



**Tribute to the Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick**  
**By Setri Nyomi (Rev. Dr.), Interim General Secretary,**  
**World Communion of Reformed Churches**

It is with a sense of deep sadness that we heard of the passing on of our friend and colleague, Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick. Cliff was a dear friend whose leadership and pastoral gifts were very inspirational in my ministry and ecumenical engagement. Our friendship has spanned more than a quarter of a century. We met for the first time in 1996 when the small team commissioned by WARC to put together the document “Reformed Self-Understanding met in Louisville Kentucky. We were warmly welcomed by the then new Stated Clerk of the PCUSA. That was before my time as General Secretary of WARC. Since then, Cliff made a mark on me. I saw him as an insightful theologian and ecumenical leader committed to justice. Our friendship really took off when I became General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and we discovered we had so much in common and therefore mutually enjoyed many conversations together.

In my memoirs published in 2020, I made the following statements:

From 2004 to 2010, Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick was the President of the WARC. His experience as a Church leader, his understanding of the mission of the church, his commitment to justice and for the struggle to fund funds at our difficult times and our friendship all added to a great time of working together. We led together and journeyed together through some challenges. It is a tribute to his leadership ability that, under his Presidency, WARC made great strides in our commitment to justice and also united with the Reformed Ecumenical Council. (*By God’s Grace, Memoirs of Setri Nyomi (2020)*, page 138)

Cliff had a passion for the unity of the church and for the church including in its mission a strong commitment to justice. Together, we helped churches around the world understand the significance of the Accra Confession and facilitated its reception, and we worked towards the unity of WARC and the Reformed Ecumenical Council into the present-day World Communion of Reformed Churches.

We (the WCRC and the ecumenical movement and I personally) will miss Cliff. Indeed, he leaves a vacuum which will be difficult to fill. On behalf of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, we give thanks for the life of the Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick and his impact on church and society.

Our President, Rev. Najla Kassab has this to say: “We lost in the death of Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, a special leader who impacted many lives around the Communion. His Leadership was humble, pastoral and focused on promoting church unity, and strengthening global partnerships within the Reformed family and beyond. His eyes have

always been on the witness of the church for Jesus Christ. He is a leader whom you can trust and befriend and who inspires you to work for the Global church and believe that we can make a difference. We thank God for his life and for all the richness that he brought for the church locally and worldwide.”

May he rest in perfect peace. Our condolences to his daughter, Rev. Elizabeth Kirkpatrick and the rest of the family.