

President's Address  
27th General Council,  
"Persevere in your witness,"  
Chiang Mai,  
October 14-23, 2025

We meet today in Chiang Mai, where culture, tradition, and modern life come together in a dynamic journey of heritage and growth. We gather in a context where the Church seeks to impact society through acts of love—whether through educational or medical services, or by witnessing to our risen Lord.

We are grateful to hold our General Council in Thailand, within the Asian context, hoping this will strengthen the ministry of the Church in the region and deepen the spirit of cooperation and witness among us. We will be enriched in our discussions through the contributions of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities.

This year marks a special moment as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the World Communion itself—founded in 1875 as *The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World*, which has grown into what we now know as the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

We are at a historic moment in time, as the world faces several critical challenges. These include the climate crisis and environmental stress, which have brought changes in rainfall patterns and water scarcity in many parts of the world; geopolitical realignment and multipolarity, alongside strategic competition and political populism; and the rise of generative AI and other new technologies, which offer both opportunity and risk. All this takes place while the world continues to suffer the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019

and caused enormous global disruptions to health systems, economies, and societies.

Nor can we forget the ongoing wars and conflicts that continue to prevail—whether in the Middle East, particularly with the escalation in the Gaza Strip; in Sudan; in Pakistan and Haiti; or amid the continuing struggle for peace on the Korean Peninsula. We witness the persistent threats to Taiwan and Myanmar, and conflicts involving Ethiopia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, among other troubled regions—each of which deepens injustice and robs people of dignity.

We also observe the rise of new political and economic alliances shaping a world that waits anxiously to see how this emerging order will affect the global community—especially the most fragile nations.

Nor should we overlook the refugee crisis, where wars and economic injustices have driven increasing numbers of people from their homes. Just as the world was striving to respond to the ongoing displacement of millions, new waves of refugees have emerged both from Europe and within Europe itself. The injustice of war has crept into countless lives and families; the same fear we have long seen in the eyes of children in the Middle East, Sudan, and Korea now haunts the children of Ukraine.

No one knows how long these crises will last, but death, pain, and injustice continue to spread—and, in the end, it is the simple and powerless who pay the highest price. Nor can we ignore the economic and racial injustices that persist globally. Poverty and inequality remain serious threats that endanger many nations.

During all this, we are called to be a Communion of hope. The Church is daily challenged to proclaim the Good News, to be the voice of all who struggle, and to move together toward living hope on earth while dreaming of a better tomorrow.

## **Part 2 – Perseverance, Renewal, and Reformed Identity**

As a Communion, we meet today as an affirmation of our perseverance and our assurance that God is with us. In our perseverance, we witness to a living God who is at work in our Communion. It is a witness to the role that this Communion has played—and continues to play—on both regional and global levels.

If we observe the themes that we focused on at our previous General Council in Leipzig, Germany (29 June – 7 July 2017)—“Living God, renew and transform us”—and this 27th General Council, “Persevere in your witness,” we recognize a consistent call to dynamic life, whether in good times or in difficult times. It is a call to move forward toward renewal and transformation even as we face challenges.

This call lies at the heart of the Reformed identity, which summons us to continual reformation centered on the “God of life.” God continually challenges us to ask how our faith relates to daily life and how we can be an impactful Communion—one that is restless until God’s will in heaven is lived on earth, where justice prevails.

This is why the issue of role, impact, and renewed identity remains at the heart of our struggle: because we are restless in discerning what God requires of us and calls us to do, as we seek to reflect a life of *koinonia* rooted in God’s call for justice.

### **Part 3 – A Communion under Construction**

When the WCRC was reshaped in 2010, the opening sermon was given by Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff, who said:

“At this historic gathering, it is so appropriate not only that we are beginning our journey to unity in the Spirit in worship, but also that we are doing so in the clear awareness that we are gathered as the people of God.

Yes, we are a people of the Reformation—and we are here under the rubric of many names—but together we are a people under

construction.

We have chosen to describe that construction as a communion—a fellowship—a spiritual house—an ecumenical organization—a testimony—a vehicle—to bear witness to the centrality of Jesus Christ and the gospel that has made us whole.

Before we come together to do the work of God, we need to be constructed into that ‘spiritual house’ so that we might perform and live into the ‘holy priesthood’ we are called to be.”

*(Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff, p. 206, Minutes of the 2010 Uniting General Council)*

If we were to describe ourselves today, we would say that we are a Communion under construction—on a journey of renewal, transformation, and perseverance, striving to be a “spiritual house.” We are on a journey of living out our spirituality in the streets, among those who are wounded and struggling, discerning the role of the Communion enriched by *mission from the margins*.

Since 2010, the Communion has taken serious steps toward justice rooted in Christ, seeking to lift us from our woundedness as broken humanity. Today we celebrate our mission together and recognize the blessings that we enjoy, even in these difficult days. We gather not to speak merely of past meetings, but to commit ourselves to a renewed mission with full dedication and commitment.

As David Bosch reminds us in his book *Transforming Mission*, “Mission is not only about saving souls but about changing the world.”

To be called today to live our faith is to live a transforming discipleship that impacts the world.

## **Part 4 – Persevere: Mutual Encouragement and the Spirit of Not Giving Up**

We meet today around the theme “Persevere in Your Witness,” the theme of the WCRC 27th General Council held October 14–23, 2025, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, guided by Hebrews 12:1 (NRSV):

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great 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.”

The passage in Hebrews begins with the word *therefore*, which alludes to the preceding chapter—Hebrews 11—that presents the great “cloud of witnesses” who lived by faith, did not give up, and persevered in hope for what they did not yet see. The text names Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah—all of whom “were living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.” (*Hebrews 11:13*)

Hebrews 11 then continues to name Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the parents of Moses, and Moses himself, stressing:

29. By faith, the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

30. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after the army had marched around them for seven days.

31. By faith, the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

After naming all those who walked by faith, the text says, *therefore*—with all this cloud of witnesses—*let us persevere*.

It seems that the community of faith to whom Hebrews was addressed consisted of converts from Judaism who had begun to feel weary and disheartened. This is why the author writes to them: to encourage them to persevere, to keep the faith, to continue the race, and not to give up—to persevere in their witness.

## **Understanding Perseverance**

The word *persevere* can sometimes be misunderstood or even provoke discomfort among those living in contexts of struggle. It might be taken to mean passive acceptance of reality or mere waiting and postponement.

However, the word used here for *perseverance*—*hupomone*—carries a much richer and more active meaning. It refers to steadfast endurance: doing what is right and never yielding to temptation or trial. *Hupomone* describes the ability to face life's trials triumphantly. It is the capacity to withstand the blows of life and to transform them into steppingstones toward new achievement.

The term comes from two Greek words: *hupo* (under) and *menō* (remain)—meaning “to remain under.” It describes a spirit that remains under trial in a God-honoring way, seeking to learn the lessons that can only be learned through endurance, rather than escaping hardship simply for relief.

The keynote of *hupomonē* is not grim or bleak resignation, but triumph. It speaks of a spirit that does not merely accept suffering but overcomes it victoriously. It is a courageous endurance that transforms even the worst experiences into steps on an upward path.

Thus, perseverance becomes a practice of faith—especially in times of distress. It is an invitation to draw upon spiritual resources that are often neglected. Perseverance recognizes the promise wherever there is an opportunity for life-giving engagement. In doing so, it transforms communities into bodies of mutual encouragement and care.

Perseverance reflects persistent engagement until resurrection is lived—until a better tomorrow for all is realized.

## **Part 5 – The Communion Journey of Perseverance**

If we were to describe the journey of the Communion over the past eight years, we could not help but see that it has truly been a journey of

perseverance—from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, to financial difficulties, to the absence of a General Secretary, to an overworked staff; from the adaptation of the CGS model to meet the commitments and needs of the Communion, to the appointment of an interim General Secretary, to the ongoing challenge of encouraging greater involvement of people within the regions.

Yet, during all this, the spirit of perseverance has kindled new strength within the Communion and inspired many not to give up, but to continue seeking a deeper understanding of our witness on both the local and global levels.

We have deepened our commitment to justice, and our perseverance through these challenging years has helped us learn together a shared language for expressing the vision and mission of the WCRC—affirming the fundamental theological and identity concepts that unite us.

Amid all the challenges, our programmatic work was strengthened, and a sincere commitment to that work has deepened our sense of Communion. We recognize the new developments achieved in the fields of advocacy, gender justice, and ecumenical dialogue. Even in difficult times, we discerned the blessings that come from persevering in our witness.

The days have been—and continue to be—difficult, but through perseverance, we have grown stronger as we face challenges together. We have reached this point because of God, who journeyed with us and transformed crises into kairos moments. In the middle of all these trials, we discerned the blessings of perseverance in our witness.

As a Communion, we can affirm that our programmatic work has matured, even though some regions have been more actively involved than others.

## **Part 6 – Persevering in Justice and Prophetic Witness**

As a Communion that focuses on justice, we could easily become discouraged when we look at what is happening in the world. Despite all the intentional work being done toward justice, the world has witnessed even greater injustices—reaching at times the verge of inhumane cruelty.

As I write this report, the war in Ukraine enters its fourth year, with no clear end in sight. The war in Israel and Palestine continues, and the recent developments in Gaza have been devastating:

- 66,000 Palestinians killed since October 7, 2023.
- 168,000 wounded, among them 13,000 children and 56,000 injured adults;
- Over 500,000 people living in catastrophic conditions.
- By early September 2025, 361 people—including 130 children—had died from malnutrition.
- Hundreds of thousands displaced many of them multiple times.
- 26 hospitals out of service.
- 400 healthcare workers killed; and
- 56 schools damaged or destroyed.

The intensity of the killing in Gaza—compounded by hunger and unlivable conditions—has revealed the forsakenness felt by the people there, abandoned without any power or organization capable of protecting their dignity.

We have become preoccupied with words and terminology rather than substance. While people are dying—colonized, kidnapped, oppressed, and stripped of their dignity—the world watches. This is what truly matters.

The burst of student movements in universities across the world in recent months reflects a cry for lost dignity and freedom of expression

—a resistance to a global silence that has numbed moral conscience. This movement calls us to ask:

### **What prophetic role can we play?**

We are called to break the shackles of slogans and to lift a prophetic voice, in the spirit of those students who dared to take risks and speak out—not against any religion or race, but for humanity. Speaking prophetically remains the ongoing challenge that Christ places before us.

We hope that the theme of this General Council will guide us toward hearing the voices of those whose witness is shaped by perseverance—and help us grow in maturity as a spiritual house.

Recently, we have begun to see a growing consensus regarding the inhumane conditions faced by the people in Gaza. We hope that the ongoing negotiations for a ceasefire—and we pray, a lasting peace—will bear fruit, and that the Church will be an active participant in the process, not merely a passive recipient of outcomes.

### **Part 7 – The Accra Confession: Perseverance and Justice**

On our journey of perseverance in witness, we have become assured as a Communion that the Accra Confession remains the foundational pillar of our justice work and identity. We are called to reflect deeply on the values expressed in the Accra Confession and to recognize its enduring relevance to our present context.

In 2024, we celebrated twenty years since the adoption of the Accra Confession (2004) and reaffirmed that it was not only prophetic in its original proclamation but also continues to speak powerfully today amid the ongoing economic and ecological injustices of our world. The Confession emphasized that inequalities and ecological crises are interconnected—and that confronting them is a matter of faith.

The Communion has rekindled a process of recollection, repentance, and recommitment to global economic and ecological justice, echoing the vision of creation's liberation from suffering. Creation continues to groan, and both people and the earth still endure deep wounds caused by human greed and indifference.

We live in a scandalous world where injustice prevails and where political and economic systems perpetuate suffering. The neoliberal economic order, with its relentless pursuit of profit at the expense of people and the planet, remains fundamentally opposed to the Christian faith. It offers a false promise of salvation while demanding an endless stream of sacrifices—from the poor and from creation itself.

The Accra Confession, more than twenty years ago, opened our eyes to truths that still challenge our faith. It exposed the tendency among Christians to divide life into separate compartments—*spiritual, social, economic, political, cultural, and racial*—instead of understanding these dimensions as parts of a unified calling.

The Confession urged us to bring these realities into dialogue under the central theme: “Justice for all and fullness of life for all.” This dialogue leads us toward a stronger faith and a deeper communion—one that rejects easy answers and embraces the hard, transformative work of truth and justice.

We recognize the enormity and complexity of the challenges before us. We do not seek simple solutions. As seekers of truth and justice—looking through the eyes of the powerless and suffering—we affirm with the Confession that the current global disorder is rooted in an immoral and exploitative economic system (*Accra Confession, §11*).

The Accra Confession continues to challenge the integrity of our faith, reminding us to strive for the fulfillment of God's will “on earth as it is in heaven” (*Matthew 6:10*). It calls us to align our daily living with our Sunday worship—to stop thinking of our comfort first, to recognize the

pain of others, and to evaluate the world through the eyes of those who suffer and are marginalized.

As I was writing this address, the situation in Lebanon where I live, remained unstable, and Palestinian injustice persisted. Death continues on all sides, hostages remain captive, and the future appears uncertain. We are waiting to see what new alliances and agendas will shape our world.

In such a context, I found myself asking whether the Church—or our Communion—has any real impact on the injustices surrounding us. Can our voice as a faith community make a difference? We have spoken of justice for many years. Yet at times, what we do as a Communion may appear to be mere words on paper. There is discouragement in the air—felt by many who live under oppression and ask, “What has the Church done for us?”

Still, the Accra Confession challenges us to remain a voice of faith and hope—trusting that we are a Communion still in the making, led by the Holy Spirit, and that God has not finished with us yet. We are called to believe that we can make a difference, to speak, and to stand where God stands.

This is why we cannot remain silent. Silence would place our faith under scrutiny and threaten its very integrity. We are challenged to live out our confession, guided by the Holy Spirit, with honesty and courage—even when it means changing the way we live.

This is the essence of the Accra Confession: it is not a collection of words, but a call to action that transforms the present, eases the suffering of creation, and points to where it hurts. In this way, the Confession continues to challenge and deepen our sense of Communion—reminding us that we come together not for ourselves, but for others.

By confessing our faith together, we enter a covenant of obedience to God’s will, as an act of faithfulness, mutual solidarity, and accountable relationships. This binds us to work for justice in both the economy and the earth—locally, regionally, and globally (*Accra Confession, §37*).

The Accra Confession continues to inspire us:

- To envision a Church committed to justice and prophetic action in times of crisis—foundational to our Reformed identity.
- To serve as a prophetic declaration against the destructive forces of economic globalization and the systemic marginalization of women and oppressed peoples.
- To emphasize inclusive justice frameworks and a shared aspiration for a compassionate, joy-filled future.
- To embrace an “Economy of Care”—largely carried by women through the care of the elderly and children—focusing on the well-being of all, building an economy rooted in hope, compassion, and mutual support.

The “Accra Plus Twenty” process has become a renewed space for collective resolve—to amplify the Reformed community’s prophetic voice against global inequality and to promote economic and ecological decisions that prioritize people and the planet. It embodies our shared hope for a compassionate, equitable, inclusive, and peaceful world—a peace that surpasses human understanding.

Even as we develop new terminologies to describe emerging realities, we remain faithful to the spirit of the Accra Confession, committed to continuing this journey with truth and courage.

## **Part 8 – Perseverance and the Challenge of Sustainability**

On our journey of perseverance as a Communion, we continue to face the ongoing challenge of finances.

One of the greatest difficulties we encounter—one that has demanded much of our energy and perseverance—is securing adequate funding for the core budget, which sustains the administrative structure and supports staff who carry out the programs and mission of the Communion.

This has been a longstanding issue, raised even during the 2010 Assembly, and remains a central concern today. However, we are now hopeful, thanks to the launch of the “10 Euro per Year” fundraising campaign, which involves all members of the Communion—from Executive Committee members to people in the pews. Through this collective effort, we trust that we will be able to overcome this challenge. Serious discussions are already underway regarding strategies to secure and stabilize the core budget.

Sustainability lies at the heart of our journey of perseverance. Before COVID-19, the contributions from member churches were beginning to improve, and progress was made toward more equitable contributions across different regions—a healthy sign of shared responsibility. Yet, during the pandemic, many churches faced financial strain, which impacted their ability to contribute to the core budget that provides staff salaries and operational stability.

The financial commitment of member churches remains essential for sustaining the work of the Communion. The number of staff is already limited in relation to the scope of our programs, and thus, we are challenged to rekindle the spirit of financial responsibility and covenantal commitment among our churches.

“Paying membership fees is a strong statement of belonging to, and empowerment within, the Communion.”

It is a covenant relationship that binds us in both good and difficult times—a promise we made when we joined the Communion. It is vital that members of WCRC encourage churches to express their belonging through financial contribution. If we wish to secure the future of our

mission, we must ensure that we have the human capacity and resources necessary for fruitful and organized work.

I must recognize and express deep gratitude to the staff, who have carried heavier loads with great commitment and dedication, helping the Communion to persevere. I also extend heartfelt thanks to our partners, who have supported the salaries of three new staff positions and continue to walk closely with us in our programmatic work.

Through these financial challenges, we have matured as a Communion, learning to face adversity with solidarity and faith. We also give thanks for the great cloud of witnesses—individuals who have contributed their time, energy, and talents—whose selfless dedication goes far beyond monetary value. The Communion is stronger today because of this shared spirit of togetherness and deeper because of the sacrifices many have made.

We acknowledge the strong and growing relationships with our partners, whose collaboration enriches our collective ministry. We value the journey we share and the richness that comes from walking and working together.

## **9- Strengthening the Regions**

As a Communion, we believe that the strength of our work lies in the regions. We continue to explore how to strengthen regional collaboration, particularly in areas that lack energy, structure, or leadership—challenges that became more pronounced after COVID-19.

Some regional councils have become weakened, while others remain active. We are challenged to reimagine and revitalize regional cooperation, ensuring that every part of the Communion can contribute meaningfully to the whole.

The relationship between the global office and the regions is key to a healthy and vibrant Communion. We are enriched by the ministry and

witness of our regional churches, each of which contributes unique gifts and insights.

To encourage the work in the regions is to strengthen the entire body. The strength of the Communion does not reside in the global office alone—though we have capable and committed staff—but in the shared empowerment of the regions alongside the global work.

Collaboration between the global and regional levels continues to grow stronger, yet we must cultivate a regular rhythm of meetings to deepen harmony, mutual accountability, and shared responsibility for human and financial resources—for the well-being of the Communion as a whole.

We hope the General Council will be a time of walking closely with the regions to secure all the resources necessary for a successful assembly. Our shared commitment urges us to offer all that God has provided—in service of ministry, justice, and a better world. In this spirit, we come together to share our gifts and blessings with all.

## **10-Ecumenical Life and Identity**

As a Communion, we are blessed by our shared endeavor of living our faith alongside others. Our ecumenical life lies at the very heart of who we are, deeply rooted in our Reformed identity.

Recently, in one of my interviews, I was asked a profound question about my Church:

“If your Church were not there, what difference would it make?” In the same way “What role does the Communion have on the global level?”

I believe that, as a Communion, we play a vital role in the ecumenical sphere as:

1. A Cloud of Witness to the Ecumenical World:

To be *Reformed* is to be *ecumenical* As a Communion, we are a cloud of witnesses to the ecumenical work and mission and its

prophetic voice. Strengthening our Communion strengthens the broader ecumenical movement. I am often surprised when some churches do not give the necessary attention to the Communion. If we wish to have a lasting impact on the ecumenical world, we must invest in strengthening our common life—not only financially, but through presence and engagement. The level of leadership involvement within the Communion reflects the depth of our commitment to it.

2. A Cloud of Witness for a Prophetic Voice:

The Communion offers a space where free and honest expression is encouraged. We are called to raise a clear prophetic voice, independent of political or media-driven agendas. Today, people are trapped in a climate of division and polarization, fueled by slogans such as “pro-Islam,” “anti-Semitic,” or “pro-Hamas” — labels that have paralyzed the Church and silenced her witness. We are called to break the chains of such slogans and to speak prophetically—not against anyone, but *for humanity*.

3. A Cloud of Witness for Accountability:

Our Reformed tradition teaches that accountability and evaluation are not threats but blessings, when discerned communally in the Spirit of Christ. Through shared evaluation and honest reflection, we strengthen the Communion and deepen our collective witness. Perseverance has taught us the value of togetherness and constructive accountability, which allows us to envision new possibilities and structures for growth.

4. A Cloud of Witness for Economic and Ecological Justice:

We are called to continually reflect on the values of the Accra Confession, reaffirming its prophetic relevance to today’s world. It reminds us that economic and ecological injustices are intertwined and must be met with faithful resistance rooted in hope.

5. A Cloud of Witness for Gender Justice:

We affirm the role of women in leadership and decision-making as integral to the vitality and credibility of our Communion. Gender justice remains inseparable part of our identity

6. –A cloud of witness for Justice rooted in Worship

As a Communion, we are rooted in a spirituality that connects faith with action. Our theme of perseverance reflects a faith that works toward transformative change, where our commitments move us to action.

Unless our spirituality meets the struggles of people in their daily lives—in their pain and suffering—we risk becoming a poetic Communion, eloquent in speech but ineffective in justice.

This is why worship and justice are inherently intertwined.

Worship elevates God through praise, prayer, and reverence—but it's true purpose is to manifest God's commandments in every area of life. To elevate God is to live out God's justice.

## **11-Points of Concern**

1-Sustainability remains at the heart of our concerns, only for maintaining a healthy core budget and financial resources, but also as a sign of our collective commitment to the WCRC.

2- Strategizing our plans, visitation and programs to connect with all regions

Strategizing travel in ways that directly support our mission and strategic goals is essential for moving forward. To coordinate and prioritize spreading our programs in a way that most effectively strengthens the Communion's work and to emphasize the importance of regional visitation, reinforcing connection and visibility throughout the Communion.

3. Strengthening Communication

Communication is one of the most vital elements for building a strong Communion. It strengthens both our internal bonds and our public witness.

That is why our Strategic Plan gives special attention to communication. Through the Communication Desk, we can produce:

- A short video introducing the Strategic Plan,
- A user-friendly document promoting our identity, vision, and mission.

Enhancing our media presence and inter-church communication will create a dynamic network that helps member churches learn from one another and share in each other's ministries.

#### 4-. Capacity Concerns

A close reading of our Strategic Plan raises an essential question: *Do we have the capacity to fulfill our vision with our current staffing?*

At present, we have four executive staff, four administrative staff, and two interns. To achieve the level of excellence and competence required by our Strategic Plan, we must address this capacity gap.

We thank God for our qualified and enthusiastic staff, but we must also be creative in expanding our team through diverse means, partnerships, and volunteer engagements. We are also challenged on

- Strengthening our connection with the regions and involving them more regularly in decision-making.
- Maintaining close communication with our main financial supporters, particularly those who sustain much of our budget, and listening carefully their insights and expectations.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities in matters of governance and management.

- Activating the SPPG Committee (Strategic Plan Programmed Group) to oversee the implementation and monitoring of our strategic goals.

## **12-Celebrating our Moving forward.**

There are several developments that provide positive steps in the life of the Communion:

### 1-Opening the Ecumenical Office in Rome

A significant step forward has been the establishment of an Ecumenical Reformed Office in Rome, in collaboration with our partners.

2- Involving female leaders in programs in the Global offices, reflecting a step towards just participation

3- The Communion is alive and vibrant in its programs despite the many challenges faced.

4-Enjoying growing cooperation with ecumenical partners and the stronger financial support for our programmatic work that reflects the trust and credibility we have built.

5-Creating two new positions in the global office- Executive Secretary for Mission and Advocacy and a Program Coordinator for Gender Justice — Additionally, a third staff member stationed in Rome, strengthening our ecumenical engagement. These developments made possible through the support of our partners, they will deepen our justice work and broaden our witness.

### 6. Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

It is not enough to have a Strategic Plan or to develop programs. We must also evaluate how these programs impact lives and move the Strategic Plan from words on paper into a tangible force for change.

The success of the Strategic Plan will not be measured by the number of activities, but by the depth of their impact—on the life of the Communion and the world around us.

For this reason, the SPPG plays a vital role as a catalyst for reflection and accountability. It will guide us through regular monitoring and through an annual report to the Executive Committee.

The key responsibilities of the SPPG include:

- Clarifying which programs are coordinated by which Reference Group.
- Monitoring whether programs are implemented according to the vision and values outlined in the Constitution and Strategic Plan.
- Receiving and reviewing reports from the Reference Groups and submitting them—through the General Secretary—to the Executive Committee.
- Ensuring that the Executive Committee’s decisions on programs are transmitted back to the Reference Groups for follow-up.

Through this structure, we are moving toward greater accountability at every level—among committees, officers, and members alike.

## **Part 13 – Gratitude, Reflection, and Final Remarks**

### Thank You and Appreciation

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the faithful dedication, and partnership shown by all who have contributed to the ministry of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). To all those who have committed themselves to witnessing to justice and deepening the life of the Communion—I will not mention names, for they are too many—many are present here today, while others could not join us. Together, they form a cloud of witnesses who never gave up, even amid challenges and trials. Through them, God has provided

assurance and strength. The Communion stands strong because of their faithfulness.

My gratitude also goes to our staff, whose tireless efforts behind the scenes—organizing, communicating, and nurturing the bonds that hold our diverse family together—have made a lasting impact on every corner of our Communion.

I also want to thank our interns, who generously gave one or two years of their lives to work with the Communion, experiencing both the blessings and challenges of serving within this global family.

I extend my sincere thanks to the members of the Executive Committee for their unwavering commitment to journeying with the Communion, ensuring that it remains healthy, vibrant, and forward-looking.

We thank God for the faithful officers who kept the Communion functioning during difficult times, working together and taking on the responsibilities in facing challenges and empowering the Communion to sustain its work during a critical period.

I would like to thank “The Committee” formed from capable leaders in the Communion who through its discernment, has provided invaluable guidance in addressing key issues, including the evaluation of several aspects in the life of the communion and helped the communion to move forward.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to our partners, organizations, and churches for their financial support and steadfast partnership in the ministry entrusted to us. Your contributions have made possible the ongoing work of justice, renewal, and peace that the Communion carries forward in Christ’s name. Through faithful giving, you have sustained programs that empower churches in mission, theological reflection, and advocacy for peace and economic justice. You have strengthened the bonds of fellowship among Reformed churches worldwide and given tangible expression to our shared calling—to be one body in Christ, serving the world God so loves. Your generosity is not merely a gift of

resources; it is a witness of faith. It reminds us that we are part of a global family, united in gratitude, service, and hope. For this, we give thanks to God—and to you.

I would also like to thank Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson, who led the Communion through challenging days and faithfully advanced the role of the Communion and work of justice, finishing his term during the COVID-19 period.

Special gratitude is also due to Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, our interim General Secretary, who graciously accepted the responsibility once again after fourteen years of prior service to the Communion. His humble and steady leadership brought renewed strength and hope. We are here today in large part because of his faithfulness and dedication. We wish him joy, peace, and health as he continues his ministry, bearing fruit in Ghana and throughout the world. I also take this opportunity to welcome the newly elected General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Philip Peacock, trusting that the Lord will journey with him as he carries the mission of the Communion forward.

### Gratitude to My Church and Family

I would like to express my profound appreciation to my church—the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon—for their unwavering support and understanding over the past eight years. Living and serving in a context of war, they nonetheless allowed me the time and space to fulfill my duties as President of the WCRC. Their commitment to justice and to the Communion has deeply inspired and sustained me.

I owe special thanks to my family—to my husband, Rev Joseph Kassab; my daughters, Mira and Tala, and their families; and my son, Jad—for their patience, understanding, and love. Even my granddaughter, who sees in me an “unusual grandmother,” has become part of this journey. Without their steadfast support, I could never have met the demands of

this calling. For all of them, the WCRC has become part of their lives, too.

## **14-Final Remarks**

The past eight years have been a journey of growth and blessing, marked by perseverance and the assurance of God’s abiding presence in our Communion. It has been a time of leading through crisis, and, as is often said, *crisis reveals character and shapes leadership*.

One quote that summarizes my story well is:

“Leaders absorb chaos, radiate calm, and inspire hope.”

— *Author Unknown*

This describes the spirit of leadership that was needed in times of turmoil. We were called to be courageous leaders—to inspire and uphold hope for one another. We worked together; endured the difficult days and trusted that this was a *kairos* moment—God’s time, when God could work through us.

Finally, I, I was introduced to Kintsugi, the ancient Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending it with lacquer mixed with gold, silver, or platinum. The philosophy behind Kintsugi is profound: *breakage and repair are part of the object’s history, not flaws to be hidden*. The cracks are not disguised but illuminated, transforming what was broken into something more beautiful than before.

As a Communion, we too have experienced difficult days, yet God has given us the grace to come together again reformed, renewed, and made stronger.

Like Kintsugi pottery, we are in the process of being reshaped. We are learning not to stop at brokenness but trusting that the Lord does turn pain into purpose, and wounds into witness.

At the very heart of our faith stands the Cross, which, like Kintsugi, reminds us that pain and brokenness are part of our history, but they do

not have the final say. Resurrection transforms our suffering, giving us a new reality—a renewed vessel formed in the hands of a loving God.

Brokenness will not have the last word. Our challenges will lead us toward a reality that is even more beautiful than before. We will not hide the pain but will work together to shape a new future—one that reflects the redemptive power of God’s grace.

This new reality is made visible through the life and witness of the Communion—locally and globally—as we learn to collaborate in trust, transparency, and shared purpose.

Today we meet as partners on a table of Hospitality “Communion” prepared by our Lord. May we make sure that we do not leave anyone out. May our General Council be a gathering where we rejoice in our witnessing together, in our persevering and may we be ready to hear anew what the lord requires from us. It is a blessing to be in Communion. To God be all glory. Amen.

**Note:** The translations of this document into other languages were made possible with the assistance of DeepL.