



# The Work and Witness of the World Communion of Reformed Churches:

*Confessing the God of life in a world fallen among thieves*

**Called to communion and committed to justice**, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)\* works 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).

As a global communion marked by discerning, confessing, witnessing and being reformed together, 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.

Jesus did not locate his ministry in the centres of power. He challenged the authority of political, economic, familial and religious authorities and enabled his followers to see the emerging Kingdom of God in the liberating, healing, feeding, cleansing, raising, reconciling and empowering of those who were excluded from full participation in communal life.

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 (John 10:10).

\* The World Communion of Reformed Churches is comprised of 100 million Christians from over 230 Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian churches in more than 105 countries.

*Called to Communion, Committed to Justice*



## Cultivating a Just Communion

The WCRC is 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.

## Covenanting for Justice

The 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. The primary areas that drive the justice work of the WCRC are economic justice, ecological justice, gender justice and inclusive communities.

## Doing Theology for Transformation

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. Engaging with the unfinished agenda of the Reformation starts with processes discerning in which the voices of wounded communities receive special attention because in their cries the WCRC 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.

## Engaging God’s Mission in a Context of Crisis

In 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. In this mission the WCRC collaborates with all people of good will inside and outside of the church, committing itself to participate in liberating discipleship.

## Working with All the Partners God Provides

The WCRC believes “to be Reformed is to be ecumenical.” 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.

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