



Global Christian Forum

International Committee Meeting

Narrative Report

17th October 2022

The Global Christian Forum's International Committee met in Seoul, South Korea on October 17th, 2022. The international committee meeting took place after two days of regional consultations with Asian church leaders which was hosted in partnership with Myungsung Church.

Rev. Dr. Master Matlhaope began the morning with a devotion from Genesis 1. "In the beginning" is talking about a dateless beginning, the point being that God is the Creator at any and every point of time. God's creation is always good, always very good. We are called to live out goodness in our discipleship as well.

Sharing Faith Stories

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.

Secretary's Report

Following the faith stories, Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah, the GCF Secretary offered a video report on the activities of the past year. He also indicated the two major issues facing GCF at the moment: namely the need for additional staff capacity and the need for increased fundraising in preparation for the 2024 Global Gathering in Ghana.

A discussion followed about the future of GCF and whether the committee envisions it as an organization or a forum. The committee confirmed that GCF is intended to operate as a forum. The committee also confirmed that GCF needs more staff capacity, and they gave the Secretary the mandate to create the staff infrastructure he feels is needed.

The committee appointed a fundraising task force to brainstorm ideas for the 2024 Global Gathering. The task force includes: Jean-Daniel Pluss, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Natasha Klukach, and David Wells as the liaison to the PWF.

GCF 25th anniversary in 2023

It was noted that 2023 will be the 25th year since the foundation of GCF, and there was a proposal to celebrate this milestone. It was also recommended that the anniversary celebration could contribute to fundraising efforts. The committee could invite donors and significant voices from GCF's history to a shared event.

Fourth Global Gathering Update

The committee reaffirmed that the fourth global gathering is planned to take place at the Pentecost Convention Center in Ghana from April 14-19th, 2024. The theme of the gathering will come from John 17:23b, "that the world may know." Two task forces have been appointed and have already begun their work. These task forces include recruitment and invitations and program and content.

It was also discussed that the history and context of Christianity in Ghana needs to be taken seriously. This provides a unique opportunity for the churches and organizations represented to reflect on the ways that slavery has shaped Christian history. It also provides the opportunity for deep listening to the past and present reality of racial injustice, confession, and reconciliation. Finally, it was recommended that a separate subcommittee be created to handle aspects of worship planning.

The meeting closed with prayers led by Jane Paone from the Salvation Army.

For further information visit www.GlobalChristianForum.org or email communications@globalchristianforum.org.