

Reformed communiqué

Articles in Bahasa Indonesia, English, Español, Français, Korean

Un voile de cendres recouvre l'Ukraine: Les chrétiens se joignent à la prière pour la paix

Le mercredi des Cendres, plus de 3 000 chrétiens de 80 pays du monde entier se sont joints à un puissant service de prière, de lamentation et de solidarité avec tous ceux qui souffrent des effets de l'invasion de l'Ukraine par la Russie.

Le service œcuménique en ligne a vu la participation de pasteurs et de paroissiens ukrainiens vivant dans des villes et des villages qui ont subi des attaques depuis que les avions, les chars et les troupes russes ont lancé un assaut coordonné le long de la frontière orientale de l'Ukraine la semaine dernière.

Le service de prière et de chant, de réflexions de Carême et de témoignages personnels a été organisé en commun par la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées (CMER) et la Fédération luthérienne mondiale (FLM), avec la participation du Conseil méthodiste mondial (CMM), de la Conférence mennonite mondiale (CMM), de la Conférence des Églises européennes, de la Communion des Églises protestantes en Europe, de l'Alliance baptiste mondiale et de la Communion anglicane.

« Dans son discours d'introduction, Anne Burghardt, secrétaire générale de la FLM, a dénoncé "la politique cynique" de ceux qui ont "renvoyé le monde à des temps auxquels nous avions espéré ne jamais revenir". Par-



// Programme Secretariat and staff of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan promote the Prayer Service for Peace in Ukraine, organized by the National Council of Churches of Taiwan. Image courtesy of PCT Church and Society/Lau Ka-Hun. //

lant des "horreurs de la guerre et des déplacements de population", elle a déclaré : " Un voile de cendres recouvre l'Ukraine. Dieu appelle l'humanité à la responsabilité : Où est ton frère, Caïn ? Nous voulons crier cet appel à la responsabilité dans le cœur et l'esprit de ceux qui sont responsables de toute cette violence." »

En méditant sur le passage du prophète Michée évoquant la nécessité de battre « les épées en socs de charrue et [...] les lances en crochets d'émondage », Hanns Lessing, secrétaire général par intérim de la CMER, a déclaré que ces mots ont inspiré les artisans de la paix depuis près de 3 000 ans. Le rétablissement de la paix est un travail difficile, a-t-il dit, mais toutes les Églises sont appelées à cette tâche aujourd'hui.

S'exprimant au nom de toutes les communions mondiales réunies pour l'événement, il a ajouté : « Nous nous engageons à soutenir les Églises en Ukraine, maintenant et dans les jours difficiles à venir. »

Parmi les témoignages provenant de différentes régions de l'Ukraine, citons Alexander Shevchenko, de l'Église méthodiste unie de Louhansk, la ville située à la frontière russe qui est en conflit depuis 2014. Il a prié pour la paix entre les Russes et les Ukrainiens et pour des décisions sages de la part des dirigeants des gouvernements dans la région et au-delà.

Pavlo Shvarts, de l'Église évangélique luthérienne allemande en Ukraine,

Suite de la page 1



s'est exprimé depuis les environs de la ville assiégée de Kharkiv, appelant à une paix juste et à ce que les agresseurs et les victimes soient nommés dans le cadre de ce processus.

Le pasteur Alexey, de l'église mennonite de la ville portuaire de Berdyansk, au sud-est du pays, a montré des rues vides et des magasins fermés, expliquant que le carburant a été rationné et que l'on s'inquiète de la disponibilité de denrées alimentaires et de médicaments si le conflit se poursuivait.

Kriszta Bado, de l'église réformée de la région occidentale de Transcarpathie, a parlé avec émotion des milliers de personnes qui ont traversé la frontière pour se réfugier en Hongrie, où les pasteurs et les congrégations se mobilisent pour les accueillir.

Taras Diatlik, de l'Alliance évangélique mondiale en Ukraine occidentale, et Marek Glodek, de l'Union baptiste polonaise, ont rendu grâce pour l'organisation des églises qui soutiennent les gens en ces temps difficiles, notamment en aidant les étudiants et les

// Ukrainian refugees crossing into Medyka, Poland, wait for a place in one of the buses that will take them to large sites or collective shelters. Many will then travel farther into the European Union. Image by Frank Schultze courtesy of ACT Alliance/Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. // Hungarian Reformed Church Aid set up shelters for refugees, most of whom are mothers with their children. // Hungarian Reformed Church Aid workers and volunteers met refugees at the main train stations in Hungary, including in Budapest, where they provided food, drink, and assistance in their onward journey or in finding a place to stay. Images courtesy of Hungarian Reformed Church Aid. //

séminaristes à fuir à l'étranger ou vers des endroits plus sûrs.

Mykola Danilevich, de l'Église orthodoxe ukrainienne, Patriarcat de Moscou, dans la capitale Kiev, a déclaré que jusqu'à 80 personnes s'abritent sous terre dans sa paroisse chaque nuit pour échapper aux bombardements. « Nous restons avec notre peuple », a-t-il dit, remerciant tous ses collègues orthodoxes, protestants et catholiques qui l'ont appelé pour lui offrir des prières et un soutien continu.

Le service s'est poursuivi par un appel aux chrétiens à apporter l'espoir par la prière et l'action en ce temps de crise. J.C. Park, président du CMM, a condamné ce qu'il a appelé « une nouvelle guerre froide » et « la propagande méprisable des armes nucléaires ».

César Garcia, secrétaire général de la CMM, a déclaré que les croyants sont

appelés à « incarner l'espoir pour les autres », tout comme les premières communautés chrétiennes l'ont fait en s'opposant aux conflits et à l'oppression de leur époque.

L'office s'est conclu par un temps de prière d'intercession, qui a été étendue au-delà de l'invasion ukrainienne à d'autres pays déchirés par la guerre, comme le Myanmar, la Syrie, l'Éthiopie et la région du Tigré, le Yémen, l'Arménie et le Sud-Soudan, et a également été l'occasion d'un appel à « pardonner notre partialité lorsque nous maintenons un discours occidental sur les réfugiés. Pardonnez-nous lorsque certaines nationalités sont sélectionnées et bloquées à la frontière alors qu'elles fuient l'Ukraine. Tous sont des victimes et nous sommes tous une famille humaine. Tourne-nous, ô Dieu, les uns vers les autres ».

Article original avec l'aimable autorisation de LWF/ P. Hitchen.

Communion providing relief for Ukraine

Even as the first of potentially millions of Ukrainians sought refuge outside of their country, members and partners of the World Communion of Reformed Churches were responding to their needs.

“It is good that we have cultivated contacts with the brothers and sisters in Ukraine in recent years. Many close relationships have developed from this,” said Martina Wasserloos, president of WCRC Europe. “The willingness of our member churches in Eastern Europe to help is overwhelming. They are preparing to take in and care for refugees, although they are very worried themselves”

Speaking from inside Ukraine, Sándor Zán-Fábián, head of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, said, “We also live in insecurity and fear, so anybody can try to leave the country. Basically, the elderly generation has remained; we have to care for them, along with the refugees seeking shelter in our region. It is an unprecedented, difficult situation here. Let us care for one another, remain humane, helpful, and patient.”

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, which is providing daily updates on its activities, delivered 800 kilograms of food to the Ukrainian-Hungarian border on Thursday with more following over the weekend. At the same time, the organization started a nationwide fundraising campaign to help those in need in Ukraine.

“Our hope is to create a humanitarian corridor, to use it both ways,” said Balász Ódor, ecumenical officer of the Reformed Church in Hungary. “We have warehouses around the border to transport supplies to Ukraine. Our refugee ministry is working closely together with the church aid to coordinate efforts.”

“The Romanian government is prepared to receive refugees from Ukraine, and our church is also preparing itself to contribute in this relief action,” said Tibor Kiss, ecumenical officer of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District in Romania. “We assure our brothers and sisters in Ukraine of our help as much as we are able to help.”

“We have had a joint meeting with our diakonia and have decided on several tracks to be able to support, though we are not a frontline country,” said Jiří Schneider, synod curator of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. “We suspect the refugees will seek refuge with their relatives and friends. It’s not going to be an anonymous immigration but very targeted. Hence, we are trying to reach out to our friends from Ukraine to help on an individual basis.”

Prior to the Russian invasion, coordinated efforts were underway to provide support to churches and non-profit organizations (NGOs) in Ukraine.

“With the WCRC’s global office we had begun a process to connect ecumenical church organizations and NGO’s. Our idea was to go to Ukraine to show solidarity, to connect us with them for the next years in doing things together,” said Wasserloos. “At this moment the visit is not possible, but we will not give up the idea to look for what we can do together —be it in joint projects or various forms of cooperation.”

“I am currently receiving urgent requests to also provide financial help

to make aid possible. I am in close contact with our brothers and sisters in Transcarpathia, so that we receive daily updates on what is happening and how we can help,” said Wasserloos.

The Ukrainian Educational Platform (UEP) is one of the NGOs with which WCRC Europe has been working. The UEP develops Ukrainian society

through creating and supporting a network of volunteer, social, and educational initiatives, including with churches across the country.

“Civil institutions are being attacked, including where people live who aren’t so mobile,” reported one UEP leader. “One of the most important changes now is that civic society is really under risk.”

“We are in full-scale crisis mode,” reported another UEP leader. “Our staff team are coordinating and transforming their work, gathering both needs and potential partner organizations” even as they relocate from the east to the west. Localized needs remain a priority, “providing support to even those who haven’t moved much.”

The WCRC’s Reformed Partnership Fund will provide financial assistance to relief efforts, while ACT Alliance, of which the WCRC is a global partner, has begun delivering emergency supplies through its members.

“For God’s sake, we must not stop working for peace, praying for peace, and resisting violence—continuously and persistently,” said Wasserloos.

» The willingness of our member churches in Eastern Europe to help is overwhelming. «

Funding builds partnerships

Through the Reformed Partnership Fund the World Communion of Reformed Churches provides small grants to member churches to implement strategically impactful, mission-related projects important to the life of a church and its surrounding community, particularly in the Global South.

For the past two years, the Partnership Fund has focused on providing support to member churches which dealt with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in all its manifestations. Here are a few of their stories:

The Reformed Church in Zambia's Touch Project empowered vulnerable but viable members from both its

congregations and non-church groups to overcome the economic challenges they were facing due to high levels of poverty, a situation that was worsened by the pandemic. Among other activities, the project promoted sustainable agricultural projects, including poultry farming and goat keeping in five communities.

Stakeholders were initially brought together for a consultative and awareness session. Eight people were then selected to be trained to become trainers themselves, covering three targeted districts. After their initial work with people in these districts, nearly 1,000 chicks, along with the equipment, food, and vaccines needed to raise and process them were purchased, distributed, and

installed. This resulted in the creation of eight broiler chicken businesses. At the same time, two groups were provided support to upgrade their goat farms, while another fifty farmers were trained in sustainable agriculture.

The Touch Project will continue with other activities, such as planting trees to address soil erosion and a back-to-school campaign, as well as ongoing support and monitoring of the agricultural projects.

A consultation early in the pandemic held in Jabalpur, India, led the Church of North India to initiate a project to support pastors. "Our Pastors and our frontline workers, who are especially posted in the extreme, rural locations suffers multifold. They are working and





at the same time being totally cut off from every kind of physical, mental, spiritual, and resource support. Their family suffers, too, along with them,” they said.

While congregations were well connected to their members in the cities, in rural areas not even all the pastors had mobile phones. The supported project not only provided smart phones to pastors, it also provided audio-visual aid and training on Internet usage, including online sermons.

Not only did this help bridge the digital divide, but the project better connected pastors in the countryside with their colleagues in cities. As the church reported, “the project brought a sigh of relief to the pastors. It made their work easier.”

Prior to the pandemic, attacks by extremist Islamic military groups in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger had killed hundreds and displaced 1.5 million people. The *Association des Eglises Evangéliques Réformées du Burkina Faso* (AEERB) provided refuge for 240 people at their headquarters, with support coming from their members, many of whom were impoverished.

And then came the pandemic, exacerbating the economic crisis. The money provided by the Partnership Fund was used to provide emergency food and sanitation kits to the internally displaced people already under the church’s care, as well as support dozens of other vulnerable households and raise COVID-prevention awareness. The COVID-prevention awareness efforts also obtained cooperation from the government’s health ministry.

“The AEERB is appreciating the solidarity expressed by the WCRC through its Partnership Fund to support Christians and non-Christians in an emergency,” the church reported.

An economic crisis in Lebanon has seen four in five people fall into poverty as the local currency plummeted in value, declining by 95%. To provide basic assistance, the National Synod of Syria and Lebanon’s Compassion Protestant Society created the Agro-Basket Project.

The baskets contained seeds for ten kinds of vegetables along with organic fertilizer so that targeted families could grow their own home gardens, thus relieving the need to expend as much on basic groceries.

“Two years ago, a similar project would not have registered on the radar screen of most Lebanese families. Today, with every household aiming to reduce the burden of any expense to be able to put food on the table, beneficiaries have responded with enthusiasm, satisfaction, and gratitude,” reports the church.

Applications for funding for projects to be implemented in 2022-23 are being accepted by the Partnership Fund through 30 April. Details and application forms can be found on the Partnership Fund’s webpage: <http://wcr.ch/mission/partnership-fund>

The main source of financial support for the Partnership Fund is through the Waldensian Church’s *Otto per Mille* fund and a special grant from the Church of Westphalia (Germany), although donations from WCRC member churches, partnership organizations and individuals are periodically received and always welcome.

Lombard Prize winners announced

Essays by three young theologians from the United Kingdom, Brazil, and United States have been selected as winners of the 2022 Lombard Prize.

The Prize's aim is to encourage theological work in the tradition of Reformed thought that responds to challenges of our time, bringing together elements of faith and theology in dialogue with justice and peace issues and mission in the world—all central themes of Reformed witness.

The 2022 Lombard Prize competition challenged young theologians to write on any aspect of "Ecumenism from the Margins: Confessing a God of life in a world fallen among thieves."

Qualifying essays were to illustrate a familiarity with Reformed tradition and theology and to demonstrate both theological imagination and a willingness to relate theology to modern-day challenges.

Victoria Turner (United Reformed Church (UK)) took first place for her essay, "Structural Flourishing or Life Flourishing? A Critical Response to the Popular Tool of Receptive Ecumenism." She will receive a cash prize, along

with a scholarship to the next Global Institute of Theology (GIT).

"I am delighted to win such an important essay prize and honoured to sit among the previous winners!" Turner said. "The prize has an amazing legacy of elevating justice-orientated ecumenical work from younger writers. I loved writing the essay and feel like it encapsulates my passion for diversifying ecumenical literature and thinking, and am so grateful for the panel's engagement with my work."

The panel judging the essays consisted of eminent theologians from the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), who also are a part of the *Reformed World* editorial board. The winning essays will be published in a future edition of that theological journal.

Taking second place for his essay "Evangelism as an Act of Hospitality: A Local Church Case of Ecumenism from the Margins" was Paulo Camara (Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil). Camera will also receive both a cash award and GIT scholarship.

"This award is certainly an invitation to continue with the studies on ecumenism from the margins. In a world fallen among thieves, to confess God is to share hope. With one voice Christians confess God, and through many voices, Christians' testimony God's presence among humanity," Camara said.

In third place, for which he'll receive a GIT scholarship, was David Brandon Smith (Presbyterian Church (USA)) for his essay, "A Liberative Reformed Linguistic: Ecumenical Formation Programs, Gender and Sexuality."

"To me, the Lombard Prize is about more than a celebration of emerging scholars, it is also about declaring the openness of our communion to the future God has designed for us. In the years and decades to come, we will continue to face great challenges and ask over-arching questions together. I pray we will do so in the spirit of unity, siblinghood, and justice to which Christ has called us," said Smith.

The Lombard Prize is given by the WCRC in association with Lombard, Odier & Cie (Geneva, Switzerland) in memory of the late Georges Lombard, associate of the bank.

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8 de marzo: conmemorar, celebrar y denunciar

El Departamento de Mujeres de la AIPRAL comparte una declaración en ocasión de un nuevo 8 de marzo :

En esta fecha es preciso recordar que en 1945 la Carta de las Naciones Unidas se instaló como el primer acuerdo internacional para consolidar el principio de igualdad entre mujeres y hombres. Y después de 30 años de este suceso, en el 1975 la ONU celebró de manera oficial el primer Día Internacional de la Mujer.

Necesario es recordar que el 8 de marzo surge en conmemoración de la lucha de un movimiento de mujeres por sus derechos laborales y la disminución de las horas de trabajo. 146 trabajadoras que fueron calcinadas por los dueños de la fábrica textil Cotton de Nueva York.

Sin embargo, con el transcurrir de los años observamos que la lucha que dio origen a esta conmemoración ha adquirido un mayor grado de complejidad y ha trascendido a ser la conmemoración de las luchas de las mujeres por la igualdad social, buscando la consolidación de una sociedad plural y justa que permita una convivencia en paz.

Esta conmemoración es momento propicio para ratificar la necesidad y el compromiso de continuar promoviendo y defendiendo los derechos de la mujer a una vida libre de violencias

y de desigualdades, así como también su empoderamiento y protagonismo en todas las áreas en las que participe.

Este 8 de marzo nos permite celebrar que en muchos países del mundo se llevan a cabo luchas y acciones para avanzar hacia la justicia de género, lo cual implica inclusión, paz y desarrollo en igualdad de oportunidades en igualdad de condiciones.

Celebramos que en este tiempo de pandemia y de distanciamiento social, las mujeres nos hemos reinventado para expresar de diferentes formas acciones de sororidad en las nuevas realidades que nos ha tocado vivir; para aprender y desarrollar capacidades tecnológicas para mantenernos intercomunicadas en todo el mundo, crear redes nutritivas de mujeres, formarnos y crecer juntas.

Celebramos que en medio de la incertidumbre hemos fortalecido la fe y la esperanza.

Denunciamos que a pesar que del reconocimiento internacional de esta fecha, la desigualdad y la inequidad cada día son más evidentes, independientemente de la existencia o no de respuestas por parte de los

Estados. Aunque de igual manera, es propicio asumirla como un llamado a la unidad en la implementación y profundización de estas luchas.

Así mismo denunciaremos el impacto cada vez mayor del cambio climático y sus consecuencias que agobian a mujeres, niñas y al resto de la población más vulnerable, frente a la imposibilidad de un futuro sostenible para toda la creación, generando entre otras cosas y causas, un momento histórico de enormes desplazamientos humanos y migraciones, con las mujeres como víctimas de redes de trata o de la violencia de fuerzas de seguridad.

Denunciamos que las condiciones en las cuales las mujeres vivimos nuestras diferentes realidades, contradicen el mensaje del Evangelio cuando Jesús como revelación de Dios y promotor de su reinado dice: “Yo he venido para que tengan vida y para que la tengan en abundancia” Juan 10:10.

Por lo tanto, desde el Departamento de Mujeres AIPRAL asumiendo los fundamentos de nuestra Fe Cristiana y Tradición Reformada, seguiremos luchando y pronunciándonos contra todo aquello que impida que la Justicia de Género, la Vida abundante y la Paz de Cristo, sean evidencias del Reino de Dios en nuestro mundo.

—Rvda. María Jiménez de Ramírez
Directora del Departamento de Mujeres

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Gender Justice Policy launched at webinar

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) launched its new Gender Justice Policy at a webinar which focused on “Why the church needs intersectional feminism.”

“This is a special time as we gather to celebrate the launching of the Gender Justice Policy as an empowering document and guiding map on our journey towards lived justice for all,” said Najla Kassab, WCRC president. “To address the issue of gender justice is not as an act of sympathy towards women, but rather integrity of the church, and a call for all of us as a Communion and churches worldwide.”

The webinar, moderated by Karen Georgia Thompson, featured Peggy Kabonde, Aruna Gnanadason, Eve Rebecca Parker, Isabel Phiri, and Hanna Reichel.

“In our churches, we are often told what type of person we can put our trust in; most commonly it is those who maintain the power and seek to prevent the narratives that may challenge the dominant ways of knowing from entering our Holy spaces,” said Parker.

“As Christian theology and tradition has the potential to exacerbate violence against women, the psychological dimension of exclusion and feelings of non-belonging cannot be overlooked. It is for this reason that we must be free to explore the liberative narratives of our Scriptures, to witness where women have navigated their identities in Christ in cultures that have not necessarily been on the side of women,” she said, specifically citing the biblical story of Hagar and Sarai.

“Women all over the world experience sexism, but we do experience it differently depending on class, race, and sexuality” said Phiri. “When we

talk about sexism we talk about the oppression of women on the basis of gender. Because we experience it differently, it becomes very important that feminist theology should reflect the context in which women live.”

“We in the ecumenical movement are very conscious of not focusing on the self-affirmation of identities. We are very worried about focusing on individual identities and feel it will be divisive. There’s a tendency to harmonize. We thus lack that space for honest dialogue and discussion of our various identities,” said Gnanadason. “I feel we need to move to a space where dialogue becomes the way in which we move together, and the way in which we sort out any differences that exist among us. The challenge for the ecumenical movement continues to be how to keep the dialogue open, how to create an environment where no group of women feel they are slighted.”

“One of the things I appreciated in the Gender Justice Policy is that gender justice is not just a women’s concern. Too often feminism is reduced to a women’s issue. Men, too, need to be liberated from gender injustice that limits their full humanity,” said Reichel. “Feminism is not about women. It’s about dismantling these structures of power that suffocate people all around the world, that inhibit everyone from fully flourishing, most especially this myth of white self-sufficient masculinity.”

“All believers in Christ can find their place going straight through Jesus Christ—with no intermediary,” said Kabonde. “But some women find it very difficult to ascend to higher levels of leadership in the church. Such unfairness compromises the mission of God and creates gender injustice in so many ways. It also means deconstructing the exploitation of

women by men, providing the tools of new realities of justice. This is an empire that the church has failed to dismantle for many years.”

The WCRC’s Gender Justice Policy advances the Communion’s vision of living out its call to communion and commitment to justice, enabling and inviting churches to participate in God’s transformative mission of gender justice and partnership. The policy seeks to address gender inequalities and injustice in the Communion and member churches.

“Gender justice includes just and right relationships, mutual respect and accountability, respect for creation and the rights of all people to live life in all its fullness. Gender justice addresses gender and economic injustice, gender-based violence and a whole range of social issues that are rooted in unequal power relations. It is a fundamental building block for church and society,” states the introduction to the policy.

Phiri is the deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Kabonde is the former general secretary of the United Church of Zambia. Gnanadason is the former coordinator of the WCC’s women’s programme and of the justice, peace, and creation team. Reichel is a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. Parker is a professor at Durham University. Thompson is the associate general minister for wider church ministries and co-executive for global ministries of the United Church of Christ.

Excerpt from the Gender Justice Policy

The WCRC Gender Justice Policy can be downloaded as a PDF from the WCRC website : wrc.ch/justice/gender-equality

Principles of Gender Justice Policy

We are each made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and together, as Church, we are the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12 & 27):

- we are each created, gifted, and loved by God;
- we are each loved and valued for the beauty and totality of our being and the diversity of our bodies;
- our sexuality is a gift from God and a source of life;
- we are all needed to serve the church, without discrimination;
- service includes both lay and ordained leadership, in the priesthood of all believers; every type of leadership is needed and equally valued;
- no one is excluded in the basis of their gender, sexuality, race, class, disability, poverty, or caste; and
- leadership must be exercised through the Spirit of God, with respect for all.

The Body of Christ, our Church, will begin to heal when:

- the voices of women and other marginalized persons begin to be heard in our Communion;
- the sexuality of each person is honoured, including the right to control one's body;
- women and other marginalized persons are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles in our churches, including ordination;
- the contributions of women and other marginalized persons are fairly valued, without discrimination on the basis of gender;
- churches no longer tolerate gender-based violence including sexual abuse and sexual harassment by persons in positions of power and leadership, but instead discipline persons for abuse of their power;
- churches become welcoming and safe spaces for women and marginalized persons;
- as churches and as a Communion, we speak up, advocate, and champion the rights and dignity of women and other marginalized persons in our churches and in the world; and
- churches allocate sufficient time, money, and resources in their budgeting process to continue the challenging work of gender justice.



Tejer juntas y juntos

La Pre-Asamblea de Jóvenes y la Pre-Asamblea de Mujeres concluyeron el pasado sábado 26 de febrero tras el segundo encuentro virtual de ambas instancias. Durante la semana se reunieron en grupos pequeños de trabajo que volcaron en sus respectivos plenarios las conclusiones sobre las temáticas abordadas: la violencia de género en el marco de la pandemia y la justicia económica a través de la figura de Zaqueo. Además se eligieron las personas candidatas a las direcciones de los departamentos de Mujeres y de Jóvenes, que serán presentadas a la XIII Asamblea General a desarrollarse del 21 al 23 de abril de 2022.

Con el acompañamiento litúrgico de la hermana Loida Gáffaro de la **Red Crearte** se inició la segunda sesión y final de las Pre-Asambleas de Jóvenes y de Mujeres de AIPRAL. Las actividades que comenzaron el 19 de febrero, se continuaron durante la semana con trabajos en equipos de 4-5 integrantes, donde mujeres y jóvenes se dividieron entre las delegaciones de las iglesias que constituyen las diferentes regiones de la Alianza: Caribe, Centroamérica y Cono Sur.

En palabras de la directora de Jóvenes TS. Lucía Maureliz, en la Pre-Asamblea de Jóvenes “se reflexionó sobre dos historias complementarias, la de Zaqueo y el ciego de Jericó. Ambas nos permitieron reflexionar sobre los contextos y debatir sobre criterios para la toma de decisiones económicas y la importancia del derecho a la vida plena de todas las personas. Se destacó como algo fundamental el desarrollo de nuestras comunidades así



como nuestro rol en la creación de mecanismos para que haya restauración y justicia. El encuentro permitió acercarnos una vez más cómo alianza a jóvenes y mujeres, encontrarnos, celebrar la fe y compartir en esperanza; renovando el compromiso por la justicia y los derechos a una vida plena.”

Por su parte, la directora del Departamento de Mujeres, Rev. María Jiménez señala que “cada una de las sesiones transcurrió en un ambiente de armonía y disposición al reconocimiento mutuo para un trabajo conjunto. Esta modalidad de Encuentro, nos facilitó un espacio para reinventarnos y dar continuidad de manera creativa al trabajo del Departamento de Mujeres. La Pre-Asamblea reafirmó la necesidad de continuar trabajando el tema Justicia de Género, a fin de contribuir a la superación de las diversas formas de violencias hacia las mujeres de todas las edades, tanto en el ámbito eclesial, familiar y en otros espacios en donde ellas hacen vida; muchas veces sustentadas estas violencias desde lo bíblico teológico por un sistema patriarcal. Luego del trabajo en grupos, se acordó elaborar un documento final conjunto, con las conclusiones de las reflexiones como producto del trabajo

en cada grupo. Así mismo, con las iniciativas de cada participante, producir una declaración en el contexto del 8 de marzo Día Internacional de la Mujer.”

Para el momento devocional de clausura, se pidió a participantes a colaborar en la liturgia. Emilia Ahumada, joven en representación de la Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana en Chile compartió la canción: “Va Dios mismo” y la hermana Blanca Geymonat representante mujer de la Iglesia Evangélica Valdense del Río de la Plata cerró con la lectura de una oración elaborada de forma colectiva.

Tejemos redes para estar juntas y sostenernos

Tejemos mantas para cuidar y cuidarnos

Tejemos telas de colores para alegrarnos y adornar nuestras casas

A veces necesitamos lentes para apreciar la belleza y la diversidad

A veces nos imponen lentes que no nos dejan ver el dolor de nuestras hermanas

Queremos ver todos los colores, con claridad, ver todas las hebras, con los lentes de Tu Amor buen Dios para seguir tejiendo JUNTAS Y JUNTOS.

Church leader recognized for work in women's development

Joy Abdul-Mohan's work for the development of women and gender equity has been formally recognized by the government of Trinidad and Tobago.

In March Abdul-Mohan, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT), was awarded with a National Medal for the Development of Women (Gold) by the Office of the President.

"This is a very special time as it recognizes Rev. Abdul-Mohan's contribution to the PCTT and the country of Trinidad and Tobago in the sphere of women's development. The PCTT is especially proud of this recognition and the role of women in our church as strong leaders and advocates for gender equality and justice," said Terrence Warde, general secretary of the PCTT Synod.

"Rev. Joy is a woman of substance and the Lord has gifted her with the personality, the reverence, the humility, and the ability to lead the church through this period of pandemic. This time of absolute uncertainty required a special type of leader, and the church was blessed to have Rev. Abdul-Mohan to navigate the adversity and maintain the operations of the church," he said.

The Medal for the Development of Women is granted to individuals for their contribution to the development of women's rights and issues. A National Awards Committee, headed by the chief justice, oversees the nomination process and investigates the nominees before making its recommendations to the prime minister, after which the president confers the award on the prime minister's advice.

"I accept this award with the deepest and sincerest humility not as a symbol of any personal achievement, but as a tribute to all women who labor sacrificially and

magnanimously (especially behind the scenes) not only to improve and develop the lives of women but all of God's Creation," said Abdul-Mohan.

A statement from the church noted that Abdul-Mohan's "role in keeping alive issues of women in general, and issues of gender-based violence and domestic violence in particular, within the church and in the wider community and country, is quite a pastoral care and activism."

"The PCTT is thankful for the work of this servant-leader as she continues her work for the development of the church and of women," it stated.

Abdul-Mohan was the first locally ordained female minister of the PCTT and its youngest minister at 23 years of age. She was elected as moderator of the PCTT in 2019. She was also the first female principal of the St. Andrew's Theological College. Abdul-Mohan served as a senator in the 10th Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and has served as vice-president of the Rapidfire Kidz Foundation for more than ten years.



Young, woke, Christians speak up in new book

A complaint about how young people's views are often dismissed by churches has led to the publication of an important book.

Each chapter of *Young, Woke, and Christian: Words from a Missing Generation*, edited by United Reformed Church (URC) Youth member Victoria Turner, is written by a different young Christian from a different tradition.

It covers themes such as climate change, racial inclusivity, sexual purity, mental health, homelessness, food poverty, sexuality, trans identity, feminism, peace-making, interfaith relations, and disability justice, and is a cry for the reform of the church to not ally with "woke" issues because they are popular with youth, but because they are gospel issues.

Victoria explains how the book came about: "I was complaining again to my boyfriend about how young people's political energy and vision of justice is often dismissed by churches."



"I told him my dream was to produce a book called 'Young, Woke and Christian' and just shout that these things we're passionate about aren't things that can be dismissed but are gospel issues. I also was really mindful that I wanted to use the charged word of 'woke' because it has such a rich history, and seeing it being misappropriated makes me quite sad honestly."

With a clear idea that she wanted young people to speak for themselves, Victoria set about sourcing contributors.

Renowned author and theologian, Anthony G. Reddie, director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture at Regent's Park College, who writes the book's prologue says: "*Young, Woke, Christian: Words from a Missing Generation* offers a bold and prophetic vision for a radical liberationist mode of Christian faith that speaks to the need for churches to become allies to all those who are marginalized and oppressed. It is a bold call for Christianity to rediscover its radical roots and to side with the powerless, the weak, the poor, the broken-

hearted and those who are told that they do not count and that their lives do not matter."

Victoria further explains the book's importance.

"*Young, Woke and Christian* is important because nobody has argued against this idea of the 'missing generation'.

"I feel like if my generation is missing then it means people don't have to engage us as part of the church body. Also, I find that a lot of youth work studies which I have read concentrate on evangelical Christians, which have left me wondering where myself and my friends are because we don't fit their models."

"I think there's a big misunderstanding about my generation not being religious. We're definitely Christians, but less dedicated perhaps to upholding flawed and fossilized structures and more inclined to look at where we can be disciples in the world."

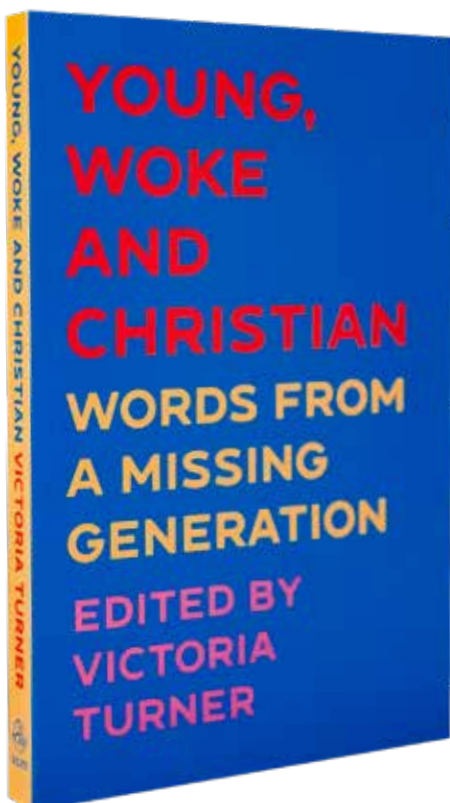
Victoria says she loved editing her first book.

"It was a joy," she said. "I did a lot of the work on trains to and from the Council for World Mission archives in the School for Oriental and African Studies in London from Edinburgh."

"The whole process has just inspired me and made me feel really hopeful. I loved the challenge of helping the contributors really nail their chapters, while at the same time trying not to lose their voice. It's almost like mediation. There's a lot of energy around it already which is so exciting."

The book is available for £13.99 from the URC Bookshop: <https://urcshop.co.uk>

(Article courtesy of the United Reformed Church.)



Webinar : “Pembangunan Jemaat Intergenerasi”



Puji syukur kepada Tuhan Yesus Kristus, pada hari Sabtu, 4 Februari 2022, Departemen Pembangunan Gereja (DPG) dan Departemen Penelitian dan Pengembangan (DPP) BPMSW GKI SW Jateng telah melaksanakan Webinar: “Pembangunan Jemaat Intergenerasi”.

Latar belakang kajian ini adalah konteks kehidupan menggereja pada masa kini di mana segregasi menjadi realitas jemaat. Akibat dari segregasi itu adalah terpisahnya persekutuan oleh kategori usia.

Di tengah segregasi itu, pelayanan intergenerasional menjadi pilihan yang perlu kita hayati secara serius. Kata intergenerasi adalah gabungan dari kata “inter” dan “generasi”. Inter artinya in-between (di antara). Hal ini menunjuk pada kerjasama, interaksi dan pertukaran antar generasi.

Yang mendapatkan tekanan adalah kata “inter”. Itu berarti pusat perhatian tertuju pada relasi, yaitu apa yang terjadi di antara pribadi-pribadi (dari tiap generasi itu).

Webinar yang dilaksanakan melalui Zoom ini disampaikan oleh beberapa narasumber, diantaranya

1. Pdt. Tabita Kartika Christiani Ph.D (PTKSW GKI SW Jateng basis pelayanan Fakultas Teologi UKDW, Yogyakarta) menyampaikan tentang Pendidikan Kristen.
2. Pdt. Angga Prasetya (Pendeta GKI basis pelayanan Jemaat GKI Karangсарu, Semarang) menyampaikan tentang Liturgi.
3. Pdt. Mungki Aditya Sasmita (Pendeta GKI basis pelayanan Jemaat GKI Sangkrah, Solo) menyampaikan tentang Pendekatan Sosiologis.
4. Pdt. Helen Aramada Setyoputri (Pendeta GKI basis pelayanan Jemaat GKI Peterongan, Semarang).
5. Pdt. Em. Prof. Yahya Wijaya Ph.D. (Guru Besar Fakultas Teologi UKDW, Yogyakarta)
6. Pdt. Hizkia Anugrah (Pendeta GKI basis pelayanan Jemaat GKI Taman Aries)

dan sebagai moderator yakni Pdt. Wisnu Sapto Nugroho (PTKSW GKI SW Jateng basis pelayanan LPP Sinode GKJ dan GKI SW Jateng, Yogyakarta).

Acara ini diikuti oleh 202 peserta terdiri dari utusan 31 gereja GKI dan wakil dari 6 BPMK GKI Klasik lingkup Sinode Wilayah Jawa Tengah, juga 2 departemen dan 10 komisi sebagai badan pelayanan BPMSW GKI SW Jateng, serta 1 orang wakil dari BPMSW GKI SW Jateng.

Pelaksanaan webinar ini juga disiarkan (streaming) melalui Youtube Channel : GKI SW Jateng, melalui link : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDZQbLcGr5o>

Semoga dengan adanya Webinar: Pembangunan Jemaat Intergenerasi ini, peserta utusan dari jemaat, klasik GKI lingkup Sinode Wilayah Jawa Tengah, beserta badan pelayanan BPMSW GKI SW Jateng dapat menambah pengetahuan dan memahami makna pembangunan jemaat intergenerasi, terutama pelayanan di era serba digital ini.

Mission work in Romania inspires ongoing support

Sometimes an invitation to visit a new place is life-changing. That's certainly what happened to Jack Ferlino.

Nearly 30 years ago, he was invited to go to Romania, and what he witnessed then and in more than a dozen trips since inspired him to make a permanent gift through the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), for the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania. The relationship was fostered through Lehigh Presbytery's Worldwide Ministries mission efforts.

The WCRC, through its Reformed Partnership Fund, shares financial resources between member churches, including funds designated for specific projects and organizations.

Ferlino, now 100 years old, says there were many experiences there that inspired his gift. He summarizes it this way: "I finally came across a group of churches that really practice the Six Great Ends of the

Church. It was a wonderful relationship to have, so we entered into partnership."

Ellie Johns-Kelley has worked with Ferlino to set up the fund. She is a Ministry Relations Officer for the Presbyterian Foundation. "Jack's love for both God and the church are deep," Johns-Kelley says. "His relationships in partnering in ministry around the world will be enduring as well as invitational as others may make additions and thereby join in supporting the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania."

To understand why the Church in Romania needs support, you'll need to know some history. Hungarians are an ethnic minority in Romania. A series of treaties, battles, and political moves in Romania during World War I ceded Transylvania to Romania, taking it from its Hungarian origins.

Romania was under communist rule until 1989. During that time Christians were harassed, making Christian worship difficult. Christianity is strong in Romania today, and the Reformed Church in Romania has a special ministry to the Hungarians that no one else is fulfilling.

These churches are so much more than places of worship; they are centers of life and care for the people that they serve, Ferlino says. "The church there is the focal point of their life," Ferlino says. "Everything is around the church, including social activities. Diaconia is the organization that attends to the shut-ins and the sick, and the orphanages as well."

Ferlino was particularly moved by meeting pastors. "We have one pastor who serves seven churches," Ferlino recalls. That pastor visits one

church each day of the week. "All of the churches are rural. They are all very old. Some of them go back 500 years."

He became interested in mission outside of the U.S. when he was invited to join an effort by Lehigh Presbytery to create a Worldwide Ministries Care Team in 1994 as a way to create partnerships among the presbytery, churches, and partners in other parts of the world. Worldwide Ministries-Lehigh Presbytery entered into a covenant partnership in 1997 with the Reformed Church of Romania for mutual mission, ministry and support.

Ferlino still believes passionately in the need to support churches in Romania. In an article published by Lehigh Presbytery in January 2021, Tibor Kiss, counselor in the Department of International Relations of the Transylvanian District of the Reformed Church in Romania, praised Ferlino for his role as a bridge builder. He said Ferlino helped church members in the United States and Transylvania together meet the "challenges of human life in a secular, unjust, discriminatory social environment."

Kiss talked of Ferlino's strong work ethic and compassion for those in need, concluding, "Since I have met Mr. Ferlino for the first time, I am continuously fascinated by his astonishing compassion toward our Church and its people. Furthermore, Mr. Ferlino is gifted by the capacity of spreading this compassion among his co-workers."

(Article courtesy of Robyn Davis Sekula, Presbyterian Foundation; Image: Jack Ferlino, seated, with his son, Jim Ferlino, and daughter, Angela Nolan. Photo by David Fonda.)



김용복 목사의 죽음을 애도하는 커뮤니티언

세계개혁교회 커뮤니티언(WCRC)은 4월 7일, 암으로 84세의 나이에 세상을 떠난 김용복 목사를 애도한다.

대한예수교장로회(PCK)의 목사로서, 김용복 목사는 아시아 신학, 그 중에서도 특별히 민중 신학의 선구자였다.

WCRC의 합의 사무국에서는 애도의 편지를 통해 다음과 같은 메시지를 전했다. “그는 코이노니아와 그것이 한국인들에게 암시하는 바를 이야기하며 개혁주의 신학을 한국적 상황에서 재해석했습니다. 그의 업적은 아시아와 전 세계 많은 사람들을 고무하는 데 기여했습니다. 아래에서의 신학과 억눌린 자들의 시각을 기르는 데에 대한 그의 열정은 아시아 신학을 재창조하고 하나님의 백성들과 더 깊은 관계를 맺도록 격려했습니다.”

김용복 목사는 1997년부터 2004년까지 WCRC의 전신인 세계개혁교회 연맹 (World Alliance of Reformed Churches, WARC)에서 신학 부 의장으로 섬겼다.

김 목사는 2004년 가나 아크라에서 열린 총회에서 “고백하는 자세는 생명 언약의 핵심.”이라는 주제로 발표하며 말했다. “저는 성령이 생명의 하나님을 고백하며 저의 신앙에 뿌리 박힌 단호한 자세를 취하도록 강권하는 것을 느낍니다. 저는 이 도전이 우리의 회원 교회들, 에큐메니컬 운동, 그리고 더 넓은 범위의 신앙 공동체에 각각의 방식대로 있다고 믿습니다... 그러니 우리는 언제까지 침묵할 수 있겠습니까?”

그는 계속해서 다음과 같이 말했다. “언약은 행동을 뜻합니다. 언약은 주권자 하나님께 대한 우리 신앙의 행동을 의미합니다. 언약은 가난한 자와 약자를 위한 정의를 의미합니다. 언약은 성 정의와 포용을 뜻합니다. 언약은 모든 살아있는 생명들이 살아있는 주체로서 참여하는 것을 의미합니다.



언약은 급진적인 사회 정의와 연대를 뜻합니다. 언약은 생명을 축하하는 것을 뜻합니다. 무엇보다도 언약은 생명을 향한 하나님의 사역을 의미합니다.”

김 목사는 또한 아시아기독교연합회 (the Christian Conference of Asia), 세계선교협의회 (Council for World

Mission), 세계교회협의회 (World Council of Churches), 그리고 세계학생그리스도교연맹 (World Student Christian Federation)에서 중요한 역할들을 감당했다. 그는 한일장신대학교 총장 (1992-1999), 한국 기독교 협회 회장 (1994-1995), 그리고 한국 민중신학회 회장(1999-2000)을 역임했다.

“그의 신학적 비전은 민중의 투쟁에 대한 헌신으로 특징 지어지며 이에서 출현한 것이었습니다. 바로 그가 스스로 참여한 투쟁입니다. 그는 헌신적인 신학자에게 ‘감옥은 두번째 집이다!’ 라는 사실에 대해 종종 말했습니다. 이는 바로 인권, 존엄성, 그리고 풍성한 삶에 대한 그의 깊은 헌신이었습니다.” 라고 애도의 편지를 전했다.

김용복 목사는 1938년 출생하여 1961년 연세대학교 철학과를 졸업한 후 이어 프린스턴 신학 대학교에서 신학을 공부하였다. 그는 <한국민중과 기독교>, <한국민중의 사회전기> 등 많은 책을 출판하였다.

그의 장례식은 4월 9일에 치러졌다.

Communion mourns passing of Kim Yong-Bok

The World Communion of Reformed Churches mourns the passing of Kim Yong-Bok on 7 April, at the age of 84, from cancer.

Kim, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, was a pioneer of Asian theology, particularly Minjung theology. He served as moderator of the Department of Theology of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, a predecessor organization of the WCRC, from 1997 to 2004.

“He reimagined Reformed theology in the Korean context speaking of *koinonia* and its implications for the Korean people. His work served to inspire so many people across Asia and the world. His passion of doing theology from below, raising up the perspectives of the oppressed, re-invented Asian theology and encouraged a deeper engagement with God’s people,” said a letter of condolence from the WCRC Collegial General Secretariat.

Image: Jessica Lewis/Unsplash



Walk in the Name of the Lord our God

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

—Micah 4:2b-5

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“Swords into ploughshares, spears into pruning-hooks” — this vision of the prophet Micah has inspired peacemakers for almost 3,000 years. The image of a blacksmith who transforms his weapons into farming tools has been invoked in many struggles. Many of them were costly: People who had peace in their hearts risked their lives to stop violence, fight injustice, and strive for reconciliation.

Peacemaking is hard work because, according to Micah, it seeks radical transformation: Our resources shall only be used to enhance life and not to bring death, no nation shall threaten others with war, and the whole world shall unlearn violence!

These words are very relevant today. People in situations of war— in Ukraine, in Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and many other places in the world —have known for years how costly peacemaking can be. But they also have experienced the blessings that God promises to those who seek peace.

Peacemaking can bring out the best in humanity. In many war situations, we see incredible courage, passion, and mutual support. People are committed to protecting their neighbourhoods, supporting refugees, and showing the world that justice and peace are living realities. In Ukraine — strong enough to halt the forces of death, even if only for a moment. Those who engage in peacemaking know that what is at stake in a war is not just a strategic interest or a political position but the core principles of who we are as God’s children.

The promise of Micah is fulfilled in the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Easter victory over death and the forces of evil — accompanied by the promise of grace and eternal life — is the most precious divine gift to us. But at the same time, it is also a calling. The gospels report that Jesus, after the resurrection, called upon the disciples to return to Galilee (Matthew 28:10). Galilee was the place of Jesus’ ministry. Here he brought good news to the poor, proclaimed the release of the captives, the recovery of the sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18). In sending the disciples to Galilee, Jesus called them to continue his ministry and promised that in their work for justice, peace, and reconciliation they would see him alive.

In Jesus’ call and the promise, we can gratefully find the hope and courage to walk in the name of the Lord our God and be active peacemakers in this world, whether it be in conflicts as violent as war or as subtle as an abusive word overheard.

Working for justice, peace, and reconciliation is a divine calling, one in which all of us, each in our own contexts as well as in solidarity and support around the world, must be actively involved.

These are difficult days for many, but through the promise of the resurrection we know with whom we must walk, working hard to beat swords into ploughshares that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Najla Kassab
President

Hanns Lessing, Philip Vinod Peacock, Phil Tanis
Collegial General Secretariat