

**WCRC 27th General Council, Chiang Mai, 2025**  
**THEME INPUT D: Discerning the Vision and Mission of the WCRC**

Jooseop Keum

The 27<sup>th</sup> General Council is meeting at a time when the world faces profound challenges that demand not only perseverance but also prophetic witness. We are called to the reformed witness to act now in a day of climate crises, totalitarian terror, wars, and dysfunctional democracies. There are immediate and present dangers to many individuals and communities in our world. The experience of the reformed churches worldwide has exposed socio-political and economic polarisation, revealing unlimited forms of greed, corruption and oppression everywhere that result in vulnerability, deprivation and suffering for many. The world is deeply wounded. It's catastrophic, indeed. Despite occasional glimmers of hope, like that of recent ceasefire in Gaza, we are faced with the death-dealing forces of necropolitics that prevail in the current world order and inflict immense suffering on the poor and vulnerable.

As Park Seong-Won warned, humanity now stands at a civilizational crossroads shaped by two apocalyptic forces: the climate crisis and artificial intelligence. Creation is groaning, not metaphorically but biologically. Yet, amid this devastation, faith communities are called not to despair but to discern: what does it mean to persevere in witness when the very definition of humanity and justice is being rewritten by empire, capital, and code?

In his 2024 Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, Cornel West raises a missiological question: "How do we emerge from the bleakness of our catastrophic time?"

The Accra Confession (2004) prophetically named the global economy as an "idol that claims sovereignty over life." Two decades later, that imperial system has mutated into technocratic feudalism, a form of "digital empire" in which data, rather than land, is the colonized territory. Algorithms have become instruments of behavioral control, concentrating power in unelected hands and deepening inequality. As Shoshana Zuboff and Park note, this "surveillance capitalism" is the new empire that colonizes consciousness itself.

To resist empire today, the WCRC must move from Accra to decoloniality, a theological turn that unmask how empire persists through technology, patriarchy, racialized capitalism, and epistemic domination. Decolonial theology, informed by feminist, Indigenous, and postnational insights, is the continuation of the Accra resistance. It insists that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the liberation of life from every form of domination, political, economic, digital, and spiritual.

With this input, I would like to move to the questions that were given to us to reflect on:

**1. How the Contributions Inform and Enhance the Theological Self-Understanding of the WCRC?**

The Bible studies and plenary reflections together redefine WCRC's theological self-understanding around three interlocking insights:

### **1.1. Theology as Prophetic Praxis in the Age of Empire**

Otis Moss's keynote called the Church to recover its salt and light in a world addicted to "processed spirituality." Theology must therefore become praxis, public, prophetic, and political, resisting idolatrous powers that privatize faith. Park's proposal for a *status confessionis* on the climate crisis and a *processus confessionis* on AI demands the same courage as the anti-apartheid and Accra moments. Miriam Spies's Bible study pushes this further: she shows that empire's tools are not only economic or digital but also bodily. Empires decide whose bodies matter and whose do not. When the gospel itself is at stake, silence becomes sin. The WCRC's theological identity must thus be confessional, rooted in God's solidarity with the crucified Earth and the violated body of humanity.

### **1.2. Reclaiming the Margins as the Site of Revelation**

Both the Women's Caucus and the Youth Caucus embody theology from below. The women's report proclaims: "We are witnesses who speak with our own voices to the justice of God." Spies's crip theology further expands this voice, reminding us that disabled, wounded, and scarred bodies are also sites of divine revelation. The risen Christ's scars testify that God does not erase pain but redeems it. This intersectional lens, seeing the ecological and militarized crises as gendered realities, enriches Reformed theology with the wisdom of those erased from history.

### **1.3. Differential and Postnational Theologies of Justice**

From Nivedita Menon and Hanna Reichel we learn that justice and theology cannot be universal abstractions but must be differential, rooted in diverse, local, embodied experiences. Justice is not order restored but the breaking of the false order. Reichel reminds us that "God is not the guarantor of order but its necessary disruption." Menon's call for justice from below and beyond the nation challenges WCRC to envision itself as a postnational communion, one that transcends state boundaries and confesses solidarity with migrants, refugees, and stateless peoples.

## **2. How the Contributions Renew and Strengthen Our Communion?**

For me, the ongoing discernment at the General Council reveals both the strengths and the shortcomings. While the discernment has been mostly focused on perseverance in the theme, I felt that there has been no sufficient attention focused on witness. Perseverance, when detached from mission, risks becoming institutional endurance rather than transformative missional agenda. Therefore, while we must persevere amidst the challenges we face, we must also continue to witness to the living and liberating gospel of Christ.

### **2.1. Communion as *Kai-Taha*: Shared Table and Mutual Care**

Drawing on Jione Havea's *talanoa* on food and *kainga* (Matthew 14:13–21), we rediscover communion as the miracle of shared life. The feeding of the multitude was not about divine magic but about human sharing. The *kai-taha* the potluck of the poor, becomes an image

for WCRC's future: communion as collective care, where justice and food sovereignty are intertwined. Havea's insight that "the only thing that will overcome our compassion fatigue is being together" defines what communion must mean in an age of fragmentation and digital isolation. Additionally, Spies's theology of just communion converges here: bodies that eat together, lament together, and resist together reveal Christ's body in history.

## **2.2. Communion as Gendered, Generational, and Ecological Solidarity**

The renewal of communion requires the full inclusion of women and youth. The Women's Caucus calls for rejecting heterosexist patriarchy and promoting full ordination and leadership of women in every member church. Communion that excludes the feminine voice is incomplete and unfaithful. Similarly, the youth's prophetic impatience with bureaucratic inertia reminds us that perseverance without renewal becomes decay.

## **2.3. Communion in the Hyperconnected Economy**

In a world where "digital empires" manipulate our attention and behavior, communion must resist becoming another algorithmic network. Park's warning about "technological singularity" invites the WCRC to discern communion as counter-algorithm, human, ethical, spiritual connection grounded in care rather than data. The Reformed principle of *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* calls us to reform even our modes of connection.

## **3. How the Contributions Inspire a More Substantial Commitment to Justice**

The General Council called us to reimagine Justice, the beating heart of the WCRC's mission, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not as moral rhetoric, but as the structural transformation of life systems.

### **3.1. Justice as Disruption and Liberation**

Menon's insight that "if order is injustice, then disorder is the beginning of justice" reclaims the biblical prophetic tradition where God's Spirit disrupts oppressive peace. Reichel echoes this when she calls us to "welcome the Spirit's ability to disrupt both our systems and our desires." Justice, then, is not equilibrium but eschatological interruption: the breaking open of oppressive orders by God's liberating grace.

### **3.2. Justice as Decolonial, Ecological, and Economic Conversion**

Building on Accra, the WCRC must embrace decolonial justice, dismantling capitalist and epistemic hierarchies that continue to shape theology, mission, and leadership. Menon's feminist vision of degrowth and food sovereignty aligns with Havea's theology of *kai*. Justice here becomes the recovery of community economies of care, reciprocity, and local resilience. Decolonial justice demands that we move from extraction to restoration, from possession to participation, and from profit to providence.

### **3.3. Justice as Theological Perseverance in the AI Age**

Park's theological reading of the AI revolution warns that humanity risks repeating the sin of Genesis 3, seeking to "be like God" through technological omniscience. The Church's response must be confessional: to reaffirm that true knowledge is relational and moral, not

algorithmic. WCRC's commitment to justice must therefore include ethical literacy, AI regulation advocacy, and theological education that cultivates spiritual wisdom alongside technological literacy.

**In conclusion,**

I would like to highlight that perseverance without witness is survival without transformation. Our task, therefore, is to persevere in witness, to embody faith as resistance and hope as imagination. The future vision of the WCRC must integrate five movements:

- **From Empire to Communion:** resisting economic, digital, and ideological domination through the covenant of shared life.
- **From Growth to Degrowth:** living simply, sharing abundantly, and re-rooting economies in creation's rhythm.
- **From Nation to Postnation:** embracing a transboundary, postnational fellowship of churches and peoples who seek shalom beyond flags and borders.
- **From Patriarchy to Partnership:** ensuring the full and equal participation of women, youth, and all marginalized voices.
- **From Technocracy to simple Theology:** affirming that wisdom, compassion, and spirituality are the true markers of intelligence.

As the WCRC moves from Chiang Mai into its next chapter, it must not only confess against the idols of empire but create life-flourishing communities that live God's Jubilee here and now. In an age of climate collapse and artificial intelligence, the most radical confession remains the simplest: God is God, and life belongs to God.