

Called to communion,
committed to justice



World Communion
of Reformed Churches
ANNUAL REPORT 2012





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Cover photo: Members of congregation in North Sumatra, Indonesia on building site for new church



About the World Communion of Reformed Churches

We are a network of Protestant churches in 108 countries. Our 229 member churches are Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed, Waldensian, United, and Uniting. The combined membership of these churches is an estimated 80 million people.

The WCRC secretariat is in Geneva, Switzerland until December 2013. In January 2014 it will relocate to Hannover, Germany. An office in Grand Rapids, United States manages WCRC's American corporate entity.

Member churches pay annual dues which support the core costs of the communion: governance, communication, travel and staff.

INTRODUCTION

The World Communion of Reformed Churches is privileged to have a vision which is focused on uniting its member churches in common witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, working for justice and participating in God's project for fullness of life for all.

It is an exciting and challenging vision which was renewed through strategic plans adopted in 2011. However, the clear vision and the dedication to serve our churches have faced a major challenge – the global financial situation has had a severe adverse impact on WCRC. In 2012, the question confronting the WCRC was: "Where are we going?" And so it became a year of decision.

Our annual report for 2012 shows that we answered the question by affirming our intent to remain focused on serving and stimulating the millions of people who sit in our pews and who are God's instruments for justice and the transformation of the world. In order to do this effectively, we had to take the painful decision of moving from the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland to operate in Hannover, Germany where our financial resources can go further. We are grateful to the German churches for offering this invitation and for their generosity in assisting us to address our financial challenges.

The decision to leave Geneva was accompanied by a renewed commitment to take every step to remain a vibrant link within

"Quo Imus: Where are we going?"

the ecumenical movement and to maintain the links with the Swiss churches which offer the gifts of theology and heritage that bind us together – the legacies of Calvin, Dentièrè, Zwingli and Bullinger.

It is in this spirit that we operated in 2012. The snippets of our actions and activities that you see in this annual report reflect our commitments in the "year of decision." WCRC, its member churches, its governing body, its regional councils and its staff continue to engage in witness to the Lord Jesus Christ and God's project of transformation.

Where are we going? Our journey is purposeful. The 2012 decision demonstrates that the answer is not simply "to Hannover." The decision shows we are journeying where the Lord Jesus Christ leads us to be an effective Communion committed to justice.



Jerry Pillay, President



Setri Nyomi, General Secretary



A NEW HOME FOR WCRC

The Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches at its meeting in May 2012 voted to relocate the Communion's office from Geneva, Switzerland to Hannover, Germany.



The decision was made in response to concerns about the cost of running an organization in Switzerland. These include staff salaries and the high value of the Swiss franc. Most WCRC membership fees and donations are made in Euros or American dollars that have dropped in value in the past several years against the strong Swiss franc. WCRC expects to save CHF200,000 per annum in its new location.

The move to Hannover is scheduled for the end of December 2013. WCRC's offices will be located at the Calvin Centre owned by the Evangelical Reformed Church of Germany where the Reformed Alliance has its offices.

The Reformed church movement has had its offices in Geneva since 1948 when the World Presbyterian Alliance (a WCRC predecessor organisation) moved from Edinburgh, Scotland. At the time the World Council of Churches was in formation and Reformed church leaders felt it important to be close to colleagues in the global ecumenical movement.



VISION AND COMMITMENTS



Called to communion, committed to justice

We are the World Communion of Reformed Churches called to be a communion of churches joined together in Christ, to promote the renewal and the unity of the church and to participate in God's transformation of the world.

What we do

WCRC coordinates joint church initiatives for communion, church unity, renewal, contemporary mission, economic, ecological and gender justice based on the member churches' common theology and beliefs. Our objectives are to foster unity among our member churches and promote economic, social and environmental justice.

Why

WCRC's member churches believe that Christian faith is based on actions which respond to the spiritual needs and economic and social rights of all people in society and that this includes ensuring responsible use of natural resources.

How

WCRC is committed to collaborating with other church movements on issues of common concern such as climate change, gender justice and theological dialogue. WCRC is supported principally by membership contributions of finances and human resources. It also seeks funding for specific projects.





JUSTICE

New financial system needed to curb greed

Theologians, anti-poverty advocates and economists met in Brazil in October to develop principles for a new global economic system. At the conclusion of the meeting participants issued a declaration naming overconsumption and greed as key factors to be addressed in seeking a more just distribution of the world's resources.

The Global Ecumenical Conference on a New Economic and Financial Architecture convened in a suburb of São Paulo. Sixty delegates attended the conference organized by WCRC in partnership with the World Council of Churches and the Council for World Mission.

Social inclusion, gender justice, care for the environment, and concrete actions to overcome greed are named as criteria for a new economic and financial architecture. The statement recommends a series of actions including the formation of an ecumenical school of governance, economics, and management and setting up a global commission initiated by the ecumenical movement to forward the work of the Commission of Experts on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System, chaired by Joseph Stiglitz.

Zambian social justice advocate, Omega Bula, who moderated the drafting group, says the importance of the statement is that it offers clear alternatives to current models.

“Often we are challenged when we just criticize something and we are asked what we think should be done. So this meeting was critical in providing these alternatives,” she said.





Rwandan church leader helped by scholarship for women to study theology

Thérèse Mukamakuza was ordained by the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda (PCR) with only a diploma in theology because of a scarcity of clergy after the genocide. It was 1998 and there was an urgent need to rebuild the church.

Thanks to the support of the Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South, managed by WCRC's Justice and

Partnership Office, Mukamakuza enrolled at St. Paul's University Limuru, Kenya in 2002 after first learning to speak English! She graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity in 2005. This equipped her to prepare a Masters degree at KwaZulu Natal University in South Africa in Theology and Development where she focused on gender and development.

Today Mukamakuza holds senior positions in her church. She is the first woman to be named President of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda Kigali Region, centred in the country's capital, Kigali. At the same time she is President of the Executive Committee of the national church.

Without a solid basis in theology, Mukamakuza says she wouldn't have been able to "stand on her own feet" and know what she was doing. "I could not have taken on the duties I now have. I am happy to remember what the scholarship has done for me."

The *Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South* was established in 2001 to increase the number of women in ordained ministry and enable women from Reformed churches in the Global South to build their capacity for effective partnership in God's mission. The fund provides for first degree or diploma studies which are done at a seminary or college in the home country or region of scholarship awardees.



COMMUNION



Global Institute of Theology asks what it means to “be the church” on society’s margins

“Every time I read a news article or Bible passage, I realize the effect of the Global Institute of Theology on me,” says Dan Snyder. “Now the news is close to my heart. I look for what the spirit of God is doing around the world.”



The American pastor, ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA, participated in the GIT programme in 2012 when it was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Snyder, along with fifty senior theology students and new pastors, spent three weeks at the Duta Wacana Christian University in Java focusing on Reformed theology and on the experience of churches in Indonesia who are called to witness in a multi-faith context.

Participants were encouraged to learn from each other about their countries and the contexts of their home churches. It was all part of developing an understanding of the multiple forms of Reformed church ministry and identity throughout the world.

“I wish every pastor going into ministry could have an experience like that,” Snyder says. “I learned about parts of the world where the church is marginalized and yet thriving. So I can speak more honestly about the condition and state of my own church. Let’s see what God can do if we admit our weaknesses.”

WCRC continues to work with the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) to overcome the legacies of apartheid. In a process guided by WCRC president, Jerry Pillay, the two churches are working towards reunification. URCSA is a united church which includes the former Dutch Reformed Mission Church.



Is security the new religion?

A meeting coordinated by the WCRC's Office of Theology and Communion on the rule of law in October heard about concerns for the escalation of state-supported security measures.

“Is security the new religion?” Dietrich Werner of the World Council of Churches asked during debate. “Are we idolizing security?” The German academic and theologian said it is time to issue a declaration against the “religious connotation of security.”

The conference entitled Churches and the Rule of Law conference was organized by the Programme Committee of the John Knox International Centre in Geneva. The two-day event attracted forty participants from churches and non-governmental organizations in Africa, North America and Europe.

The objective was to inform churches about the role they can play in their local contexts in ensuring the rule of law and offered an opportunity for global organizations such as WCRC and WCC to set their agendas in response to the question of rights and the rule of law in the coming years.

Roman Catholic – Reformed Dialogue

Since the Reformed church movement began ecumenical dialogues 42 years ago, there has always been a Reformed–Catholic dialogue. For WCRC a global dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church is of first priority because of our shared history: the Protestant church emerged from the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation. Today our ecumenical commitment is to work on relations with the church whose roots we share.

Dialogues are meetings of theologians who are experts in the field of the theme. Their role includes ensuring that the results of the discussions will inspire their respective churches in a commitment to justice. By developing a common understanding of a theology of justice, our faith communities are better able to fulfil that commitment.

A round of dialogues has on average five face-to-face annual meetings. The current round with the Catholic Church started in 2011 with a first meeting in Rome. The group consists of 15 participants: seven Catholic, eight Reformed.

In 2012 the group met in Atlanta, USA to explore the theme: “Sanctification and Justification, the Christian Community as an agent for justice.” Discussions focused on the saving work of Christ that gives a firm basis for being part of God’s life-giving ministry, especially on the field of justice.



MISSION



Churches issue statement on mission in Indonesia

The question of how churches in Indonesia can work together in response to social, community and environmental concerns is an important subject of discussion in a country where Christians form just ten per cent of the population.

In May, 80 Christians from Indonesia and neighbouring countries gathered to consider the question at a conference in Jakarta, the country's capital. The mission event was jointly coordinated by WCRC and the Christian Conference of Asia. Participants included representatives of WCRC's 27 member churches in Indonesia and one church in East Timor. The gathering was part of WCRC's global programme encouraging similar discussions in several regions.

A statement issued at the end of the conference says: "Technological advances have shifted the traditional relationship between human beings and nature; industrial advances are turning villages into cities, while making the rich richer and the poor poorer; traditional values are being replaced with consumerism which leads to corruption; and all the while different church denominations are competing against each other thus hindering them from working together to face these issues."

In response to these challenges, the participants called on churches to join forces to work against dehumanization of people and ecological destruction.

MEMBER RELATIONS

Prayers for peace requested for Nigeria

Early in the year, WCRC's general secretary issued a call for prayers for peace in Nigeria saying there was a need for ongoing prayer in the face of violence affecting Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

“As people of faith wrestle with the Boko Haram phenomenon, let us keep our sisters and brothers in our prayers,” Setri Nyomi wrote in a message to WCRC member churches and posted on WCRC's website www.wcrc.ch. Nyomi asked that those prayers include both Muslims and Christians.

WCRC regularly issues calls for prayers for member churches that are facing challenges caused by civil strife, natural disasters, internal church tensions or political turmoil. Requests for prayers sent by WCRC members are also welcome.

North East Asia churches speak out on nuclear energy

WCRC's Northeast Asia Area Council ended its 2012 Council meeting in Hsinchu, Taiwan in February with many voices calling for renewed commitment to climate justice and vigilance against the destructive power of nuclear energy.

Delegates from Korea and Japan spoke strongly about the need for WCRC to take up issues of nuclear energy. Recalling major



nuclear accidents in the world – especially the March 2011 Fukushima nuclear plant crisis – they reminded delegates that the world could be faced with a major catastrophe if attention is not paid to nuclear technology.

Council for World Mission affirms partnership for justice

The Council for World Mission (CWM) has taken steps to strengthen its partnership with WCRC on justice initiatives by agreeing to sponsor WCRC's Justice and Partnership Office for the coming five years. The decision was made during a meeting of CWM trustees in American Samoa in June. The trustees also voted to support an endowment fund created by WCRC's Executive Committee to stabilise the organisation's finances and to ensure its sustainability. Twenty-seven of CWM's 31 member churches are members of WCRC.



PARTNERSHIP FUND: EMERGENCY FUND

Partnership Fund Project in Sri Lanka: Empowerment of communities through capacity building

Four communities in Sri Lanka centred around mission stations of the Presbytery of Lanka have received support from the Partnership Fund for a joint training-for-empowerment project. The project offers workshops to strengthen the capacity of women and men to meet challenges to justice, peace, human rights, and development so that they can enhance life in their communities.

The people in these four communities are vulnerable: they face economic risks, environmental problems, and political uncertainties. People feel excluded from political participation. The poor have no voice and they are not aware of their

economic, social and cultural rights. They suffer from delays in the judicial system. There is a lack of awareness of women's rights and of gender justice. Unemployment and lack of access to credit deepen the vulnerability of the whole community.

The Partnership Fund project will offer training in organisation and transformation skills to empower the communities. The Presbyterian Centre for Mission and Discipleship will meet all the training requirements of the church and the communities involved.

Total costs for this project are CHF 44,138. The Partnership Fund has contributed CHF 29,618.

For information about the Partnership Fund, contact PF@wcrch or visit www.wcrch



PARTNERSHIP FUND: MIDDLE EAST

Partnership Fund Project in Egypt: Christian-Muslim understanding and reconciliation

The Evangelical Church of Egypt has long recognized the need for dialogue and closer relations between Christians and Muslims. Facing a new political situation in Egypt after the Mubarak dictatorship ended in 2011, the church feels this need even more strongly and has launched a project of Christian–Muslim understanding and reconciliation.

In the first phase of the project, workshops to train small groups of pastors and laypeople in dialogue will be offered in cities and villages throughout the country. Books, booklets, CDs and a newspaper are also planned.

A new Egypt is in the making and the Christian minority – including the Reformed church – needs to witness to the principles of democracy, justice, peace, liberty and human rights, and stand in opposition to extremism and fundamentalism of all kinds.

Total costs for this project are CHF 48,000. The Partnership Fund supported the project with CHF 30,000.





INDONESIAN STEWARDS

Indonesian Stewards offer time, talent and good humour for Executive Committee meeting in Berastagi

Young people from the Karo region of North Sumatra in Indonesia served as stewards for WCRC's Executive Committee meeting in May. Most are studying theology or serving as student pastors in parishes and mission placements. Some are young ordinands. All gave unselfishly of their time, skills and good humour. Above all, they served as living witnesses to their faith and to the role of the church in the region.

The meeting was hosted by the Karo Batak Protestant Church (GBKP). Executive Committee members appreciated formal presentations by GBKP leaders and informal encounters with local parish members which allowed them to learn about the work of the church in the area that is home to a predominantly aboriginal population.



WCRC STAFF



Setri Nyomi (Ghana)
General Secretary



Douwe Visser (The Netherlands)
Executive Secretary,
Theology, Mission and Communion



Dora Arce-Valentín (Cuba)
Executive Secretary,
Justice and Partnership



Kristine Greenaway (Canada)
Executive Secretary, Communications



Yueh Cho (Switzerland)
Finance Coordinator



Penny Blachut (Switzerland) until September
Administrative Assistant



Ida Milli (Switzerland) from October
Administrative Assistant



Daphne Martin-Gnadason (India)
Administrative Assistant



Páraic Réamonn (Ireland)
Deputy Director, Partnership Fund

WCRC is grateful for the support of volunteers and interns.

Hartmut Lucke (Switzerland) Volunteer Translator/Interpreter

Aiko Sumichan Intern (Indonesia)

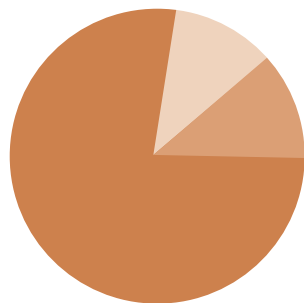
Christopher Dorn Intern (United States)



FINANCES

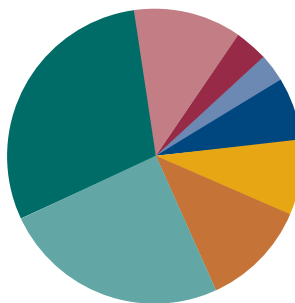


2012 Income



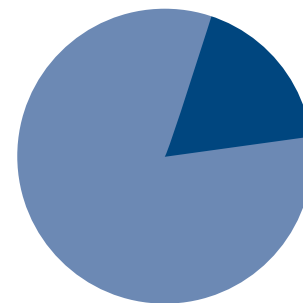
Membership Fees	76%
Donations	13%
Other Income	11%

2012 Programme Expenses



Global Institute of Theology (GIT)	31%
New Economic and Financial Architecture	25%
WCRC Regional Support	10%
Justice and Partnership Office Support	8%
Global South Internship Fund	7%
North American Internship Fund	4%
Covenanting for Justice	4%
Other Programs	10%

2012 Partnership Fund disbursements



Development	81%
Mission	19%

SUSTAINABILITY FUND

WCRC establishes fund development office

In 2012, WCRC's Executive Committee established a Development Office to devise plans to ensure the Communion's financial stability. The Office works with longtime partners such as church agencies and other ecumenical organizations to support projects where work intersects. And it seeks new partners, such as congregations and individuals, who want to ensure that the Reformed witness remains vital in a changing world.

Fees and donations from member churches remain the core of WCRC's financial support. But, given the changing dynamics of funding in the member churches, WCRC needs new sources to remain vital. New people and organizations have to be invited to share in the task of supporting the Reformed witness today.

Stephens Lytch has donated a year to get the Development Office started. He would be pleased to hear from you with ideas and offers of support. sglytch@gmail.com

DONORS

The World Communion of Reformed Churches acknowledges with gratitude all financial contributions received in 2012, including the support of member churches through membership fees and the support of donors for designated programme initiatives.

You can support WCRC's mission of justice, healing and unity. Donations can be made via the website www.wcrc.ch or by contacting Rev. Dr. Stephens Lytch, Endowment Fund President sglytch@gmail.com. Contributions from North America are tax deductible.



WCRC GOVERNANCE

OFFICERS 2010 - 2017



Jerry Pillay,
President

Uniting Presbyterian Church
in Southern Africa
South Africa



Yvette Noble Bloomfield,
Vice-President

United Church of Jamaica and
the Cayman Islands
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Lu Yueh Wen,
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Presbyterian Church
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Taiwan



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Vice-President

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Helis Barraza Diaz,
Vice-President

Presbyterian Church
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Johann Weusmann,
General Treasurer

Evangelical Reformed
Church
Germany



Setri Nyomi,
General Secretary

Evangelical Presbyterian Church
in Ghana
Ghana, Switzerland

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2010 – 2017

Lydia Aku Adajawah, Africa/President of the African Communion of
Reformed Churches (ACRC) of the WCRC/Ghana

Peter Borgdorff, North America/Christian Reformed Church in
North America/USA

Allan Buckingham, North America/United Church of Canada/Canada

Peter Bukowski, Europe/Reformed Alliance /Germany

Brenda Bullock, Caribbean/Convener of the Caribbean and North America Area
Council (CANAAC) of the WCRC/Trinidad & Tobago

Yang-En Cheng, Asia/President of North East Asia Area Council (NEAAC) of
the WCRC/Taiwan

Mary Fontaine, North America/Presbyterian Church in Canada/Canada

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Yael Eka Hadiputeri, Asia/Indonesian Christian Church/Indonesia

Yang-En Cheng, Asia/President of North East Asia Area Council
of the WCRC/Taiwan

Jan-Gerd Heetderks Europe/President of WCRC Europe/the Netherlands

Najla Kassab Abousawan, Middle East/National Evangelical Synod
of Syria and Lebanon/Lebanon

Clifton Kirkpatrick, North America/Presbyterian Church (USA)/USA

Clayton Leal da Silva, Latin America/Independent Presbyterian
Church of Brazil/Brazil

Subha Singh Majaw, Asia/Presbyterian Church of India/India

Cheryl Meban, Europe/Presbyterian Church in Ireland/UK

Cheh Liang Mok, Asia/Presbyterian Church in Malaysia/Malaysia

Veronica Njoki Muchiri, Africa/Presbyterian Church of East Africa/Kenya

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www.wrcr.ch

Visit our website for worship resources, reports, publications, news releases and messages from churches. While visiting the site, you can make an online donation!

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The World Communion of Reformed Churches represents 80 million Christians in Presbyterian, Reformed, Congregational, Waldensian, United and Uniting churches throughout the world. Its 229 member churches are active in initiatives supporting economic, mission, church unity, and justice in 108 countries.



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