



# World Communion of Reformed Churches

Called to communion, committed to justice

## Message from the 2019 Executive Committee Meeting Kappel am Albis, Switzerland

*You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.*

—Matthew 5:14

*But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

—Jeremiah 29:7

The Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches met from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 in Kappel, Switzerland, under the theme, “Let your Light Shine Forth: Seeking Shalom in the midst of Empire.” We were graciously hosted by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches and particularly the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zürich. We met at a time when all the Swiss churches are particularly committed to looking for ways to respond to the increasing number of people without religious belonging or affiliation. As the entire country celebrates the jubilee of the reformations they are seeking ways in which they can find inspiration and confidence in addressing this issue. We celebrated, along with Swiss Protestant Churches, the five hundredth anniversary of Ulrich Zwingli and the hundredth anniversary of the ordination of women in Zürich at the Grossmünster in Zürich.

We are inspired by the courage and the resilience of the Reformers, including Ulrich Zwingli, and commit to a continual reforming of our churches and communities through peace and reconciliation efforts. We once more commit ourselves to a reformed spirituality and the spirit of continually reforming the church and the world. We are also encouraged to continue in ecumenical dialogue and partnership.

During the meeting of the Executive Committee, we had the opportunity to engage with our hosts, on “Church, State and Politics: Cooperation or Protest.” We also heard about the specific contexts of Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Hungary, the Korean Peninsula, Nigeria and Syria, and were sensitized to global movements towards populism and authoritarianism.

At our meetings, we were also moved by stories of violence, abuse, forced migration and the denial of human rights of marginalized communities in many other situations around the world, particularly Cuba, Palestine and Venezuela.

We recognize the growing machinations of Empire that continue to commodify all of life, and which grow through the exploitation of people and the disruption of shalom. We confess our complicity and silence. In the midst of the growing threats to all of life that Empire creates, we recognize Jesus’ offer of the fullness of life and the call to courageous discipleship and a mutually transforming hospitality.

As we met in Kappel we were reminded of our rich Reformed heritage and the call to be continually reforming. We acknowledge the unfinished agenda of the Reformation and commit to the full and just participation of all, particularly in the area of gender justice.

We remember all the Reformers, and we also acknowledge our own violent heritage. We recognize how theological and spiritual understandings can foster hostility and violence. We commit to the dismantling of such false theologies and spiritualities and to the advancement of theologies that seek the dignity and respect of all life. It is from this stance that we take up a dialogue with the Mennonite World Conference.

As a body called to communion and committed to justice, we reaffirm our commitment to emphasizing justice that leads to peace, healing and reconciliation. We believe that our distinctive contribution is to discern the signs of the times in order to live faithfully and witness prophetically to the God of life.

We call on our member churches, our ecumenical partners and all communities of faith to act towards the just transformation of the world. As Zwingli encourages us, "For God's sake, do something brave."