

Reformed communiqué

Articles in Bahasa Indonesia, English, Español, Français, Korean

Nassar appointed executive secretary

Muna Nassar has been appointed as Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy for the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

“I am looking forward to connect the work of advocacy and mission while being able to connect people from different parts of the world and through different networks,” said Nassar.

“The appointment of Muna is a step of advocacy in itself for gender justice in the life of the Communion,” said Najla Kassab, WCRC president. “It is an expression that reflects clearly how we strive to live justice, how to be enriched with the dialogue among generations on the journey of a communion that is inclusive and is deepened as we come together to be the voice of all struggling.”

This new executive secretary position was made possible through grants from WCRC partners and member churches, most especially the Presbyterian Church (USA).

“She has demonstrated a very keen yearning for justice that is rooted in hope (‘there is always a way to liberation’), a thoughtful and multidimensional analysis of issues, and a rich understanding of advocacy that is very much about placing the marginalized and oppressed at the centre and listening and learning deeply from their lived realities and dreams,” said the Search Committee in



// Muna Nassar //

its report to the WCRC Executive Committee.

As a Christian Palestinian, born and raised in Bethlehem, Nassar has “been a witness to a reality that has been passed down from one generation to another, a reality of oppression, dispossession, and alienation. Therefore, I have always been passionate about issues of justice, gender equality, and liberation—and being able to work in a context that puts these issues in the forefront,” she said.

“The WCRC’s work is very significant as it embodies all of that through the work it does in communion and its commitment to project the meaning of the church as people listening, voicing, and working through and with,” Nassar said.

Central to Nassar’s work will be encouraging, accompanying, and supporting activities of WCRC member churches to prepare the stage for people to become effective advocates of transformation towards justice and peace in their contexts. She will work to build an internationally networked platform to promote and support concerns of the WCRC, its member churches, and its ecumenical partners. Key to this work is the creation and coordination of the Global Reformed Advocacy Platforms for Engagement (GRAPE) project, which will launch its first pilot projects by the end of the year.

As a woman joining the three male executive secretaries at the WCRC, Nassar said, “I am eager to bring a different set of eyes and ideas that reflects the multitude of intersectionality to be able to lay the ground for a reimagined reality that reflects and talks to all individuals of a society, a reality where texts reflect voices rather than a voice and where equality, justice, and liberation are delivered to all.”

The WCRC Executive Committee met in an extraordinary virtual meeting on 11 October 2022 to receive the report from the Search Committee and act on its recommendation to appoint Nassar. She began her five-year term on 1 December.

기념하고 애도하며, 기뻐하기 위해 모이는 여성 지도자들

세 계개혁교회 커뮤니티(WCRC)와 세계선교협의회(CWM)가 공동으로 후원하는 “지도자 회의 속의 여성들 (Women in Leadership Roundtable)”에 20개국 이상에서 약 36명 가량의 여성들을 모였다.

“기념하고, 애도하며, 기뻐함”이라는 주제 아래 이뤄진 이 모임은 가부장적인 컨텍스트를 다루는 여성들을 위한 상호적인 나눔, 연대, 지지, 그리고 성찰의 시간이었다.

WCRC 회장인 나슬라 카삽은 “우리가 이 주제를 선택한 것은 여성들을 지도자로서 존경하는 것이 중요하기 때문이었지만, 특별히 여성과 남성 사이 지도력의 과도기 안에서 여성들이 마주하는 고통을 잊을 수 없었기 때문이기도 합니다.” 라고 말했다. “우리는 이 시간이 강화하고, 상상하며, 나누고, 더 나은 내일을 기대하는 시간이었기를 바랍니다.”

카삽과 CWM 의장인리디아 네상웨 (Lydia Neshangwe)는 모두 개발도상국 출신의 여성들로서, 함께 이 프로젝트를 시작하였다.

“우리 두 단체는 함께 모이고, 함께 일하며, 함께 증언하는 것을 전하는데, 이제는 이 원탁회의를 통해 리더십에 있는 여성들로서 함께 함께 모여 이 모든 것들을 함으로써 우리가 전하는 것을 실행하고 있기에 정말 감격스럽습니다. 라고 네상웨가 말했다. “여성으로서, 우리는 경쟁이 아닌 협력의 메시지를 전하고 싶습니다.”

두 사람은 새로운 여성 지도자들과 함께 현재의 여성 지도자들이 서로 지지하며 성 평등의 문제에 관여하기 위한 공간의 필요성을 인식하였다. 최근, 더 많은 여성들이 세계적 예큐메니컬 기관들을 포함한 주요 리더십의 자리에 있으면서 이 선교적 안건의 홍보와

» 여성으로서, 우리는 경쟁이 아닌 협력의. «

지속성을 가능하게 하고 있다. 성 평등 문제에 대해 오래동안 참여한 역사를 가진 이 프로그램은 이 대의에 위한 양 기관의 지속적인 헌신의 일부이다.

기조연설은 전 세계교회협의회(WCC)의 교회와 사회 속 여성에 대한 프로그램 국장인 아루나 그나다손(Aruna Gnadason)이 전했다.

이어 한국 평화 협정에 대해 교육하고 이를 조직하며 옹호하는 세계적인 캠페인인 “한반도 종전과 평화를 위한 여성행동, Korea Peace Now!” 로의 방문이 진행되었다. 참가자들은 한국 국경을 넘는 여성 평화주의자들의 그룹에 대한 영화인 Crossings를 시청한 후, 백인 제국주의, 평화 만들기 모델, 그리고 대중과의 연결 구축에 대하여 토론했다.

여성들은 함께 모여 예배 드리고, “자매들과 함께 애도함”과 “딸들과 함께 즐거워함”이라는 주제들에 기초하여 룻, 나오미, 마리아, 그리고 미리암 등의 성경 속 여성들에 대한 성경공부도 했다. 이 행사는 나눔을 위한 그룹 공간, 그들의 컨텍스트를 이해하는 시간, 그리고 저명한 여성 운동가들과 신학자들, 그리고 예큐메니스트들의 논문들을 통합하였다.

이 행사는 참가자들이 여성 지도자가 되는 것, 유지되어야 하는 중요한 자질, 차세대 지도자로서 젊은 여성들에게 힘을 실어주고 멘토링 하는 것, 그들의 영역과 권력에 대한 이해, 그리고 마지막으로 하나님의 형상을 따라 창조된 여성들의 신성한 선물로부터 어떻게 예큐메니컬 세계가 도움을 받을 수 있을지에 대해 숙고하는 비전과 상상을 위한 시간이 되기도 했다.

대한예수교장로회(PCK)와 한국기독교장로회(PROK)에 의해 진행된 폐회예배 이후, 참석자들은 공유된 비전에 의해 만들어진 우정과 더 굳건한 자매애로 활기를 되찾으며 모임을 마무리했다.

이 모임은 2022년 10월 4-6일, 서울에서 열렸다.

(CWM의 원본 기사에서 발췌)



Rebecca Mutumosi Mfutila reçoit le prix Sylvia Michel

Rebecca Mutumosi Mfutila, pasteure ordonnée de la Communauté Évangélique du Kwango (CEK), a reçu le prix Sylvia Michel 2022 à Berne, en Suisse, le 7 novembre.

Le prix Sylvia Michel, coparrainé par l'Église protestante de Suisse (EPS) et la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées (CMER), promeut et soutient des personnes et des projets pour le développement des femmes à la tête des Églises réformées dans le monde entier.

« L'attribution du prix Sylvia Michel permet de prendre conscience que les organes de direction des églises sont toujours composés de manière inégale dans de nombreux endroits. Avec ce prix, nous montrons à des femmes pionnières comme Rebecca Mutumosi Mfutila dans le monde entier que nous sommes à leurs côtés », a déclaré Rita Famos, présidente de l'EPS.

« C'est un acte de solidarité et d'engagement envers les femmes qui exercent un leadership et qui insistent pour utiliser leurs talents à tous les niveaux du ministère de l'église », a déclaré Najla Kassab, présidente de la CMER. « Rebecca est devenue un modèle pour de nombreuses jeunes femmes. Elle les encourage à s'impliquer dans le leadership de l'église et de la société. »

Mfutila, première pasteure ordonnée dans son église en 2014, a travaillé comme pasteure et a également été secrétaire générale de la Fédération des femmes de la CEK à Kinshasa, en République démocratique du Congo, de 2002 à 2010 ; elle en est la présidente depuis 2010. De 2010 à 2015, elle a dirigé le ministère des femmes de l'association nationale Église du Christ au Congo (ECC). Depuis 2020, Mfutila est en outre responsable des affaires féminines au sein de la fédération



// La présidente Kassab remet le prix à Rebecca Mutumosi Mfutila. //

nationale des différentes églises protestantes de l'ECC.

« Au-delà de la joie et de l'honneur, je considère le prix Sylvia Michel comme une invitation à travailler encore plus dur dans la lutte pour la promotion de la femme. Ce n'est pas une tâche facile, surtout dans le contexte de nos pays sous-développés », a déclaré Mme Mfutila dans son discours d'acceptation. « J'appelle donc toutes les personnes de bonne volonté à nous aider de quelque manière que ce soit à mener à bien cette sérieuse et noble mission. »

« Ce prix reflète la profondeur de notre compréhension du sacerdoce de tous les croyants, de l'appel du Christ à tous ceux qui sont baptisés, et du cheminement du Saint-Esprit dans la vie de l'église alors que nous envisageons ensemble comment être le corps du Christ dans le monde », a déclaré Madame Kassab. « Ce qui nous rassemble, c'est notre espérance dans le Dieu de la vie. Ensemble, nous continuerons à travailler pour un avenir meilleur sous le regard de Dieu. »

Le prix a été créé en l'honneur de Sylvia Michel, de l'Église réformée

d'Argovie, qui a été la première femme en Suisse à occuper la fonction de présidente d'une Église. Le prix est organisé depuis longtemps par PanKS, une association de femmes qui sont ou ont été présidentes et vice-présidentes des Églises réformées de Suisse.

Lini Sutter, responsable de l'équipe dirigeante du PanKS, est revenue dans son discours sur les débuts : « En 2005, lorsque nous, les dix présidentes - la plupart d'entre nous étant les premières à la présidence de nos églises - nous sommes réunies au Rügél en Argovie, nous ne savions pas encore où cette rencontre allait nous mener. Nous étions intéressées par l'échange mutuel, l'encouragement et le renforcement. Le prix Sylvia Michel, créé dans cet esprit, reconnaît la compétence avec laquelle les femmes portent et dirigent les églises. »

PanKS sera bientôt dissous mais l'EPS, en partenariat avec la CMER, continuera à décerner le prix Sylvia Michel.

Symposium honors theology of Kim Yong-Bok

“Witnessing to a God of Life” was the theme for an ecumenical symposium paying tribute to the late Kim Yong-Bok.

“We invite you to engage with us in the ideas of the theology of life, which sees all life as interrelated. The World Communion of Reformed Churches owes a lot to these concepts, and we particularly want to pay tribute to the contributions of Kim Yong-Bok, without whom the WCRC would not be what it is today,” said Hanns Lessing, acting general secretary as part of the Collegial General Secretariat (CGS).

Letizia Tomassone spoke on “Witnessing to a God of Life: A Protestant Engagement with the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si.*” She noted that while Protestant churches in Italy had been involved in environmental work for years, “the encyclical opened a new perspective in the ecumenical dialogue.”

Jin Kwan Kwon, in his keynote address “From Social Biography to Zoography: A Long Theological Journey of Dr. Kim Yong-Bok,” provided a sweeping history of Minjung Theology, which developed the concept of a theology of life with reference to Korean Indigenous traditions.

“Life is lived in people in a wider web of life. For Kim Yong-Bok, the universe is first of all a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects or things. Yong-Bok views the universe as a mystery, the ultimate destination of all creation—the new heaven and the new earth, life together,” he said.

He went on to explain that Kim Yong-Bok believed that “the subject does not abide in a particular being; the subject abides in the whole being of life, in the whole of creation. This is the power that must take on the power of global capitalism” that is destroying God’s creation.



// The symposium was attended by both local and global church leaders. //

In his response to the keynote, “People as the Pivot of *Missio Dei* – A Religio-Social Horizon of Kim Yong-Bok’s Minjung Hermeneutics,” Lee Hong-Jung said, “Justice and equality are essential. All people should be treated as God is treated. Doing harm to others is doing harm to God. *Missio Dei* is a kairos event that happens in the ministry of the people.”

Henry Kuo’s response, “Remembering the God of Life for a World on Edge,” argued that the voices of the marginalized “become an interruption that’s prompted by the Holy Spirit, and that interruption should teach us the way to righteousness and witness in an increasingly unstable, fear-driven, and anxious world.”

“Witnessing to a God of Life: Embracing Embodiment Theology” was Pauline Patricia’s response to the keynote. “Witnessing to the God of life is a bodily experience. Our body is a shared body broken down by crucifixion. The wounded body of Jesus became a sign of the body of every wounded woman,” she said, sharing her autobiography as a victim of sexual abuse as a child and how it compelled her journey toward dismantling patriarchy.

“Apart from theology providing a dialogical space, liberation theology compels us to do something, to be committed to a theology that transforms,” said Philip Vinod Peacock, WCRC executive for justice and witness as part of the CGS, in summary remarks at the conclusion of the symposium.

Held in conjunction with and at the Waldensian Faculty of Theology in Rome, Italy, the symposium, took place on 27 October.

It was the first of what will become an annual event to introduce important Reformed thoughts into the ecumenical discussion in Rome, Italy.

It is anticipated that the presentations made at the symposium will be collectively printed in either a special booklet or in *Reformed World*, the theological journal of the WCRC.

Jin Kwan Kwon is a professor at the Anglican University (Seoul). Letizia Tomassone is a member of the Waldensian Faculty of Theology. Lee Hong-Jung is general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea. Henry Kuo is a professor at Greensboro College (North Carolina, USA). Pauline Patricia is from the Protestant Church in West Indonesia.

Kantor ekumenis di Roma segera dibuka

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) bekerja sama dengan *Waldensian Evangelical Church* (Gereja Injili Waldensian) dan *Church of Scotland* (Gereja Skotlandia) akan membuka kantor ekumenis di Roma, Italia, pada tahun 2023.

“Di masa sekarang ini, lebih dari sebelumnya, kita dipanggil sebagai gereja-gereja untuk mengobarkan kembali semangat ekumenisme dalam kehidupan Gereja di seluruh dunia, melawan semangat menjaga jarak. Sebagai gereja-gereja Kristen yang berbagi pengakuan yang sama tentang Kristus sebagai Tuhan, kita dipanggil untuk bekerja sama dalam memperlihatkan kesatuan yang telah diberikan Kristus kepada kita,” kata Najla Kassab, Presiden WCRC.

Gereja Waldensian akan menyediakan ruang fisik untuk kantor ekumenis ini, sementara Gereja Skotlandia akan menyediakan staf, posisi yang akan dibagi paruh waktu antara kantor ekumenis dan pengembalaan Gereja St. Andrew di Roma.

“Kantor ini didirikan dalam semangat kerjasama yang kuat—dengan kemungkinan untuk mendirikan kantor ekumenis di kota ini, untuk mengambil tanggung jawab yang lebih lagi dalam komitmen ekumenis dengan memfasilitasi keterlibatan keluarga Reform global, serta untuk memperbesar peluang untuk berdiri bersama di depan dunia,” kata Alessandra Trotta, moderator *Waldensian Evangelical Church*.

“Gereja Skotlandia sangat gembira dan senang bisa berperan dalam mendirikan kantor ekumenis di Roma. Gereja Skotlandia, melalui Gereja St. Andrew, telah menjadi saksi Kristus di Roma sejak tahun 1860-an,” kata Rhona Dunphy, pendeta interim di St. Andrew, atas nama Gereja Skotlandia. “Kami tidak sabar untuk melanjutkan pekerjaan ekumenis dan bekerja sama untuk bersaksi tentang Kristus.”

“Kami menyadari Roma adalah lokasi di mana percakapan ekumenis penting berlangsung. Kami berharap bahwa Kantor Ekumenis Reform akan memungkinkan WCRC untuk berpartisipasi lebih utuh dalam diskusi-diskusi ekumenis yang

semarak. Kami menantikan langkah selanjutnya dalam perjalanan ekumenis bersama dengan Gereja Katolik Roma dan lainnya yang hadir di sini,” kata Hanns Lessing, pejabat sekretaris umum WCRC sebagai bagian dari Sekretariat Umum Kolegial.

“Kantor ini akan memiliki tugas untuk memelihara hubungan antara gereja-gereja Reform dan mitra ekumenis mereka di Roma serta menyajikan inisiatif Reform yang paling signifikan kepada komunitas ekumenis di kota ini. Tentu saja tanpa melupakan komitmen terhadap perdamaian dan keadilan,” kata Claudio Pasquet, seorang pendeta di *Waldensian Evangelical Church* dan anggota Komite Eksekutif WCRC.

Sebuah komite penasihat yang terdiri atas perwakilan dari tiga organisasi mitra akan mengawasi pekerjaan Kantor Ekumenis, dengan WCRC berkomitmen untuk mensponsori acara tahunan di Roma untuk menyoroti inisiatif dan gagasan Reform. Dalam beberapa bulan ke depan, sebuah pencarian global akan dilakukan untuk individu yang akan menjadi staf kantor ini, yang direncanakan akan berfungsi penuh pada pertengahan 2023.



// Rhona Dunphy, Hanns Lessing, Najla Kassab, dan Alessandra Trotta. //

» Kami tidak sabar untuk melanjutkan pekerjaan ekumenis dan bekerja sama untuk bersaksi tentang Kristus. «

Reformation Day worship service held in Rome

Leaders of the World Communion of Reformed Churches gathered for a Reformation Day worship service at the Waldensian Church at the Piazza Cavour, in Rome, Italy, on 30 October.

The service was live-streamed in English, Spanish, and French through Facebook and can still be viewed on the WCRC and AIPRAL Facebook pages.

The service followed the 2022 Reformation Day order of worship, “Witnessing to the God of Life,” created in conjunction with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW).

“The theme of the service honors the contribution of Kim Yong-Bock, who died in April 2022, to ecumenical theology. In the service we will give thanks and praise to the God of Life and pray for God’s blessing on the Reformed churches, the global church, and the entire creation, which has been groaning until now, but in hope ‘will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God,’” said Kathy Smith, CICW senior associate director, citing Romans 8.

Songhee Chai, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, brought the message, based on Romans 8:18-25. “The redemption that Romans speaks of is not just for individuals, nor for specific groups or communities. It

» God has opened the door of redemption to all living things. «

encompasses, embraces all life. Just as God reached out to us who groaned under the destructive power of sin and death, so God has opened



// Congregants celebrated the Reformation at the Waldensian Church at the Piazza Cavour, Rome. //

the door of redemption to all living things,” she said.

“The Waldensians have had a tremendous legacy of faithfulness, love, and perseverance since pre-Reformation times, even amidst the most challenging conditions. It will be an honor to be hosted by the Waldensians in Rome for this Reformation Sunday worship service, especially considering their steadfast Christian witness and ecumenical vocation,” said Maria Eugenia Cornou,

CICW associate director and program manager for international & intercultural learning.

Two special moments not contained in the original liturgy included a prayer for the victims of the Itaewon tragedy in Seoul, South Korea, the evening before the service and prayers offered by a group of South Africans on a pilgrimage for justice and peace.

An annual event, the 2023 Reformation Day worship service is planned to be held in Indonesia.

“Alive and active” Communion blesses Pillay

Reformed participants at the World Council of Churches (WCC) 11th Assembly gathered one evening to hear about the work of the WCRC, share concerns and priorities, and bless WCC General Secretary-elect Jerry Pillay.

“The Communion is alive and active,” said Philip Vinod Peacock, executive for justice and witness as part of the Collegial General Secretariat (CGS). He presented the WCRC’s upcoming activities to the several hundred people gathered, also noting that the next General Council will be held in 2025 in Thailand.

Hanns Lessing, acting general secretary as part of the CGS, moderated the sharing session, which took most of the 90-minute gathering. More than twenty people spoke, raising a host of concerns, including:

- promoting peace in Cameroon, Colombia, and Ukraine;
- ending the United States blockade of Cuba;
- educating migrant children;
- fully including people with disabilities;
- raising awareness of Indigenous rights, as well as confronting the sins of the church toward Indigenous people;
- fighting human trafficking; and
- tackling state-condoned attacks against Christians, especially in Nigeria and the Philippines.

Several speakers spoke on the climate crisis, with a young steward from Switzerland urging those gathered to “put faith into action. Call it a climate catastrophe. Hear and listen to the young people in your churches. We are here because we want a future. We are here because we need a future!”



// Communion leaders pray for Jerry Pillay. //

The meeting concluded with a commissioning ceremony for Pillay, a former WCRC president who will become the next WCC general secretary in January 2023.

Introducing him, Phil Tanis, executive for communications as part of the CGS, noted Pillay’s long commitment to the ecumenical movement. “Jerry understands that the ecumenical movement must be focused on mission, witness, and service,” he said, “and that it must be a safe space for all to participate.”

Najla Kassab, WCRC president, presented Pillay with a Bible, noting that especially as Reformed Christians, all of what we do begins with the Word.

“You will not be able to succeed without having the Word of God lead you,” she said. “Use the Word of God to speak, to challenge, to create a new envisioning in the life of the church.”

WCRC global and regional leaders, as well as Lungile Mpetsheni, general secretary of Pillay’s home church, laid hands on Pillay as Kassab said a prayer of blessing: “May you equip him with wisdom and grant him your strength as he works with the churches towards unity and healing, witnessing to a

broken world.” Those gathered then collectively recited a litany of commissioning based on Philippians 4:8.

Pillay admitted that he felt “overcome and overwhelmed” by this act of support and encouragement. He pledged to continue to partner as much as possible with other ecumenical organizations, including the WCRC, and to take seriously the sorts of concerns voiced in the meeting.

Pillay served as WCRC president from 2010 to 2017. He is an ordained minister in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and is currently a professor of theology and dean of the faculty of theology and religion at the University of Pretoria.

The 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in Karlsruhe, Germany, from 31 August to 8 September, under the theme “Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity.”

The Collegial General Secretariat (CGS) is composed of the WCRC’s three executive secretaries, collectively sharing the constitutionally-mandated responsibilities of the general secretary.

Le trajet vers la justice de genre se poursuit

L'engagement de la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées (CMER) en faveur de la justice de genre - avec un accent particulier sur l'ordination des femmes - était le sujet d'un atelier lors de la 11e Assemblée du Conseil Œcuménique des Églises.

Dorcas Gordon, de l'Église presbytérienne du Canada, a présenté la Déclaration de foi de la CMER sur l'ordination des femmes, adoptée lors de l'Assemblée générale de 2017, comme « une déclaration définitive sur l'ordination des femmes, et non une décision que la CMER aurait prise à la légère. »

La déclaration commence ainsi : « Dieu, par le Saint-Esprit, appelle les femmes et les hommes à participer pleinement à tous les ministères de l'Église. » Elle témoigne de la conviction de la CMER que les femmes et les hommes sont créés de façon égale à l'image de Dieu et qu'ils doivent donc être traités avec le même respect et la même dignité. Elle appelle les Églises membres de la CMER à déclarer leur engagement à garantir que les femmes et les hommes ont le même statut pour refléter leur incorporation commune dans le corps du Christ par le baptême et le ministère.

« Cela ne signifie pas que les femmes sont ordonnées tout de suite dans la communion ou qu'on leur donne la pleine autorité », a déclaré Gordon, qui se demande également « Combien de temps faudra-t-il pour faire bouger ces systèmes » qui empêchent les femmes de répondre à l'appel de Dieu dans leur vie ?

« L'ordination des femmes n'est pas une chose facile, mais nous sommes sur le bon chemin », a déclaré la présidente de la CMER, Najla Kassab, du Synode évangélique national de Syrie et du Liban (NESSL).

Kassab, ainsi que Jyoti Singh Pillai de l'Église de l'Inde du Nord et Peggy Kabonde de l'Église unie de Zambie, ont



// Intervenants à l'atelier sur la justice de genre. //

parlé de leurs expériences alors qu'elles répondaient à leur appel à être ordonnées au ministère. Toutes trois ont rencontré des résistances ou des défis, d'abord pour obtenir une formation théologique, puis pour être placées comme pasteurs dans leurs églises.

Dix ans après l'ordination de la première femme de son église à un poste d'aumônier, Kabonde a été initialement placée comme pasteur en formation dans une petite paroisse rurale « parce qu'ils avaient peur que les hommes et les femmes de l'église ne soient pas encore prêts à recevoir des femmes dans le ministère. »

Kabonde est ensuite devenue la première femme secrétaire générale de l'Église unie de Zambie. « Tout le temps que j'ai exercé mon service, je me suis tournée vers l'avenir pour voir comment je pouvais motiver les jeunes femmes qui voulaient faire partie du ministère », a-t-elle déclaré.

Déjà diplômée et avocate, Singh Pillai a ressenti l'appel de Dieu au ministère, mais ses amis et sa famille l'ont fortement découragée. Même après avoir obtenu son diplôme de théologie, le chemin vers le ministère dans sa propre église s'est heurté à des résistances et des luttes. Mais lorsque des ouvertures se sont présentées - y compris pour prêcher - elle les a saisies et a finalement obtenu sa propre paroisse.

« Si une femme peut donner naissance à un enfant, pourquoi ne peut-elle pas baptiser, donner la communion et enterrer ? » a demandé Singh Pillai. « Ce qui est important, c'est que nous éduquions nos églises, que nous donnions à nos femmes les moyens de s'exprimer. Lorsque vous parlez de l'ordination des femmes, ne vous contentez pas d'un geste symbolique. Demandez une place égale. »

Mme Kassab a commencé son parcours théologique à la Near East School of Theology, où elle a fait des études de pédagogie chrétienne. Mais pour obtenir un diplôme de théologie, elle a dû partir à l'étranger, au séminaire de Princeton, aux États-Unis.

« J'ai décidé de ne pas être ordonnée aux États-Unis. Je voulais le faire dans mon église d'origine », a déclaré Mme Kassab. Elle a pris un poste dans l'éducation chrétienne au sein de NESSL. La porte de l'ordination s'est ouverte d'un cran en 1993 lorsqu'il a été décidé d'accorder aux femmes des autorisations de prêcher, mais ce n'est qu'en 2017 que la première femme a été ordonnée. Najla Kassab fut la seconde.

« Je crois que la vie de nos églises connaît une nouvelle bénédiction spirituelle lorsque les femmes sont ordonnées », a déclaré Najla Kassab.

Pour plus d'informations sur l'ordination des femmes voir : wrcr.ch/justice/gender-equality

Taller enfocado en la justicia tributaria

La búsqueda de la justicia tributaria en América Latina fue el tema de un taller organizado por la Alianza de Iglesias Presbiterianas y Reformadas en América Latina (AIPRAL) en el marco de la 11ª Asamblea del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias.

Moderado por Raíssa Vieira Brasil, vicepresidenta de la Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas (CMIR), el panel estuvo integrado por Dora Arce Valentín, secretaria ejecutiva de AIPRAL; Darío Barolín, exsecretario ejecutivo de AIPRAL; Wertson Brasil de Souza, presidente de AIPRAL; David Haslam, metodista con sede en el Reino Unido y enfocado en incidencia tributaria; y Humberto Shikiya, director gerente de CREAS (Centro Ecuménico Regional de Asesoría y Servicio).

“Desde sus inicios, el movimiento ecuménico se ha involucrado críticamente en los problemas de justicia social y tributaria, y sobre todo luego de la crisis económica global del año 2008, que empujó a millones de personas a la pobreza”, expresó Arce Valentín, también secretaria general de la Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba.

También señaló la importancia de la [Confesión de Accra](/accra), “que reclama justicia social y justicia climática, a partir de un enfoque bíblico, pero también justicia en todos sus términos”. La Confesión de Accra fue un documento fundamental para el proyecto de la Nueva Arquitectura Financiera y Económica Internacional (NAFEI), una asociación ecuménica que trabaja por la justicia económica.

La Campaña Tributaria de Zaqueo (#ZacTax) resulta un elemento clave del proyecto NAFEI, que busca transformar los sistemas tributarios nacionales y globales para

proporcionar equidad para todas las personas y reparar las explotaciones y las injusticias pasadas, asegurando que las comunidades empobrecidas tengan fondos suficientes para los servicios de bienestar público y social.

Al indicar la manera en que las actuales legislaciones tributarias favorecen a las personas ricas, Haslam dijo: “Solo queremos que la gente pague sus impuestos. Para salvar el alma de las personas más ricas, tenemos que hacer que paguen sus impuestos”.

Ante la pregunta del porqué de la necesidad de hablar de justicia tributaria y de reparaciones, el economista argentino Shikiya, expresó: “creo que es de suma importancia que las personas vivan y se desarrollen con la plena dignidad de sus derechos humanos. Esto hace que toda una sociedad sea democrática, pacífica e inclusiva. Para que esto sea una realidad, los gobiernos necesitan un sistema tributario, y este sistema debe ser justo”.

Shikiya presentó abundante información que dejaba en evidencia la injusticia de los sistemas tributarios latinoamericanos, afectando a la gran mayoría de la población del continente y favoreciendo decididamente a la élite rica y terrateniente.

Barolín, quien también es pastor de la iglesia valdense en Uruguay, dijo: “si recordamos la historia de Zaqueo, no es difícil entender por qué esto resulta inspirador para una campaña por impuestos justos y por reparación. Zaqueo es alguien que entiende la necesidad de un sistema tributario justo. No sólo lo reconoce, sino que procede a reparar, devolviendo cuatro veces lo que había tomado”.

“La inequidad no se debe únicamente a factores económicos, sino que está

vinculada a los valores y a la espiritualidad”, dijo Barolín. “Por ende, es importante que las iglesias y la teología participen en este debate para afirmar que detrás de la economía hay valores”.

Brasil de Souza, quien también es recaudador de impuestos profesional en Brasil, describió cómo AIPRAL ha estado promoviendo la Campaña ZacTax en América Latina, reuniendo al liderazgo eclesial con personas expertas en economía y defensoras de la sociedad civil.

“Es importante escuchar cómo funcionan estos sistemas complejos desde la voz de personas expertas en el tema”, dijo. “Solo a partir de allí podremos incidir con fuerza por sistemas más justos”.

A partir de un plan de acción establecido con aportes de economistas y de activistas, AIPRAL continuará con la Campaña ZacTax en América Latina, invitando a otras iglesias cristianas a un creciente movimiento ecuménico por la justicia tributaria.

Más información sobre la campaña tributaria Zaqueo puede encontrarse en wrc.ch/zactax.

La 11ª Asamblea del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias se celebró en Karlsruhe, Alemania, del 31 de agosto al 8 de septiembre.

El proyecto NAFEI involucra la participación del Consejo para la Misión Mundial, de la Federación Luterana Mundial, del Consejo Metodista Mundial, del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias y de la CMIR. NAFEI y la Campaña Tributaria Zaqueo son financiadas por el *Otto per Mille*.

Indigenous academic leaders work on curricula for liberation

Indigenous people from around Asia gathered to discuss biases and challenges in education, including in theological schools. They also drafted “Education for Liberation: From Indigenous Perspectives,” a course designed to be taught in various context around the globe.

In his keynote address, Wati Long Char discussed the Indian colonial education paradigm of “downward filtration” that benefits only the elite, exposing the truth of present-day theological research that emphasizes academic excellence. This academic pursuit is detached from people’s real-life experiences.

Mar Lar Mynt highlighted the role of politics in education in Myanmar and said that the history discussed in textbooks offers a biased perspective with minorities’ contributions to nation-building neglected and a focus on Burmese heroes.

“It is a challenge to speak and generalize India because of the diversity of the

people in the country,” said Lalmuanpuii Hmar. Indian education is influenced by colonization and swayed by globalization. As she took up the challenge to present the Indian perspective, she discussed the contribution of Christian missionaries to introduce modern western education in India. For those missionaries, “Indigenous people were nothing more than barbaric hunters.”

While discussing the Lumad situation in the southern Philippines, Katkat Dalon voiced the struggles of their youth who are being imprisoned for resisting government attacks and holding rallies. She shared that those attempting to help the Lumads have also been attacked by the government, even as they realize that “if we will not fight for the future now, there might be a time where there is no future to fight for.”

In “The Present Theological Curricula in My College: An Indigenous Assessment” Jane Peiter presented the Maluku Indigenous culture as a basis for community-oriented higher education in Indonesia. Also presenting were Weerayut Kaewjai, who designed an elective course related to the Indigenous peoples of Thailand, and Kakay Parmaran, discussing the curriculum of United Theological Seminary (the Philippines).

“Stories of Community Transformative Initiatives among Indigenous Peoples” followed with presentations by Hysianyi Chen, Seno Tshah, Piyawat Jareonmuengmoon, and Ferdinand Anno (the Philippines).

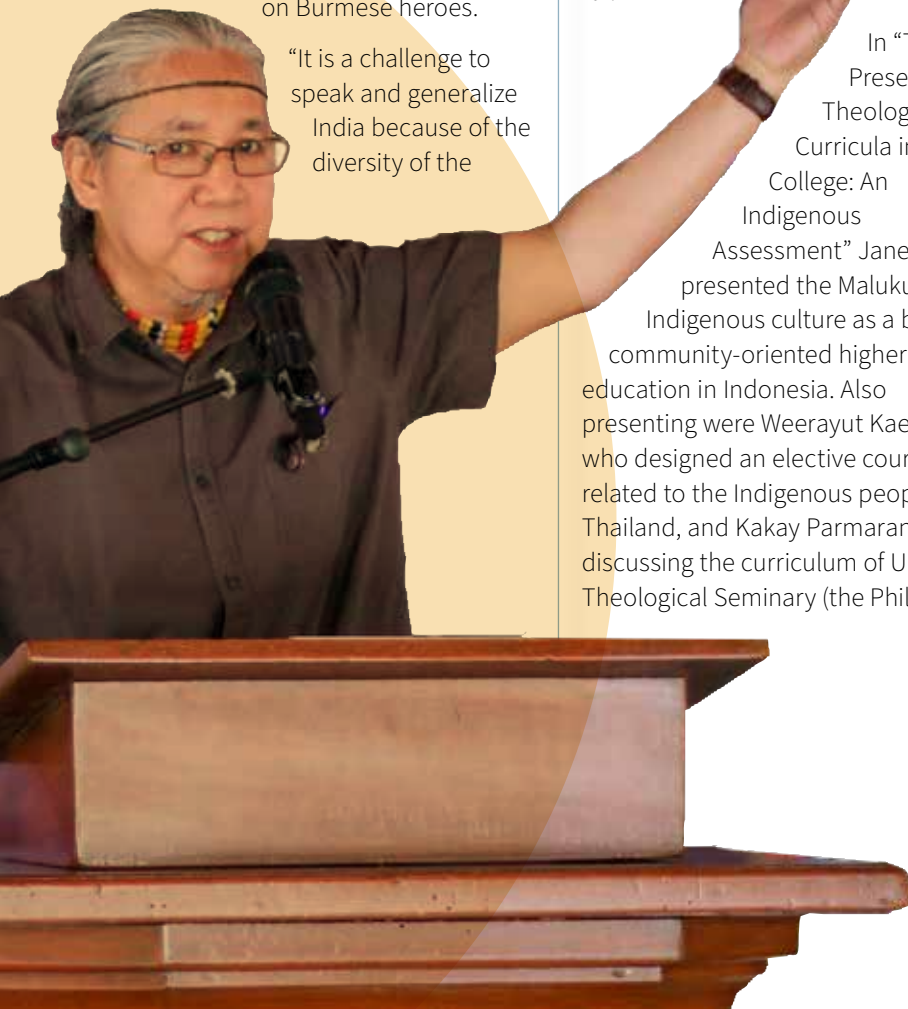
Chen shared some achievements of the Taiwan Indigenous movement which facilitated the establishment of the Council of Indigenous People, the establishment of Taiwan Indigenous Television, the celebration of an annual Indigenous People’s Day, and the establishment of “The Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee for Indigenous Peoples.”

Tshah shared initiatives that emphasize a seed-saving culture in India. Women utilize seed banks, breaking the generational gap by sharing knowledge as they share seeds within their community. “If you want to sustain the kind of work that we do, we need to include the children,” she said.

Similarly, Jareonmuengmoon shared how his college community in Thailand serves the students by recognizing the importance of ethnic groups in the college, including organizing cultural nights wherein they share food, sing in their language, dance, and celebrate their diversity. The college community continues to serve the students after graduation by organizing family follow-ups and alumni days.

Discussion topics included how Indigenous ways of knowing can improve pedagogies, ways in which to decolonize educational systems, and the sharing and creation of Indigenous educational resources.

The consultation was held 15-18 October in Manila, the Philippines, with financial support for it coming from *Otto per Mille* through the WCRC Indigenous Peoples Network.



Palestina–América Latina: «nos unen contextos similares de opresión»

El *Diálogo palestino-latinoamericano sobre «El Sionismo Cristiano y los Fundamentalismos Religiosos, Políticos y Económicos»* concluyó viernes 11 de noviembre en la ciudad de Santiago de Chile. Entre sus participantes, estuvo la pastora guatemalteca y defensora de los derechos de las mujeres Delia Leal.

¿Cuáles son los temas abordados y su relevancia?

Los espacios de enunciación que se han venido desarrollando han versado sobre el apartheid global y el sistema de exclusión, el análisis de la situación geopolítica; las tendencias y divergencias en América Latina y Palestina; una exposición del contexto chileno; los testimonios que compartimos desde una perspectiva de mujeres feministas; el documento del kairós palestino sobre el apartheid, desde la voz palestina; el sionismo cristiano y la agenda política conservadora, escritura, medios y política; el uso de los textos sagrados como arma; el uso del antisemitismo como arma haciendo una crítica a la definición de la alianza internacional para el recuerdo del holocausto, la militarización y vigilancia para el control social; respuestas y estrategias para desafiar el sionismo cristiano y las estructuras de opresión y exclusión en nuestros respectivos territorios...

Todas estas ponencias, han sido abordadas de forma profesional, con ética y desde el respeto. Desde mi punto de vista, las ponencias más relevantes fueron el documento del kairós desde la voz palestina, y todo el análisis que se hizo de respuestas y estrategias para desafiar el sionismo cristiano y las estructuras de opresión y exclusión en nuestro respectivos

territorios. Me parece que fue una instancia muy, muy importante. Sentí que necesitábamos tratar con más profundidad el tema de los usos de los textos sagrados como armas y nos hubiese gustado que se ampliara o que se siga ampliando.

¿Qué temáticas afectan particularmente a las iglesias reformadas y evangélicas del continente?

Una de las problemáticas que afecta particularmente, son los imaginarios religiosos que se imponen mediante narrativas bíblicas sionistas-cristianas, dispensacionistas, a partir de textos bíblicos que sacralizan y al mismo tiempo demonizan mediante la manipulación.

Este modo de instrumentalización de lo sagrado y lo profano, descentraliza la fe responsable y comprometida con las transformaciones sociales. Por tanto, el sionismo cristiano debe ser detectado para hacer de construcciones pertinentes, caso contrario seguiremos teniendo poblaciones cristianas que no salen de su zona de confort y conciencias acomodadas.

¿Cómo se puede pensar la participación de las iglesias?

Desde el punto de vista bíblico – teológico, la lectura crítica como punto de partida puede ser una llave hermenéutica para trabajar los símbolos, las imágenes de Dios, el campo semántico de los textos, utilizados a su conveniencia, y el lenguaje teológico. Estos deben ser revisados y revitalizados a la luz de un Evangelio que dé señales de esperanza y acciones liberadoras en defensa de los derechos fundamentales de Palestina, y los contextos de América Latina que viven bajo regímenes políticos totalitaristas, Estados fallidos, etc.

¿Cuál es el vínculo actual entre América Latina y Palestina?

Como punto de partida debemos comenzar por reconocer que esta situación no es un conflicto geopolítico entre Israel y Palestina. Israel, como régimen de un Estado dictatorial, está generando alianzas económicas y armamentistas con países de América Latina por medio de un lenguaje ideológico mediante sistemas, políticas, economía y religión. Por tanto, ya no podemos seguir pensando que es un conflicto entre países. América Latina también a sufrido los horrores de un régimen de dictaduras y políticas de corrupción y militarización, por consiguiente nos unen contextos similares de opresión.

¿Cuáles temáticas considera que se deben seguir profundizando?

El fundamentalismo en América Latina se ha convertido en una estructura de poder coercitiva, que se impone mediante un lenguaje religioso que genera violencia simbólica y refuerza la represión en muchas áreas de la vida humana. Por tanto, se vuelve necesario profundizar en la comprensión de los fundamentalismos que hoy imperan, que deben ser releídos como un problema de carácter social que afecta la libertad y limita la emancipación de nuestros pueblos.

Participar en este seminario es tener la oportunidad para animar a construir topías, que son estrategias para hilar, tejer una propuesta de vida en abundancia para las mujeres, niñas y adolescentes.

(POR JOSUÉ CHARBONNIER/AIPRAL)

Latest Reformed World focuses on disabilities

The most recent issue of *Reformed World*, the WCRC's theological journal, is focused on the intersections of church and disability.

"Over the centuries, people with disabilities have been silenced, and often this has been truer in the church than in the world in which we live, serve, and witness. Scripture does not support this injustice, but the church has been reluctant to recognize it or act on it," wrote Terry DeYoung, guest editor, in the journal's introduction.

"Certainly, there are regional and cultural distinctives in how people with disabilities are viewed and treated; for example, in some parts of the world, disability is viewed as a curse for wrongdoing or a matter of shame for the individual or family members. But the call of the church to move toward justice for marginalized people, full inclusion, and greater belonging for all God's children is not and should not be subject to the winds of cultural realities," DeYoung wrote.

The edition features eleven essays, with two-thirds written by people with disabilities. The essays cover three topics: Theology and Scripture, Church Ministry and Practice, and Ecumenism and Theological Education.

For instance, in her essay "Disability Questions about Embodiment and Resurrection," Talitha Cooreman-Guittin explores the theology of the promised physical resurrection, writing, "All of this is to say that there are scriptural arguments in favour of maintaining disabilities in the afterlife. Again, we don't know what our bodies will be like in the afterlife. However, the way we think about our bodies in heaven has consequences for how we consider them here and now."

In his essay "Reformation Messages to the Church: Voices of Disability in a Pandemic," Gordon Cowans argues, "The church's vocation is to be the sign and servant of God's design to gather humanity and all of creation into communion under the lordship of Christ (Ephesians 1:10). The church will only be able to live this vocation when it learns to appreciate the presence of and the gifts from all its members."

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Anjeline Okola, in "Disability and the Ecumenical Movement," explores the "journey of the disability work in the World Council of Churches members and how this has led to disability discourse in churches and in theological education," also covering how "this has given the ecumenical movement an opportunity to benefit from a variety of perspectives that have given voice to the rich and diverse theological meanings of the human experience of disability."

"If you count yourself among those wanting to welcome the full participation of people with disabilities in your church, read and share the articles in this issue of *Reformed World*. Then search out various people with disabilities in your midst, ask them what barriers are keeping them from participating in your church and its ministries of justice, inclusion, and reconciliation, and then invite them to be teachers, leaders, and change agents. Many of us are eager to join you in responding to God's call," wrote DeYoung.

This and previous editions of *Reformed World* are free to download through this link: wrcr.ch/theology/reformed-world

NIFEA partners urge G20 leaders to tackle crises

The five partners in the NIFEA effort have sent a letter to the G20 leaders, urging them “to ‘recover together’ and ‘recover stronger’” from intertwined crises as a global community.

Noting three interlocking crises—social, climate, and economic—along with “an alarming food crises,” the letter states, “We need an economic system that is equitable, respects planetary boundaries, involves the participation of all and nourishes the health and resiliency of our communities and ecosystems.”

The letter lists the following measures for the G20 to pursue:

- Adopt new economic and wellbeing indicators that deliver better outcomes for people and the planet and place them at the centre of policymaking.
- Stronger rules to curb financial speculation on food, energy, and other vital commodities.
- Adequate social protection for the socio-economically vulnerable (including children, the aged, and those unable to work) and support to small farmers.
- An end to subsidies to giant agri-businesses and the fossil fuel industry coupled with fast-tracked and tripled investments in sustainable, community-based agricultural and renewable energy systems.
- Cancellation of unsustainable debts and a moratorium on debt payments for low and middle-income countries in debt distress while their debts are being renegotiated.

- A stronger global effort of cooperation to realize systems of just taxation to raise resources to fund social protection systems and the public investments needed to address the climate emergency.

“For churches, the fullness of life and all that contributes to it are essential to our faith and practice. Through the NIFEA process, we seek an economic system that looks after the well-being of all and particularly the most vulnerable, while bringing us back within planetary boundaries, protecting the diversity of life, and safeguarding the future of coming generations. Our faith perspectives and valuing of justice and peace demand that the poor and the dispossessed lie at the centre of our economic thinking and that our economic systems also work to serve their needs,” the letter states.

The New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) is a collaborative ecumenical effort that brings together the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council, and the Council for World Mission. It is partially supported by funding from *Otto per Mille*.

The G20 leaders held a summit in Bali, Indonesia, on 15-16 November.

Partnership Fund being reviewed

The Reformed Partnership Fund, which has provided small grants to member churches for more than two decades, is being put on hiatus in 2023 while both its funding and effectiveness are reviewed.

No applications for regular or emergency projects will be accepted during this period.

Reasons for this decision include decreases in both donations to the Fund and staff capacity to manage the reporting requirements, a shift in strategic goals of the Communion, and concerns that the Fund as currently utilized is not as impactful as desired.

The hiatus will allow the Reformed Partnership Fund Committee to review all aspects of the Fund before deciding on its future.

Kassab addresses Swiss synod

WCRC President Najla Kassab brought greetings to the Synod of the Protestant Church in Switzerland.

“We thank God for the opportunity of meeting as partners and members in the World Communion of Reformed Churches, committed to a journey together towards justice,” Kassab said.

“‘Called to Communion, committed to justice’ remains the theme that guides our joint efforts. Today we affirm our enthusiasm to live our call for continual reform and to speak to the needs of the people, in securing the dignity of the people. We meet to focus on the people rather than institutions and structures, and we dare to stand for all that the Word of God challenges us so that all may have life and dignity,” she said.



// President Kassab addresses the synod. //

normal for many countries. Peace is urgent today, as we face war in Ukraine, a neighbour in pain,” said Kassab, who visited Ukraine earlier this year.

Trotta raised several challenges currently facing the church, including welcoming strangers—specifically noting refugees—and the concerns that the church should focus on spirituality rather than social action.

In arguing for “spirituality *and* human rights, bread and freedom together,” Trotta said, “For us, it is not only a matter of Christian solidarity for people in need but an opportunity of salvation for everybody.”

While in Bern, Kassab also presented the Sylvia Michel Prize to Rebecca Mutumosi Mfutila and spoke on a panel about Christians in the Middle East, focused on the document “We Choose Abundant Life.”



// The synod gathered in the Bern Rathaus. //

The synod gathered 7-8 November in the Bern Rathaus. In its business, the synod re-elected Evelyn Borer as synod moderator and dealt with future financial planning.

“Justice is an urgent, pressing need today whether it is related to climate change, or solving conflicts through dialogue away from weapons, or dealing with ongoing wars that have become a continued lifestyle and

“We cannot face all the injustices today away from coming together in sincere commitment to *koinonia*, of trusting that as Reformed family, we are called to work together,” she said. “The challenge of involvement of the church in the public sphere, or the empowerment of

women in the life of the church, or inviting the marginalized among us to the table, or leading the ecumenical dialogue, are key tasks that the Reformed identity demands from us.”

Also addressing the synod was Alessandra Trotta, moderator of the Waldensian Evangelical Church of Italy. She reviewed the historical support and connections between the two churches, noting, “The past talks to our present.”

» Today we affirm our enthusiasm to live our call for continual reform and to speak to the needs of the people. «

WCRC Round-Up



Following on the successful launch of the GRAPE—Global Reformed Advocacy Platforms for Engagement—project in South Africa earlier this year, a second pilot project was launched in Kenya in September. The GRAPE program aims to build advocacy campaigns for economic justice and peace-building, built by local churches, empowered through the global Communion to become agents of decisive and tangible change on the local and national level and beyond. GRAPE is funded through a variety of sources, including *Brot für die Welt* and *Otto per Mille*.



The Global Christian Forum's first post-pandemic in-person regional consultation and international committee meeting was held in Seoul in October. In partnership with Myungsung Church, it was a time of worship, reflection, prayer, and conversation, bringing together Christian leaders from across the continent of Asia, together with other international Christian leaders, including Hanns Lessing, WCRC acting general secretary.



The World Communion of Reformed Churches is continuing its partnership with the Waldensian Evangelical Church's *Otto per Mille* (OPM) program, which provides funding for social justice and diaconal projects around the world. The WCRC uses money from OPM to support its New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) project, peace and reconciliation work in a variety of countries, efforts for climate justice, and more.



Last year, the WCRC Executive Committee declared a Decade for Climate Justice. A working group recently gathered at the WCRC's office in Hannover, Germany, to plan the work of the campaign, which will launch in early 2023.



Dora Arce Valentin, former WCRC executive for justice and partnership and now executive secretary for AIPRAL, the WCRC's Latin American regional council, paid a visit to the offices in Hannover, Germany, after the WCC 12th Assembly in Karlsruhe. Here, she's pictured (center) with current and former interns.



// Albin Hillert/Life on Earth //

FROM THE COLLEGIAL GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

—Luke 2:10-11

This last year has made us realize how violent our world is. Besides conflicts in Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Palestine, and elsewhere, we also know of the contexts of covert, quotidian, almost banal violence that takes place through poverty, patriarchy, and racism. We approach Christmas in this context of violence. However, if we look at the Christmas story closely, we find that the story challenges the violence in society, speaking powerfully against it.

At the heart of it, the scandal of Christmas is that it is about a young unwed mother. But what is beautiful about the story of the incarnation of God into our world is that men are missing. The story is about a girl, God, who is beyond gender, and a baby! The man is missing from the equation, and though Joseph does step up, he plays virtually no role in the story of the incarnation. In this most significant event of history, man is missing as God becomes flesh. This is a challenge to patriarchy and the violence of patriarchy. God brings salvation to the world through a girl, the Spirit, and a baby.

And at the centre of Christmas lies a baby! This is the paradox of God’s plan of salvation for us—this Lord, the Messiah, is wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. Scholars suggest to us that weak babies were wrapped in swaddling bands to offer support to weak limbs. Being born in a manger, a stinky smelly, indicates extreme poverty. The Messiah, the Lord of all, is born in weakness, physical infirmity, and extreme poverty. Salvation in the world does not come from the powerful but from the weak and poor child.

The story is also about the shepherds, not allowed into mainstream Jewish society because they were thought to be unclean. The good news about Jesus is not proclaimed in the city centre, from the town squares, or even amid the temple or synagogues; instead, the chorus of angels speaks of the good news in the fields among shepherds. The good news of salvation is not proclaimed at the centres of political and economic power; instead, it is sung on the outskirts, on the margins of society. These shepherds are on the margins and then come into Bethlehem to see the child and witness what they have seen and heard to others. The surprise of this text is that it indicates that instead of the absorption of the margins into the mainstream, the margins invade the mainstream. The movement is from outwards in and not inwards out, showing to us clearly that our salvation comes from the outside, from the margins.

The incarnation of God is a paradox, a surprise, not only because God becomes flesh but because it challenges the basic assumptions of the dominant society. It brings true peace to this very violent world. The promise of Christmas is that a baby can change the world in which we live; the promise of Christmas is the promise of the presence of God with us; it is the promise of Emmanuel, of a God who journeys with us to overcome this violence.

(The full text can be found at wrc.ch/blog/2022-christmas-meditation.)

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