmas Eve (December 24) until New Year's Day (January 1). The days in-between those days are also given as vacation days. *This does not impact the annual leave.*

**New Christmas holidays:** The WCRC office is closed from Christmas Day (December 24) until New Year's Day (January 1). The days in-between those days are also given as vacation days *deducted from the annual leave.*

3. *That the Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC Chapter V, Article 4.1 be amended as follows:*

**Old 1. Working Hours**

- a. The working week shall be from Monday to Friday for *eight and a half hours* each day.
- b. Working hours are based on flexitime system. So long as a staff member not on duty travel is working between a core time of 10:00 hours and 15:00 with a lunch break, the starting point and the ending point of

the *eight-and-half-hour* working day can be left to the staff member.

- c. During the day the staff member may take time for lunch and one or two short breaks. These will be deemed outside the *eight and a half hours*.

**New** 1. *Working Hours*

- a. The working week shall be from Monday to Friday for *eight* hours each day.
- b. Working hours are based on flexitime system. So long as a staff member not on duty travel is working between a core time of 10:00 hours and 15:00 with a lunch break, the starting point and the ending point of the *eight* working day can be left to the staff member.
- c. During the day the staff member may take time for lunch and one or two short breaks. These will be deemed outside the *eight* hours.

4. *That the Personnel Policies and Practices of the WCRC Chapter VI, Article 3.5 be amended as follows:*

**Old** Use of Private Car: A member of staff may use his/her private car on his/her own responsibility for a duty-related travel or official home leave or taking up appointment or termination. For this the general secretary has to authorize. When a member of the staff is authorized to use his/her private car for duty an allowance of *0.20 Euro* per kilometre shall be paid. This is a global allowance and includes all expenses for the car. However, subject to the next point, where it is cheaper to use available public transport, the reimbursement of travelling expenses shall be comparable to the use of public transport.

**New** Use of Private Car: A member of staff may use his/her private car on his/her own responsibility for a duty-related travel or official home leave or taking up appointment or termination. For this the general secretary has to authorize. When a member of the staff is authorized to use his/her private car for duty an allowance of *0.30 Euro* per kilometre shall be paid. This is a global allowance and includes all expenses for the car. However, subject to the next point, where it is cheaper to use available public transport, the reimbursement of travelling expenses shall be comparable to the use of public transport.

Personnel committee

5. That the WCRC takes leadership of the NIFEA initiative as the process continues ecumenically with CWM, WCC and LWF. That the WCRC general secretary's input into the negotiations with the other general secretaries on where to anchor the coordinator to be engaged reflect this leadership.

## OFFICERS

The officers had several meetings between the May 2013 executive committee meeting and the May 2014 meeting. The results of these meetings were communicated to the executive committee throughout the year. This report therefore is brief and is focused on issues discussed in this meeting.

The executive committee is meeting at a time when the world is touched by the fact that more than 270 Nigerian girls were abducted from their school and they are still missing.

*The following are the officers' recommendations.*

### **The 26th general council**

1. Following the decision to hold the 26th general council in Erfurt, Germany in June 2017, the officers propose the following as members of the general council planning committee. They were named on the basis of expertise, gender balance and regional balance. The officers also wanted to ensure there that three of them (including the president) are members of the executive committee and carry the mind of executive committee with them.

*Therefore the recommendation is that the following be named to the assembly planning committee:*

Lisa Vander Wal, convener  
Jerry Pillay (WCRC president)  
Cheryl Meban  
Doug Chial  
Dario Barolín  
Aiko Sumichan  
The incoming WCRC general secretary (Chris Ferguson)  
The general council coordinator when appointed)  
2 representatives of the German host committee

2. *That the general assembly planning committee has the following terms of reference:*
  - a) To be responsible for the broad plans of the 26th general council within the framework set by the 2014 executive committee.
  - b) This includes working with the WCRC general secretary and staff to develop a detailed programme, timetable, budget,

## Officers

- fundraising strategies, publications (including guidelines for several processes of the general council), subthemes, flow, discernment processes, meaningful decision-making tracks (including sub-groupings they may decide on), and symbolic events of the general council.
- c) To develop recommendations for decision of executive committee the number of delegates (including balances), and participants in other categories.
  - d) To work with representatives of the host committee in Germany for all aspects of the hosting operations, ensuring that the housing and conference facilities are adequate for the general council.
  - e) It is understood that the general secretary and staff including a general council coordinator when engaged will take the lead in the actual practical initiatives that feed the deliberations of the general council planning committee, and they will in turn take directions from the planning committee.
3. *That the executive committee authorize the officers to appoint a worship committee for the general council and to negotiate with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship the role they can play in coordinating the worship committee.*

## **Gratitude to the Council for World Mission**

4. *That the executive committee express profound gratitude to the Council for World Mission for the partnership we have and how this has strengthened the mission of the WCRC, and note with gratitude that the one million pounds seed funds for the Endowment has been received, and that the general secretary and staff are making arrangements to investment the funds appropriately.*

## **Gratitude to the German churches**

5. *That the executive committee express gratitude to the Reformierter Bund, our other German member churches, the UEK churches, as well as German agencies for the roles they have played in making the WCRC feel welcomed and for helping to make the transition to the new location smooth. That the executive committee also reiterate our gratitude for the gift of EUR 900,000 that UEK churches gave towards the stabilization of the WCRC over a period of four years.*

## **The missing Nigerian girls**

6. *That the executive committee adopts the attached statement and authorize it to be released.*

## **Statement on the kidnappings in Nigeria**

Executive committee  
World Communion of Reformed Churches  
17 May 2014

*Hannover, Germany*

We are meeting here at a time when the world has been agonizing over the plight of the kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls. We join the strong global voice to say: "Bring back our girls."

We are shocked and saddened that young people, especially girls, cannot be given the opportunity freely to further their education. We hope and pray that this injustice will be rectified, not only here but globally.

We believe that the action against these Nigerian girls is reprehensible and repugnant for people of all religions – Christians and Muslims and other people of faith who know the peace for which our religions call.

We, the executive committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, support the efforts that are being made to find and free these girls and reunite them with their families.

We have prayed for these girls in our meeting and we shall continue to pray.