

**World Communion of Reformed Churches
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The WCRC's theological understanding is stated as reformed and reforming, a contextual theology that reflects the reformed tradition as well as the experiences of communities and people. I am grateful for all the inputs we heard over these few days, for the presentations and interventions from the floor, as well as as from panelists and Bible study leaders. There has been a volume of rich content, and I believe it will take some time for us to navigate the layers presented to us. This has been a time of transformation and encounter with God, and it opens the discourse for what is next in the life of the communion as we consider the theological self-understanding of the WCRC.

The time together is informed by the realities of the world. Much continue to shift and require not only our response for justice, but our theological framing as we find and encounter god in the midst. The theology of the WCRC is itself a response to the signs of the time which must be read and heard in the life of the communion.

We are living in a COVID informed world, one in which the realities of marginalized communities were on display in ways that we had not seen before. While the pandemic is no longer at the fore of our news and discourse, the glaring needs of those days are yet among us. That said, here are a few additional items for consideration as we

Artificial Intelligence

We live in a changing world, one in which technologies intersect with the life of the church. The acceptance and use of AI is still new in the church. As the use of Ai becomes more pervasive this too will need to be considered for theological discourse. The use of AI is going to impact the church beyond some of the current conversations regarding intellectual property rights as regards sermon preparation. AI use brings challenges in the church and we have already heard presentations which reference AI in a variety of ways as well as the cautions issues by Professor Roderick Hewitt in his presentation.

Nationalism and Authoritarianism Veiled with Christian Narratives

While the WCRC has been at the forefront of conversations on authoritarianism and nationalism, these concerns continue to spread amplifying ongoing concerns about marginalization of people rooted in colonialism. The theological self-understanding of the WCRC must be cellar in its Christian witness and pushback against ideologies that claim to be Christian but are not. Now more than ever, our voice and actions as Christians should be clear in identifying who we are as a part of the body of Christ. This theological grounding is one that needs to be amplified in this time. Courage is required to be consistent in naming that the good news of the gospel is indeed good.

Restorative Justice

Truth telling is a criteria for prophetic witness. There are truth that we brush up against and need to be more direct in addressing theologically. The enslavement of Africans and indigenous people raises the question of how we see and experience those among us who are viewed as other. Our theology should reflect an on-going commitment to restorative justice, not only

naming injustice, also theologically affirming the need for restitution for those whose lives have suffered and lacked thriving as a result of oppression. The returning of land is biblical. The call for restitution is theologically sound and must be reflected in the WCRC's theology.

Context and Culture

Our Bible studies over these days pointed to several areas that will continue to be important for the life of the communion. Contextual theology is about the cultural narratives we bring from the realities that shape and for the past and present of our lives. We heard the realities facing many in our communities. Indigenous people. Persons with disabilities. Women. Youth. People from the global south. Person who are living minoritized experiences in the contexts in which they live. All of these are a reminder that supremacy can creep into the theological narratives we offer. Our theological frameworks should ably reflect the lives and experiences of those who are members of the WCRC. Theology that does not connect with the lives of the people is a static and not lived theology.

A Responsive Theology

There are emerging challenges in our communities and across the life of the communion. Each of our Bible study leaders, and providers of theme inputs challenged the body to be responsive. The bodies that are suffering and being flayed by the realities of injustice require response, as does the challenges created by the presence of Empire and the ever growing economic and ecological challenges. Emerging issues are interconnected. They are in no way isolated from the systemic injustice of colonization and neo-colonialism.

An Accessible Theology

Lastly, I want to identify the issue of academic privilege inherent in our theological engagement. I attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City. I had the opportunity to have Dr. James Cone as one of my professors. On my first day in his Systematic Theology class he said something I will never forget. He said: "Theology is God-talk. In that, we all do theology." Simple, yet profound.

Yet, theology has taken on an elitist aspect which continues to privilege the academically trained, those who have a particular body of knowledge and access to theological training. This has privileged some over others when we talk about the formality of theology in the communion and in our churches.

Theology should be accessible to all. God talk that nurtures our soul, accommodates our God-talk, speaks life over death, and is prophetic in its witness. Our theologians are leaders among us, prophets, advocates and in their leadership they should be hearing the voices of the masses, most of whom are not educated and not formally trained. What are the expectations for theological engagement across the life of the WCRC? If the theology of the WCRC is for members of the body, then accessibility has to be addressed.

Accommodating God-talk for all is a part of the work that lies ahead as we contemplate the future of the WCRC's theology and all that we have heard here during this General Council.