



GCF Expanded Leadership Group Meeting

Narrative Report

February 6-8, 2022

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) held a hybrid meeting for the expanded leadership group on February 6-8, 2022. A group of the participants gathered in Rome, where they were hosted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, while others joined the meeting virtually. Participants were given space to share their faith stories, to discuss plans for the upcoming Global Gathering in 2024, and to engage with scholars on the current trends in ecumenism and global Christianity.

Each morning the meeting began with prayers and a devotion.

Following the GCF model, participants were invited to share their faith stories from the past few months. Participants shared stories of loss and reorientation in the midst of grief and fragility, stories of hope and encouragement in the midst of uncertain times, and stories of faithful communities that have uplifted one another during this season of pandemic. Each of the faith stories testified to the God who walks with us in every season of our lives.

The participants heard from a number of speakers during the three day consultation:

On the first morning, Rev. Jooseop Keum and Dr. Ruth Padilla DeBorst gave presentations about the need for an expanded construction of ecumenism that takes its leads from people on the margins and moves us all toward equality. It was noted that ecumenism can serve as a witness to the world that God's love has the power to defeat the culture of hatred that has taken root. Christian unity offers a credible witness to the world about the power of Jesus Christ. In the afternoon session, Dr. Gina Zurlo discussed recent trends in global Christianity, with a particular focus on the fast growing movements of evangelicalism and pentecostalism.

On the second morning, Dr. Teresa Rossi shared her vision of ecumenism and congratulated the model of faith sharing practiced by GCF. She noted that this type of welcoming space allows a more diverse group of people to gather and connect with one another. In the afternoon, Dr. Gina Zurlo continued her presentation on global Christianity with a focus on independent church movements. This led to a fruitful conversation about invitations for the next global gathering and a commitment to intentionally include ministry practitioners who might be left out by institutional invitations.

During the first day, meeting participants discussed the possibilities for regional consultations which will help shape the next Global Gathering in 2024. The conversations touched on the issues of expanding the table to include those who are often left out, reducing the carbon footprint of events, and visiting marginalized areas to be in solidarity with the church. It was agreed that the GCF

International Committee meetings could be expanded to become regional consultations. During the second day, meeting participants discussed the proposed locations for the Global Gathering and came to a consensus about the plans.

In the final day, the facilitation group presented the conceptual framework for the Global Gathering including the theme, process of invitations, and the biblical passages to be studied. The meeting discussed their proposals and made additional recommendations. The final proposal will be presented to the GCF International Committee for discussion.

The meeting closed with a devotion and prayer for all participants.

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) is a unique gathering of global Christian churches and organisations bringing together all the major streams of world Christianity. It is an open space where all Christians can meet to nurture unity by fostering mutual respect and understanding as well as by addressing together common challenges. Represented in the GCF are many Christian World Communions and world Christian organisations, including the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, the World Evangelical Alliance and the World Council of Churches. The GCF secretary is Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah.