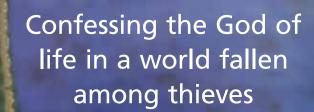


STRATEGIC PLAN



Called to Communion, Committed to Justice

alled to communion and committed to justice, the World Communion of Reformed Churches responds to God's call to foster justice and meet spiritual needs for all in the transformation of the world through the love of Jesus Christ.

United in Christ and rooted in the historic Reformed traditions, the WCRC strengthens and deepens unity among its member churches and coordinates common initiatives to increase its impact around the world.

Confessing in the Present Tense

The whole of creation is the "theatre of God's glory." This tenet of John Calvin leads the WCRC to follow both the imperatives and the approach of confessing moments as represented by the Barmen Declaration and the confessions of Belhar and Accra.

Bringing the resources of the Reformed theological and confessing tradition into the present tense means listening to the suffering and cries of humanity and all of creation. The WCRC takes up the prophetic traditions of public witness as a confessing communion in a world fallen among thieves.

A Communion for Justice

Renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit and drawing from the heritage of *ecclesia semper reformanda secundum verbum dei*—a church always being reformed according to the Word of God—the WCRC understands itself as a communion that refutes the logic of exclusion that marks social and political institutions, the economic order and sometimes even the church itself.

Where this communion is lived out those in power relinquish their authority, lay aside their power and privilege and consciously embrace the bodies and the voices of those who have been excluded from full participation in the community.

The WCRC's Work

The work of the WCRC is built upon Reformed traditions, the actions of General Councils and upon its constitution. The work itself is guided by the Strategic Plan. Based on the actions and spirit of the 2017 General Council the creation of the Strategic 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 centers of power.

The aspirations of the WCRC are captured in its Vision Statement:

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

Through robust engagement with the Word of God and the call of the Holy Spirit, the World Communion of Reformed Churches 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).

And the means to achieve such a vision are found in the Strategic Plan's Overarching Goal:

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.1 As a global Koinonia,2 we are marked by discerning, confessing,3 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 Interreligious Cooperation

^{1&}quot;Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other (Psalm 85:10).

²The Greek word Koinonia means joint participation in a communion, in which one has a share in anything. According to Acts 2:42 it identifies the state of fellowship and unity that should exist within the Christian congregation.

³In the spirit of the Barmen Declaration and the confessions of Belhar and Accra.



Overarching Objective for Communion

The work on communion will be lived out through acts of justice that refute the logic of exclusion that marks social and political institutions, the economic order and sometimes even the church itself (General Council Actions 20, 21, 41).

The communion that the WCRC seeks to become will embody the radical hospitality of the gospel of Jesus, which demonstrates respect, trust, love and willingness to listen to a variety of voices seeking fullness of life.

In the commitment to discerning God's will together, the Communion therefore embraces the challenges of linguistic and cultural divergences, as well as differences in theological and hermeneutical perspectives as positive building blocks that set the atmosphere for dialogue, discernment and engagement on communion with justice.

Always Reforming

he Strategic Plan interprets the classic Reformed understanding of "Reformed church always reforming according to the Word of God" as a global *koinonia*, marked by "discerning, confessing, witnessing and being reformed together."

This *koinonia* comes into being as a communion by the openness that allows the Holy Spirit to transform the individual, the community of believers and the world as a whole. This communion emerges from the contributions of all people of faith and therefore questions authoritarian leadership and rejects all forms of exclusion. In living out God's calling to communion the WCRC therefore commits itself firmly to justice.

Full and Just Inclusion

The WCRC seeks to live out a vision to become a just communion where those in power relinquish their authority and consciously embrace the bodies and the voices of those who have been excluded from full participation in the community.

Through the programs conducted under this objective the WCRC particularly opens

itself to be challenged and enriched by the engagement of youth and young adults, by women, children, Indigenous peoples, persons discriminated against because of race, Dalits, migrants and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and of the LGBTQ community. These programs will advise the Communion in its pursuit for the full and just inclusion of all.



Creating Community

According to Reformed understanding the unity of the church is a gift and a calling from God. The WCRC is a communion because of the commitment of its members to engage in discernment and to witness together even in areas where the churches have not been able to find common ground for considerable time.

One currently challenging area is the understanding of human sexuality. In such a situation, the WCRC sets

the atmosphere for dialogue and discernment on communion and diversity that attempts to open a space for a hermeneutical and theological conversation on human sexuality across different theological positions and moral convictions and on the missional implications of such joint discernment.

Accompanying Members

WCRC member churches are often prophetic voices in the midst of conflict. The WCRC accompanies these members, coming alongside in solidarity, lifting global voices in prayer, providing critical resources and raising awareness of situations which are always not well known. The WCRC is committed to these Global Peace Initiatives in these (and many other) areas:

On the Korean Peninsula, the WCRC works with its member churches, along with the National Council of Churches in Korea and World Council of Churches, to provide bridges of conversation over the DMZ and stand against words and acts of war.

In Colombia the WCRC provides financial, theological and leadership resources to its member churches and partners as they continue to work for peace and reconciliation through accompaniment programs and other initiatives.

Throughout the Middle East the WCRC works with its member churches and ecumenical partners to raise up the voices of the Christian minority, provide assistance to war refugees and promote peaceful solutions to difficult challenges.





Overarching Objective for Justice

The WCRC will seek to engage the whole Communion to discern the signs of the times in order to effectively witness to transformative reformation in the areas of economic, social, gender and ecological justice so that member churches will be able to faithfully confess to the God of life in a world fallen among thieves (John 10:10).

The WCRC will seek to deepen and strengthen its existing commitments to justice while at the same time expanding and growing in accordance with the vision of the 2017 General Council.

he WCRC seeks to do justice in the context of a world groaning in travail (Romans 8:19-24) and fallen among thieves (John 10:10), yet we continue to affirm that we are gripped with the power of the resurrection, gifted by the God of life. The Accra Confession named "empire" as that overarching system under which we live, and to which, we as the church, are called to resist, acknowledging that:

We believe in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. We live under the promise that Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in fullness (John 10:10). Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit we open ourselves to the reality of our world. (Article 17)

Three important pillars have shaped the justice work of the WCRC:

- reading the signs of the time as the first steps in understanding and discerning the will of God and where we have to come together in collaboration with God's plan
- realizing that justice issues are all interconnected
- recognizing that the mission of the church can be summarized in contributing to the reign of God

With this background the 2017 General Council resolved that the primary areas that drive the justice work of the WCRC will be economic justice, ecological justice, gender justice and inclusive communities.

Economic Justice

The WCRC continues to advocate for a democratic global system of economic governance through partnerships with like-minded ecumenical organizations, people's movements and civil society networks. This is done through building resistance movements by coordinated campaigns and with participation at the local, national, regional and international levels.



Ecological Justice

Care for creation and fair and equitable use of the earth's resources are central to Reformed church theology and justice programming. The WCRC has become an active member in the Season of Creation Ecumenical Program. It has decidedly asserted its position by shaping the message from the Season of Creation 2018 as well as by occupying a position on the steering committee and the advisory committee.

Gender Justice

Gender justice is an ongoing journey of praying together, engaging, challenging and always seeking discernment on how God wants us to live as women and men. It involves finding and putting into practice new ways to express and live out the uniqueness of bearing the image of God, fulfilling our responsibility of building and nurturing right, just and equal relationships between women, men and the earth. The WCRC is particularly committed to gender justice and the just and full participation of women in all areas of church and society.

Inclusive Communities

The WCRC is committed to the full and just participation of all making definitive efforts to positively address discrimination based on gender, ability and age. It seeks to work to create spaces in which the voices of the vulnerable and excluded will be heard.

DREAM: Discipleship: Resisting Empire as Mission

All the programmatic work of the WCRC uses the lens of empire as a means for understanding the context. The WCRC is strengthening and deepening a critical theological study process of engaging empire in the present context. This is undertaken through an intersectional lens by organizing consultations and conferences, particularly in the regions and with a view to creating resources which foreground voices from the Global South on empire.



NIFEA: New International Financial and Economic Architecture

A multi-faceted, ecumenical endeavour, the NIFEA project encompasses several programs, including the GEM School, the Campaign on Just Taxation and Reparation, the G20 Interreligious Conference on Ethics and the Economy, the mobilization of people to advocate for structural change and democracy with accountability in the global financial system.

Ordination of Women

The 2017 General Council adopted "The Declaration of Faith on the Ordination of Women" and pledged to journey with those members who do not yet ordain women. The ordination of women is not just about having more women in the ministry; rather it's about recognizing that by including women in ministry and as equals in church leadership would create a powerful force for social and economic justice throughout the world.

Vision Statement

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

Through robust engagement with the Word of God and the call of the Holy Spirit, the World Communion of Reformed Churches 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).

Overarching Goal

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.¹ As a global *Koinonia*,² we are marked by discerning, confessing,³ 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.

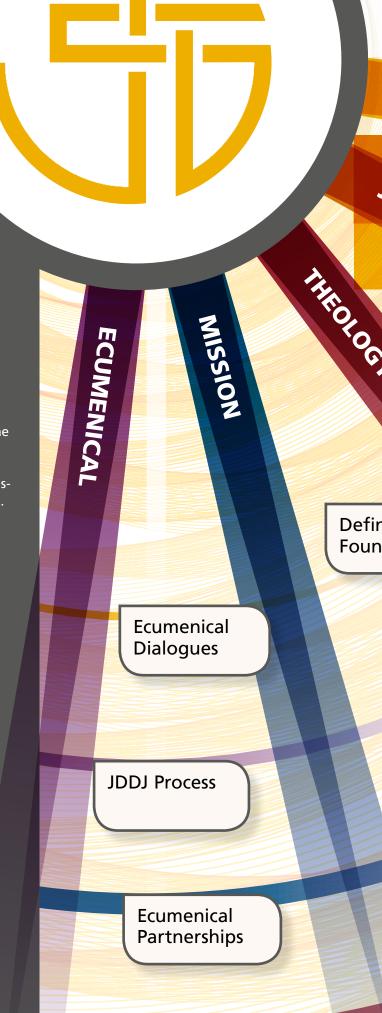
These strategic trajectories are applied through five interlocking dimensions:

- Communion
- Justice
- Theology
- Mission
- Ecumenical Engagement and Interreligious Cooperation

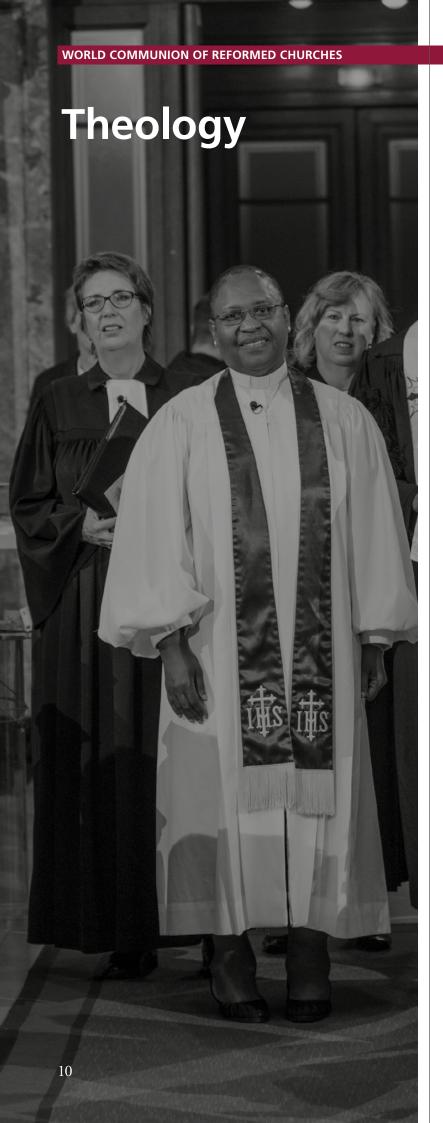
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CONFESSING WITNESSING REFORMING **DISCERNING** Full and Just Inclusion Accompanying COMMUNION **Members** USTICE Creating Community Ordination of Women DREAM: Discipleship: NIFEA: New **Resisting Empire** International Financial as Mission and Economic Architecture ing Missional dations RAN: Resisting Cultures of Discrimination, Authoritarianism and Nationalism GIT: Global Institute of Theology Mission in the Context of Crisis and Migration The Ruth Project



Overarching Objective for Theology

Hearing the cries of wounded communities and engaging with them (General Council Action 21) the theological work of the WCRC shall lead the whole Communion in theologically-rooted processes of confessing the faith, drawing on the Reformed tradition and contextual theologies to address the present reality.

he agenda of the Reformation is not yet finished. Christians and churches all over the globe are inspired by the call to join into God's continuous reforming of the church and transforming of the world.

In calling the Communion to engage with the unfinished agenda of the Reformation, the 2017 General Council formulated an understanding of theology that calls for continuous self-reflection in the attempt to respond to the call of the living God. This self-reflection starts with processes discerning in which the voices of wounded communities receive special attention because in their cries the communion hears the words of the crucified God.

This engagement leads into processes of confessing the faith to which theology is called to provide language to address the present reality, drawing on the Reformed traditions and contextual theologies.

Unfinished Agenda

The following items of the unfinished agenda of the Reformation have been identified to receive attention in the theology work of the WCRC. These items are being pursued not only in the program work of the WCRC and in its regions and member churches, but also in universities and seminaries as well as by individual theologians. These activities can have a wide impact in the communion and beyond:

- bringing key insights of the Reformation into the present tense, especially considering the intrinsic connection between communion and justice
- learning from theologies that liberate and affirm life, describing the Reformed

family as a global movement with histories on all conti-

- developing the concept of "embodied justice" as a touchstone, with special attention paid to marginalized peoples
- confronting rising authoritarianisms, particularly in how they engage with religion, nationality, race and caste to disenfranchise and pauperize the most vulnerable

encouraging the renewal of Christian worship and spiritual life within the Reformed tradition

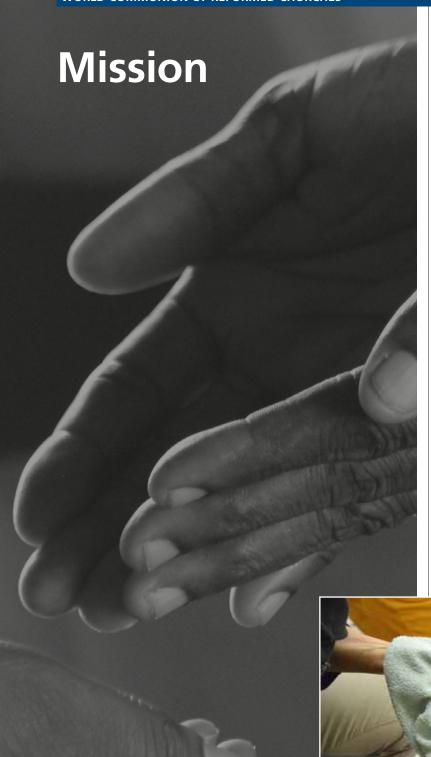


An intensive short-term academic program designed to

give theological students and faculty from all over the world an opportunity to learn, teach, and do theology in an inter-contextual and ecumenical way, situating the theological task in local, regional and world contexts, the Global Institute for Theology continues to nurture and encourage the work of young theologians and scholars.

RAN: Resisting Cultures of Discrimination, Authoritarianism and Nationalism

The first consultation in this process was sparked by the rise of racist ideologies that are more often than not fed by nationalist discourses. The consultation gathered together Dalits and people of African descent from the Americas to seek to redeem religion from the idolatry of power and privilege by drawing from theologies and ideologies that intentionally have positioned themselves outside of traditional power structures.



Overarching Objective for Mission

In witnessing its call to communion and its commitment to justice, the WCRC will articulate afresh a vision of liberating discipleship that rejoices in God's renewing presence in individual conversion and in social transformation and embraces the call to live out God's mission in the face of idolatries of power and privilege.

n responding to the call to communion and in affirming the commitment to justice the WCRC becomes part of God's mission (mission dei) to renew the whole creation. God's mission transforms the church into a missional communion that commits itself to God's work of renewal and transformation.

God calls disciples. Discipleship liberates the person as well as the community and calls for the crossing of all borders and barriers that separate people from one another, from creation and from God.

In this mission the church discovers that God provides partners in expected as well as in unexpected places and therefore collaborates with all people of good will inside and outside and outside the church. The WCRC in its programs on mission is committed to the participation in liberating discipleship.

Defining Missional Foundations

Continuing discussions begun at the 2010 Uniting General Council, the WCRC is initiating a process to better define the foundations and goals of mission, guided by the principle that mission is contextual, relational, ide-



ological and transformational. This will be a broad participatory process of consultation.

Mission in the Context of Crisis and Migration

This program works to strengthen member churches in crisis situations that are aggravated by religious tensions and empower these churches to participate in God's mission for justice, peace and reconciliation. The program:

- accompanies churches particularly in the Middle East, West Africa and Indonesia and supports their work for justice, peace and reconciliation
- establishes a network for exchange, mutual learning and support between member churches in crisis situations that are aggravated by religious tensions
- facilitates a process to develop mission strategies for conflict resolution, justice and peace

The Ruth Project

The WCRC recognizes the urgency of the global issues of human trafficking and migration and the need for a clear common response from the church on behalf of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and trafficked people. Calling on member churches to challenges forces and systems that displace people, advocate for the rights of migrant people and offer refuge, the Ruth Project also:

- analyzes what happens to trafficked people, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the countries they leave, pass through, and settle in
- promotes networking among regions and local churches to share best practices
- works to address governments, media and citizens to ensure all that is necessary is done so people receive the help they need and deserve
- considers the theological, spiritual and pastoral challenges confronting member churches



Overarching Objectives for Ecumenical Engagement

The WCRC understands itself as an integral part of the ecumenical movement. Taking up the constitutional mandate to "contribute to the ecumenical movement and the transformation of the world" (Art. IV. C.) the WCRC will promote economic and ecological justice, global peace and reconciliation and provide Reformed perspectives on church unity.

The ecumenical engagement of the WCRC with other Christian communions aims to promote the visible unity of the larger church in its common witness to the world. In dialogues and other programmes, the WCRC will emphasize the interconnectedness of theology, communion, mission and justice and will foreground voices and perspectives of Christians in the Global South.



he WCRC has stated repeatedly that "to be Reformed is to be ecumenical." This statement reflects that according to Reformed understanding the church is called to be always reforming according to the Word of God. Self-understanding thus can never be seen as final, but must continuously be examined in the light of God's mission that we receive in Scripture.

The Reformed understanding of the church therefore transcends the boundaries of any particular church. Reformed theology sees that God is at work also in other Christian traditions and understands that the unity of the church to which the Apostolic Creed testifies is already there. God gives unity as a gift and invites the church to receive this by reforming itself and its relationships to Christians of other traditions.

This principle has significant consequences for the selfunderstanding of the WCRC as a communion and to the relationship to other Christian world communions. The WCRC understands itself as an ecumenical communion that participates in God's mission for the unity of the





whole church. In the light of this missional commitment, the WCRC is guided by the vision of the visible unity of the larger church in its common witness to the world.

Ecumenical Dialogues

The WCRC is shifting its focus on ecumenical dialogues from striving for doctrinal consensus to building relationships that will lead to common witness. While the theological search for doctrinal consensus still has a place in relations between Christian communions, the issues in today's world that shape our self-understanding are a more relevant and practical entry point to pave the way for a common witness.

JDDJ Process

The five signatories of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) "are convinced of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to transform us and the world and we are committed to witness more effectively together to the salvation given to us in Christ (Romans 1:16)." Initially signed by the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, the JDDJ now includes the World Methodist Council, the Anglican Communion and the WCRC, all of which agree on the core message of salvation in and through Christ.

Ecumenical Partnerships

The WCRC is committed to working with all the partners God provides and is particularly focused on participating with and contributing toward the work of the Council for World Mission, World Council of Churches, Global Christian Forum and the World Alliance of Christian Communicators. The Lutheran World Federation is also a strategically important partner, based on the Wittenberg Witness which commits the two organizations "to explore new forms of life together that will more fully express the communion we already have in Christ."

The World Communion of Reformed Churches is comprised of 100 million Christians in Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian churches. The WCRC, working with its more than 230 member churches, is active in supporting church unity, justice, theology, mission and ecumenical engagement in over 105 countries.

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WCRC Vision

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In addition to the five interlocking dimensions the Strategic Plan included several organizational issues, including:

• Sustainability

While organizational sustainability, including financial stability, is one important part of the faithful living out of our communion, the WCRC also recognizes and celebrates that we have much to share that sustains us in time and space. The WCRC takes seriously the sharing of prayer, time, friendship, goodwill, and all the gifts of the Spirit.

Capacity

Current staff capacities will be maximized and new staff colleagues will be sought through partnerships.

Communications

Building right relationships through communication is key not only for strengthening the Communion but for creating a just and inclusive organization and for being able to effectively witness to the world.

Governance

The WCRC is committed to continuing its decision-making processes through the use of discernment and consensus.

• Empowering Regions

The WCRC's regions are a focal point of the organization's work and witness. Synergies on all levels will be strengthened, and the regions will be key in developing programs based on the Strategic Plan.