



Global Christian Forum

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We are delighted to share updates from this busy season of the Global Christian Forum. As Covid-19 restrictions have lessened throughout many parts of our world, we have experienced the joy of gathering together as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is truly a gift to join together in worship and fellowship to further the cause of Christian unity.

We thank God for your faithful commitment to the work of hope and Christian unity fostered by GCF, and we hold you in prayer always.

May God bless us during this Christmas season, as we prepare to celebrate the gift of Immanuel, God with us.



GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

GCF Global Gathering 2024

We want to remind all of our GCF community that next Global Gathering will take place April 15-20, 2024 in Accra, Ghana. The theme of the gathering will be *"That the World May Know..."* from John 17:23b.

Please continue praying for the planning and preparation of this important, joyful gathering.

GCF Asia Regional Consultation

The Global Christian Forum was delighted to convene a regional consultation in Asia in partnership with Myung Sung Presbyterian Church in Seoul from October 14-16th. The consultation was followed by a GCF International Committee meeting on October 17th.

This gathering marked the first in-person Regional Consultation and the first in-person International Committee meeting since 2019. Much like the apostle Paul describes in Romans 1:12, participants left the gathering “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” and grateful for the time spent learning, praying, and worshipping together. The theme of the gathering was "Faithfulness in a Multi-Faith Context." Participants included representatives of the four pillars of the GCF (World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic Church (through the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity), Pentecostal World Fellowship and World Evangelical Alliance), along with church leaders from across Asia, local leaders from Korea and GCF International Committee members from ecumenical organisations.

During the consultation, various participants from GCF were graciously invited to preach in the six worship services held by Myung Sung Church on Sunday, October 16th. We were reminded by the Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah during worship “there are two phrases that cannot pass your lips if you are a Christian, and they are right here in this passage from 1 Corinthians 12: I do not belong to the body. I do not need you. The Bible says that the body of Christ is ONE, and there are different parts that make up the body.” As disciples of Jesus Christ, we need each other, and we belong to one another.

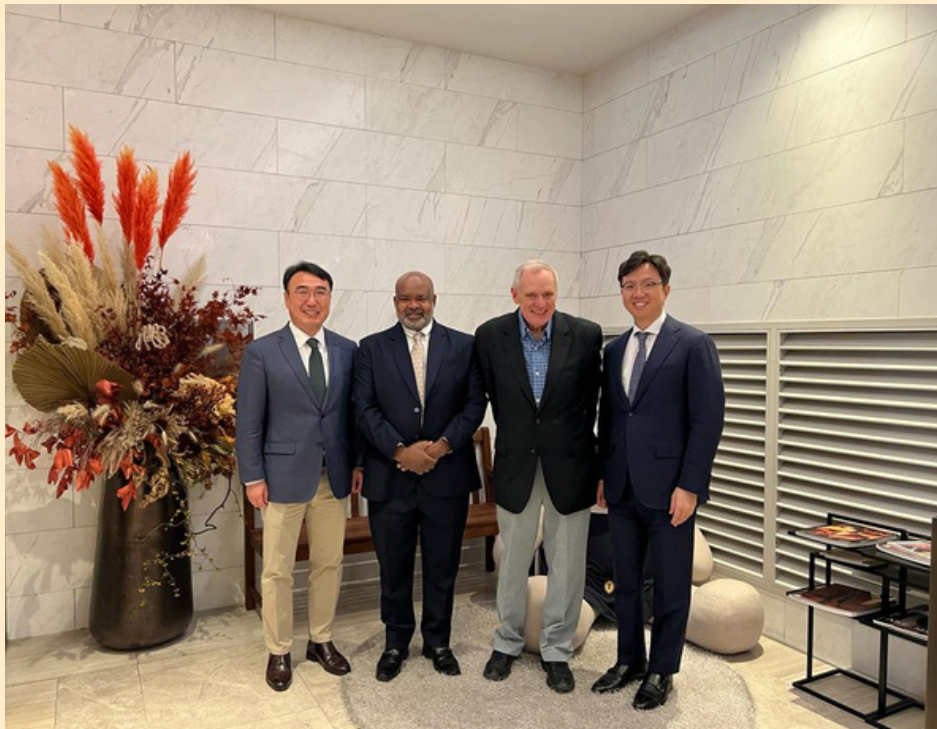
From the communique which was released following the regional consultation,

“Asia is the world’s largest continent with the most diverse sociocultural context and a long history of peaceful coexistence between people of different faiths. While learning of the many trends of both growth and decline of Christian traditions in Asia, we were encouraged by stories of God’s grace and hope as the gospel spread organically, even in contexts of persecution. Yet we also identified concerning challenges, both internal and external to our churches, which demand of us reflection and discernment.

Appreciating the rich and diverse history of Christianity in Asia, we are grateful for the faithful witness of Christians over the centuries and the ways in which Christians in other parts of the world can learn from Asian Christianity – perseverance under pressure, profound theology and practice of hospitality, and the many ways in which Asian Christians enrich their cultures and promote life- giving witness in their contexts.”



Regional leaders from the continent of Asia and GCF International Committee members gathered in Seoul for a regional consultation hosted by Myung Sung Presbyterian Church



Sharing Faith Stories from Seoul

One of the most unique and transformative aspects of the Global Christian Forum's model and methodology comes in the tradition of sharing faith stories in each gathering. Hearing about each other's "journey with Jesus" allows participants to connect with each other across differences.

During the Seoul meeting, participants were asked to share how God had been at work in their lives recently. The faith stories shared were filled with honest reflection on God's presence and guidance in our lives:

"This has been a season of loss: I lost my closest working colleague to cancer; I lost three friends to Covid last year, and I lost my dad a year ago. In the midst of that loss and sorrow, I want to talk about the goodness of God."

"As a young person, I came to know the Lord and the Lord revealed himself to me as my Father. That has built my deeper relationship with God, to know him deeply as my Father and to know his favor. This has become my assignment: to share with God's children that they are deeply loved and favored. In 2007, I nearly died for exhaustion. I heard God speak to me and say "You don't have to die for the church; I have already died for it." We pastors also need to rest because we are important to God."

"My faith has grown recently in terms of learning to trust that the Lord will provide. Usually, we say that pastors are definitely the ones who do not believe this is true. Clergy feel like we have to raise the money; and bring the people; and run the programs. It can feel more about work than about faith; pastors feel like they have to do everything, and they are burning out. In my organization, when we stopped seeing ourselves as an institution and started seeing ourselves as a communion, we began to experience anew the blessings of God."

"Going to rural Uganda during Covid revealed to me an important truth: in the rural communities, it is "our" daily bread, not "my" daily bread. People live on very little, but they live out of abundance. I thought I was there to train people, but God told me to slow down, you are here to be trained."



Speakers in the GCF Workshop in Karlsruhe.



GCF participants join the United Bible Society for lunch during the WCC Assembly.

GCF Participates in the 11th WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe

From 31 August - 8 September the World Council of Churches (WCC) held its 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany under the theme "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity." The WCC Assembly is the highest governing body of the World Council of Churches, and normally meets every eight years. It is the only time when the entire fellowship of member churches comes together in one place for prayer and celebration.

On Friday, 2nd September, the Global Christian Forum led a workshop entitled "World Christianity's Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement." The workshop offered an opportunity for assembly participants to learn about the trends in global Christianity, such as the rapid growth in pentecostal and charismatic movements, especially in Africa. With many young churches emerging independently of the historical ecumenical bodies, the Christian family needs new models of engagement and relationship to connect with one another. The methodologies practiced by GCF, particularly the practice of sharing faith stories and intentionally reaching out to younger churches, have much to offer on the journey of ecumenism in this new era.

Each of GCF's four pillars - the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, and the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity - were represented in the workshop, and they were able to share their own personal stories of transformation in the space of openness that GCF seeks to create. It was a joyful time of sharing and conversation in the journey toward Christian unity.

*For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

-Isaiah 9:6

