

Reformed communiqué

Articles in Bahasa Indonesia, Deutsch, English, Español, Français and 한국어

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Rathnakara Sadananda presents the proposed strategic plan to the Executive Committee.



Executive Committee sets direction through strategic plan

The Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) adopted a strategic plan to guide the work and witness of the organization through 2024. The approved strategic plan includes a new vision statement, an overarching goal, numerous objectives to reach the goal and structures to implement the plan.

“The 2017 General Council entrusted us with a big number of actions, concerns and challenges. Prioritizing and setting a timetable is vital for our success and progress,” said President Najla Kassab. The Council, meeting under the theme, “Living God, renew and transform us,” passed 72 actions, calling the Communion to engage in numerous activities throughout the world.

In order to prioritize and effectively direct the organization’s work

the WCRC officers began a strategic planning process in December 2017. Based on the actions and spirit of the General Council the creation of the plan included the participation of people from around the world, providing input through numerous “working groups” on specific issues and a “Mission and Vision: Widening the Circle” consultation, which raised voices that are outside the traditional centres of power.

“The process itself was an exercise in communion strengthening and commitment to justice,” said Chris Ferguson, WCRC general secretary. “The Widening the Circle consultation already pushed us forward with our tasks of critical theological reflection and ‘reforming’ our life as a communion so that all voices are heard and power imbalances are redressed.”

The proposed strategic plan was presented to the Executive Commit-

tee by Rev. Rathnakara Sadananda, the general secretary of the Church of South India and moderator of the Strategic Planning Committee.

“This is a good plan that captures dreams and aspirations of the Reformed family, as well as the directions set by the General Council,” he said. “It sincerely attempts to strive towards a realistic goal that will both strengthen the Communion and engage us more deeply with the Word and world.”

The Executive Committee reviewed the proposal through a discernment process, making several modifications, before adopting the plan.

The Vision Statement set forth in the plan is:

The World Communion of Reformed Churches is called to communion and is committed to justice.

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에큐메니칼 대표단이 북한을 방문하다

조 선그리스도교연맹의 초청으로 5월 3~7일 WCC와 WCRC의 대표들로 구성된 6인의 국제에큐메니칼대표단이 WCC 총무인 올라브 픽세 트베이트(Olav Fykse Tveit) 박사와 WCRC 총무인 크리스 퍼거슨(Chris Ferguson) 목사의 인도하에 5월 3~7일 북한의 평양을 방문했다.

이 방문이 있기 며칠 전인 4월 27일 판문점에서 역사적인 남북한 정상회담이 열렸는데, 문재인 대한민국 대통령과 김정은 조선인민민주주의공화국 국무위원장이 공동으로 한반도의 평화와 번영 및 통일을 위한 판문점 선언에 서명했다. 이러한 특별한 이니셔티브는 대표단이 확인하고



WCRC 사무총장 크리스 퍼거슨이 김영남 최고인민회의 상임위원회 위원장 각하에게 선물하다.

지지하고 격려하기를 강력히 원하는 평화를 위한 새로운 추진력을 만들어 냈다.

세계 에큐메니칼 운동은 특히 WCC가 1984년 소집한 토잔소(Tozanso) 협의회 이후 30년이 넘는 세월 동안 분단된 한국 민족의 대화와 평화적 공존과 통일을 촉진하는 데 참여했다.

조선인민민주주의공화국의 조선그리스도교연맹과 남한의 한국기독교교회협의회(NCCK)와 한국WCC 및 WCRC 회원 교회들 사이의 관계가 한반도 평화통일을 위한 이 에큐메니칼 연대 운동의 중심에 있었다.

대표단은 평양 방문 후 성명을 발표했다. “우리는 오늘 조선그리스도교연맹과 한국기독교교회협의회와 함께 판문점선언에 표현된, 그 오랜 기간 불붙고 온 한반도의 평화를 향한 에큐메니칼 희망과 염원을

아우르는 정치적 약속들을, 특히 군사적 긴장을 완화하기 위해 공동으로 노력하고 남북간 교류 및 협력을 증진하고 1953년의 정전협정을 대체하기 위한 평화조약을 달성하고자 하는 약속들과 한반도에 더는 전쟁이 없을 것이라는 엄숙한 선언에 대해 축하하게 된 것을 하나님께 감사드립니다.”

또한, 그들은 성명서에 이렇게 덧붙였다. “우리는 핵무기금지조약의 보편적 비준과 이행을 위한 옹호를 통해 핵없는 세계를 이루고자 하는 우리의 노력 속에서, 완전한 비핵화를 통해 핵없는 한반도 실현을 약속하는 공동선언을 축하하고 확인한다.”

북한을 방문하는 동안, 대표단은 조선그리스도교연맹의 대표들뿐만 아니라 북한 최고인민회의 상임위원장 김영남과 조국통일연구원 원장 리종혁 박사를 만나 논의했다.

트베이트와 퍼거슨은 북한을 방문하기 전에 김영남 상임위원장과 남한의 통일부장관 조명균을 만났는데, 그들은 교회 지도자들과 신앙공동체들이 과거는 물론 현재도 한민족의 평화와 통일을 위해 노력하는 역할이 중요하다고 확인하고 강조했다.

대표단은 남북한 정상회담과 그 결과를 수 개월 및 수년간 위협스럽게 고조되던 긴장 끝에 찾아 온 동북아 지역의 기적과도 같은 새로운 평화의 봄으로 보았다. “우리는 자연계만이 아니라 한반도의 사람들과 정부들 사이의 관계도 아름다운 새 봄철을 맞이한 때에 평양을 방문했습니다.”라고 트베이트씨는 말했다. “우리는 또한 봄철이 뿌려진 씨를 풍성히 수확하기 위해 일해야 하는 계절이라는 것을 알고 있습니다.”

WCRC 총무 크리스 퍼거슨 목사는 다음과 같이 덧붙였다. “WCC와 WCRC는 한반도의 사람들과 동북아 지역을 위해 오랫동안 추구해온 평화를 지향하는 새로운 조치들을 지원하기 위해 세계곳곳의 회원교회들을 동원하기 위해 함께 노력하고 있습니다.”

대표단은 “예수그리스도께로부터 화평케 하는 자가 되도록 부르심을 받은 모든 교회들과 모든 그리스도인들, 그리스도 선의를 가진 전 세계 모든 사람들이 한민족과 동북아, 그리고 세계의 평화를 위한 기초이자 뼈대로서 판문점 선언에 표명된 평화를 위한 한민족 주도의 이니셔티브를 지지하는 데에 함께해 달라”고 촉구한다. ●

President Kassab calls for building a stronger communion

President Najla Kassab, in her first address to the new Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, said, “We are grateful for God who brought us here in Seoul at this time where all efforts toward peace have started to bear fruits.”

“Through the work of the Holy Spirit we will be challenged to live as ambassadors for reconciliation and will strive to be healed from a past full of pain and division to a new community transformed, reconciled and renewed,” she said.

This first meeting of the new Executive Committee, elected during last summer’s General Council in Leipzig, Germany, was held in Seoul, South Korea, 9-16 May, hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

Besides conducting their business, the Executive Committee will deepen the WCRC’s involvement in the Korean peace process by holding a prayer vigil in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), worshipping in local churches and hearing from Korean church leaders. They have already participated in a special prayer service for peace on Wednesday evening at the Han Shin Church.

“The context of the Korean peninsula urges us to spell justice in practical steps of crossing borders and meeting others and hearing stories from the other side of the grass,” said Kassab.

Noting that the main work of this year’s Executive Committee was to adopt a new strategic plan, she said, “The General Council entrusted us with a big number of actions, concerns and challenges. Prioritizing and setting a timetable is vital for our success and progress.”

Kassab also said that building a stronger communion “starts with our work together in this meeting” through getting to know one another better and building a community around the working table. She also noted several other ways to help “us grow together a communion:”

- Strengthening and empowering the work of the regions
- Communicating through new media to more people more regularly
- Reporting to the Executive Committee throughout the year
- Promoting the WCRC to the world
- Strengthening relations with key partners

“I look forward to working together as a communion who strives for building stronger relations among churches and strategizes to lift up justice as a lens through which we evaluate what we do, how we view the world around us and how we reach out in mission,” she said. ●



President Najla Kassab

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Through robust engagement with the Word of God and the call of the Holy Spirit, it is always being transformed as it strives for the full and just participation of all. In our diversity, we seek to be a living expression of “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

We work to renew and restore the economy and the earth, so that all humanity and the whole of creation might live life in its fullness (Deuteronomy 30:19; John 10:10).

The overarching goal is:

By 2024, the World Communion of Reformed Churches will strive to be significantly strengthened and increasingly effective in living out God’s call to communion and commitment to justice. As a global Koinonia, we are marked by discerning, confessing, witnessing and being reformed together.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches, with all the partners God provides, serves its member churches and also works for the transformation of the whole world, which is so loved by God but still trapped by multiple injustices and death, having fallen among thieves (John 10:10).

As it strives to fulfil its vision, the World Communion of Reformed Churches works through two strategic trajectories:

- *Strengthening and deepening the Koinonia.*
- *Growing and expanding its work for a greater global impact.*

These strategic trajectories are applied through five interlocking dimensions:

- *Communion*
- *Justice*
- *Theology*
- *Mission*
- *Ecumenical Engagement and Inter-religious Cooperation.*

“This goal clearly shows that we will continue to work through five key areas,” said Ferguson, “and that all we do will strengthen and deepen our Communion even as we engage in important work in this world so loved by God but fallen among thieves.”

The WCRC Executive Committee met in Seoul, South Korea, 9-16 May, hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. ●

Visiting the DMZ, recalling conflicts but seeing peace



Whether due to fanaticism, the sheer desire of power or material wealth, the reasons for conflicts have been the same for thousands of years. According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research in its “Conflict Barometer 2013,” there were an alarming 400 conflicts worldwide out of which 20 were wars.

During the visit to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between South and North Korea the Executive Committee members couldn't stop from recalling how the world today is plagued with conflict and tension. At a special prayer service at a military chapel in the DMZ, members voiced their concerns and shared how their regions are affected by conflict.

Mary Ekinde Salle, Cameroon

I am challenged by what I have seen this afternoon, here at DMZ. When I entered the compound, the first thing I saw was the inscription, “End of separation: Beginning of Unification.” I was deeply challenged when I reflect on what is happening in my country; Cameroon. The conflict that is gradually developing into a civil war and which has left many people in pain, others mourning their loved ones who had died in the struggle, others living in fear and uncertainty. I keep asking, “God when will you bring all these to a stop?”

However, the word of God says there is time for everything. There is time to begin and time to end. There is time to love and time to hate, the time for war and time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:8). This gives me hope, to believe that the upheavals going on in Cameroon will one day also come to an end. Because the word of God says so.

Therefore, I seize this opportunity to remind our brothers and sisters of North and South Korea that they

have taken the right decision, to end their separation and start uniting. So it should not just be an inscription, but a dream come true. After all, that is what God desires of His Children; that they should be one just as he and his Father are one.

At this moment, we want to add our voices to the rest of the world to appeal to our brothers and sisters, that after war, there must be peace; and after hate, there must be love. So, instead of constructing fences and digging trenches that separate them, let them build bridges that will unite them.

Let the theme for the executive Committee meeting of WCRC challenge us: “From life, for life: Transforming, Reconciling and Renewing,” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). This implies that even though a lot of water has gone under the bridge, there is still a lot to be gained when we reconcile with God and with one another.

May the Almighty God fill the hearts and minds of our brothers and sisters of Korea, so that they can genuinely surrender to Him and may this decision to end their conflict challenge Cameroonians to ask God to transform their chaos into peace and hatred into love.

Karen Georgia Thompson, United States

I live in the United States. I was born on the island of Jamaica. As a person of African descent living in the United States I am often confronted with challenges of what it means to be in a place where oppression is real and is often denied. The separation that is present among us is often rendered visible but is manifested in the ways that people look and the ways in which what we look like and where we come from has been problematic for our existence, and so in this moment of being here again in

South Korea I find myself standing in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who want to see peace.

The Prophet Isaiah said, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.” And I think in places where we find ourselves at risk for our existence, we look for hope in the peace that only God can give.

The Psalmist wrote, “How long, oh God, how long.” And those are words quite often that we also find ourselves saying, but we live as the people of hope, a people who live with the promise of resurrection that certainly if God could be present in the resurrection of Jesus, then certainly God can be present each day as we look for peace and hope in places where often there is none. And so, we continue to pray one with the other that indeed God’s peace will reign and will be evident not for generations to come, but we will see that in our day and we will hold on to that peace for our children and our children’s children.

Claudio Pasquet, Italy

Italy is a country facing conflict among those who want to do something for refugees and those who do not want to. Italy is trying to rescue immigrants arriving from Africa (via Libya) who often risk drowning in the sea. But many people say: We have so many problems, why help others?

We as a small, Protestant church chose to be involved with these who are helpless and often hopeless. We also try to overcome conflict, explaining that as the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us, you do not choose your neighbour; you simply meet him/her on the road of life.

Milciades Pua, Colombia

I come from a beautiful country, with great wealth, but divided by wars. Since we achieved independence from Spain in the 19th century, we have not had a day of peace. The causes of our wars have been political exclusion..., economic exclusion... [and] exclusion due to the accumulation of land.

A little over sixty years ago, some farmers rose up to claim their lands to combat political and economic exclusion. The guerrillas were formed, and in that fratricidal war there have been more than seven million people displaced, 55,000 people who have disappeared, and more than 300,000 who died. The war came to a state of degradation, and its cruelty was so evident that the eyes of the world looked at Colombia as one of the countries that has been unable to resolve its conflicts.

Two years ago, the Colombian government reached an agreement to end the armed conflict with the FARC, one of the oldest guerrilla armies in the world. It has been difficult to achieve the implementation of the agreement and now the long-awaited peace is threatened. In a campaign of hatred and lies, a referendum was voted on by the people, and those who did not agree with the peace negotiation won by a narrow margin. Since then, the long-awaited peace is being threatened every day, and the Colombian government has not fully complied with the agreements.

We have a polarized country that is full of hatred and resentment. The roots of our conflict persist, yet the churches continue to dream and believe in peace while everlastingly sowing hope within the hearts of our people. We are working for reconciliation and believe that we must heal the wounds so that we can move forward with a new epoch in our history.

Colombia also participated in the division of the Korean peninsula, sending Colombian soldiers to fight a war that was not theirs.

Today we believe that it is possible to continue working toward the construction of peace. We continue to dream of a world of justice and freedom where there is bread and peace, a place where joy and laughter return without the omnipresent threat of violence. Today we see with hope the possibility of peace between two peoples that have been separated by the powerful, and that hope of peace gives us the strength to build peace in our country.

Najla Kassab, Lebanon

We are so happy to gather here at this special time and to witness the move towards peace in the Korean Peninsula. We wait in hope for a better future. Just as the weather is gloomy here at the DMZ today, and we wait for the sun to come out, so we wait in hope for the sun to come out and to see borders removed and people live side by side, celebrating reunion and living reconciliation. We remember all the pain of the people here in this area, where war divided people, and put borders among the people of the same nation.

As people from the Middle East, who experienced war for so many years, we understand what war does for nations and how war affects the future of the generations, but we trust that death and suffering will not have the final word but the power of resurrection will. Through the death of Jesus Christ, and his pain on the cross and resurrection, we have hope and we grow to be the people of hope. This is what kept us going as a church in the Middle East, and this is what sustains the church here in Korea.

As people in the Middle East we raise our voice with all the suffering in Korea and pray that this step towards reconciliation will grow. We also hope that a similar journey towards reconciliation will start soon in the suffering Middle East.

We pray that we will be assured that God is with us on this journey and will open our eyes to be a church of reconciliation, where your wellness for all is proclaimed. Let us move in hope that the sun will come out soon.

The stories shared do make one realize that to be hopeful to see a better world is not a utopia and there is peace in sight. The hope shared comes from the assurance that true reconciliation is possible by seeking God and asking for guidance as we continue our journey toward peaceful coexistence. ●

—Anam Gill

WCRC Executive Committee issues message from Seoul

The Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, holding its annual meeting in Seoul, South Korea, issued a message to its churches calling for a continuing commitment to peace, reconciliation and justice—especially on the Korean peninsula.

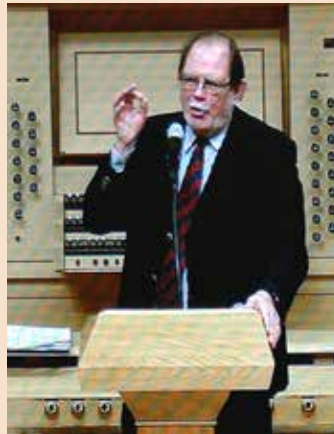
“We met in Korea at a momentous time in history when attempts towards peace, reconciliation and reunification loomed large on the horizon,” the message says. “From the perspective of God’s saving work in the world it clear that the division of the Korean peninsula is not the end of the history for the Korean people. The experience of the Korean peninsula shows us that war, violence and militarization can be overcome and that vested interests that sow the seeds of conflict will not win.”

The message also noted other conflicts in the world, including Indonesia, Palestine, Israel, Cameroon, Kenya, Syria, Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia.

During the Executive Committee meeting, which was held 10-16 May, the WCRC also issued specific statements calling for prayer and solidarity in the wake of attacks on churches in Indonesia, condemning the Israeli violence in Gaza and welcoming the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula. ●



Members of the WCRC Executive Committee immersed themselves in the Korean context, including through worship with local congregations in Seoul.



Message from the Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, 2018 in Seoul, South Korea

*He will judge between many peoples
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
—Micah 4: 4-6*

The Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, met in Seoul, South Korea, along with ecumenical partners, under the theme: “From Life, For Life: Transforming, Reconciling, and Renewing between the 10th and 16th of May 2018. During the Executive Committee meeting, we experienced the hospitality of our Korean member churches and were enriched by their wonderful and rich spirituality.

We met in Korea at a momentous time in history when attempts towards peace, reconciliation and reunification loomed large on the horizon. Our two member churches, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), along with the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Korean Christian Federation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have made sacrificial efforts for peace in the peninsula for which we now see much hope. The 1945 division of the Korean nation represented a compromise between the USA and the Soviet Union for short term tactical expediency rather than long term strategic vision for those suffering under Japanese occupation.

However, the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula (of 27 April 2018) opened the possibility of a peace treaty replacing the presently existing armistice, demilitarization of the DMZ, denuclearization and steps towards peaceful coexistence and reunification in the Korean peninsula. From the perspective of God’s saving work in the world it clear that the division of the Korean peninsula is not the end of the history for the Korean people. The experience of the Korean peninsula shows us that war, violence and militarization can be overcome and that vested interests that sow the seeds of conflict will not win.

The journey for peace in the Korean context is an inspiration. While we met we took notice of what was happening in the wider world. We invite the Communion to prayer and advocacy for these situations particularly for a successful summit meeting between North Korea and the USA.

As an ecumenical body of Christians, we extend our deepest condolences to the congregations affected by the multiple bomb blasts in Surabaya in Indonesia, including Diponegoro Indonesian Christian Church of WCRC member church *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (GKI). It is with great concern we heard of the loss of life in Palestine following the relocation of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem. We look forward to a global engagement, that will deal with this painful reality and to work towards just peace. We pray for communities around the world that are living with violence, fear, and hopelessness. Specifically, we think of Cameroon, Kenya, Syria, Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia. Our prayers are with all God’s children who are suffering.

We commit to pray and act in concrete solidarity for all who are affected by war and injustice, so that hatred is abandoned, and so that polarization and violence do not grow. We understand that it is a long road to justice and that the paths of peace are not easy to tread, but we as the Executive Committee of the WCRC call on all our member churches to live in obedience to a God of life and commit to the transformation of the world for the fullness of life for all. We commit to move From Life, For Life: Transforming, Reconciling and Renewing. ●

Message du Comité Exécutif de la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées 2018, Séoul, Corée du Sud

*Il sera le juge d'un grand nombre de peuples,
l'arbitre de nations puissantes, lointaines.
Celles-ci mettront en pièces leurs épées pour en faire des socs de charrue,
et leurs lances pour en faire des serpes:
aucune nation ne prendra plus les armes contre une autre
et l'on n'apprendra plus à faire la guerre.
—Michée 4:3 (Segond 21)*

Le Comité Exécutif de la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées a siégé, du 10 au 16 mai 2018 à Séoul, en Corée du Sud, avec ses partenaires œcuméniques sous le thème « De la Vie, Pour la Vie : Transformant, Réconciliant et Renouvelant ». Pendant la réunion du Comité Exécutif nous avons joui de l'hospitalité de nos églises membres de Corée et nous avons profité de leur merveilleuse et riche spiritualité.

Nous nous sommes rassemblés en Corée, à un moment très important de l'histoire, alors que les tentatives de paix, de réconciliation et de réunification paraissent imminentes à l'horizon. Nos deux églises membres, l'Église Presbytérienne de Corée (PCK) et l'Église Presbytérienne en République de Corée (PROK), ainsi que le Conseil national des Églises de Corée et la Fédération chrétienne de la République populaire démocratique de Corée ont fait de très grands efforts en direction de la paix que nous attendons beaucoup en ce moment. La division de la nation coréenne en 1945 était un compromis entre les États-Unis et l'Union soviétique qui devait plutôt répondre à des besoins tactiques à court terme qu'à une vision stratégique à long terme pour ceux qui avaient souffert sous l'occupation japonaise.

Néanmoins, la Déclaration de Panmunjom pour la Paix, la Prospérité et l'Unification de la péninsule de Corée du 27 avril 2018 a rendu possible qu'un traité de paix remplace le cessez-le-feu actuellement en vigueur, ainsi que la démilitarisation de la Zone démilitarisée, la dénucléarisation et des étapes en direction d'une coexistence pacifique et d'une réunification de la péninsule de Corée. Du point de vue de l'œuvre salutaire de Dieu dans le monde, il est clair que la division de la péninsule de Corée n'est pas la fin de l'histoire du peuple coréen. L'expérience de la péninsule de Corée nous prouve que la guerre, la violence et la militarisation peuvent être surmontées et que les intérêts particuliers qui sèment la discorde ne seront pas vainqueurs.

Le trajet vers la paix dans le contexte coréen nous a inspiré. Durant notre rencontre, nous avons pris conscience de ce qui se passait ailleurs dans le monde. Nous invitons notre Communion à prier et à s'engager en

faveur de ces situations difficiles, et, en particulier, pour la réussite d'une réunion au sommet entre les États-Unis et la Corée du Nord.

Comme organisme chrétien œcuménique nous adressons nos condoléances les plus profondes aux communautés qui ont été atteintes par plusieurs attentats à la bombe à Surabaya, en Indonésie, dont l'église de Diponegoro qui appartient à notre église membre *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (GKI). Nous avons eu connaissance avec grande inquiétude de la perte de vies en Palestine due au démantèlement vers Jérusalem de l'ambassade des États-Unis. Nous espérons qu'un engagement mondial s'occupera de cette douloureuse réalité et travaillera pour une paix juste. Nous prions pour nos communautés qui sont victimes de violence, de peur et de désespoir. Nous sommes, en particulier, au Cameroun, au Kenya, à la Syrie, au Brésil, au Venezuela et à la Colombie. En prière nous sommes avec tous les enfants de Dieu qui souffrent.

Nous nous engageons à prier et agir en solidarité concrète avec tous ceux qui sont touchés par la guerre et l'injustice, pour que la haine soit abandonnée et que la polarisation et la violence ne grandissent pas. Nous savons que la route vers la justice est longue et que les sentiers de la paix sont difficiles à emprunter, mais en tant que Comité Exécutif de la CMER nous faisons appel à toutes nos églises membres de vivre dans l'obéissance à un Dieu de la Vie et de s'engager pour la transformation du monde pour que tous aient la vie en plénitude. Nous nous engageons à avancer de la Vie, pour la Vie : Transformant, Réconciliant et Renouvelant. ●

Mensaje del Comité Ejecutivo de la Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas, 2018, Seúl, Corea del Sur

*Dios mismo juzgará entre muchos pueblos,
y administrará justicia
a naciones poderosas y lejanas. Convertirán en azadones sus espadas,
y en hoces sus lanzas.
Ya no alzará su espada nación contra nación,
ni se adiestrarán más para la guerra.
—Miqueas 4:3, NVI*

El Comité Ejecutivo de la Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas, estuvo reunido en Seúl, Corea del Sur, junto a otros asociados ecuménicos, del 10 al 16 de mayo de 2018, bajo el lema: “Desde la vida, por la vida: transformando, reconciliando y renovando”. Durante el encuentro del Comité Ejecutivo vivenciamos la hospitalidad de nuestras iglesias coreanas miembros de la CMIR, siendo enriquecidos por su rica y maravillosa espiritualidad.

Nos encontramos en Corea en un momento trascendental de la historia en que los intentos de paz, reconciliación y reunificación se vislumbraron en el horizonte. Nuestras dos iglesias miembros, la Iglesia Presbiteriana de Corea (IPC) y la Iglesia Presbiteriana en la República de Corea (IPRC), junto al Consejo Nacional de Iglesias en Corea y la Federación Cristiana Coreana en la República Popular Democrática de Corea, han hecho esfuerzos sacrificiales por la paz en la península, por lo que ahora alentamos muchas esperanzas. La división de la nación coreana, en 1945, representó un compromiso entre los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica y la Unión Soviética por una conveniencia táctica de corto plazo en lugar de una visión estratégica a largo plazo para quienes sufrieron bajo la ocupación japonesa.

Sin embargo, la Declaración de Panmunjom por la paz, la prosperidad y la unificación de la Península Coreana (del 27 de abril de 2018) abrió la posibilidad de un tratado de paz que reemplace el actual armisticio, la desmilitarización de la zona desmilitarizada (DMZ por sus siglas en inglés), la desnuclearización y los pasos hacia la coexistencia pacífica y la reunificación en la península. Desde la perspectiva de la obra salvífica de Dios en el mundo, resulta claro que la división de la península de Corea no es el final de la historia para el pueblo coreano. La experiencia de la península de Corea indica que la guerra, la violencia y la militarización pueden superarse y que no prevalecerán los intereses creados que siembran las semillas del conflicto.

El peregrinaje por la paz en el contexto coreano es una inspiración. Mientras estuvimos reunidos, recibimos noticias de lo que estaba sucediendo en el resto del

mundo. Invitamos a la Comunión a la oración y a cabildear por estas situaciones, especialmente por una reunión cumbre exitosa entre Corea del Norte y los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.

Como organismo ecuménico de cristianos y cristianas, expresamos nuestras más profundas condolencias a las congregaciones afectadas por las múltiples explosiones de bombas en Surabaya, Indonesia, incluida la iglesia cristiana indonesia Diponegoro, perteneciente a la *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (Iglesia Cristiana en Indonesia), que es miembro de la CMIR. Es con gran preocupación que oímos acerca de la pérdida de vidas en Palestina tras la reubicación de la Embajada de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica en Jerusalén. Anhelamos un compromiso mundial que aborde esta dolorosa realidad y que se esfuerce por una paz justa. Oramos por las comunidades de todo el mundo que viven situaciones de violencia, miedo y desesperanza. Específicamente, pensamos en Camerún, Kenia, Siria, Brasil, Venezuela y Colombia. Nuestras oraciones están con todos los hijos e hijas de Dios que están sufriendo.

Nos comprometemos a orar y a actuar en solidaridad concreta por quienes se ven afectados por la guerra y la injusticia, para que se abandone el odio y para que no crezcan la polarización y la violencia. Entendemos que el camino hacia la justicia es un camino largo y que los senderos de la paz no son fáciles de recorrer, pero nosotros y nosotras, como Comité Ejecutivo de la CMIR, convocamos a todas nuestras iglesias miembros a vivir en obediencia a un Dios de la vida y a comprometerse con la transformación del mundo para la plenitud de la vida para todos y todas. Nos comprometemos a movernos desde la vida, por la vida: transformando, reconciliando y renovando. ●

Pesan dari Komite Eksekutif World Communion of Reformed Churches, 2018 di Seoul, Korea Selatan

*Ia akan menjadi hakim antara banyak bangsa,
dan akan menjadi wasit bagi suku-suku bangsa yang besar sampai ke tempat yang jauh;
mereka akan menempa pedang-pedangnya menjadi mata bajak,
dan tombak-tombaknya menjadi pisau pemangkas;
bangsa tidak akan lagi mengangkat pedang terhadap bangsa,
dan mereka tidak akan lagi belajar perang.*
—Mikha 4:3

Komite Eksekutif World Communion of Reformed Churches, bertemu di Seoul, Korea Selatan, bersama dengan beberapa partner ekumenis, dengan tema: “Dari Kehidupan, Untuk Kehidupan: Mentransformasi, Merekonsiliasi, dan Memperbarui” pada tanggal 10 hingga 16 Mei 2018. Dalam rapat Komite Eksekutif tersebut, kami merasakan keramahtamahan gereja-gereja anggota di Korea dan diperkaya oleh spiritualitas mereka yang indah dan begitu kaya.

Kami bertemu di Korea pada sebuah waktu yang penting dalam sejarah di mana usaha-usaha mencapai perdamaian, rekonsiliasi dan pemersatuan kembali berada di depan mata. Dua gereja anggota WCRC, Gereja Presbiterian Korea (Presbyterian Church of Korea/PCK) dan Gereja Presbiterian di Republik Korea (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea/PROK), bersama dengan Dewan Gereja Nasional di Korea dan Federasi Kristen Korea di Republik Rakyat Demokratik Korea telah melakukan usaha-usaha penuh pengorbanan untuk perdamaian di semenanjung Korea di mana kita sekarang melihat adanya banyak pengharapan. Pemisahan negara Korea di tahun 1945 merupakan sebuah kompromi antara Amerika Serikat dan Uni Soviet demi kecepatan taktis jangka pendek dan bukan sebuah visi strategis jangka panjang bagi mereka yang menderita di bawah penjajahan Jepang.

Bagaimanapun juga, Deklarasi Panmunjom untuk Perdamaian, Kesejahteraan, dan Pemersatuan Semenanjung Korea (yang disahkan pada 27 April 2018) membuka kesempatan bagi perjanjian damai yang menggantikan gencatan senjata yang ada saat ini, demiliterisasi DMZ, denuklirisasi dan langkah-langkah menuju koeksistensi yang damai dan pemersatuan kembali semenanjung Korea. Dari perspektif karya penyelamatan Allah di tengah dunia, jelas bahwa pemisahan semenanjung Korea bukanlah akhir sejarah bagi orang-orang Korea. Pengalaman semenanjung Korea menunjukkan kepada kita bahwa perang, kekerasan, dan militerisasi dapat diatasi dan bahwa kepentingan-kepentingan pribadi yang menebar benih-benih konflik tidak akan menang.

Perjalanan menuju perdamaian di konteks Korea merupakan sebuah inspirasi. Dalam rapat kami, kami memerhatikan apa yang terjadi di tengah dunia secara lebih luas. Kami mengundang Persekutuan ini untuk berdoa dan melakukan tindakan advokasi, khususnya untuk pertemuan puncak antara Korea Utara dan Amerika Serikat.

Sebagai sebuah badan Kristen ekumenis, kami turut berdukacita secara mendalam bersama jemaat-jemaat yang mengalami ledakan bom di Surabaya, Indonesia, termasuk di antaranya GKI Diponegoro yang merupakan jemaat *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (GKI) yang adalah anggota WCRC. Dengan penuh keprihatinan kami mendengar hilangnya nyawa di Palestina setelah relokasi Kedutaan Besar Amerika Serikat ke Yerusalem. Kami menantikan pertemuan global yang akan berhadapan dengan realitas menyakitkan ini dan bekerja bersama-sama menuju perdamaian yang adil. Kami berdoa untuk komunitas-komunitas di seluruh dunia yang hidup di tengah kekerasan, ketakutan, dan keputusan. Secara khusus kami mengingat Kamerun, Kenya, Suriah, Brasil, Venezuela, dan Kolombia. Doa-doa kami bersama semua anak-anak Allah yang menderita.

Kami berkomitmen untuk berdoa dan bekerja dalam solidaritas yang konkrit bagi semua yang terpengaruh oleh perang dan ketidakadilan, sehingga kebencian dapat ditinggalkan, dan sehingga polarisasi dan kekerasan tidak bertumbuh. Kami menyadari bahwa jalan menuju keadilan sangat panjang dan jalur menuju perdamaian tidak mudah ditempuh, namun sebagai Komite Eksekutif WCRC kami menyerukan kepada semua gereja anggota untuk hidup dalam ketaatan kepada Allah Kehidupan dan berkomitmen untuk mentransformasikan dunia bagi keutuhan seluruh ciptaan. Kami berkomitmen untuk bergerak Dari Kehidupan, Untuk Kehidupan: Mentransformasi, Merekonsiliasi, dan Memperbarui. ●

Najla Kassab looks to transformation, reconciliation, peace

“We are called to change things, and to change the world as well,” said the Rev. Najla Kassab, president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, preaching Wednesday morning, 20 June, at the Ecumenical Service of Worship of the 223rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Her sermon, “Towards a Kingdom of Reconciliation,” was based on a text by the Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 5:11–6:2.

Paul wrote at a time of divisions within the congregation in Corinth, speaking with fervor about the Christian vocation to bear “the message of reconciliation” as “ambassadors for Christ” (5:19–20).

Kassab discussed Paul’s approach to reconciliation as seeking unity “beyond the flesh.” That is, looking beyond the human condition, beyond a person’s wealth or marginality, beyond outward physical appearance. Following Christ’s resurrection, it was no longer appropriate to form judgments on such grounds, Paul taught.

A minister of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, Kassab reflected on her family’s experience of Israeli attacks on Beirut. “With the start of the Lebanese War, outlooks changed,” she said. “Before, we were hardly aware of who was Christian and who was Muslim.”

Suddenly, they saw their neighbours “according to the flesh,” or



J. Herbert Nelson, PC(USA) stated clerk, greets WCRC President Najla Kassab.

“from a human point of view” (5:16). “Our challenge is to live the Jesus paradigm,” said Kassab, “...to see beyond the flesh.”

Commitment to reconciliation, Kassab believes, “is tested at the point of pain. But reconciliation can never be achieved by violence; violence will bring more violence all around the world.” Overcoming pain and violence, war and separation of children from their families, requires that we see and live “beyond the flesh,” nurturing the reign of reconciliation on earth.

Led by ministers and lay people from more than a dozen denominations and nations, the Ecumenical Service of Worship was based on a service of Holy Communion in Churches Uniting in Christ Liturgy (adapted for local use). Co-presiding at the Lord’s Table were the Rev. J.

While in the United States, Najla Kassab also presented a keynote address at an advocacy summit of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) in Washington, DC, “And Still We Rise: Transforming U.S. Policy toward a Just Middle East,” a part of CMEP’s pilgrimage to peace program.

In her address, Kassab told stories of near hopelessness from the Middle East and then, based on John 14:27 and Jeremiah 8:11, talked about what true peace with justice is: “The peace of Christ then is not the absence of trouble but is rather the confidence that Jesus is there with us on this journey. The peace of Christ is a peace that invites us to speak up and do something about any unfair practices till justice is reached.”

CMEP is a coalition of 28 denominations and organizations dedicated to elevating diverse voices who are advocating for equality, security, and human rights for all people in the Middle East. You can learn more at cme.org.

Herbert Nelson, stated clerk of the General Assembly and WCRC Executive Committee member, and the Rev. Farouk Hammo, Ecumenical Advisory Delegate from the Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Iraq. ●

—Theodore Gill

Panel trabaja por justicia económica y climática

La 3ª reunión del panel ecuménico sobre una Nueva Arquitectura Financiera y Económica Internacional (NIFEA por sus siglas en inglés) tuvo lugar del 21 al 22 de abril de 2018 en la ciudad de Nueva York coincidiendo en días posteriores con el Consejo Económico y Social sobre Financiamiento para el Desarrollo.

El panel inició la reunión recordando a los asistentes que “Estamos reunidos para revisar nuestras tareas, identificar signos de injusticia económica y climática, establecer acciones prioritarias, hacer nuevas alianzas, actualizar el plan de la NIFEA y juntos hacer un compromiso más profundo para construir un mundo que se asemeje más al verdadero reino de Dios”.

Este panel ecuménico sobre una NIFEA busca analizar las señales de los tiempos para la economía y la tierra reconectando las finanzas a la economía real, estableciendo límites a la ambición al dismantelar estructuras que protegen la corrupción y construir nuevas estructuras que respondan mejor al contexto económico, político, social y ecológico actual.

El panel de la NIFEA surgió como respuesta al “*São Paulo Statement: International Financial Transformation for an Economy of Life*” de 2012. Líderes del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias (CMI), de la Comunión Mundial de Iglesias Reformadas (CMIR), del Consejo para la Misión Mundial (CWM por sus siglas en inglés) y de la Federación Luterana Mundial (FLM) reunieron al panel ecuménico sobre una NIFEA, compuesto por 13 expertos en finanzas, economía, sociología y teología, con la encomienda de desarrollar un plan de acción para impulsar la Declaración de São Paulo.

Desde que el Plan de la NIFEA fue diseñado en enero de 2014, ha habido grandes avances en el panorama mundial a nivel económico, político, social y ecológico que afectan el plan directamente. En esta reunión, el panel contó con miembros de la fe católica romana y de la sociedad civil.

El grupo trabajó en conjunto por más de dos días para identificar elementos emergentes y persistentes sobre injusticia económica y climática y formuló nuevos planes de acción y alianzas para abogar por el análisis y la transformación de la NIFEA.

El grupo discutió los siguientes elementos clave para avanzar en su trabajo:



- La importancia de crear una **cultura de rendición de cuentas**, establecer observatorios financieros y desarrollar estructuras financieras nuevas y justas;
- **El perdón como punto de partida** para abrir camino hacia la reconciliación, restitución y recuperación;
- **Reforzar las coaliciones** de diferentes movimientos (económico, ecológico y social) y sin separarlos; asociando pobreza, ecología y desigualdad como un solo problema;
- **Alentar a los gobiernos** a invertir en avances en pro de la ecología;
- **Movilizarse proporcionando información a las comunidades**, mostrando datos alarmantes para hacer que la gente reaccione;
- **Trabajar en las cuestiones fiscales** a nivel nacional y global; unirse a otras asociaciones civiles como Oxfam;
- **Cambiar la narrativa** trabajando juntos con la ciencia y otras fes, con humildad y apertura, uniendo fuerzas con movimientos sociales específicos que son nuestros aliados;
- **Cambiar nuestro propio estilo de vida** examinando la justicia de género y ecológica dentro de la Iglesia;
- **Continuar manifestando** el descontento contra las cosas que oscurecen el Evangelio.

Athena Peralta, secretaria ejecutiva del programa para Economía de Vida del CMI, dijo: “Para el CMI, la NIFEA es una prioridad clave. Nuestros dos pilares son la economía de vida y la justicia ecológica, es por ello que la NIFEA es el centro del trabajo que realizamos”.

Colli Cowan, secretario general del CWM, señaló: “El asunto en cuestión es la dignidad de la humanidad y la integridad de la creación. El CWM está comprometido

WGRK-Europa setzt Prioritäten und wählt Leitung

a este camino, pero es consciente de que no podemos y no debemos hacerlo solos. Necesitamos una banda de discípulos comprometidos con la justicia y la paz y centrados en una misión por una vida plena para *toda* la creación. Vamos a comprometernos nosotros a los principios de reciprocidad, compañerismo y esperanza en acción. Depende de nosotros el recuperar nuestra dignidad y ser el cambio que deseamos”.

Martin Junge, secretario general del CMI, dijo: “Estamos luchando en contra la mercantilización de todo y, ‘la salvación no está en venta, los seres humanos no estamos en venta, la creación no está en venta’ y se ha convertido en nuestro grito de guerra. Nos reunimos para agudizar nuestro enfoque, actualizar métodos y decidir cuál es el mejor punto de partida en nuestro contexto de hoy en día. Espero con gusto implementar nuestros planes juntos”.

Chris Ferguson, secretario general de la CMIR, clausuró la reunión diciendo: “Estoy extremadamente agradecido porque este viaje encontró nuevos énfasis y enfoques. Hemos sido llamados a defender y proteger los regalos de vida, y nos preguntamos: ‘¿cuáles son las dos cosas más convincentes que podamos hacer y que serían tan estratégicas, traerán cambios dramáticos y poderosos por el bienestar de cada una de las creaciones de Dios?’ Este es un compromiso que estamos haciendo para lograr una transformación económica y ecológica con la justicia como núcleo. He escuchado en repetidas ocasiones que este grupo quiere trabajar junto en estos temas”.

Previo a esta reunión en Nueva York, el panel se reunió en agosto de 2013 y en enero de 2014 y creó el reporte intitulado “*Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture*”.

El panel ecuménico también redactó una declaración pública sobre una declaración pública, la cual fue presentada en un evento paralelo al Foro para la Financiación del Desarrollo de la ONU. ●

Die jährliche Tagung der WGRK-Europa, eines der Regionalräte der Weltgemeinschaft Reformierter Kirchen (WGRK), hat sich mit der Migrationsfrage beschäftigt, auf die Generalversammlung des vergangenen Jahres zurückgeblickt und eine neue Leitung gewählt.

Die Tagung begann mit dem Bericht des Präsidenten von WGRK-Europa, Jan-Gerd Heetderks, der auf die Arbeit der Lenkungsgruppe zurückblickte und Anregungen für eine Aussprache über neue Prioritäten gab. Der Bericht enthielt auch eine Auswertung der Generalversammlung der WGRK, die 2017 in Leipzig stattgefunden hat.

Die Arbeitsgruppe von WGRK-Europa zu Flucht und Migration gab ebenfalls einen Bericht ab. Balázs Ódor, Moderator der Arbeitsgruppe gab einen Überblick über die Tätigkeit der letzten zwei Jahre, während Joshua Ralston die Ziele hervorhob und die Leistung der Mitgliedskirchen in der Pflege der Beziehungen zu anderen Organisationen im Bereich der Migrations- und Flüchtlingspolitik beschrieb.

In einer Ansprache nahm Najla Kassab, die Präsidentin der Weltgemeinschaft, Stellung zum Bericht indem sie als Pastorin der Evangelischen Nationalsynode von Syrien und dem Libanon (NESSL) ihre nahöstliche Perspektive einbrachte. Sie hob die Bereitschaft der Kirchen der Region hervor, sich auf einen Dialog und effektive Zusammenarbeit einzulassen und sich auch an die muslimische Bevölkerungsmehrheit zu wenden. Sie sprach über die Stärke der Minderheiten, die dem Evangelium treu sind und über die Herausforderungen, vor denen Staat und Kirchen im Libanon angesichts der großen Zahl von Flüchtlingen aus Syrien stehen.

Frau Kassab forderte die Kirchen auf, sich gegen Krieg auszusprechen und sich für andere und für den Frieden einzusetzen. „Kirchen sind dazu berufen, Zeichen der Hoffnung zu sein und sollten sich auch in schweren Situationen und Konflikten entsprechend verhalten“, meinte sie.

Während ihres Aufenthalts in Ungarn begegnete Frau Kassab auch Regierungsvertretern, Bischöfen und Kirchenpräsidenten der Reformierten Kirche Ungarns und nahm an deren Missionskonferenz in Budapest teil. Sie besuchte auch die Reformationsstadt Debrecen.

Auf der Tagung fanden auch die Wahlen zur Leitungsgruppe von WGRK-Europa statt:

- Präsidentin: Martina Wasserloos-Strunk (Reformierter Bund Deutschland)
- Vizepräsidentin: Jenny Dober (Equmeniakyrkan)
- Vizepräsident: Dimitrios Boukis (Griechische Evangelische Kirche)
- Schriftführerin: Jacobine de Scholte (Protestantische Kirche in den Niederlanden)

An der Tagung nahmen 40 Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der Mitgliedskirchen teil sowie der Generalsekretär der WGRK Chris Ferguson und der Referent für Theologie und Gemeinschaft Hanns Lessing. Das Treffen fand auf Einladung der Reformierten Kirche Ungarns am 12.-13. April 2018 in Budapest statt. ●

Reformed communion grieves loss of Peter Borgdorff

Peter Borgdorff, former president of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) and member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches Executive Committee (WCRC), passed away on 21 May.

His funeral will be on Friday, 25 May at Shawnee Park Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, at 10:30 a.m., with visitation the day prior, Thursday, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the same location.

“Today we miss a great man who worked hard towards a stronger communion among the churches,” said Najla Kassab, WCRC president. “The mission of the WCRC was close to his heart and in his prayers. His contribution and commitment to the WCRC was a living example to many who wanted to see how being ‘called to communion’ is lived out in practical ways.”

Peter served on the WCRC Executive Committee from the 2010 Uniting General Council until the 2017 General Council in Leipzig, Germany. He continued to serve the WCRC as an advisor to its finance committee, volunteer bookkeeper and designated agent for its non-profit corporation in the United States.

“Peter’s commitment to the WCRC was abundant and abundantly clear to all who had the privilege of serving with him,” said Chris Ferguson, WCRC general secretary. “That he continued to serve the Communion until his untimely death is a testament to this.”

Peter was instrumental in the creation of the WCRC, working closely with both the REC and World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) as the two organizations came together at the Uniting General Council in 2010 to form the WCRC.

“Peter was a dear friend and co-worker in so many ways as we laboured together in uniting the



“The unity we seek is not to be of our own making, no matter how hard we seek it. The unity of the church globally and for all ages is rooted in the fact that together all Christians form one body and confess the same Lord.”

—Peter Borgdorff

Reformed movement around the world,” said Cliff Kirkpatrick, former WARC president and stated clerk emeritus of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

“We had the privilege of each serving as president of one of the two global Reformed bodies—the REC and WARC—that came together into the WCRC,” Kirkpatrick continued. “Peter’s leadership was key in bringing together Reformed churches into one body to witness more strongly to the love, justice and peace of Christ.”

“It was indeed an absolute pleasure and delight to work with him on the Executive,” said Jerry Pillay, WCRC president from 2010 to 2017. “He had a mind of his own, was decisive, quick and sharp in his thoughts. Peter was someone you could count on, reliable, friendly and generous. He was a wonderful servant of God whose contributions in the ecumenical world would be well remembered and cherished.”

“Peter worked tirelessly for unity and shared mission in the worldwide Reformed family, and beyond,” said Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary emeritus of the Reformed Church in America. The WCRC’s “vibrant Reformed global witness owes Peter a deep debt of gratitude for being instrumental in its birth and ongoing witness.”

“His commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the unity of the Reformed family of churches was remarkable,” said Setri Nyomi, for-

mer WCRC general secretary. “In these 16 years I have known him, I have come to appreciate Peter as a friend and an exemplary man of faith. Our prayers will continue for Janet and the family. We will miss him. The Reformed family worldwide will miss him.”

Peter is survived by his wife of 55 years, Janet (Kuperus) Borgdorff, his children Marcia Deck Borgdorff and Todd Bennane, Nicholas and Jonna Franz Borgdorff, Arlene and Dan DeKam, Trish Borgdorff and Suzi and Andy Bos, along with many, many grandchildren.

Peter’s family immigrated to Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, from the Netherlands in 1951 where he lived until he moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1962 to attend Calvin College. He graduated from Calvin Seminary in 1969 and obtained a D.Min. degree from Western Theological Seminary in 1990.

He served the Christian Reformed Church in North America, a WCRC member, for more than thirty-eight years in a variety of positions. A decade was spent serving congregations, 13 years in mission administration and then 14 years in denominational administration, including as executive director (under various titles) until 2006.

In lieu of flowers, Peter requested that memorial contributions be sent to the World Communion of Reformed Churches at 1700 28th Street Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407. ●



WCRRC members were well represented at the Conference for European Churches General Assembly (held in Novi Sad, Serbia, 31 May - 6 June). Christian Krieger, a dedicated, Reformed ecumenist was elected as the Conference's next president.



Koreans from both sides of the DMZ attended the latest Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (EFK), held in Geneva in June, and issued a call to "Seek Peace and Pursue It."



PHOTO BY: ALBIN HILLERT

Chris Ferguson spoke at the Global Christian Forum Gathering in Bogotá, Colombia, in April, at a session entitled "From Conflict to Communion: A Bilateral Journey of Reconciliation that became a Multilateral One" which focused on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.



Both President Najla Kassab and General Secretary Chris Ferguson addressed the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon Third Partners' Consultation, "Together for Reconciliation & Reconstruction," held in April, just outside of Beirut, Lebanon.

Pursue Peace

Continued from page 16

setbacks, to not fail to seize each new opportunity to do good.

In concluding this reflection, I will put all this another way: In our recent history evil has flourished and peace has been far from us, and yet churches in our family have been seized with the Living Word of God clearly resounding in Psalm 34 and have called all to turn away from that evil—to see that all is not lost that through God's grace good can proposer, that peace is possible and that we are required to pursue it. Thanks be to God that is exactly what we are doing, knowing that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

Soli deo Gloria! ●

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Chris Ferguson

From the General Secretary Pursue Peace

“Turn away from evil and do good: seek peace and pursue it.”

—Psalm 34:14

The Presbyterian Church of Colombia made its voice heard in the midst of a bitter and divisive presidential campaign where the future of a fragile peace agreement that seeks to end six decades of armed conflict was at stake. Responding to an “invitation” by evangelical church leaders to all Christian churches to “vote responsibly” by supporting the candidate who has promised to roll back the peace agreement, Rev. Milciades Pua, a member of the WCRC Executive Committee, wrote an open letter lifting up Reformed values rooted in the gospel in a prophetic act of public witness, concluding, “one of the principles of my tradition says that lies cannot be placed on a par with truth.”

A church small is moved by the convictions of the Reformed tradition to risk calling evil by its name and calling lies by their name. Supported by the wider family against growing public opinion or indifference they challenge the trend and bring Scripture values to a debate where “Christians” are using religion to justify injustice and violence. Turning from evil, they not only yearn for peace, they actively pursue it.

In the United States the horror of children separated from their parents and caged up in inhumane conditions is justified by the Trump Administration by citing scripture. Violence, racism and injustice reach the turning point. Indifference and silence put the very integrity of faith in the God of Life at stake. Turn from evil. The churches of the Reformed and Uniting traditions in the USA face this turning point. Our search for peace and faith-based commitment to do good now must show its face publicly—in the whole theatre of history and creation, to paraphrase John Calvin.

At both the recent meetings of the WCRC Executive Committee and at the World Council of Churches Central Committee church leaders from Cameroon spoke about the violence, persecution and injustice faced by Anglophones in Cameroon in what is a virtually unreported civil conflict. Church voices are among the few calling international attention to a deadly conflict which raises the fearful spectre of mass killings of the same character as Rwanda. Turn from evil. More than that: do good, seek peace, do not be silent, says the Psalmist. Not passively but robustly, publicly, actively. Pursue peace—put your heart into it.

Boat loads of rescued migrants, many of them asylum seekers, are turned away from European ports. Leaders debate how to stop people coming to Europe while continuing economic, trade, military and political actions and policies that fuel conflict and deepen poverty, destroy the environment and perpetuate systemic injustice in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The courageous church voices in Italy, Greece, Germany and other countries echo the Psalmist: Don’t turn boats away... turn away yourself from evil...beyond defending borders...seek peace...pursue it.

In the Korean Peninsula churches in South and North have been among those who have sought and pursued peace for 70 years, and now there has been a radical if erratic, almost miraculous turning from evil. Led by North and South Korean leaders the Panmunjom Declaration emerged from a history-making summit and said “no more war.” This has set the tone for an important and hope-filled summit in Singapore that has staked the claim for peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and all of North East Asia.

The Psalmist reminds us that our commitment is based on active, ongoing movement, most importantly in the sustained effort to *seek* and to *pursue*. If the turning away from evil is to be enduring it requires the whole of the WCRC family among all others to embrace the peace possibility of the Panmunjom Declaration and support the churches in the North and South to pursue it; to not be distracted by

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