

**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.  
Colossians 1:17**

## About this Edition

In this issue of the Global Christian Forum newsletter, we highlight the recent International Committee meeting in Rome, where leaders gathered to discern the Forum's ongoing mission and priorities. We are also pleased to feature two thought-provoking reflections that explore Christian unity, witness, and peacebuilding in diverse contexts. Rev. Dr. Eva Wong offers an Asian Pentecostal perspective on theological education and its contribution to Christian unity, while Rev. Dr. César Lopes reflects on what it means for the Church to be "gathered for prophetic presence" in today's world.



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## Global Christian Forum International Committee Meets in Rome



From 21–23 April, the International Committee of the Global Christian Forum gathered in Rome, bringing together leaders and representatives from major Christian traditions and organizations across the global Church for days of prayer, fellowship, and discernment.

In a time marked by global uncertainty, wars, and divisions in the world and in the Church, the gathering served as a reminder of the Church's deep need for prayer, attentive listening, and renewed commitment to seek God and unity in Christ.

During their time together, committee members took important steps to strengthen the shared life and relationships of the Forum, seeking to model an ecumenism of the heart. They advanced new initiatives in communications, young adult engagement, and faith sharing, while also reviewing resources and making strategic decisions to support the flourishing of the Forum's vision.

The committee also renewed its commitment to encourage Forum activities in all regions and began the early work of discerning the theme and venue for the next Global Gathering.

The Global Christian Forum gives thanks to God for the gift of communion and for the shared commitment to walk together in humility, faith, and hope.

**Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.' - Isaiah 30:21**



## GCF Short News Stories

### Archbishop Sarah Mullally Installed as Archbishop of Canterbury

On the Feast of the Annunciation, The Most Reverend Sarah Mullally was installed as Archbishop of Canterbury in Canterbury Cathedral. In her sermon, she spoke of her vision for the Church as one of love, compassion, reconciliation, and hope.

“The Church, through the ordinary lives of its people, contains so many extraordinary acts of love: God’s people offering a listening ear, a word of encouragement, or prayer for healing; offering food and shelter, sanctuary and welcome; in a world that so often seeks to divide us, tables to sit at and conversations to be shared; and being a simple, loving presence, like the salt of the earth, a light on a hill, the treasure of the kingdom.”



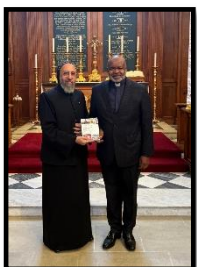
The Global Christian Forum was represented by Dr. Natasha Klukach, Director of Research and Operations, joining a wide range of ecumenical guests from across the Christian family. We extend our congratulations to Archbishop Sarah and offer our prayers for her ministry.

### GCF Secretary Visits Church Leaders in London

During visits to London in April and May, GCF Secretary Rev. Dr. Casely Baiden Essamuah met with church leaders and ecumenical partners from across Christian traditions, strengthening relationships and advancing a shared commitment to Christian unity.

His meetings included **His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos** (Coptic Orthodox Church), **Commissioner Jane Paone** (The Salvation Army), **Rev. Dr. Reynaldo Ferreira Leão Neto** (World Methodist Council), **Rev. Dr. Jonathan Hustler** and **Rev. Dr. Andrew Ashdown** (Methodist Church of Great Britain), **Canon Dr. Christopher Wells** and **Rev. Neil Vigers** (Anglican Communion Office), and **Bishop Mike Royal** and **Rev. Dr. Benjamin Aldous** (Churches Together in England).

These encounters reflected the heart of the Global Christian Forum—creating space for friendship, dialogue, and shared discernment as Christians from diverse traditions seek to bear witness to Christ together.



## Theological Education for Christian Unity: An Asian Pentecostal Perspective

Rev. Dr. Eva Wong Suk Kyun

Director of Malaysia Pentecostal Research Centre, Bible College of Malaysia

As a Pentecostal theologian serving at theological institutions in the Asia Pacific, I consistently emphasize the importance of Christian unity in diversity. This is particularly central to my courses in World Church History and Systematic Theology, where students explore a vast array of denominations, theological perspectives, and doctrines.

Theological seminaries and Bible colleges are responsible for forming the next generation of pastors, missionaries, ministerial leaders, and marketplace laity. These formative years of training are crucial for instilling a spirit of unity. When these equipped leaders are sent into the field, they must possess a Kingdom mindset and a global mission perspective. This ensures they do not serve in isolation but rather contribute to God's overarching purposes. Regardless of where they serve, every believer is a brother or sister in Christ and a co-laborer in God's global mission. Ultimately, God views all Christians as His children, transcending denominations, traditions, and backgrounds.

In this faith story, I offer theological reflections on Christian unity and recount my journey through rich ecumenical experiences.

### Christian Unity Begins Where We Are

Theological education is of the utmost importance in imparting a biblical understanding of Jesus' high priestly prayer "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe" that the Father sent Him (John 17:21). It teaches that the universal church is united by the Holy Spirit into the single body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27).

Despite our diverse geographical, historical, and sociocultural contexts, global Christians—whether in denominations or independent churches—must maintain unity through one Lord, one faith, and one baptism (Galatians 3:28). The source of this unity is the Triune God: one Lord, one Spirit, and one Father (Ephesians 4:3-6), to whom we all belong. We are called to love, which



binds everything together in perfect harmony as one body in Christ (Colossians 3:14). Scripture describes believers as being "built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Unity in the Spirit is not merely organizational; it is a spiritual reality that must be actively maintained (Ephesians 4:3), and it begins exactly where we are. By promoting this unity, theological education significantly impacts local, national, and global Christianity. It forms leaders who embrace one another as members of a single body characterized by diverse gifts and functions, fostering a mutual understanding of our differences and their significance (Romans 12:4-5).

### **A Journey of Faith Through Rich Ecumenical Experiences**

My journey has been enriched by many ecumenical communities over the years. These include: My PhD studies at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in the UK; participating in the Global Christian Forum (Asia Regional meeting in Seoul, 2022; 4th Global Gathering in Accra, 2024); and being a member of the Scholar Leaders' Women's Peer Leader Forum. I am honored to have worshipped, spoken, prayed, and worked with brothers and sisters from many nations and Christian traditions. I deeply treasure these encounters and the friendships they have produced. Recently, I have also had the privilege of serving on the board of the *Lausanne Global Analysis* and participating in the Fourth Lausanne Congress in Seoul (2024). These experiences have been vital to my faith journey and my service to the Global Church.

Closer to home in Malaysia, I serve as the director of the Malaysia Pentecostal Research Centre, editor of the *Malaysian Pentecostal Journal*, and a faculty member at the Bible College of Malaysia. Locally, our seminaries are actively engaged in ecumenical efforts. For example, the Bible College recently hosted chapel services in the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox traditions, providing valuable exposure for our Pentecostal students. Additionally, the Malaysia Association of Theological Schools (MATS) serves as an avenue for unity where seminaries collaborate on academic projects; I currently serve on the editorial committee of the *MATS Journal*.

Last year, I attended the ecumenical worship service for the inauguration of the Tenth Congress of Asian Theologians and the 1700th Anniversary of Nicaea, organized by the Christian Conference of Asia and the Council of Churches of Malaysia. This rich liturgical service brought together many Christian leaders in unity. I also participated in an academic seminar on the Nicene Creed organized by the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia. It is vital for Pentecostals to join in commemorating this 1,700-year-old confession, which remains a unifying force for Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions. Having grown up in a Lutheran background, I have a long-standing appreciation for the Creed and liturgical life.

This year, my cohort in the Scholar Leaders Women's Peer Leader Forum is focusing on "Christian Spirituality". This platform allows me to share and learn with theological leaders from

the Middle East, Kenya, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. We are also contributing a roundtable of articles on our diverse spiritualities to the *Insights Journal*.

As a co-leader of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) Women Thriving Impact Team, I am co-editing a book titled *Global Voices of Women in Theological Education*, featuring authors from Canada to New Zealand. The book will amplify the voices of women theological leaders from different contexts, and it is interdenominational.

Within the Pentecostal arena, I serve as the Vice President of the Asia Pentecostal Society, and also a member of the Global Network of Spirit Empowered Scholars and the Global Pentecostal Voices cadre of scholars. Over the years, I have been contributing to Pentecostal scholarships, organising, engaging and speaking in Pentecostal conferences that have also enriched global Christianity. Furthermore, I serve on the International Board of Directors and Postgraduate Committee at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary. With Pentecostal students representing 36 nations, it is a privilege to impart the spirit of Christian unity during their formative years.

Christian unity and common witness must be central to our faith journey, regardless of our specific vocation or leadership role. We need to share our Christian faith and embrace the rich diversity. I am reminded of the words of Charles Spurgeon: "Never mind about a thousand differences if thou art in Christ and I am in Christ, we cannot be two, we must be one."

## **Gathered for prophetic presence: Christian unity and formation in Latin America**

**Dr. César Lopes**

**Comunidad de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios Continental, Brazil**

Participating in the Global Christian Forum gathering in Accra, Ghana, in 2024 became a deeply formative experience for me and for the wider network I serve in Latin America. What impacted me most was not only the diversity of Christian traditions present, but the spirit in which we encountered one another: listening across differences, praying together, and discerning how the church can respond faithfully to the wounds and hopes of our world.

The gathering created spaces where Christians from different backgrounds could speak honestly from their contexts while recognizing one another as companions in God's mission. That experience stayed with me long after returning home and became one of the inspirations behind our Summit, the "Second Cátedra Caty y René Padilla", organized by the *Comunidad de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios* (CETI) in March 2026 in Medellín, Colombia.

The *Cátedra*, titled “Formation for Prophetic Presence,” brought together leaders, practitioners, theologians, and community organizers from more than eighteen countries across Latin America and the Caribbean to reflect on how Christian formation can nurture communities committed to justice, peace, and the flourishing of life in Abya Yala, as some indigenous people call our subcontinent.



The gathering intentionally created a space of encounter and collaboration among participants from diverse Christian traditions such as Evangelical, Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal, and Anabaptist communities, as well as Christians engaged in grassroots and community-based movements. Participants gathered not around uniformity, but around a shared longing to embody the Gospel faithfully in their territories. This spirit of Christian unity was expressed through dialogue, mutual learning, and a recognition that the challenges facing our societies require a shared Christian witness. Throughout the gathering, participants explored themes such as ecological justice, church and public life, relational justice, youth and digital culture, and

alternative economies that sustain life.

One of the lessons I carried into our *Cátedra* was the conviction that Christian unity becomes credible when it is practiced in service, humility, and shared commitment to transformation. The experience of gathering with believers from different traditions helped inspire a safe space in Latin America where people could encounter one another not as competitors, but as fellow pilgrims seeking to respond faithfully to their contexts.

The experience reaffirmed for me that Christian unity is not an abstract project reserved for theologians or institutions. It is lived whenever Christians from different traditions choose to listen deeply, discern together, and collaborate for the sake of justice and hope. The relationships and conversations that began in 2024 continue to bear fruit in our region, inspiring new networks, friendships, and formative spaces committed to a prophetic Christian presence in the world.

## Prayer Requests

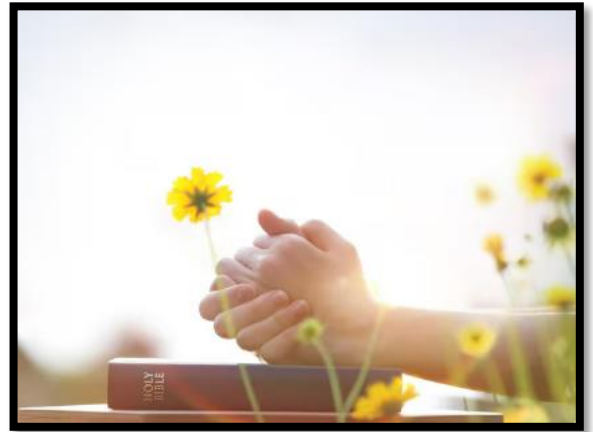
- **For peace and justice in our world** — especially in the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, and other regions affected by war and instability. Pray for protection of civilians, comfort for those who suffer, and wisdom for leaders seeking peace.

- **For Christian formation and unity across the Church** — inspired by faith stories from Asia and Latin America, we pray for theological schools, churches, and Christian communities worldwide. May leaders be formed with a Kingdom mindset, and may believers learn to listen, discern together, and live out Christian unity through shared witness, service, and pursuit of justice and peace.

- **For the Fifth Global Gathering (GG5) and the Emmaus Forum (young adult initiative)** — for God's guidance in planning GG5, forming the Thematic Task Force, and discerning its theme, vision, and preparations. Pray also for the Emmaus Forum as we seek global nominations, that God will raise up diverse young leaders passionate about Christian unity and able to serve as bridges across traditions.

- **For the Global Christian Forum** — for staff, committee members, and partners worldwide: for wisdom, strength, health, and God's sustaining grace as we serve the Church, build relationships, and follow the Holy Spirit.

We welcome your prayers for your own communities as well, and we are grateful to stand with you in prayer across the global Church.



## We want to hear from you!

Please share stories of how faith sharing can bring communities together for common witness and service. The spirit of the Forum is not in an organisation; it's in seeing how the charism and vision of broad Christian unity thrive in new places and in new ways.

Send stories and pictures to: [communications@globalchristianforum.org](mailto:communications@globalchristianforum.org)

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. The GCF Secretary is Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah.



**Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

**- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**