



World Communion  
of Reformed Churches

# Executive Committee Minutes 2021

FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING



**Minutes of the  
Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting:  
29 November – 1 December 2021**

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

The following members of the Executive Committee were present for either all or portions of the meeting (each session had a constituted quorum):

### **Officers**

President Najla Kassab

General Treasurer Johann Weusmann

Vice President Samuel Ayete-Nyampong

Vice President Sylvana Apituley

Vice President Raissa Brasil

Vice President Lisa Vander Wal

Collegial General Secretariat: Hanns Lessing, Philip Vinod Peacock, Phil Tanis

### **Executive Committee Members**

Uma Agwu Onwunta

Clayton Da Silva

Diana Erdélyi

Hefin Jones

Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan

Hong-Jung Lee

Angela Martins

Coutinho Maravilhoso Moma

Veronica Muchiri

Tibonge Ng'ambi

Hannah North

Claudio Pasquet

Khid-arn Prawate

Milciades Pua

Susan Thomas

Martina Wasserloos-Strunk

### **Special Guests**

Serge Fernerode, WCRC representative to the John Knox International Reformed Center

Stephen Kendall, advisor to the Finance Committee

Rathnakara Sadananda, moderator of the Sustainability Task Group

**Staff**

Anna Krüger  
Amritha Perumalla  
Godwin Muoneke  
Gerhard Plenter  
Meta Ginting  
Ismetyati Natalia Tuhuteru

**Translators**

Gerardo Oberman (coordinator)  
Corina Diaz  
Robert Jordan

## TIMETABLE

### Monday, 29 November

Noon-12:45:	Welcome and Opening Worship
12:45-12:55:	Introduction/Purpose of Meeting
12:55-13:00:	Adopt Rules of Order/Agenda, Appoint Drafting Team
13:00-13:30:	Plenary: Report of the Collegial General Secretariat
13:30-13:45:	Break
13:45-14:45:	Plenary: Report from the Sustainability Task Group
14:45-15:45:	Plenary: Report from the General Council Task Group
15:45-16:00:	Instructions for Tuesday

### Tuesday, 30 November

Noon-12:15:	Opening Prayers
12:15-13:30:	Discernment Session: Sustainability
13:30-13:45:	Break
13:45-15:00:	Discernment Session: General Council
15:00-16:00:	Drafting Team

### Wednesday, 1 December

Noon-12:15:	Opening Prayers
12:15-13:00:	Decision Session: Sustainability
13:00-13:30:	Decision Session: 2022 Budget
13:30-13:45:	Break
13:45-14:45:	Decision Session: General Council
14:45-15:15:	Sharing Session
15:15-15:30:	Closing Prayers

## **ACTIONS**

### *Action 1*

The Executive Committee adopts the proposed Rules of Order for a Virtual Meeting.

### *Action 2*

The Executive Committee adopts the proposed Schedule/Agenda.

### *Action 3*

The Executive Committee names the following to be members of the drafting team: Lisa Vander Wal (moderator), Angela Martins, Diana Erdélyi, Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan.

### *Action 4*

The Executive Committee names the following discernment groups:

#### Discernment Group 1:

Lisa Vander Wal (moderator), Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan (scribe), Sylvana Apituley, Martina Wasserloos, Hong-Jung Lee, Uma Agwu Onwunta, Hannah North, Johann Weusmann

#### Discernment Group 2:

Samuel Ayete-Nyampong (moderator), Diana Erdélyi (scribe), Claudio Pasquet, Khid-arn Prawate, Mary Ekinde Salle, Susan Thomas, Hefin Jones, Veronica Muchiri, Serge Fernerod

#### Discernment Group 3:

Raissa Vieira Brasil (moderator), Angela Martins (scribe), Aginaldo P. Gomes, Milciades Pua, Clayton Da Silva Leal, Tibonge Ng'ambi, Hilary Hagar, Baekki Heo, Coutinho Maravillhoso Moma

### *Action 5*

The Executive Committee receives the Report of the Collegial General Secretariat and refers the pertinent portions to the discernment groups for discussion.

### *Action 6*

The Executive Committee receives the Report of the Sustainability Task Group and refers it to the discernment groups for discussion.

### *Action 7*

The Executive Committee receives the Report of the General Council Planning Task Group and refers it to the discernment groups for discussion.

## Actions

### Action 8

The Executive Committee:

- Endorses the GRAPE programme;
- Approves the creation of an Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy, upon completion of fundraising;
- Authorizes the CGS in conjunction with the Officers' Committee and the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group to form a search committee for the Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy to present a candidate to the Executive Committee for appointment in May 2022.

### Action 9

The WCRC shall declare a "Decade for Climate Justice" and shall seek to collaborate with regional councils, other ecumenical bodies, and additional appropriate partners to gain greater awareness and impact.

### Action 10

The Executive Committee extends the work of the Sustainability Task Group to the next General Council, to develop a longer-term sustainability plan, with regular reports to be made at each Executive Committee meeting and the General Council.

### Action 11

To strengthen the participation of member churches in the life of the Communion, the Executive Committee:

- Authorizes the creation of a process to explore the development of regional councils in Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific, with the understanding that the next General Council could formally constitute any new councils.

### Action 12

The Executive Committee affirms this definition of sustainability to guide our work:

We are sustained in all things by the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings our communion into being and nurtures it according to God's will. While organizational sustainability, including financial stability, is one important part of the faithful living out of our Communion, we also recognize and celebrate that we have much to share that sustains us in time and space. We take seriously the sharing of prayer, time, friendship, goodwill, and all the gifts of the Spirit as we carry out our ministry. All this is integral to the sustainability of the WCRC.

### Action 13

The Executive Committee adopts the balanced 2022 budget.

**Action 14**

The Executive Committee affirms the proposal of the General Council Planning Task Group to hold the next General Council in Asia, with Chiang Mai, Thailand, being the preferred option.

**Action 15**

The Executive Committee affirms that the General Council be planned to be held in 2025.

**Action 16**

The Executive Committee asks the General Council Planning Task Group to consider other texts and themes for the General Council in 2025.



## NARRATIVE RECORD

**Monday, 29 November**

### *Opening Worship*

The extraordinary Executive Committee meeting began with a worship service led by WCRC interns Natalia and Meta Ginting, with President Najla Kassab bringing the message to focus on God despite the circumstances, and Vice President Samuel Ayete-Nyampong praying for the Communion.

### *Plenary: Initial Actions*

President Kassab called the meeting officially to order and welcomed everyone.

CGS members Hanns Lessing and Philip Vinod Peacock gave an introduction to the purposes of the extraordinary meeting.

#### **Action 1**

**The Executive Committee adopts the proposed Rules of Order for a Virtual Meeting.**

#### **Action 2**

**The Executive Committee adopts the proposed Schedule/Agenda.**

#### **Action 3**

**The Executive Committee names the following to be members of the drafting team: Lisa Vander Wal (moderator), Tibonge Ng'ambi, Diana Erdélyi, Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan.**

#### **Action 4**

**The Executive Committee names the following discernment groups:**

##### **Discernment Group 1:**

**Sylvana Apituley (moderator), Lisa Vander Wal (scribe), Martina Wasserloos, Hong Jung Lee, Uma Agwu Onwunta, Hannah North, Johann Weusmann, Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan**

##### **Discernment Group 2:**

**Samuel Ayete-Nyampong (moderator), Diana Erdélyi (scribe), Claudio Pasquet, Khid-arn Prawate, Mary Ekinde Salle, Susan Thomas, Hefin Jones, Veronica Muchiri, Serge Fernerod**

##### **Discernment Group 3:**

**Raissa Vieira Brasil (moderator), Tibonge Ng'ambi (scribe), Aginaldo P. Gomes, Milciades Pua, Clayton Da Silva Leal, Angela Martins, Hilary Hagar, Baekki Heo, Coutinho Maravillhoso Moma**

*Plenary: Listening Session*

The Collegial General Secretariat presented their report to the Executive Committee. A short question and answer session followed, which included the suggestion to proclaim a decade for climate justice.

#### **Action 5**

**The Executive Committee receives the Report of the Collegial General Secretariat and refers the pertinent portions to the discernment groups for discussion.**

The Executive took a short break.

Rathnakara Sadananda, moderator of the Sustainability Task Group, presented its report. The President thanked Dr. Sadananda for the report and opened the floor for questions of clarification. Comments were made concerning the continuing focus on finances rather than a holistic view of the Communion and the lack of generational succession as a contributing factor.

#### **Action 6**

**The Executive Committee receives the Report of the Sustainability Task Group and refers it to the discernment groups for discussion.**

Due to the inability of Dario Barolin, moderator of the General Council Planning Task Group, to be present, Philip Vinod Peacock presented the report to the Executive Committee.

Several questions and comments were raised, most revolving around the draft theme for the Council.

#### **Action 7**

**The Executive Committee receives the Report of the General Council Planning Task Group and refers it to the discernment groups for discussion.**

At the request of the president, Phil presented an overview of the discernment sessions for tomorrow. The President then requested that those who cannot attend tomorrow, to please send their comments to be included in the discussion.

Hong-Jung Lee, Hefin Jones, and Claudio Pasquet led the Executive in prayer as it closed business for the day.

## **Tuesday, 30 November**

### *Opening Prayers*

The President welcomed everyone to the second day of the extraordinary Executive Committee meeting. She then invited Philip Vinod Peacock to lead those gathered in a short service of prayers.

Philip did so, including inviting prayer requests from all participants.

### *Discernment Groups*

The Executive Committee moved into discernment groups for the remainder of the day, with the Drafting Team meeting after the conclusion of the discernment sessions.

## **Wednesday, 1 December**

### *Opening Prayers*

President Kassab called the meeting to order.

Philip Vinod Peacock led those gathered in prayer.

### *Plenary: Decision Session*

The President asked that Vice President Samuel Ayete-Nyampong take the chair for the first decision session.

The Vice President asked Lisa Vander Wal, in her role as moderator of the Drafting Team, to present the report to the Executive, along with the recommendations for action. She did so, with the following proposals adopted by the Executive Committee:

### **Action 8**

#### **The Executive Committee:**

- **Endorses the GRAPE programme;**
- **Approves the creation of an Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy, upon completion of fundraising;**
- **Authorizes the CGS in conjunction with the Officers' Committee and the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group to form a search committee for the Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy to present a candidate to the Executive Committee for appointment in May 2022.**

**Action 9**

**The WCRC shall declare a “Decade for Climate Justice” and shall seek to collaborate with regional councils, other ecumenical bodies, and additional appropriate partners to gain greater awareness and impact.**

**Action 10**

**The Executive Committee extends the work of the Sustainability Task Group to the next General Council, to develop a longer-term sustainability plan, with regular reports to be made at each Executive Committee meeting and the General Council.**

**Action 11**

**To strengthen the participation of member churches in the life of the Communion, the Executive Committee:**

- **Authorizes the creation of a process to explore the development of regional councils in Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific, with the understanding that the next General Council could formally constitute any new councils.**

**Action 12**

**The Executive Committee affirms this definition of sustainability to guide our work:**

**We are sustained in all things by the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings our communion into being and nurtures it according to God’s will. While organizational sustainability, including financial stability, is one important part of the faithful living out of our Communion, we also recognize and celebrate that we have much to share that sustains us in time and space. We take seriously the sharing of prayer, time, friendship, goodwill, and all the gifts of the Spirit as we carry out our ministry. All this is integral to the sustainability of the WCRC.**

*Plenary: Finance Report*

The President, again taking the chair, asked the General Treasurer to present the Finance Report and proposed 2022 budget, which he did.

Questions and comments followed. These included questions about the reserves and amounts available for usage, the pressures of the continuing increase of salary costs, the faithfulness of most members to contribute to the Communion, and the specific challenges of raising significant funds in 2022 to be able to ensure a balanced budget in 2023.

**Action 13**

**The Executive Committee adopts the balanced 2022 budget.**

Narrative

*Plenary: Decision Session*

After a short break, the Executive continued with Vice President Raíssa Brasil presiding and Lisa Vander Wal, again as moderator of the Drafting Team, continuing to report.

After presentation and opportunities for discussion, the Executive Committee adopted the following:

**Action 14**

**The Executive Committee affirms the proposal of the General Council Planning Task Group to hold the next General Council in Asia, with Chiang Mai, Thailand, being the preferred option.**

**Action 15**

**The Executive Committee affirms that the General Council be planned to be held in 2025.**

**Action 16**

**The Executive Committee asks the General Council Planning Task Group to consider other texts and themes for the General Council in 2025.**

Moderator Vander Wal concluded the report of the Drafting Team with suggestions about the composition of the General Council Planning Committee, which will be appointed at an upcoming Executive Committee meeting.

*Plenary: Sharing Session*

President Kassab resumed the chair. A group picture was taken of the gathered members, and then the President presided over a sharing session, allowing Executive members to share updates with the group. Members sharing about their current situations, with a focus on the challenges presented on the pandemic, included Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, Clayton Da Silva, Uma Agwu Onwunta, Coutinho Maravilhoso Moma, Veronica Muchiri, Angela Martins, and Lisa Vander Wal.

The President noted that these are difficult days for all of us but together we have the strength to continue, to support one another as a communion, to trust that these difficult days will one day be behind us, and we'll one day move forward as a Communion that impacts lives and makes a difference in the work. She thanked those gathered for their commitment.

The President asked Uma Agwu Onwunta to pray for the Communion and especially for the CGS, which he did.

Philip Vinod Peacock led the Executive in a closing prayer.

The President noted that the annual meeting of the Executive Committee will be held within the following dates—16-21 May 2022—and asked that members block those dates in their calendar for what will likely be a virtual meeting.

The President called the meeting to a close.

## **Appendix A: Rules of Order for a Virtual Meeting**

### **RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR A VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PROPOSED) Guidelines for Discernment Procedures**

#### **Background**

The 2017 General Council successfully utilized a discernment/consensus model of decision-making, allowing more voices to be heard throughout the entirety of the process and coming together on decisions through consensus. Voices from the participants emphasize the strengths of this process:

“Discernment truly is more about listening than speaking. It is important to listen to what others are saying. It is important to listen to what God is saying. And it’s important to consider your own thoughts with regard to the issue and in light of what you have heard.”

“Church decision-making should look like church, not politics. And the process should make community, not fracture it.”

“Consensus-building does not solve every issue. But the important thing is that we all journey in the same direction. And that we journey together.”

The WCRC Executive Committee adapted the 2017 General Council Rules of Procedure for its own in-person meetings in 2018 and 2019. The restrictions placed on global gatherings have necessitated a slight adaptation of the rules to allow for conducting a virtual meeting, although the spiritual and theological foundations remain the same.

## **I. DISCERNMENT AND THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

### **1. Theological Basis**

At the heart of discernment procedures is a commitment to worship, work, listen, and pray together as a community of faith, seeking to discern God’s will for the way forward on issues under consideration.

As the Body of Christ, the church is always searching for the mind of Christ, seeking to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). Our common commitment to seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our deliberations is confirmed by the experience of the fruit of the Spirit amongst us as we work: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) is intentionally a communion built around a common table for both worship and decision making. The table symbolizes the centrality of Christ and our mutual dependence on the Holy Spirit for our life together. We sit equally before God as sisters and brothers.

The WCRC is a communion that is committed to justice. It is therefore imperative that in its shared life together it operates in a way that fosters communion among its members and which allows them to live justly in relation to one another. All conversations should be edifying and all efforts build *koinonia*.

Our developing *koinonia*, our intentional spiritual fellowship, is dedicated to the prophetic calling to bring God's justice like a mighty river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream to a world thirsty for hope and the grace of the Gospel.

**Discernment** means a prayerful process that builds community and by which a common mind of the Executive Committee is sought concerning the wisest way forward on a particular issue at that time.

There are no winners and losers—we are all seekers and discerners together, affirming through our common loyalty to Jesus Christ that:

- the Executive Committee is a community of faith earnestly seeking to understand God's will;
- each member of the Executive Committee has been given unique gifts and insights by God;
- everyone's contribution is worthy of respect;
- our aim is to discern what the Spirit is saying to the organization through the Executive Committee;
- our commitment is to find faithful ways forward on which all can agree.

Adopting these Rules of Procedure ensures that the Executive Committee of the WCRC will:

- foster deep **listening** and respect;
- make space for the influence of the Holy Spirit and different perspectives through **dialogue** and **discernment**;
- take the time to **build consensus** in decision making.

## 2. Building Community

The Executive Committee draws together people from different countries, cultures, and traditions. It takes time to build the trust and relationships that form a community of faith. This is why significant time will be spent in worship and community building.



As we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and listen for the Word of God in worship together the bonds of community are strengthened. Our diversity and unity in Jesus Christ are also celebrated informally as we work and pray together.

## II. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

### 1. Definitions

**Committee** means a group appointed by the Executive Committee to bring reports and proposals on particular business through the general secretariat. The following committees have been constituted by previous actions of the Executive Committee and continue to fulfil their mandates:

- Finance Committee
- Membership and Constitution Committee
- Reformed Partnership Fund Committee

Last year, without an Executive Committee meeting called due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the officers constituted a committee which will report to the 2021 Executive Committee:

- General Secretary Search Committee

**Discernment Group** means a small group of Executive Committee members (with guests and observers brought together in their own discernment group(s)). Discernment Groups are composed according to the values of empowerment and diversity: Each member shall be given the chance to fully contribute to the discussion in dialogue with voices expressing themselves from different perspectives (see part 10 of these rules).

**Drafting Team** means the committee of the Scribes of the Discernment Groups that amend the proposals coming from the Discernment Groups in the light of the discussions in the groups (see part 10 of these rules).

**Facilitator** means the person who facilitates the work of a Discernment Group. The main task of the facilitator is to ensure that all delegates can fully participate in the discussion (see part 10 of these rules).

### **Participants**

- *Members* of the Executive Committee have full vote and voice throughout the meeting.
- *Guests* are those individuals who have been invited to attend the Executive Committee meeting. Guests have the right to speak but may not vote.
- *Observers* are representatives from member churches or other communions who are considering becoming members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Observers may participate in the

activities of the Executive Committee, but do not have the right to voice or vote.

- *Consultants* may be present at the Executive Committee meeting upon invitation by the officers. A consultant may be asked to address the Executive Committee on the issue for which the consultant is present. A consultant's right to speak is limited to that specific matter, and the consultant may not vote.
- *Visitors* are those individuals who attend the public sessions of the Executive Committee for personal reasons. Visitors do not have the right to speak, make motions or vote.
- *Officers* are the following elected officials of the WCRC: president, vice president, general secretary and general treasurer. The general secretary, by virtue of his office, has the right to speak but may not vote.
- *Staff* of the WCRC may act as resources in the work of the Executive Committee. When requested by the chair, they have voice, but they may not vote.

**Scribe** means a person appointed to be the secretary of a Discernment Group and to convey its findings to the Drafting Team. At the end of each session the Discernment Group determines which points should be brought to the Drafting Team (see part 10 of these rules).

## **2. Role of the Officers Group**

The Officers Group shall oversee the business coming to the Executive Committee and set its proposed agenda, taking on any of the following tasks as necessary:

- initiate proposals on any matter relating to the efficient working of the Executive Committee;
- consider how matters may best be grouped for consideration, so none is disadvantaged;
- ensure that the Executive Committee is resourced with information from a range of perspectives about each matter, so that an informed way forward may be discerned;
- review the agenda regularly, prioritizing items needing deeper deliberation and more time;
- alter the agenda as needed.

## **3. Matters for Consideration**

Matters for consideration shall be presented through the address of the president, the report of the general secretary, or other means as decided upon by the officers and ratified by the Executive Committee when approving the agenda of the meeting.

#### **4. Interpretation**

The Executive Committee conducts its work in English. If a member of the Executive Committee needs translation, that request must come with sufficient notice to obtain translators.

#### **5. Moderator**

The officers of the WCRC (president or one of the vice-presidents) shall be Moderator of the plenary sessions of the Executive Committee.

The role of the Moderator is to preside in a manner which assists the Executive Committee in seeking to understand the will of God as far as possible and which meets the needs and purposes of the Executive Committee and its participants.

In so doing, the Moderator:

- ensures that the Rules of Procedure are observed;
- watches with the participants for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and for the wisdom of Scripture throughout all contributions;
- is prepared to pause for prayer or silent reflection as appropriate;
- encourages trust and integrity in contributions;
- ensures care and support for those whose honesty may leave them vulnerable;
- invites members to indicate their response to speeches and reflects that mood back to the Executive Committee as it becomes apparent;
- looks for creative modifications of a proposal, incorporating insights expressed by speakers;
- summarizes discussion from time to time to assist in focusing the direction;
- does not participate in discussion (if a Moderator wishes to speak to an issue someone else will act as Moderator during consideration of that particular issue until it is resolved);
- acknowledges those who wish to speak during the meeting. Speakers should address the Executive Committee through the Moderator;
- ensures that different voices are included during plenary sessions.

Participants will respect requests or directions from the Moderator. Out of respect for the office of Moderator, when she or he speaks, all remain silent so the Moderator is heard without interruption.

#### **6. Use of Discernment Procedures**

The Executive Committee will use the discernment process to make all decisions except for: approval or changes in procedures, elections, and constitutional and

bylaws changes. If a resubmitted matter does not receive approval through the discernment process, and the Executive Committee takes the view that a decision must be made on this item of business at this meeting of the Executive Committee then a vote will be taken.

## **7. Building Blocks of the Discernment Process**

The basic building blocks of the discernment process are:

- Introduce and clarify the issue (listening sessions)
- Explore the issue and look for ideas (Discernment Groups)
- Look for emerging proposals (decision sessions)
- Discuss, clarify, and offer proposals (decision sessions)
- Test for agreement (decision sessions)
- Implement the decision (staff)

## **8. Listening Sessions to Introduce and Clarify the Issue**

The Executive Committee must be fully resourced with information about an issue, proposal or report. Seeking to discern God's will for a faithful response presumes participants hold a clear understanding of the rationale and theological basis for possible ways forward.

Listening sessions shall be prepared in conjunction with the officers group.

During the listening sessions the reports and matters are received. A number of speakers may be invited to present varying aspects of a particular issue before clarification questions.

The "raise hand" reaction will be displayed if a participant wishes to ask a question of clarification on the matter under discussion. When the participant is recognized by the Moderator, s/he will unmute and ask the question, re-muting immediately after.

*Reception of a report* means agreement to consider the substance of a report. This is approved in the listening sessions after the report is presented and any clarifying questions are answered. Reception means that the proposals in the report are now before the Executive Committee for consideration. A report as a whole must be adopted if its substance is to become policy, or specific proposals arising from a report must be considered before agreement to act can be assumed.

At the end of each listening session draft proposals to be discussed by the Discernment Groups shall be introduced.

## **9. Discernment Groups to Look for Emerging Consensus**

### *Composition of Discernment Groups*

The Discernment Groups will formally be appointed by the president and approved by the Executive Committee. Factors that need to be included (and sometimes weighed against each other) when composing the Discernment Groups:

1. **Diversity:** Groups should not be geographically driven. It is important not to have a group composed solely from a single country or region.
2. **Balances:** Besides geographic diversity, each group should be balanced between gender, age, ordained/non-ordained, and abilities.
3. **Communication:** All members of a group must be able to communicate effectively with one another. Those Executive Committee members who do not speak fluent English will be grouped with those of like language abilities.

Another critical aspect of each group's composition is the *leadership*. Each group needs at least two leaders: one to *facilitate* the group and another one to act as *Scribe*, not only recording the decisions of the group but also taking those decisions to the Drafting Team. The *Facilitator* will need to be able to facilitate a process that respects all members' voices while striving at reaching consensus on the issues within the time allotted.

### *Process in Discernment Groups*

The introductory session of the Discernment Group will re-introduce the discernment process to the group and set the "norms" (rules, guidelines, etc.) of how the group will operate. Setting the norms also gives the members an experience of the discernment process and can be used by the leadership to accommodate differing cultural needs, fix any glitches in the system (especially translation), etc. While structured to produce constructive results that will move the process to the Drafting Team, the discernment process is geared to hear all voices and invite the movement of the Holy Spirit into all groups.

The Discernment Groups are guided by materials they receive; they discuss and amend the proposals that were introduced during the listening session. Decisions within each group should be made through consensus. If consensus cannot be reached the group defines the point of disagreement and requests the Scribe to take the different opinions to the Drafting Team.

The discernment process during the Executive Committee is value driven and should respect each individual and her/his voice even as the process unites the delegates

through discussion and consensus. No member should be marginalized based on any factor: “The World Communion of Reformed Churches in its order and actions is called to respect, defend, and advance the dignity of every person. In Jesus Christ all human differences must lose their power to divide. No one shall be disadvantaged for, among other reasons, race, ethnicity, or gender, and no individual or church may claim or exercise dominance over another” (WCRC Constitution, Article III, Section B).

At the end of each Discernment Group session, the Scribes will gather to distil the variety of material produced into a report with specific recommendations. The processes used in the Drafting Team to create the report will also be by consensus and use norms as determined by the group.

## **10. Decision Sessions to Discuss, Clarify, and Test for Agreement**

The final reports of the Drafting Team will be brought to the plenary. The reports should be presented by at least two Scribes, selected by the Drafting Team. Delegates will hear the voice of their Discernment Group in the report and its recommendations, changing the tenor of the discussion positively. The plenary will then discuss and come to consensus on the reports and recommendations.

### *Procedures in Decision Sessions*

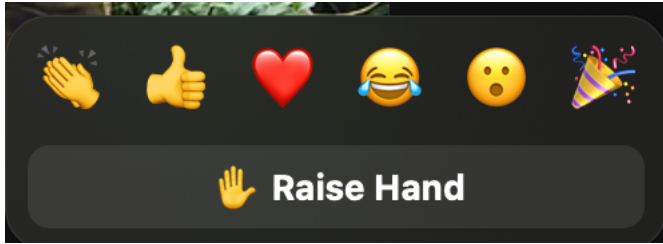
Zoom provides a number of “reactions” through which participants may seek the chance to speak and to indicate their feelings toward proceedings.

The “raise hand” reaction will be displayed if a participant wishes to speak to the matter under discussion. When the participant is recognized by the Moderator, s/he will unmute and speak for the allotted time allowed, re-muting at the conclusion.

At the end of each speech, voting delegates may choose to indicate their response to the content of the speech by displaying the appropriate reaction. The reactions provide a quick and visible indication of the mood of the Executive Committee.

- Showing a “heart” reaction indicates warmth and appreciation towards a point of view.
- Showing an “open mouth” reaction indicates coolness and hesitation towards a point of view, or that more discussion is needed.

Reactions may also be used to indicate to the Moderator that it is time to move on, a speaker may be getting repetitious, or the points may have been well made already. In this case, a member can display the “party cone” reaction as an indication that pursuing debate is not likely to be helpful.



The Moderator alerts the Executive Committee to the strength of feeling expressed through the indicator cards as appropriate.

Possible outcomes of discernment process:

- All in agreement (unanimous);
- Most are in agreement (minority give consent to move forward);
- Consideration on matter postponed;
- Agree no decision can be reached;
- Refer an issue to another body, either to bring advice to the Executive Committee on how to proceed or to determine the referred issue on behalf of the Executive Committee;
- Issue brought to a vote, if this is agreed by a two-thirds majority of voting delegates present (see below).

The Moderator may determine that a proposal be referred to a small group of participants nominated by the Moderator, with a view to the small group bringing an amended proposal likely to receive greater support. The matter is resubmitted to the Executive Committee for decision when the Officers Group determines.

In the event that:

- the resubmitted matter does not receive support, and
- if the Officers group takes the view that a decision must be made on this item of business at this meeting of the Executive Committee,
- then the Executive Committee may determine that a two thirds majority of delegates present and voting is sufficient to determine this item of business.

## **11. When Voting is Required**

Only voting members may vote. The Moderator declares the method of voting (show of hands, display of reactions, electronic ballot, etc).

A majority of members present and voting is required for approval of the proposal.

After the vote, the Moderator declares the proposal approved or not approved.

All participants are encouraged to return to their churches advocating the decisions of the Executive Committee, even if they would have preferred different outcomes. It is the responsibility of those privileged to participate to explain to those who were not present why particular decisions were taken.

## **12. Recording Dissension**

The basis of discernment procedures is that the community of faith listens, prays, discusses, and works together towards discerning God's will for a faithful response. Resolutions are made in that light.

Voting members may record their dissent or abstention on any particular resolution by lodging it in writing with the recording secretary or executive secretary for communications and operations before the next session commences.

## **13. Procedural Proposals**

Procedural proposals may be raised by Executive Committee members and relate to how or when the Executive Committee deals with a particular agenda item. When making a procedural proposal a member may not interrupt a speaker but seeks recognition from the Moderator to speak. Procedural proposals must be seconded, may be debated, and are determined by discernment procedures or a simple majority vote (50 percent plus one of those present).

Procedural proposals include:

- *Fixed order*: proposes that the Executive Committee deals with business previously set for that time. It may be linked to a procedural proposal for the adjournment of the current discussion.
- *Adjournment*: may be proposed by a member who has not spoken in the current discussion. If approved, any person whose speech was interrupted may speak first when discussion resumes.
- *Closed Session*: all who are not members leave the session while the Executive Committee considers an issue in private. If approved, it requires a subsequent procedural proposal ("that the Executive Committee cease sitting in closed session") to return to an open plenary session.
- *Closure of the debate*: may be proposed ("that the vote be now taken") by a member who has not spoken in the current discussion. The Moderator may also propose closure.

## **14. Points of Concern**



*“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...”* (Galatians 5:22-23).

The Executive Committee will engage in its business and corporate life in a way that ensures that the fruits of the Spirit are supported and expressed:

- prayerful listening respect for all participants;
- compassion with one another;
- trust;
- encouraging shared goals;
- exhibiting an openness/vulnerability to one another.

A member may raise a concern at any time by gaining the attention of the Moderator and stating, “I have a point of concern.” The Moderator asks the delegate to state the concern.

Concerns that may be raised are:

- A speaker is thought to be digressing from the matter under discussion.
- A member may claim the right to make personal explanation if a subsequent speaker grossly misrepresents her/his remarks.
- A member may raise objection if remarks are thought to be offensive or derogatory.

The Moderator may without debate:

- rule on it immediately;
- ask advice from selected participants and then rule on the point;
- ask the Executive Committee to decide the matter by discussion and discernment.

If the Moderator’s ruling on a point of concern is challenged, the challenging member may speak, and the Moderator may reply before putting it to a vote to sustain or disallow the ruling, without further discussion. The decision is resolved by simple majority.

## **15. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure**

The Executive Committee in its first business session determines by simple majority vote whether to adopt or modify these Rules of Procedure. During the course of the meeting, suspension or amendment of all or part of the procedures may be agreed by discernment procedures or a two-thirds majority of delegates present and voting.

## Appendix B: Introduction to the Extraordinary Meeting

### At such a Time as This

In May 2021, the Executive Committee met under the theme “At such a time as this.” In the months afterwards, this word from Esther 4:18 has been picked up on several occasions. The verse has allowed us to express the stress that we experience under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruption of the “old normal” has sensitized us afresh for the challenges around us. In ordinary times, our established patterns of working, living, and believing make it relatively easy to close our eyes to the suffering and injustice. They filter our perception of the world and, most of the time, give us the feeling that the little that we can do is an adequate response to the state of the world.

At such a time as this, these filters are shattered. The pandemic is a great revealer and confronts us much more directly with the problems around us. Almost all of us have lost relatives and friends during the last 18 months. We have been holding the hands of people who could not breathe. We have experienced helplessness and anger when we saw how ill-equipped health systems have been unable to deal with the pandemic, how women have been abused at home, and children have been deprived of education and support. In several member churches, the majority of people earn their living in the informal economy. This is often hard even in “normal” times; during lockdowns and in shrinking economies, this becomes life-threatening. Many countries do not have access to vaccines, oxygen, and other important medical equipment. Politicians and businesses have taken advantage of the situation to maximize their power. Existing divisions in our societies and throughout the globe have increased. People who have been vulnerable and marginalized are now living in even more abject conditions. In our “COVID and Beyond” process, many people have described this situation as hardening of global apartheid.

But despite all these challenges, during our Executive Committee meeting in May, we could discuss this difficult situation and its impact on life, the work, and the sustainability of the WCRC in a spirit of hope. Our President Najla Kassab described the situation as a *kairos* and outlined several directions in which we could respond to the challenges in the spirit of a renewed imagination. In this light, the word “At such a time as this” opens up a space. It does express not only the difficulties but also marks a special moment. The clarity of the view of the problems around us expresses itself as a calling. The filters that in the “old normal” should shield us from the problems have been shattered. We are forced to see the world with open eyes. And it becomes abundantly clear that we have to act.

However, this newly discovered clarity is difficult to bear. We have been isolated by physical distancing regimes that have disrupted important structures that provided

for solidarity and care. Many of us have suffered psychologically. The urgency of the challenges and the awareness of our limitations overwhelms us. And this feeling that we are just not strong enough can make it difficult to grasp the opportunities that the *kairos*, after the disruption of the “old normal,” could offer.

This stress becomes even more severe when we realize that these problems will not end anytime soon. Long COVID is not only a medical condition that describes the long-term impact of a COVID infection on a person’s health. It also expresses a social reality. The “moment of truth” that the experience of a *kairos* makes us so urgently aware of lasts much longer than a moment. Under these circumstances, a *kairos* does not only call to grasp an opportunity in a particular moment. Under the conditions of Long COVID, the *kairos* calls for a new approach to life that can sustain us through a longer period of time: carried by hope and in the confidence that God will sustain us in our attempts to bring justice to this world.

During our “COVID and Beyond” process that brought all parts of our Communion together throughout the last 12 months, this experience of a long *kairos* called us to go back to first principles. We asked: “What does God require of us? (Micah 6:8) Discerning, confessing, and witnessing in times of COVID-19 and Beyond.” And in asking this question in the context of a global process of discernment, we built a communion in which we can comfort, support, and sustain each other in our attempts to meet God’s call in our proclamation and witness.

This communion experience strengthens our confidence in God’s guidance: We keep our eyes wide open to the injustices of this world. We confess God’s justice against all attempts to normalize marginalization, oppression, and abuse. We witness in our many attempts to further peace and justice. And we allow ourselves to be Reformed by God, who sustains us and gives us the strength to persevere in times of crisis.

During the Executive Committee meeting in May, this spirit of hope allowed us to discuss with confidence the challenges that the WCRC is facing. Today, we pray for the same spirit when we discuss the impact of Long COVID on the life of our churches and our Communion:

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1)*

## **Towards a New Imagination for the Life and Work of the WCRC**

The sustainability challenges that the WCRC is facing are older than COVID-19, but the pandemic aggravates the challenges. The corona situation affects the life and the financial situation of our member churches. In several ways, the COVID pandemic has accelerated processes that have gained momentum for quite some time already.

We have become more digital and perhaps also more individualistic and inward-looking. Diminishing resources let us become more careful to make commitments. We look much more circumspect at what will serve our purposes and what will not.

However, this more cautious approach is not necessarily an impediment to the life of our Communion. On the contrary, if churches ask for assurance that their engagement will be worthwhile, they simultaneously express their wish to participate more intensively in the life and work of the WCRC. We have heard from several sides that mere membership does not motivate sufficient commitment. Churches want to participate in the richness that the global network of the WCRC can offer, but they want to participate in a way that enriches the lives of their congregations, ministries, and seminaries.

This expectation is not a farfetched dream but addresses a reality that already exists. In the programme work of the WCRC, we never experience a shortness of people who want to become engaged. They offer their time, their energy, and their networks and often act as ambassadors of our Communion. This engagement is a crucial asset in times of dwindling resources. A Communion that understands itself as a *koinonia* that is discerning, confessing, witnessing, and being Reformed together depends on that its mission is becoming alive. All efforts to improve the sustainability of the WCRC require that we create more space for the energy in the member churches to enrich, extend, and sustain the mission of the Communion.

At the moment, the WCRC is going through an interim period. The decision to postpone the election of a general secretary was partly motivated by sustainability shortfalls. This is not a momentous problem; the underlying issues reach much deeper. The WCRC has experienced sustainability challenges for more than 20 years. Many forms of fundraising have been explored and yielded some success. But the efforts could never secure the long-term sustainability of the organization. In many years, the core budget could only be balanced by cutting of costs and extraordinary contributions in particular by churches in Europe, North America, and Northeast Asia. Both strategies have reached their limits. There is hardly any staff left in the Hannover secretariat that could be made redundant, and the abilities of churches in the Global North have passed their peak.

Both developments require a new strategic direction. As we already said during the discussions of the Executive Committee in May: To sustain our work we need a less centralized working model for the WCRC, which involves member churches, ministries, partner organizations, and volunteering individuals in the planning, implementation, and also financing of programmes. And we need to activate new forms of support for the WCRC, particularly in the Global South. As a Communion, we can only flourish when more churches contribute actively to the life and sustainability of the WCRC. The potential for such increased commitment is there. Let us use the energy that we find in the WCRC to build a more stable organization!

*Executive Committee Decisions for the Interim*

This renewed imagination has guided in its decision on structures and objectives of the interim period. To allow the WCRC to function during the interim and to prepare the preconditions for improved sustainability that will allow the election of a new general secretary, the Executive Committee in May 2021 adopted the following actions:

- [26-28] Appointed and set the terms of reference for a sustainability task group.
- [11-12] Appointed and set the terms of reference for a General Council task group.
- [19] Approved the proposed interim plan, which resolves that the WCRC shall operate under the interim leadership structure from 1 September 2021 until 31 August 2022.
- [20] Requested the Officers Committee to conduct a mid-term review on the progress of the search process and the sustainability campaign in February 2022 and to make a proposal to the Executive Committee on how to proceed if these processes do not provide the expected results.
- [21] Mandated the General Secretary Search Committee as currently composed to continue its search for a suitable candidate to be presented to the Executive Committee for election at its meeting in May 2022.
- [22-24] Endorsed the leadership model during the interim period.
- [14] Engaged with the proposal of the Strategic Plan Programme Group (SPPG) to develop a less centralized leadership model for the WCRC programme work and referred it to the general secretary for further consideration.
- [15] Engaged with SPPG proposal to extend the peace and reconciliation work of the WCRC and referred it to the general secretary for further consideration.

These actions have been implemented as will be seen in reports from the Collegial General Secretariat, the Sustainability Task Group, and the General Council Task Group.

## **Appendix C: Report of the Collegial General Secretariat**

### **Report of the Collegial General Secretariat**

In May 2021, the Executive Committee endorsed the leadership model described in the Proposed Interim Plan that, during the interim period, the core functions and responsibilities of the general secretary as found in the Constitution and Bylaws shall be delegated to the “Collegial General Secretariat” (CGS) composed of the three executive secretaries [Action 22]. Hanns Lessing was appointed as acting general secretary during the time of the interim for legal and specific representational purposes.

#### *Perception on the Structure of the Collegial Secretariat*

The appointment of a CGS has found a lot of interest in the WCRC and ecumenical partner organizations. Several people see the model as a timely experiment of non-hierarchical leadership that is more open to accommodate the diversity and richness of 21st century church life. Others have pointed to the collegial tradition of Presbyterian and Reformed churches that have adopted the office of powerful general secretaries only recently. References have been made to the Trinitarian nature of the life of the Church in all its aspects. The exercise has clearly captured the interest and the imagination of many.

However, other people have raised the concern that the structure strongly depends on good personal relationships of the three members of the collegial general secretariat and offers only limited resources in terms of conflict. Several people have pointed to the ambiguity of authority in the system. In the collegial structure, it was not always clear where the authority was located. This could impact the effectiveness of the work because their leadership would not be taken seriously by some parties. Some people pointed to the situation that the structure of the interim was making contradictory demands on the office of the collegial general secretariat: On the one hand, the appointment of the CGS was an expression of the transitory nature of the interim. The collegium should, therefore, always make clear that their appointment was only temporary. On the other hand, the CGS was called to start a far-reaching transformation process of the WCRC. To be effective, they should therefore be empowered to do the work that they are appointed for.

#### *First Experiences*

The CGS started its work on 1 September. Because of the transitory nature of the exercise, the structure perhaps does not warrant a too thorough analysis. There are, however, some learnings that should be taken seriously in future discussions on the leadership model of the WCRC:

- Transparency and accountability: Because decisions can only be taken in the collegium, the executives must be in continuous conversation with each other. This has led to a much-improved quality of discussion and a deeper integration of the activities. The system has also improved the communication between executives and administrators. Issues in relation with member churches or projects can be addressed in a much more focused manner and with greater depth.
- Integration of member church relations and programme work: Since the sustainability model adopted by the Executive in May 2021 calls for the mobilization of member churches, the CGS is now coordinating member church relations and programme work much more closely. We seek to involve the member churches in planning, implementing, and financing programme activities and have approached the regions to cooperate in this exercise.

We will continue to report about experiences that might be significant for the development of leadership and working models of the WCRC.

At the same time, we also want to share the challenges we are experiencing in the interim structure. These difficulties are not of fundamental nature. So far, none of the concerns quoted above has seriously impacted our work. Every new beginning requires an investment in relationship building. Some partners needed a moment to adapt to the new system. But after some conversation, we usually managed to establish good contacts.

The point on which challenges become most palpable is of importance for all discussions on the development of new leadership and working models for the WCRC. The strategy to increase the sustainability of the WCRC by activating the Communion requires significant capacity for coordination and accompaniment. There is high potential in the invitation of churches, ministries, seminaries, and individuals, but many of these activities need encouragement and support, often also on a regular basis. The WCRC will surely gain capacity in a less centralized working model, but much of this capacity will have to be invested in relationship building.

In our short experience with the CGS structure, we experience that this engagement is worthwhile and bears fruit. At the same time, we are already experience the limitations of the possible. This challenge will need strong attention in the future.

### *Staffing*

Over the summer an extensive review of the work both taken on by the WCRC's administrative assistants and the needs of the organization was undertaken. When combined with the reduction (due to budgetary constraints) from four to three

administrative staff members, it was decided to increase the responsibilities of the three positions from assistant to administrator. The EKD's personnel office provided a review of the new job descriptions to set the appropriate compensation level for each.

Thus, Amritha Perumalla is now the Administrator for Projects and Programmes, Anna Krüger is the Administrator for Finance and Sustainability, and Godwin Muoneke (who began in August) is the Administrator for the General Secretariat.

In these new roles, the administrators have taken on more management responsibilities, instead of simply providing administrative support to the executives. For instance, Anna drives the budget process, working with the General Treasurer, the volunteer Finance Administrator (Gerhard Plenter), and staff; while Amritha manages all aspects of the Reformed Partnership Fund.

The increase in responsibilities not only better reflects the actual work that these staff members are doing but also has allowed the organization to function more effectively.

It should also be noted that after postponing the recruitment of a new intern due to pandemic travel restrictions, we were pleased to welcome Ismetyati Natalia Tuhuteru (Taya) at the end of October. She is from the *Gereja Protestan Maluku* (GPM: Protestant Church in the Moluccas). Our longer serving intern, Meta Ginting, will complete her service with us at the end of January 2022.

#### *Strategic Direction Set by the Strategic Plan Programme Group (SPPG)*

In its report to the Executive Committee in May 2021, the SPPG addressed the reduction of staff capacity in the Hannover secretariat because of the sustainability challenges that the WCRC experiences and made the following proposal:

3. The primary answer to the diminished staff capacity should—wherever possible—not be to downgrade goals, but to develop a programme model that will allow the implementation of the objectives of the Strategic Plan.
4. Such a programme model shall allow executive secretaries to call upon WCRC regions, member churches, and working groups to implement global programmes on behalf of the WCRC. The Hannover secretariat shall support the programme activities administratively. The role of the executive secretaries shall focus on the coordination of these activities and not so much on their facilitation. It shall be the primary function of the executive secretaries to develop the programme work according to the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and to ensure coherence of the different programme areas with the vision and the mission of the WCRC.



Under the conditions of the interim, the need for developing a less centralized working model has become even more urgent. The responsibilities of the general secretariat and the demands of the sustainability initiative reduce the capacity for planning and implementing programmes severely.

A core group of the SPPG met face-to-face in November, reviewed the proposal, and reconfirmed the need to develop a less centralized working model for the WCRC.

The CGS has already started perspective discussions with member churches, ministries, and seminaries to explore possible synergies. We hope that these conversations will lead to agreements that will allow these partners to plan and implement programmes on behalf of the Communion.

The SPPG sees its role in this new model in accompanying these discussions as guardians of the strategic plan to ensure the coherence of the programme work with the vision and mission of the WCRC.

#### *The “COVID and Beyond” Process*

Many people have described the “COVID and Beyond” process as an example of a new phase in the life of the Communion. The digital format allowed a form of intense fellowship that the WCRC so far had not had outside General Councils. Since December 2020, the process gathered representatives of all areas of the life of the Communion to share experiences during the pandemic. The process allowed for lamenting the pain, comfort in prayer, and solidarity in moments of mutual encouragement. During the process, the communion lived out its identity as a *Koinonia* marked by discerning, confessing, witnessing and being Reformed together. The richness of the contributions testifies to the spiritual and theological strength of our Communion and its commitment to radical transformation.

The process also succeeded in giving an expression by what we mean if we call for full and just participation. Not only all our mandatory balances (region, gender, age, etc.) have been met, but the sharing sessions provided a space where representatives of the churches in the regions could engage with people from groups that are often excluded from participating in discussions in the church (Indigenous people, people living with disabilities, people with diverse sexualities, etc.). The programme networks of the WCRC also participated and made important contributions to the conversation.

The organization of this process would not have been possible without the strong engagement from the regions. The leadership bodies either prepared contributions themselves or called upon people from the churches to prepare presentations. Several regions mobilized their member churches to participate in the sessions

either on Zoom or by watching the YouTube and Facebook streams. The presentation from Indonesia was particularly impressive, because people from almost all the member churches participated. This experience shows the potential of digital formats to activate church members which do not yet belong to the circle that regularly attends WCRC programmes.

The rich material gathered during these sessions is currently being prepared to be published to allow church groups to engage with the contributions.

In 2022 we plan to translate the digital into the analogue. Deep discernment of controversial issues requires in-person engagement; the development of creative and impactful forms of witness needs sufficient time and space. If the pandemic conditions allow, we shall convene a series of regional meetings to involve the member churches more directly in the process.

These regional meetings will also offer opportunities to reach out to churches, ministries, and seminaries to explore programme perspectives and organize sustainability roundtables.

Planning and conducting these meetings will occupy a large part of the management capacity in the WCRC secretariat in the first half of 2022. We believe that this engagement shall be a worthwhile investment that will strengthen the foundations of the sustainability of the WCRC in the future.

#### *New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA)*

The joint NIFEA process continued through two significant webinars, one on Indigenous people and the economy of life, the second on living sustainably and sufficiently. The second webinar also resulted in a joint letter from the constituent organizations (WCRC, World Methodist Council, World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, and Council for World Mission) to the G20.

For the G20 both Najla Kassab and Philip Peacock attended the Interfaith Summit at the G20 in Bologna, Italy, offering the WCRC visibility at this meeting.

NIFEA continued its presence at the COP26 with a session at the People's Summit on "Tax the Rich, Save the Planet." The session was in a hybrid format and was very well attended. The NIFEA team also produced a joint statement from the five ecumenical organizations for the COP26.

Finally, the ZacTAX toolkit was produced by the WCRC and is being used by all the members of the NIFEA process. This toolkit is available as a free download on our webpage as well as the webpages of the other organizations ([wcrch/zactax](http://wcrch/zactax)).

### *Gender Policy*

In accordance with action 31 of the 2017 General Council, the Gender Policy of the WCRC along with the implementation plan was passed by the Executive Committee at its May 2021 meeting. The Gender Policy is now being readied for a formal launching at a webinar in mid-December. Translations are also in various stages of development.

### *Focus: Palestine*

In accordance with Action 55 of the 2017 General Council, the General Secretariat was tasked with producing a study guide in order to lift up the cries of the Palestinian people for the entire Communion and the wider ecumenical movement to study. This study guide has been released as a four-volume book and was launched at a webinar in October. This study guide has been extremely well received by our members and other partners, and is available for free download on the WCRC website ([wcrch.ch/justice/palestine](http://wcrch.ch/justice/palestine)).

### *Cameroon*

The WCRC has initiated the Ecumenical Forum for Cameroon and a very well conducted and received meeting was held in Ethiopia in September on conflict resolution. This meeting was exceedingly successful in fulfilling its objectives as well as contributing to the discussions on peace in the Cameroonian context.

### *Global Reformed Advocacy Platforms for Engagement (GRAPE)*

After several years of negotiations, we now have reached agreements with the core partners *Brot für die Welt* (Bread for the World) and the PC(USA) that allow us to proceed with the planning of the WCRC advocacy programme.

Economic and political advocacy has been a core commitment of the WCRC for decades. In conducting advocacy programmes, the WCRC lives out its vision and makes an essential contribution to the needs of member churches.

In the financial challenges that the WCRC is experiencing, every new programme must be scrutinized on its sustainability implications. The advocacy programme is designed in a way that it will not be a burden to the core budget but offers opportunities to stabilize the sustainability of the organization:

- The focus on advocacy allows support from mission partners and relief organizations and is open also for secular funding.
- Administrative fees on the funds for the project will contribute to the core budget.

- The programme will provide opportunities to mobilize member churches in all parts of the Communion. The “local to global to local” format in which it is designed will empower churches and local communities. At the same time, the global nature of the programme invites mission and justice ministries from all parts of the Communion to become engaged in the programme. First conversations with the ACRC council and several mission organizations indicate significant agreement with this approach.

The WCRC advocacy programme shall consist of three elements:

- The creation of the position of a female executive secretary for mission and advocacy. We hope to employ a person with an advanced leadership record on conflict resolution. This position will be funded by the PC(USA) with funds earmarked for improving the gender balance in the WCRC executive staff and with funds from other partners that support the advocacy programme.
- The formation of local, regional, and global advocacy platforms in which people from the churches will cooperate with activists and representatives from mission and advocacy organizations. Activities of these platforms shall be supported by funds provided by *Otto per Mille*.
- A training programme which will equip church leadership and local communities to become effective advocates of issues of their concern. This training programme shall be conducted in cooperation with the Economic Policy Research Institute in Cape Town, South Africa, and shall be financed by *Brot für die Welt* and other partners.

Depending on the availability of funds, the implementation of the programme shall begin in 2022. We hope to present a female candidate for the position of Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy to the Executive Committee in May along with a plan to create the first advocacy platforms. The training programme shall begin with two pilot initiatives in Africa: One project will prepare advocacy in a social transformation context, the other will improve capacity for conflict resolution. Both projects shall be planned in close cooperation with the ACRC. When we will be able to raise additional funds, we will also implement the programme in other regions.

### *Database*

After some delays due to personnel absences and changes, the first phase of the database project has been completed. CiviCRM, a non-profit-focused, open-source system, is now our operational database. Of the several ecumenical partners invited to join with us in moving to CiviCRM, the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) has also completed their project. We will continue to cooperate with them in the sharing of training sessions and the development of customized applications.

While the database is operational, work continues to develop systems to ensure that the data contained therein is kept up-to-date. These systems will include the flow of information within the Hannover office, as well as how to best utilize the contacts in regional councils.

The next phases of the database development will include implementing paid subscription management for *Reformed World*, inviting regional councils to actively utilize the database, connecting CiviCRM to the new bookkeeping system (which is anticipated to be implemented in 2023), and customizing the event management application to handle the next General Council.

A fully functional database will undergird sustainability efforts, allowing more precise tracking of both membership dues and additional contributions, better means to communicate via mass email messaging, and the management of specialized networks within the Communion.

### *Communications*

Besides the regular work of posting to social media platforms, writing and releasing news features, compiling and sending the monthly eNewsletter, coordinating the development of resources, and producing periodicals, several foundational communication projects are in process:

1. Corporate design refresh. When the WCRC was formed in 2010, a new logo was developed, along with a full design guide (colors, fonts, etc.). This was slightly modified during the 2017 General Council and is now being given a full reworking (outside of the logo, which is the foundation of the reworking).
2. New introductory brochures about the WCRC and its work have been completed in eight languages.
3. Videos introducing the WCRC, as well as each aspect of its work, are in development. It is anticipated they will be completed by early 2022. The introductory video will be customizable to also be used in the sustainability initiative.
4. FAP has provided the WCRC with a grant to redevelop the website. The last website redevelopment was completed in 2015, so the WCRC is “past due” on this. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by spring 2022. A part of the redevelopment will be an expansion of the resource area, providing more resources which member churches can freely access for use.

These pieces will each have a positive impact on the ongoing sustainability efforts, as well as deepening the Communion through better communication tools and presentation possibilities.

*Conclusion*

At the end of this report, we want to return to Hebrews 12:1, the verse quoted in the introduction to this extraordinary Executive Committee meeting: Yes, we are burdened by a heavy weight that impedes our movements and often hinders us from achieving the goals that we have set. The Long COVID reality and the sustainability challenges of the WCRC call for increased engagement and, more than once, we have felt that more is required from us than we are able to do with the little strength we have as an institution or as individuals. But in our Communion, we also experience what it means to be “surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” which gives us comfort, encouragement, and support. This Communion is an important resource for our sustainability that lets us run with perseverance, even at times such as this—with everything possible through the strength and support of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God!

Hanns Lessing, Philip Vinod Peacock, Phil Tanis  
Collegial General Secretariat

## **Appendix D: Report of the Sustainability Task Group**

### **Sustainability Task Group Report**

#### *Terms of Reference*

The Executive Committee, at its meeting in May 2021, formed a task group to address the sustainability challenges of the WCRC and resolved the following assignments:

- intensify the process of designing a long-term, comprehensive sustainability model that will address the challenge of the structural deficit of the core budget;
- the development of a process to activate the whole Communion to more strongly contribute to the work of the WCRC with witness, prayer, human resources, and financial resources;
- intensify the processes to secure funds to cover the shortfalls in the 2021 and 2022 core budget;
- intensify the process of developing a medium-term budget plan that will allow the election of a general secretary in 2022;
- engage a consultant to analyze why the WCRC is having such problems with sustainability;
- explore models used by other organizations.

#### *1. The Understanding of Sustainability*

The Sustainability Task Group engaged with the definition of sustainability in the strategic plan that has already guided earlier sustainability initiatives of the WCRC:

Sustainability should not be defined narrowly in financial terms. We are sustained in all things by the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings our communion into being and nurtures it according to God's will. While organizational sustainability, including financial stability, is one important part of the faithful living out of our communion, we also recognize and celebrate that we have much to share that sustains us in time and space. We take seriously the sharing of prayer, time, friendship, goodwill, and all the gifts of the Spirit as we carry out our ministry. All this is integral to the sustainability of the WCRC.

The task group found that this definition was well suited to guide the process to develop a long-term sustainability model as it was expressed in the terms of reference and, therefore, decided to put the activation of the Communion into the centre of the fundraising initiative to reach long-term sustainability.

At the same time, the task group was aware that also the short- and medium-term sustainability goals require urgent attention and therefore discussed how best to intensify the processes to secure funds to cover the shortfalls in the 2022 core budget and secure sufficient funds to allow the election of a general secretary.

## *2. The Work of the Sustainability Task Group*

The task group had meetings in July and August and discerned that—seeing the increasing financial difficulties of the churches that till now contribute the bulk to the core budget—successful fundraising would depend on creating stronger enthusiasm and commitment in all the member churches.

To develop the best approach to meet this challenge, the task group decided that it would involve the regions to get advice about tone and asks most suitable to the member churches in a particular area. In this process the regional leadership would also be invited to approach member churches as ambassadors of the WCRC sustainability initiative.

## *3. Methodology*

The task group decided on the following methodology:

- The sustainability initiative shall begin with **perspective discussions** with people representing the regions in leadership bodies of the WCRC (Executive Committee, regional councils, Finance Committee, Sustainability Task Group etc.) to
  - explain the financial challenges of the WCRC core budget;
  - assess the potential of the particular region to contribute to the sustainability of the WCRC (focusing upon contributions to the core budget, but also encourage other ways of supporting staff capacities and programmes);
  - define approaches and methods to approach member churches in the particular regions;
  - motivate the participants of the perspective discussions to act as ambassadors to promote the sustainability initiatives.
- **Communication with church leaders** to
  - make them aware of the difficult financial situation of the WCRC;
  - discuss ways to increase awareness and involvement of the churches in the mission of the WCRC;
  - explore potentials and limitations in the different churches to contribute to the sustainability of the WCRC on all levels;
  - encourage the church leadership to make the sustainability of the WCRC a priority in their churches.



- Convening **round tables** and initiating **individual discussions** with selected member churches to
  - investigate how contributions to the WCRC can be increased or at least stabilized;
  - explore how best to mainstream the support of the WCRC in churches and congregations, ministries, and organizations connected to them by creating opportunities for more intensive involvement in the life of the WCRC;
  - secure long-term commitments to support the sustainability of the WCRC.

#### *4. Activities during the Sustainability Initiative*

To this day, the sustainability initiative has been in contact with the following regional bodies:

- Africa: Africa Communion of Reformed Churches (ACRC) Council, letter to all African member churches;
- Europe: WCRC Europe Steering Committee and European members of the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Sustainability Task Group;
- Northeast Asia: regional church leaders;
- Caribbean and North America: Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) Steering Committee, members of the Sustainability Task Group, conversations with Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America, and Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The CGS shall approach the following regions in the first quarter of 2022, while work in other regions will be continued:

- Indonesia
- Latin America Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (AIPRAL)
- South Asia
- Southeast Asia
- Pacific

#### *4.1 Discussions with Regions*

The perspective discussions with the regions revealed a great variety of structures, self-understandings, and visions. The spectrum reaches from an emphasis on fellowship and sharing (e.g. in the NEAAC region) to a commitment to jointly live out the vision and mission of the WCRC in the particular region (e.g., ACRC, CANAAC). Some regions focus on planning and implementing programmes in their own right (e.g. WCRC Europe).

The “COVID and Beyond” process demonstrated the importance of the regions for the life and work of the WCRC. While the established regions have active structures to communicate and cooperate with each other and with the global Communion, churches in areas without a regional structure are much less connected. To lay the ground for increased contributions from these regions, the Sustainability Task Group urgently sees the need to establish regional structures in areas where they do not yet exist.

All regions that we have been in contact with see the need for bringing the WCRC closer to the member churches and involving them more intensively in the mission of the Communion. Without such an increased commitment, it will be difficult to find viable solutions for the financial problems. But if the WCRC succeeds in kindling a renewed engagement, the regions see a possibility to overcome the problems. One of the positive results of the discussions so far is that the participants have—in different degrees—committed themselves to be ambassadors to make the initiative a success.

While the regions support the sustainability process, most of them do not see themselves in the position to contribute significantly to fundraising initiatives. The majority of members of the regional bodies are volunteers and have no access to the bodies of the larger churches that take decisions on financial contributions. To support those members on WCRC governance bodies who are not in the leadership of member churches, efforts should be made to enhance the connection between governance bodies and church leadership.

#### *4.2 Discussions with Member Churches*

The discussions with member churches resembles those with the regions in several ways. All churches that we have been in contact with expressed their commitment to the WCRC and many of them noted the wish to participate more in the life of the Communion. Both expressions are connected: We heard that without intensified contact, it would be difficult to maintain or even increase contributions. Many churches face financial difficulties themselves. They hope that participating in the work of the WCRC will contribute to the life of their congregations, which will lead to a stronger ecumenical commitment, which will justify contributions to the WCRC.

The collegial general secretariat (CGS) has begun its discussion with member churches in North America and had good meetings with PC(USA), UCC, RCA, and CRCNA. In all cases, the conversations yielded ideas for increased cooperation. From the American churches that were contacted, the CGS received signals that current contributions would be maintained and perhaps even increased.

### *4.3 Discussions with Mission and Relief Organizations*

We experience that mission and relief organizations are interested in closer cooperation with the WCRC. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and *Brot für die Welt* (Bread for the World, Germany) want to partner with the planned advocacy programme of the WCRC. This will allow the appointment of a female executive secretary as demanded by the strategic plan with the portfolio of mission and advocacy, as well as the creation of a pilot of an advocacy network in Africa (see the Report of the Collegial General Secretariat for details).

The Sustainability Task Group welcomes this initiative because it offers the chance to finance an area of work where the WCRC will be very close to the needs of its member churches without requiring funds from the core budget.

Increased programme funds shall also bring more money into core budget. The partners who contribute to the programme budget allow a certain percentage be used to finance the administration of the programme work.

### *5. Summary*

While these processes in the regions point in the right direction, they do not yet offer immediate solutions for the short-, medium-, and long-term needs of the WCRC core budget.

We nevertheless want to state that there is a realistic expectation to overcome the financial challenges of the WCRC in the long term. There is sufficient financial potential in the Communion and there are chances to tap these to cover the needs of the core budget.

The problem will be to sustain the organization during the time that we need to build an effective sustainability campaign.

However, these challenges will not go beyond the level that we are facing already now. If we want to see the situation in more positive terms: At the present moment, a balanced core budget will allow continuing the operations of the WCRC in the structures of the interim. Additional financial commitments like having an in-person Executive Committee meeting or the appointment of a general secretary can only be funded from the core budget after substantial success in fundraising has been made.

The amounts that need to be raised are substantial: In 2023 and the following years, the budget deficit that would need to be covered by additional contributions would amount to almost 400,000 euro. At this point in time, no additional income can be guaranteed to fill this gap.

This situation requires careful coordination between the Officers Committee, Executive Committee, Sustainability Task Group, and General Secretary Search

Committee to prepare the right decisions for the work of the WCRC in the coming years.

Irrespective of which decision shall be taken, we recommend that the Executive Committee extends the work of the Sustainability Task Group to the next General Council, to develop a longer-term sustainability plan, with regular reports to be made at each Executive Committee meeting and the General Council. We believe that with this extension we can present a realistic sustainability plan that covers secure funding of the core commitments and activities of the WCRC.

## **Appendix E: Report of the General Council Planning Task Group**

### **Report of the General Council Planning Task Group**

The May 2021 Executive Committee received a report that noted the following:

The planning of the General Council has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors. The quick implementation of a robust planning process is therefore very important. Negotiations with Asian member churches are well developed but not yet concluded.

This process shall focus upon the following areas:

- location,
- finance,
- planning committee,
- staff resources,
- logistics,
- programme.

The mood and commitment of member churches toward the Communion are currently quite good. The planning of the General Council could foster this positive spirit and lead to a stronger Communion that shall be ever more determined to make an impactful witness. Such active mobilization may also lead to a higher commitment to contribute to the financial sustainability of the WCRC.

Through Action 11, the Executive Committee established a General Council Task Group which would “be coordinated by a member of the collegial general secretariat and will be composed from members of the following bodies of the WCRC:

- Officers and elected members of the Executive Committee;
- leadership of WCRC regions;
- representatives of the member churches in the region where the General Council will take place;
- representatives from different areas of the work of the WCRC.”

The specific responsibilities of the General Council Task Group adopted were:

- to propose a location for the 2024 General Council.
- to identify sources of income and to present a balanced budget for the General Council.
- to create the conditions for the appointment of the necessary staff resources.
- to propose a theme and suggest a general programme structure.

The Task Group has met three times since its inception and brings the following proposals to the Executive Committee for consideration:

1. That the General Council be held in Asia, with Chiang Mai, Thailand, being the preferred option.  
The Church of Christ in Thailand is considering serving as the local host, but this decision can only be taken by autumn 2022 due to changes in the Church's leadership. In the meantime, alternative venues in Asia, including Indonesia, the Philippines, and India are also being explored as a firm back-ups.
2. That the General Council be planned to be held in 2025.  
A group of Asian member churches which are supporting the General Council have made this request due to the pandemic impacting the general preparedness and ability to raise sufficient financial support. While the WCRC constitution notes that the General Council "shall ordinarily meet once in every seven years" it also states that the "time, place, and programme of a General Council shall be determined by the Executive Committee." It can easily be argued that the pandemic has created a situation that is anything but ordinary, and a postponement would follow the practices of other ecumenical organizations.
3. That the Asian churches will form a consortium that will collectively support the General Council financially.  
The 2017 General Council received significant funding from the German government. This is not a possibility in Asia. To compensate for this, a number of Asian churches have agreed to come together to raise funds for the General Council. This welcome initiative should be officially ratified.
4. That the hiring of a General Council Coordinator based in Asia be authorized upon receipt of sufficient funding.  
The logistical coordination of a General Council held so far away from the Hannover offices necessitates a local staff member, whose work will include supporting the local host committee and coordinating the Asia consortium.
5. That a General Council Administrative Assistant based in Hannover be authorized upon receipt of sufficient funding.  
Programmatic, worship, and registration work will all be based in the Hannover office. While current WCRC staff will all be involved in aspects of the next General Council, additional capacity is needed.

6. That the theme for the General Council be: “Endure and you will gain life” (Luke 21:19).

An exegesis of the passage and its suitability for a theme can be found in the addendum below.

7. That a General Council Planning Committee be established to continue the preparations.

The work of the General Council Task Group was purposefully limited in scope. It has now completed most of the tasks set before it, and recommends that a General Council Planning Committee be established to continue the work of planning and holding the next General Council.

### *Addendum: Exegesis*

*“By your endurance you will gain your souls.”—Luke 21:19 (NRSV)*

#### *Context*

Jesus is with his disciples at Jerusalem’s temple, and they are in wonder at the magnificence of it. Then, Jesus starts to announce coming events before the fall of the temple (21:5-11). In 21:20-24, he announces the fall of the city of Jerusalem. In between those events, Jesus reveals what will happen before the fall of the temple and the city of Jerusalem (21:12-19).

In this short period Jesus, as a prophet, prepares his disciples for those events. He warns his disciples about political and religious persecution (v. 12), betrayal (v.16), hatred (v. 17), and even death (v.16) because of his name (v.12, v. 17). However, in the midst of such harsh times, Jesus sees a possibility for public witness (v.13). In addition, he assures the disciples that they will be empowered with wisdom to face those who persecute them (vv.14-15) and that not a hair of their head will perish (v. 18, also 12:7). Finally, Jesus instructs them to endure (v.19).

The events announced in these verses constitute the core of the narrative in the book of Acts. So, what is prophecy in Luke become past events for the reader of Acts. In this way the reader can test the veracity of the prophecy and also has the certainty of what was promised since in Acts.

#### *Endurance*

Luke twice uses the word “endure” (*hypomone*): 8:15 (parable of the sower) and in 21:19. This word in the New Testament is connected to a context of persecution (Romans 5:3-4; 8:25; 2 Corinthians 1:6; Colossians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; Hebrews 10:36; 12:1; James 1:3-4; Revelation 13:10). According to The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament “while *hypoméno* is at first ethically neutral, *hypomonéno* becomes a prominent virtue in the sense of courageous endurance. As distinct from patience, it has the active significance of energetic if not necessarily successful resistance” (p. 582).

#### *Theological reflection*

Particularly in a time of pandemic, endurance or perseverance has become our reality. Life continues in spite of and not because of our present reality. But if we are to overcome and perhaps resist and transform our present reality, we have to continue, to persevere, and to endure. This is not a passive endurance but rather an endurance that has resistance built into it.



In the Biblical tradition the wilderness is often seen as a space for the preparation for transformation. Biblical characters often “endured” the harshness of the wilderness to be able to prepare for this transformation. And it is exactly this kind of endurance that we are linking into.

Further, in our “COVID and Beyond” process, from our Palestinian friends, we have learned of the concept of *sumud*. *Sumud* encapsulate this idea of perseverance in the times of tribulation with a view towards resistance and transformation. It is not passive, but it enjoins the idea of waiting and preparing.

It is these ideas that work to conceptualize our understanding of “Persevere and you will gain life.”

## **Appendix F: Finance Report**

### **1. Actuals 2021 (incl. year-end projections)**

As per budget plan, the 2021 core budget (€1,178,200,00) was expected to require an allocation from general reserves to the amount of 50,800 euros to be balanced.

By the end of November, there is a small surplus of roughly 73,000 euros. Projections taking into account all pending operational expenditures, personnel costs and others as well as pending annual allocations towards several reserves (WCRC Europe, General Council) but also pending membership contributions with sufficient probability (monthly/quarterly contributions, those where written confirmation has been given), it is expected that the budget year is likely to close with a deficit of 10,000-15,000 euros, and therefore significantly lower than budgeted.

The year-end result of 2021 will be achieved thanks to a virtual Executive Committee meeting as well as only eight months of payments for the salary of the general secretary.

Programmes: A significant amount of programme expenditures was reallocated towards the Reformed Partnership Fund since the pandemic situation and restrictions continued to limit programmatic work necessitating travel. A series of consultations were carried out virtually. Carry-overs from 2021 into 2022 are expected. How much? Several projects are currently pending, awaiting cost estimates and confirmation of schedule from service providers, which will determine whether they can be carried out in 2021 or 2022 (e.g. translations and design for resource material, such as the ZacTax booklet, Gender Policy, COVID & Beyond). Donor approvals of carry-overs have been obtained. Admin fees income for 2021 was calculated based on actual expenditures in the case of OPM. Both EMW and the Church of Westphalia allow for allocation of the full amount of admin fees towards the core budget in the year the contribution is made, independently of spending.

### **2. Budget Plan Draft 2022**

The draft core budget plan 2022 amounts to 930,800 euros. The expected expenditures are based on the assumption that a new general secretary will not begin his or her service in 2022 so that no expenditures in terms of salary, pension, installation, and other expat expenses. Furthermore, budget figures only include a virtual Executive Committee meeting and not a face-to-face meeting.

The draft programme budget amounts to 593,200 euros. Significant carry-overs from 2021 are to be expected. However, admin fees income for core were calculated

based on 2022 contributions only and based on the assumption that annual contributions will be fully spent. However, there is a risk of underspending due to the effects of the pandemic. *Otto per Mille* contributions amount to 350,000 euros and are confirmed until the end of 2023. The funding of EMW amounts to 220,000 euros, with a possible increase of funds provided they can be spent within one budget year. The Church of Westphalia has reduced its current support of 29,000 euros by 20 per cent.

### **3. Membership contributions**

The membership contributions are stable in most regions. Africa contributes 23,000 euros, Asia 60,000 euros, Europe 435,000 euros, Latin America 2,000 euros, and the Pacific 3,000 euros. Only CANAAC reduced its contribution from 230,000 to 190,000 euros in 2021 as PC(USA) has reduced its contribution by 40,000 euros due to internal financial constraints. After consultations during the course of this year the chances are high that in increase in PC(USA) contributions may be possible.

### **4. Medium Term Expenditure Planning**

It is expected that the annual deficit in 2023 will amount to approximately 355,000 euro and increase to about 420,000 euros.

Figures are based on past years, any available information on future years with sufficient probability, and applies a few assumptions across the board:

- An increase in expenditures due to inflation of 3% annually, across all expenditures unless a given amount is based on policies or contracts
- Installation of a full-time general secretary
- Pension contributions as per calculations for current staff
- Face-to-face Executive Committee meeting
- General Council in 2025

All expat expenses calculated as per personnel policies and practices based on the following assumptions:

- Any new staff is married with two dependent children
- A new executive secretary for communications will join in 2024 (at the conclusion of Phil's second and final contract)
- The general secretaries for theology and justice will each serve for a second term
- The family of the executive secretary for justice will move to Germany at the beginning of his second term

Approximately 113,000 euros for the executive secretary for theology and communion are funded by his home church, the Church of Westphalia. It has not been confirmed whether this contribution will continue for a second term or should a new executive be appointed. This document assumes that this support will somehow continue. It is also based on the assumption that:

- CWM support will continue at the same level as well as
- admin fees income from programme donations, and that
- no significant decrease in membership contributions will occur.

The Sustainability Task Group is exploring possibilities for additional funding and involvement from the regions. Current efforts produce promising results. For further details please see the report of the Sustainability Task Group.

Another option to reduce the deficit is to reduce the costs.

## **5. Investments**

All investment are now in line with our guidelines on ethical and sustainable investments. All in all, WCRC's investments amount to 4,000,000 euros, however, most are earmarked funds, including pensions in the amount of approx. 1,000,000 euros.

**Recommendation:** That the proposed 2022 budget be approved.

Johann Weusmann  
General Treasurer

World Communion of Reformed Churches								
Mid-Term Financial Plan								
CORE SUMMARY								
	Actuals 2020	Budget 2021	Actuals 2021 as of November	Budget 2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>CORE OPERATIONAL</b>								
Income	1,263,635,25 €	1,037,200,00 €	813,016,66 €	935,800,00 €	935,800,00 €	935,800,00 €	935,800,00 €	935,800,00 €
Property income (Interest s)	19,763,23 €	3,000,00 €	- €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €
Membership fees Africa	22,330,61 €	23,000,00 €	12,287,21 €	23,000,00 €	23,000,00 €	23,000,00 €	23,000,00 €	23,000,00 €
Membership fees Latin America	2,034,43 €	2,000,00 €	1,052,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €
Membership fees Canaac	231,357,15 €	230,000,00 €	132,943,08 €	190,000,00 €	190,000,00 €	190,000,00 €	190,000,00 €	190,000,00 €
Membership fees Asia	60,493,96 €	60,000,00 €	19,288,00 €	60,000,00 €	60,000,00 €	60,000,00 €	60,000,00 €	60,000,00 €
Membership fees Pacific	2,956,46 €	3,000,00 €	2,544,06 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €	3,000,00 €
Membership fees Europe	437,045,55 €	435,000,00 €	379,035,73 €	435,000,00 €	435,000,00 €	435,000,00 €	435,000,00 €	435,000,00 €
Special church donations (Asia)	10,000,00 €	- €	- €	25,000,00 €	30,000,00 €	30,000,00 €	30,000,00 €	30,000,00 €
Special contributions								
Database project	100,503,78 €	32,900,00 €	32,916,07 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Mission and Advocacy Prog	145,695,26 €	- €	- €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €
CWM annual support	124,477,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €	125,000,00 €
General donations	18,000,00 €	18,000,00 €	5,924,40 €	18,000,00 €	18,000,00 €	18,000,00 €	18,000,00 €	18,000,00 €
Program administration fees REV	55,350,46 €	71,000,00 €	60,000,00 €	63,300,00 €	63,300,00 €	63,300,00 €	63,300,00 €	63,300,00 €
FX gain	45,882,78 €	- €	42,026,10 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Allocation from Reserves	- €	50,800,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
<b>Expense</b>	<b>421,951,99 €</b>	<b>148,000,00 €</b>	<b>132,657,78 €</b>	<b>152,000,00 €</b>	<b>152,440,00 €</b>	<b>157,019,20 €</b>	<b>161,779,60 €</b>	<b>166,575,38 €</b>
Travel	1,035,10 €	10,000,00 €	6,210,00 €	10,000,00 €	18,540,00 €	18,000,00 €	19,669,09 €	19,250,25 €
Cleaning staff	7,911,48 €	10,000,00 €	6,623,65 €	10,000,00 €	10,300,00 €	10,699,00 €	10,827,27 €	11,255,09 €
Database	22,843,19 €	2,000,00 €	2,138,19 €	2,000,00 €	2,060,00 €	2,121,80 €	2,185,45 €	2,251,02 €
Office expense (incl. phone, hospitality)	8,371,93 €	22,500,00 €	28,738,20 €	22,500,00 €	23,175,00 €	23,870,25 €	24,586,36 €	25,323,95 €
Rental (incl. electricity)	34,858,40 €	38,000,00 €	28,737,00 €	38,000,00 €	39,140,00 €	40,314,20 €	41,523,63 €	42,768,33 €
IT infrastructure	14,964,36 €	12,000,00 €	6,167,83 €	12,000,00 €	12,360,00 €	12,506,11 €	13,112,72 €	13,506,11 €
Other professional fees (incl. audit)	7,800,92 €	17,500,00 €	6,083,30 €	17,500,00 €	18,025,00 €	18,565,75 €	19,122,72 €	19,696,40 €
Insurance	7,754,05 €	8,000,00 €	6,982,85 €	8,000,00 €	8,240,00 €	8,487,20 €	8,741,82 €	9,004,07 €
Misc.	7,543,31 €	20,000,00 €	8,997,07 €	20,000,00 €	20,600,00 €	21,218,00 €	21,854,54 €	22,510,18 €
FX loss	62,831,82 €	- €	24,889,90 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Allocation to Designated Funds	173,671,33 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Allocation to General Reserve	52,468,33 €	- €	- €	4,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €

		World Communion of Reformed Churches									
		Mid-Term Financial Plan									
CORE SUMMARY											
	Actuals 2020	Budget 2021	Actuals 2021 as of November	Budget 2022	2023	2024	2025	2026			
<b>General Secretary</b>											
<b>Income</b>	1,270,37 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €			
Reimbursements travel	1,270,37 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €			
<b>Expense</b>	178,817,70 €	144,000,00 €	142,664,26 €	32,000,00 €	312,354,00 €	296,434,62 €	310,448,66 €	312,703,12 €			
Payroll/pension	177,486,20 €	75,200,00 €	112,313,04 €	- €	233,604,00 €	240,612,12 €	247,630,49 €	255,265,40 €			
Expat expense	- €	12,000,00 €	- €	- €	46,000,00 €	22,300,00 €	28,300,00 €	22,300,00 €			
Travel	1,331,50 €	10,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	25,000,00 €	25,750,00 €	26,522,50 €	27,318,18 €	28,137,79 €			
Fundraising	95,10 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €			
Miscellaneous	- €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €	2,000,00 €			
<b>* Balance</b>	<b>- 177,547,33 €</b>	<b>144,000,00 €</b>	<b>- 142,664,26 €</b>	<b>- 32,000,00 €</b>	<b>- 312,354,00 €</b>	<b>- 296,434,62 €</b>	<b>- 310,448,66 €</b>	<b>- 312,703,12 €</b>			
<b>Executive Secretaries</b>											
<b>Income</b>	117,669,30 €	118,000,00 €	116,172,68 €	118,000,00 €	121,390,00 €	124,881,70 €	128,478,15 €	132,182,50 €			
Allocation from Pension R. reserve	4,669,30 €	5,000,00 €	3,172,89 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	5,000,00 €			
Subsidy for Personnel Costs Ev. Church of Westphalia	113,000,00 €	113,000,00 €	113,000,00 €	113,000,00 €	116,390,00 €	119,881,70 €	123,478,15 €	127,182,50 €			
<b>Expense</b>	439,638,46 €	450,000,00 €	388,723,30 €	450,000,00 €	497,230,00 €	522,538,90 €	510,638,07 €	524,439,21 €			
Personnel Costs Executive for Theology from Subsidies from Ev. Church of Westphalia	113,000,00 €	113,000,00 €	113,000,00 €	113,000,00 €	116,390,00 €	119,881,70 €	123,478,15 €	127,182,50 €			
Payroll/pension reserve	283,855,64 €	296,000,00 €	248,796,60 €	296,000,00 €	304,880,00 €	314,026,40 €	323,447,19 €	333,150,61 €			
Expat expense	23,849,48 €	29,000,00 €	25,351,22 €	29,000,00 €	63,600,00 €	75,600,00 €	50,600,00 €	50,600,00 €			
Other staff expense	- €	7,000,00 €	1,575,48 €	7,000,00 €	7,210,00 €	7,428,30 €	7,649,09 €	7,878,56 €			
Pension	4,669,30 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €			
Special Allocation to Pension Reserve	14,264,04 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €			
<b>* Balance</b>	<b>- 321,969,16 €</b>	<b>- 332,000,00 €</b>	<b>- 272,550,42 €</b>	<b>- 332,000,00 €</b>	<b>- 375,840,00 €</b>	<b>- 387,657,20 €</b>	<b>- 382,159,92 €</b>	<b>- 392,256,71 €</b>			
<b>Administrative Staff</b>											
<b>Income (Salary refunds)</b>	5,336,25 €	4,000,00 €	1,753,92 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €			
<b>Expense</b>	226,228,37 €	276,000,00 €	215,184,19 €	258,000,00 €	265,740,00 €	273,712,20 €	281,923,57 €	290,381,27 €			
Payroll	226,228,37 €	276,000,00 €	215,184,19 €	258,000,00 €	265,740,00 €	273,712,20 €	281,923,57 €	290,381,27 €			
<b>* Balance</b>	<b>- 220,892,12 €</b>	<b>- 272,000,00 €</b>	<b>- 213,430,27 €</b>	<b>- 258,000,00 €</b>	<b>- 265,740,00 €</b>	<b>- 273,712,20 €</b>	<b>- 281,923,57 €</b>	<b>- 290,381,27 €</b>			
<b>US Office</b>											
<b>Expense</b>	331,09 €	1,000,00 €	- €	1,000,00 €	1,030,00 €	1,060,90 €	1,092,73 €	1,125,51 €			

		World Communion of Reformed Churches						
		CORE SUMMARY			Mid-Term Financial Plan			
	Actuals 2020	Budget 2021	Actuals 2021 as of November	Budget 2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>WCRC Europe</b>								
Income	976,92 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Property Income Interest	976,92 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Expense (Allocation to WCRC Europe)	22.829,20 €	21.800,00 €	- €	21.800,00 €	21.800,00 €	21.800,00 €	21.800,00 €	21.800,00 €
<b>General Council Reserve</b>								
Income	873,18 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Property Income Interest	873,18 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Expense (Allocation to reserve)	57.589,54 €	56.500,00 €	- €	56.500,00 €	56.500,00 €	56.500,00 €	56.500,00 €	56.500,00 €
<b>President &amp; Officers</b>								
Income (contr. to travels)	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Expense	556,80 €	6.000,00 €	256,02 €	6.000,00 €	6.180,00 €	6.365,40 €	6.556,38 €	6.753,05 €
<b>ExCom</b>								
Income (Host contr./member contr. depend on location, not considered here)	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Expense (WCRC funds excl. host contr.)	2.883,96 €	5.000,00 €	900,00 €	5.000,00 €	36.050,00 €	37.131,50 €	- €	39.392,81 €
Balance	2.883,96 €	5.000,00 €	900,00 €	5.000,00 €	36.050,00 €	37.131,50 €	- €	39.392,81 €
<b>GS Search Committee</b>								
Income	- €	12.000,00 €	12.000,00 €	12.000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Expense	- €	12.000,00 €	12.000,00 €	12.000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Search Committee	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Carry-over	- €	12.000,00 €	12.000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Balance	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
<b>Memberships</b>								
Expense	6.232,83 €	7.000,00 €	3.806,99 €	7.000,00 €	7.000,00 €	7.000,00 €	7.000,00 €	7.000,00 €
Protestant	1.776,34 €	2.200,00 €	1.866,99 €	2.200,00 €	2.200,00 €	2.200,00 €	2.200,00 €	2.200,00 €
Global Christian Forum	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €	1.000,00 €
Globethics	800,00 €	800,00 €	800,00 €	800,00 €	800,00 €	800,00 €	800,00 €	800,00 €
John Knox Center	- €	- €	140,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
ACT Alliance	2.656,49 €	3.000,00 €	- €	3.000,00 €	3.000,00 €	3.000,00 €	3.000,00 €	3.000,00 €

CORE SUMMARY						Mid-Term Financial Plan			
World Communion of Reformed Churches						2023	2024	2025	2026
	Actuals 2020	Budget 2021	Actuals 2021 as of November	Budget 2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Reformed Communique Expense	13,061,92 €	14,000,00 €	3,600,00 € 3,600,00 €	14,000,00 €	14,420,00 €	14,852,00 €	15,298,18 €	15,757,12 €	
Reformed World Income	9,128,25 €	7,000,00 €	7,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Carry-over	- €	7,000,00 €	7,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Expense	9,128,25 €	13,900,00 €	10,700,43 €	17,500,00 €	18,025,00 €	18,565,75 €	19,122,72 €	19,686,40 €	
Reformed World	2,156,39 €	13,300,00 €	10,700,49 €	17,500,00 €	18,025,00 €	18,565,75 €	19,122,72 €	19,686,40 €	
Balance	6,972,92 €	6,900,00 €	3,700,43 €	17,500,00 €	18,025,00 €	18,565,75 €	19,122,72 €	19,698,40 €	
Communication main	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Income	- €	- €	6,471,28 €	23,000,00 €	23,690,00 €	24,400,70 €	25,132,72 €	25,866,70 €	
Expense	19,599,51 €	23,000,00 €	6,471,28 €	23,000,00 €	23,690,00 €	24,400,70 €	25,132,72 €	25,866,70 €	
Misc.	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Balance	- €	- €	6,471,28 €	23,000,00 €	23,690,00 €	24,400,70 €	25,132,72 €	25,866,70 €	
Communication Website Project	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Income	- €	- €	40,000,00 €	20,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Balance Brought Forward	- €	- €	- €	15,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
FAP	- €	40,000,00 €	40,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Allocation from Communications reserver	- €	- €	- €	5,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Expense	- €	- €	- €	25,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Misc.	- €	- €	- €	25,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Balance	- €	- €	40,000,00 €	5,000,00 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
TOTAL CORE	1,398,889,52 €	1,178,200,00 €	989,843,46 €	1,080,800,00 €	1,057,190,00 €	1,060,681,70 €	1,064,278,15 €	1,067,982,50 €	
Income	1,398,889,52 €	1,178,200,00 €	916,574,26 €	1,080,800,00 €	1,412,459,00 €	1,437,375,77 €	1,417,236,60 €	1,488,010,51 €	
Expense	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	
Balance	- €	- €	73,869,20 €	73,869,20 €	355,269,00 €	376,694,07 €	352,938,45 €	420,028,01 €	
<b>PROGRAMMES 2022</b>									
Other per Mills	Budgeted Income								
EWK	230,000,00 €								
Evangelical Church of Westphalia	23,200,00 €								
	593,200,00 €								



## Appendix G: Report of the Drafting Team

### COLLEGIAL GENERAL SECRETARIAT REPORT

1. What are your thoughts on the WCRC advocacy programme, GRAPE?
2. If remaining funds can be raised, do you agree that a female Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy should be appointed?

Comments from the three discernment groups:

- o There was great consistency in affirmation for the GRAPE programme among the groups, in particular the creation of the position of a female Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy.
- o Some comments were raised:
  - o Appreciation to the PC(USA) for providing funds for the position of a female executive secretary for mission and advocacy;
  - o What will be the relationship between this new position/person and those of the already existing executive secretaries? Will it be a position of equal weight?
  - o A carefully selected search committee is needed, with substantial female participation, and should include people beyond the Officers' Group;
  - o This is an important opportunity for regional engagement, and the pilot project nature of the initiative was commended;
  - o The appointment of a female to an executive position for mission and advocacy reflects the Communion's values of fair and just participation and gender justice.

#### Recommended Action:

*The Executive Committee:*

- *Endorses the GRAPE programme;*
- *Approves the creation of an Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy, upon completion of fundraising;*
- *Authorizes the CGS in conjunction with the Officers' Committee and the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group to form a search committee for the Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy to present a candidate to the Executive Committee for appointment in May 2022.*

### DECADE FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

3. What are your thoughts and/or ideas about the WCRC declaring a decade to combat climate change?

The discernment groups wholeheartedly affirmed the proposal to declare a decade to combat climate change. However, it was widely thought that this might better be termed a “Decade for Climate Justice.”

Comments from the discernment groups:

- o Climate change is affecting all of the regions of the WCRC: CANAAC, Asia, Europe, Africa, the Pacific. This is an opportunity for the Communion to listen to voices from across the Communion and to address what is already present in our Strategic Plan;
- o This should not be just another piece to add to the work of the CGS and the Hannover staff; rather it should involve voices from around the world, including regional councils, the voices of youth, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and others;
- o This is an opportunity to engage and collaborate with other ecumenical bodies, such as the WCC;
- o We should engage the outcomes of COP26 and determine what would be most helpful for the Communion.

**Recommended Action:**

*The WCRC shall declare a “Decade for Climate Justice” and shall seek to collaborate with regional councils, other ecumenical bodies, and additional appropriate partners to gain greater awareness and impact.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

1. Do you agree that the mandate of the Sustainability Task Group should be extended until the next General Council?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- o Although most participants agreed to extend the mandate because sustainability (particularly financial) has not been reached, it was not unanimous;
- o It is difficult to plan for long-term realities in the middle of a pandemic; we do not know what will occur before 2025 (presuming that will be the date for the next General Council).

**Recommended Action:**

*The Executive Committee extends the work of the Sustainability Task Group to the next General Council, to develop a longer-term sustainability plan, with regular reports to be made at each Executive Committee meeting and the General Council.*

2. Do you agree with the proposal that regional councils should be developed in Asia, the Middle East, and Pacific to strengthen communion?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- In general it was agreed that some regions, such as Asia, are so large and diverse that separate regional councils would be advantageous to their working together;
- Having additional regional councils allows for “twinning” or cooperation between regions for greater impact in programming and relationship building;
- It was suggested that in some cases “sub-regional” bodies might achieve some of the goals with less financial and administration impact;
- There is a concern for capacity: the already small and stretched staff of the WCRC may be overtaxed in needing to relate to additional regional councils;
- There is a further concern that adding additional councils at the same time (particularly in this uncertain moment) might be too onerous; it was suggested to explore the opportunities singly as they develop naturally.

**Recommended Action, Revised:**

*To strengthen the participation of member churches in the life of the Communion, the Executive Committee:*

- *Authorizes the creation of a process to explore the development of regional councils in Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific, with the understanding that the next General Council could formally constitute any new councils.*

3. What are your reflections on the definition of sustainability by the Task Group?

*Sustainability should not be defined narrowly in financial terms. We are sustained in all things by the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings our communion into being and nurtures it according to God’s will. While organizational sustainability, including financial stability, is one important part of the faithful living out of our communion, we also recognize and celebrate that we have much to share that sustains us in time and space. We take seriously the sharing of prayer, time, friendship, goodwill, and all the gifts of the Spirit as we carry out our ministry. All this is integral to the sustainability of the WCRC.*

Comments from the discernment groups:

- These varied widely: some groups focused heavily on the financial implications of sustainability, while others emphasized the Communion-building that comprises the center of the work of the Communion;
- It was felt that structure is important even in the non-financial aspects of sustainability;

- o Trust, relationships and unity across the Communion are foundational to who we are;
- o It was felt that although financial sustainability is crucial, it should not necessarily come first. We need a reframing of the script of sustainability beyond finances. It was suggested that the first sentence of the definition of sustainability be stricken. In this way it would read, “We are sustained in all things by the Lord Jesus Christ...” as of first importance, with financial stability following in the next sentence, along with the “faithful living out of our Communion...”
- o This would render the following:

**Recommended Action:**

*The Executive Committee affirms this definition of sustainability to guide our work:*

*We are sustained in all things by the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings our communion into being and nurtures it according to God’s will. While organizational sustainability, including financial stability, is one important part of the faithful living out of our Communion, we also recognize and celebrate that we have much to share that sustains us in time and space. We take seriously the sharing of prayer, time, friendship, goodwill, and all the gifts of the Spirit as we carry out our ministry. All this is integral to the sustainability of the WCRC.*

3. What are your reactions to the recommendation of the task group to put the activation of the Communion into the center of the long-term sustainability initiative of the WCRC? *[Note: this is revised because of redundancy in the original question.]*

Comments from the discernment groups:

- o In general, the groups acknowledged that although financial viability is important (to what degree is in question), it is the Communion-building and justice work that we do that is preeminent.

4. What are some ways your church could be motivated to become more actively involved in the life and work of the Communion? How could WCRC support these ways?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- o Each member church has a different character. For several, theological engagement is a passion that can be tapped and shared more widely among churches who are less engaged at present; similarly, justice is a passion for others.

5. What are some ways you, as an Executive Committee member, or others from your church might become ambassadors to promote WCRC and encourage support of its work and long-term sustainability?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- o Share skill sets;
- o Reach out within the regions to encourage contributions and submitting dues;
- o Tell the stories of the Communion: unless member churches know who we are and what we do, they will not contribute or engage in the work of the Communion;
- o Encourage a WCRC Giving Sunday (perhaps on World Communion Sunday?);
- o Reach out to the youth, particularly regarding climate justice;
- o Given the changing ecumenical landscape in general, we need to relight the fire and reimagine ecumenical engagement (within the Reformed community and beyond).

## **GENERAL COUNCIL**

1. What is your reaction to the proposal to place the next General Council in Asia?

This was widely affirmed by the groups.

### **Recommended action:**

*The Executive Committee affirms the proposal of the General Council Planning Task Group to hold the next General Council in Asia, with Chiang Mai, Thailand, being the preferred option.*

2. Do you agree that the next General Council should be planned to be held in 2025?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- o Although the proposal for a delay in the date was understood because of Covid realities, two of the groups desired verification that this is allowed within our constitution. With that caveat met, the following is recommended:

### **Recommended action:**

*The Executive Committee affirms that the General Council be planned to be held in 2025.*

3. With appreciation to the Asian consortium for their financial support of the next General Council, do you have any suggestions for other sources of funding?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- Funding from private donors may be possible and should be sought;
- Reducing the size of the General Council (taking into account the mandates of the constitution and bylaws) will reduce the cost of the assembly;
- In light of our current COVID reality, and not knowing what will be our world situation in 2025, a more modest assembly will likely be indicated;
- It was suggested that regional celebrations may be held as extensions of the global General Council.

4. What is your reaction to the hiring of two General Council staff members, one in Asia and the other in Hannover? Do you have any suggestions as to how sufficient support be obtained?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- This was widely supported, but it was noted that it is extremely important to engage the local churches to help;
- Again, the issue of capacity for the CGS and the Hannover staff must be taken into account.

5. What are your reactions to the draft theme, “Endure and you will gain life” (Luke 21:19)?

Comments from the discernment groups:

- After discussion, one of the groups felt that the theme proposal was good and appropriate for our times, with enough latitude and breadth for a good theme, especially with other supporting texts to flesh it out;
- Other groups felt that the proposed theme was uninviting, too scary, not suitable for a global gathering;
- For some, the language of “enduring” or “endurance” carries too much baggage, and it would be difficult for them to engage this theme;
- The question was raised: how do you balance needing to “stand firm” (endure) with living hopefully?
- It was suggested that the theme of standing firm has potential, but perhaps a different text might be chosen as the theme text, eg., 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, unmovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.”;
- It was noted that a theme should invite a dialogical space in which to discuss what it means to stand firm in the lives of those who have suffered loss, the reality of injustice, disabilities, poverty, and the like;
- Conversely, it was stated that if we link the theme too much to what is “bothering us now”, it might be too narrow for what may be our reality in 2025.

**Recommended action:**

*The Executive Committee asks the General Council Planning Task Group to consider other texts and themes for the General Council in 2025.*

6. Remembering that the WCRC is committed to full and just participation, what are your recommendations for composition principles of the General Council Planning Committee?

Values that were affirmed by the discernment groups:

- o Gender diversity;
- o Inclusion of people with disabilities, or their advocates;
- o Minorities reflected in our world;
- o Given the need for in-person meetings, a requirement to be vaccinated;
- o Persons who understand that this is a large and full commitment of time and energy;
- o Sensitivity to the capacity of the CGS and the Hannover staff.

It was also noted that we must hold in tension the possible need to reduce the size and breadth of the General Council and the perception of this decision, how it will be heard within the Communion. We must make sure people understand the reasons and not just indicate that it must be small because of Covid,



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