



CCM News



Peace that Sends Us

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THE BLUE PILL

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Issue 1

JAN – APR 2026

FOREWORD

Peace that Sends Us

Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. – John 20:21



EASTER MORNING PROCLAIMS a bold and beautiful truth: Christ is risen. Yet a few days later, many of us find ourselves back in the familiar rhythms of life – work, responsibilities, and, quietly, our worries. The question we face is not whether Easter happened, but whether it is still shaping how we live now.

For many, life after Easter can feel anxious. Concerns about health, finances, and the future linger. Some fears are loud; others sit quietly beneath the surface. Many we carry into our homes, workplaces, and even into church. Yet, it is into this very reality that the risen Christ speaks: *“Peace be with you.”*

This peace is not a fleeting feeling or a polite greeting. It is the presence of God Himself, meeting us where we are. In Scripture, we see this clearly. The disciples, hiding in fear behind locked doors, were met by the risen Christ standing among them. This tells us one thing: God is not distant or absent in times of fear and troubles. He is ever present, and He still reigns.

But the story does not end there. The peace of Christ is also a *sending* peace. Just as the disciples were commissioned, we too are sent into a world still marked by fear and uncertainty. Often, this does not look dramatic. It is seen in small, faithful acts – choosing patience, offering a listening ear, speaking hope, and carrying a steady presence into anxious spaces.

For when we truly encounter Christ and receive His peace, we become people who carry it into the lives of others – as peace-makers, witnesses, messengers.

Easter, then, is not only a celebration to remember. It is a reality to live. More so in this present time, and it begins right where God has placed us – in our homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. *“Peace be with you,”* Jesus says – and then, *“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

APRIL 2026

CCM NEWS is a regular publication of the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) on the life and work of the Council as well as the fellowship of churches in and around Malaysia.

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Peace in various languages
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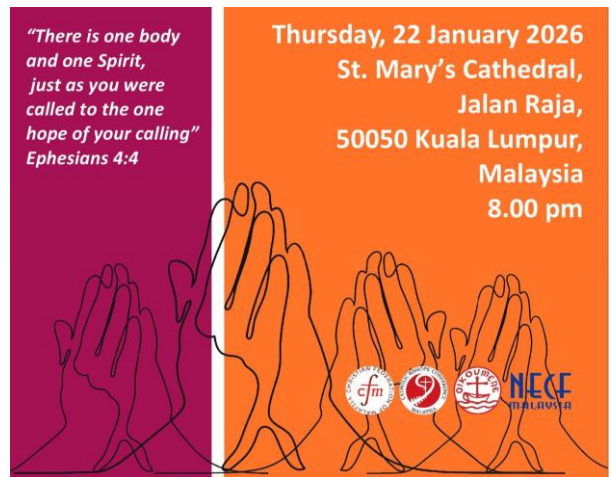
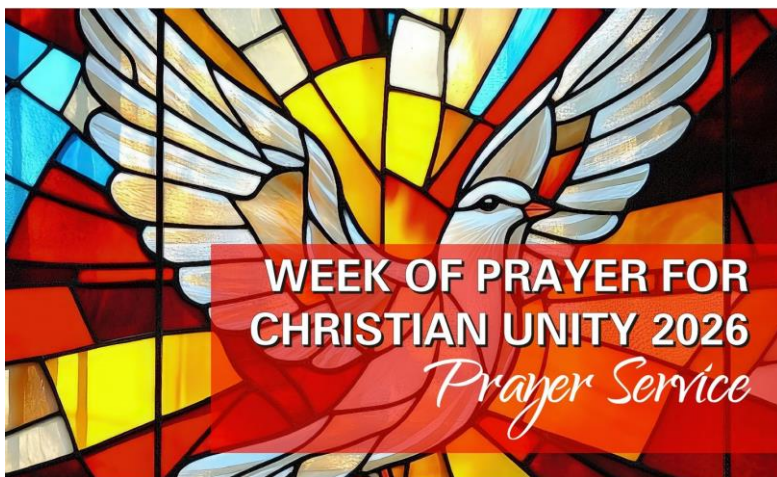
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The Council of Churches of Malaysia is a fellowship of churches from virtually all mainline Protestant denominations in the country. The highest governing body is the Assembly, which meets once every three years. CCM was formally inaugurated in 1948 in Kuala Lumpur. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member church but works cooperatively with CCM.

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Churches Gather for Global Prayer, Affirming Shared Faith and Common Calling

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026



THE ecumenical prayer service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) 2026 in Kuala Lumpur on the 22nd of January brought together Christian leaders and worshippers from across denominational traditions and backgrounds, reaffirming a shared commitment to unity rooted in Scripture and expressed through common worship, prayer, and public witness.

The service was part of a world-wide celebration of Christian unity. Also known as **the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, the WPCU is observed internationally every year between 18th to 25th January. This has been an ecumenical tradition that has extended back to more than a century, since the proposition made by a Catholic priest, Paul Wattson, back in 1908. This significant event marks the period between the confession of Saint Peter and the conversion of Saint Paul.

The 2026 theme, *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling”* (Ephesians 4:4), provided the theological and liturgical focus for the ser-

vice. The verse was selected, the official WPCU materials note, because it speaks of Christian unity both as a gift from God and a continuing task given to believers of various traditions.

Unity Rooted in Scripture

Among the reflections highlighted in the WPCU 2026, it is stressed that religious unity is not something that came into focus only in contemporary ecumenism, contrary to what many might assume. Instead, this theme of religious unity is repeated throughout Scripture. Starting from the Old Testament, it is emphasized that from that point onward, God’s community has been called to a life of peaceful and forgiving relationships. **Genesis 13:8**,

where there is a positive exhortation from Abram to Lot to eschew strife since they were relatives, is given as an early declaration of God’s will in matters of religious and peaceful co-existence.

In the New Testament, unity is heightened, yet it is imbued with a specifically spiritual content: the prayer in **John 17**, in which Jesus prays *“that they may all be one,”* understands unity in terms of the relationship between Christ and the Father. Thus, the WPCU literature emphasizes the relational nature of this unity. Unity is not based on organisation or creed, but on sharing in the shared life of the Triune God.

Paul's words in Ephesians 4 reinforce this vision by affirming that believers, despite their diversity, belong to "one body" animated by "one Spirit," called to a single hope. The passage also recognises the variety of gifts within the Church, presenting diversity not as a threat to unity, but as a means by which the Body of Christ is built up.

An International Ecumenical Effort

The preparation of the 2026 WPCU materials was jointly overseen by the **World Council of Churches (WCC)** and the **Roman Catholic Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity**. Drafting responsibilities were entrusted to the **Inter-Church Relations' Department of the Armenian Apostolic Church**, one of the oldest Christian communities in the world.

The Armenian Church produced the initial draft of the texts before collaborating with an international ecumenical team to finalise the liturgy and reflections. The materials highlight that Christian unity is not about uniformity but about a shared commitment to core truths of the faith, sustained by love, humility, and faithful witness.

A Shared Act of Worship in Kuala Lumpur

These theological convictions were given concrete expression in the Kuala Lumpur prayer service, organised by the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), and supported by the Catholic Church, NECF, and KL & PJ Churches. The service was hosted by the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia at St Mary's Cathedral, and brought together clergy and lay participants from Anglican,



Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Evangelical, and other Christian traditions. The leadership of the service was intentionally shared, with the priests, ministers, and pastors from different denominations participating in the invocation, litanies, Scripture readings, prayers, and blessings.

The Order of Worship reflected the ecumenical character of the gathering. Ancient and contemporary elements were woven together, including traditional hymns such as "*Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*" and "*The Church's One Foundation*," alongside choral pieces like "*African Alleluia*" and "*The Glory of the Lord*." Musical offerings were provided by **Cantus Musicus** and the **Ruth Milal Myanmar Youth Choir**, reflecting the cultural breadth of the Christian community.

The liturgy also incorporated prayers adapted from early Christian sources, including St Gregory of Narek, underscoring a shared spiritual inheritance that predates later ecclesial divisions.

Scripture and Social Responsibility

Readings from **Isaiah 58:6–11**, led by Mr **Augustus Jeremiah** from the Methodist Church in Malaysia, linked unity with justice and compassion,

calling believers to care for the hungry, the homeless, and the oppressed. The passage framed unity not only as a theological affirmation but as a moral imperative expressed through concrete acts of mercy.

This was followed by a reading from **Ephesians 4:1–13**, led by Ms **Ann Sumitra** from the Catholic Church in Malaysia, which urged believers to live in humility, gentleness, and patience, "bearing with one another in love" and maintaining "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The reading echoed the WPCU 2026 emphasis that spiritual maturity involves both doctrinal faithfulness and relational commitment.

Meanwhile, the Gospel reading from **John 12:31–36**, led by Rev **Elisha Satvinder** (New Covenant Community) from the NECF, in which Jesus speaks of being lifted up to draw all people to Himself, introduced the recurring image of light, a theme that ran throughout the 2026 materials. Unity, the texts suggest, is meant to be visible and transformative, offering guidance in a world marked by division and uncertainty.

This year's homily was delivered by Bishop Dr **Steven Abarrow** of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia.



Musical offerings were provided by the Ruth Milal Myanmar Youth Choir and Cantus Musicus, reflecting the cultural breadth of the Christian community.

Prayers for the World and the Church

Intercessory prayers during the service, led by Elder **Lim Kar Hor** (Presbyterian), Elder **Lee Choong San** (Full Gospel Tabernacle), Rev **Matthew Punnoose** (Mar Thoma), Ms **Mary Anne Woon** (Catholic), Rev **Zadok Jeevan** (Presbyterian), Rev **Daniel Loh**, Ms **Maria Yan** (Catholic), and Rev **Vijendra Daniel** (Anglican), addressed global concerns, including war, civil unrest, and the suffering of refugees and displaced persons. The participants prayed for peace, justice, and healing, calling on Christians to become visible signs of reconciliation in a fractured world.

A prayer that was adapted from the aforementioned St Gregory of Narek and led by Rev Dr **Eu Hong Seng** (Full Gospel Tabernacle, Chairman of CFM and NECF) was also offered specifically for the Church in Malaysia, asking for Christ's radiance to instill a deeper love for one another, a flourishing unity, and that the Church may bloom in harmony and reflect God's glory to the end of the ages. The WPCU reflections this year had noted that the call to unity is directed not only at church institutions but at individual believers, each of whom bears responsibility for living out reconciliation in daily life.

Confessing a Common Faith

A central moment of the service was the communal recitation of the Nicene Creed (led by Bishop **T. Jeyakumar** from the Methodist Church in Malaysia) described in this year's liturgy as a confession made together "*bathed in the light of the Wisdom of Christ.*" The shared affirmation of faith in "*one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church*" served as a reminder of the deep theological foundations Christians hold in common.

... Christian unity, while often slow and demanding, remains integral to the Church's witness and mission in the world.

The service concluded with the **Lord's Prayer** and a joint blessing, led by the Archbishop **Julian Leow** from the Catholic Church in Malaysia, followed by words of appreciation by Rev **Philip Lok**, General Secretary of the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), acknowledging the host church, participating clergy, singers and musicians, and

the member churches of the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF), and the Catholic Church in Malaysia.

Unity as Witness

In its concluding reflections, the WPCU 2026 materials had earlier acknowledged that the Body of Christ continues to be wounded by divisions between traditions and confessions. Yet amidst this, they also affirm that unity is sustained by Christ's love and expressed through faithful attention to everyday discipleship. The WPCU 2026 celebration at St Mary's Cathedral was a moving affirmation of this.

As participants gathered for fellowship after the service, there was even a little birthday celebration for the January and February babies (which included Archbishop Julian Leow, Bishop Steven Abbarow, Rev Richard Tok, Rev Ashok Amarasingham, Rev Vijendra Daniel, Rev Juining Babia, Lisa and Andrew Hwang, Millie Tan, and a few others). The event stood as a visible reminder of the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity's** central conviction; that Christian unity, while often slow and demanding, remains integral to the Church's witness and mission in the world.

May this bond of unity extend for years to come. All glory to the Lord! ■



Intercessory prayers during the service, led by Elder Lim Kar Hor (Presbyterian), Elder Lee Choong San (Full Gospel Tabernacle), Rev Matthew Punnoose (Mar Thoma), Ms Mary Anne Woon (Catholic), Rev Zadok Jeevan (Presbyterian), Rev Daniel Loh, Ms Maria Yan (Catholic), and Rev Vijendra Daniel (Anglican).

* First published on **Feb 6, 2026**, <https://christianitymalaysia.com/wp/churches-gather-for-the-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2026-affirming-shared-faith-and-common-calling/>

** Christianity Malaysia would like to thank the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF), and the Catholic Church in Malaysia for their immense hospitality and help in the production of this article. All photos kindly contributed by Elder Steven Fung of CCM. More photos as well as videos of the hymns and choral pieces can be found on the CCM Youth Network Facebook page.

Dedication of Gereja Prince of Peace, Putrajaya



PUTRAJAYA, JAN 1: THE Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia (DWM) officially dedicated the first church in our national administrative center of Putrajaya on New Year's Day.

Named Gereja Prince of Peace Putrajaya (GPPP), the dedication was witnessed by nearly 500 attendees and led by DWM Bishop Bp Dr Steven Abbarow, with the support of Bishop-Elect Bp Dr Stephen Soe and the Most Rev Dr Titus Chung, Archbishop of the Province of Southeast Asia.

In his homily, Bp Steven Abbarow thanked Almighty God for GPPP, located at the heart of Putrajaya and at the crossroads of the federal government and the neighboring international community in Cyberjaya. He described GPPP as an offering to God and prayed that the new church would be a house of prayer for the nation and a conscience to those in positions of power.

CCM congratulates DWM on this historic dedication and prays for GPPP's witness and impact in Putrajaya and beyond. ■

Thanksgiving service for the episcopal ministry of Rt Rev Dr Steven Abbarow

KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 5: AFTER five distinguished years of faithful leadership as Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia, Rt Rev Dr Steven Abbarow laid down his pastoral staff on the altar of the Cathedral of St Mary on 5 February 2026, marking the conclusion of his episcopal ministry.

A Service of Thanksgiving to mark his retirement was well attended by clergy and laity of the Diocese of West Malaysia, as well as ecumenical leaders and representatives from the government.

Over the decades, Dr Steven's ministerial journey has taken him to Tapah, Ipoh (Buntong), and Seremban, where he provided steadfast pastoral leadership and faithful service to the communities entrusted to his care.

During the service, Archbishop Titus Chung of the Anglican Province of South East Asia expressed his appreciation, saying, "Bp Steven is a true leader of the Church, who shepherded, directed, and taught his people. He has the ability to speak to both the heart and the mind."

Bishop-elect of the Diocese of West Malaysia, Rev Dr Stephen Soe, also shared, "Bp Steven Abbarow is a bishop with a pastoral heart. He once travelled 100 miles just to pray for a grieving family."

The Council of Churches of Malaysia is deeply thankful for Bp Steven Abbarow's leadership and contributions to the ecumenical family over the years. The CCM wishes him a blessed and joyful retirement. ■



Rt Rev Dr Stephen Soe installed as sixth Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia



KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 6: THE Rt Rev Stephen Soe was installed as the bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia by the Archbishop of the Province in South East Asia, in a service steeped in tradition.

Bp Soe succeeds Bp Steven Abbarow, who officially retired the day before. Held at St Mary's Cathedral in Kuala Lumpur, his installation was witnessed by many ecumenical guests and government representatives.

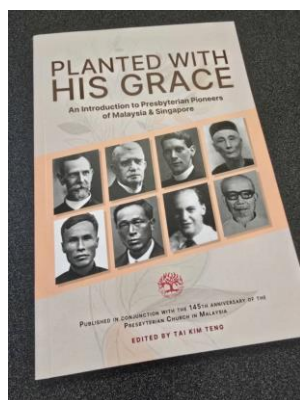
In his inaugural sermon, based on the text from John 21:15-19, Bp Soe reminded the listeners that "everything that we do must flow out from our love for Christ." He further added that in a world filled with distractions and troubles, the Church must be a place of refuge and comfort to all.

A thanksgiving dinner was held at the Majestic Hotel on the same evening in celebration of God's goodness to His Church.

The CCM congratulates Bp Steven Soe, his wife See Lang, and his three sons, on the conferment of this new responsibility to their ministry.

The Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia is a founding member of the CCM in 1948. ■

Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia celebrates 145th Anniversary



SEREMBAN, FEB 5: IN conjunction with its 52nd General Assembly in 2026, Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia (GPM) celebrated its 145th Anniversary at the Royal Chulan Hotel in Seremban.

The occasion was graced by the presence of the Moderators of both GPM and the Presbyterian Church in Singapore (PCS). Also in attendance was the PCS general secretary Rev Peter Chan.

During the anniversary dinner, GPM also unveiled a new book titled *Planted With His Grace*, which introduces the pioneers of the Presbyterian Church in Malaysia and Singapore. The book is edited by Dr Tai Kim Teng.

GPM and PCS share a common heritage, having been one church until 1 January 1975, when they formally separated and became autonomous churches. GPM is a member of the Council of Churches of Malaysia. ■

ECUMENICAL NEWS

2026 Ecumenical Prayer Service for Christian Unity, Jan 22



KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 22: OVER 200 church leaders and members representing churches from Malaysia's three main Christian bodies – CCM, NECF, and RCC – gathered for worship and prayer at St Mary's Cathedral, Kuala Lumpur, in conjunction with this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU).

In his homily during the ecumenical service, Bp Dr Steven Abbarow of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia highlighted the centrality of Christian unity in the writings of St Paul, drawing particularly from Ephesians 4. Bp Abbarow emphasised that Christian unity is not something created by human effort merely to overcome challenges, but a gift bestowed upon the Church through Jesus Christ.

“In Malaysia, unity is not an abstract concept but a daily challenge. Therefore, Christians must manifest our Christ-centred unity as a public witness,” Bp Abbarow urged.

As the organiser of the prayer service, CCM expressed its gratitude to all who contributed to and participated in this year’s event. The ecumenical body also shared plans to bring the service to other parts of the country in 2027. ■



Interfaith Forum at the CCM Ecumenical Center



PETALING JAYA, FEB 27: THE Council of Churches of Malaysia hosted an interfaith forum today at the Ecumenical Center, welcoming representatives from diverse faith organisations and institutions, including Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen, Nürnberg (FAU) from Germany.

Under the theme “The State of Interfaith Relations in Malaysia – Challenges and Opportunities”, students from FAU and Seminari Theoloji Malaysia (STM) participated in a lively dialogue with a panel of esteemed faith leaders in Malaysia.

The panel included Bishop Steven Lawrence (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia), Rev Andy Chi (NECF and MCCBCHST Exco), Datuk RS Mohan Shan (Vice-President, Malaysia Hindu Sangam, MCCBCHST Exco), and Ms Loh Pai Ling (President, Buddhist Missionary Society, MCCBCHST Exco).

The forum provided a space for mutual learning: while Malaysian students and leaders shared their insights on interfaith engagement at home, they also gained perspectives on the current state of interfaith relations in Germany.

This meaningful exchange contributes to the ongoing effort to strengthen understanding, respect, and collaboration among different faith communities in Malaysia and beyond. ■



Standing together in peace and unity

THE Christian Federation of Malaysia extends our warmest Hari Raya Aidilfitri greetings to all Muslims throughout the nation.

As Malaysians, we are deeply thankful that we are able to celebrate this festive season in peace and harmony. This blessing of peace is something we must never take for granted. It is our shared responsibility to defend and preserve it through greater acceptance, meaningful interaction, deeper understanding, and mutual respect among all communities.

We also need to stand together against voices that seek to divide us and sow hatred among fellow Malaysians. Our

diversity has always been our strength, and unity must remain our collective commitment.

This Hari Raya, let us demonstrate our stand for unity in diversity by celebrating together with our Muslim brothers and sisters on this auspicious occasion. May this season of forgiveness and renewal strengthen the bonds of friendship and goodwill among all Malaysians.

Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Maaf Zahir dan Batin. ■

Jointly signed by

REV DR EU HONG SENG, Chairman
BISHOP DATUK DANALD JUTE, Vice Chairman
ARCHBISHOP JULIAN LEOW BENG KIM, Vice Chairman
BISHOP ONG SEK LEANG, Vice Chairman

Christian Federation of Malaysia

18 March 2026

Sacred duty of church leaders to speak up

THE Christian Federation of Malaysia affirms the principle of the separation of church and state as a safeguard for both religious freedom and the integrity of civil governance, yet this distinction does not require silence from people of faith, nor does it absolve spiritual leaders of their moral responsibilities.

Faithful to the witness of Scripture, we affirm that those entrusted with spiritual leadership bear a sacred responsibility to speak truth, even when it challenges those in power.

The prophets of old did not remain silent in the face of injustice or moral failure among rulers; they confronted kings, warned nations, and called leaders back to righteousness.

From Nathan's rebuke of David, to Elijah's challenge to Ahab, to John the Baptist's condemnation of Herod, Scripture consistently demonstrates that fidelity to God requires courage before authority.

This calling is not rooted in political ambition, but in obedience to divine justice. As the watchman described in Ezekiel, the failure to warn wrongdoing is itself a moral failure.

Therefore, church leaders are not only permitted but obligated to speak when leaders act unjustly, oppress the vulnerable, or depart from what is right.

In every age, the integrity of faith demands a voice that does not bend to power, but stands anchored in truth.

As asserted by Dietrich Bonhoeffer 'silence in the face of evil is itself evil.' To remain silent in the face of wrong-

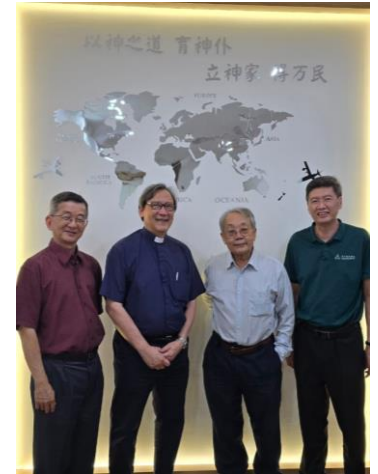
doing is to neglect a sacred duty, but to speak with courage and humility is to remain faithful to the calling entrusted by God.

To this end, CFM, as a voice of the Church, will continue to speak out on matters concerning national and religious freedom, both independently and in collaboration with others, including the platform of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST). ■

REV DR EU HONG SENG
Chairman
Christian Federation of Malaysia

20 April 2026

CCM connects with Southern Bible College, Jan 28



Southern Bible College, located in Johor Bahru, was established in 2019 to serve and equip Chinese churches in Johor. The college currently has 9 full-time students, 15 part-time students, and over 40 participants in its evening classes. Led by principal Dr Tan Yee Ching, the institution operates from a 3-storey shophouse in Skudai.

Southern Bible College has applied to become an associate member of our ecumenical family. As part of the membership process, the CCM general secretary, accompanied by Elder Quek from Our Daily Bread (ODB), recently visited the college to gain a better understanding of its operations. The application will be further considered at upcoming CCM board meetings.

CCM engages with Christian cemetery association in Johor, Jan 29



Thirty years ago (1995), the Johor state government granted 11 acres in Masai to the CCM Johor Regional Committee for use as a Christian cemetery. Today, it continues to serve Christians across denominations (except Catholics) as one of only two Christian burial grounds in Johor Bahru.

After the CCM Johor Regional Committee was deregistered, the cemetery's management was taken over by the Management Committee Association of the Christian Cemetery Masai (MCACCM). While independent, all MCACCM board members are pastors and leaders of CCM churches in Johor, and they report regularly to the CCM Pastors' Fellowship.

Recently, CCM general secretary Rev Philip Lok met with the committee to discuss its work. CCM is grateful for these leaders, whose dedication ensures affordable and well-managed burial plots for the Christian community in Johor Bahru.

CCM staff celebrates Chinese New Year of the Horse, Feb 25



This afternoon, on the 9th day of the Lunar New Year, the CCM staff came together for a simple yet meaningful celebration of the Year of the Horse. Everyone joined in the joyful tossing of the yee sang, exchanging wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous year ahead.

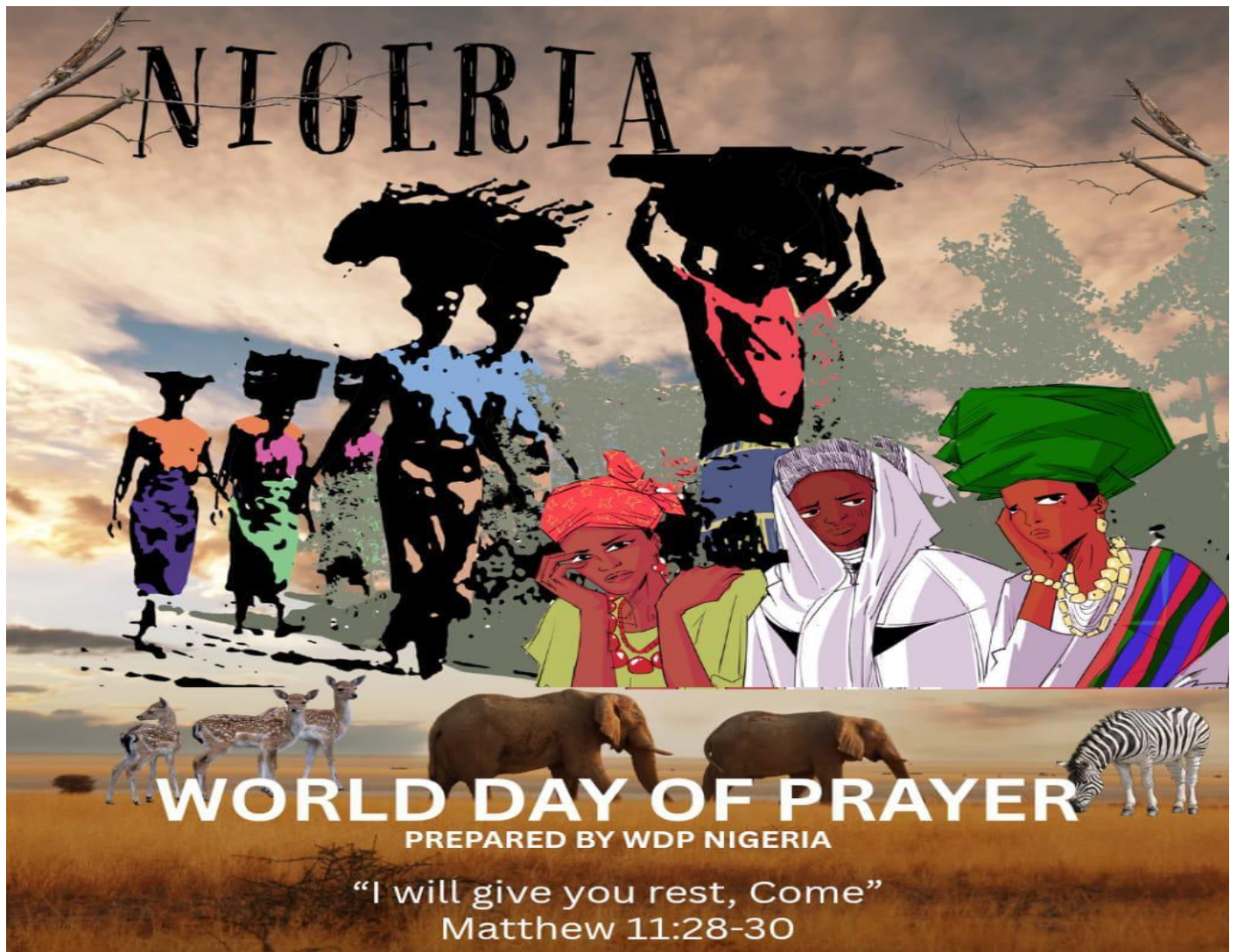
CCM Women host World Day of Prayer 2026, March 7



The CCM Women's Ministry Committee organised the World Day of Prayer (WDOP) service on Saturday March 7 at the CCM Ecumenical Centre. More than 120 worshippers gathered for the prayer service, which carried the theme, "Come, I Will Give You Rest," based on Matthew 11:28–30.



The worship materials for this year were prepared by the WDOP Committee of Nigeria. Deaconess Jasmine Dialan from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) shared the message, reflecting on the theme and its call to find rest in Christ.



MCCBCHST calls upon PM to withhold directive to Local Councils until matter is explained

THE MALAYSIAN Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism & Taoism (MCCBCHST) notes with alarm the Prime Minister's statement directing Local Councils authority to 'clean up' areas where houses of worship were built without approval in breach of existing laws (FMT 09/02/2026).

This statement is too general and appears to apply to all places of worship which do not have land ownership and were built without prior approval from local councils.

This statement, unless explained will encourage individuals like Zami Vinoth and others to stir racial and religious tension...

2. It has been said many times and is repeated again here that during the colonial era, the British allowed Temples and other places of worship to be built in rubber estates and tin mining areas. This was before Malaya gained independence in 1957 and at this time there were no local councils and neither there was the National Land Code which was only passed in 1965.

Therefore, to categorise these decades old places of worship and in some cases places of worship built over 100 years as "illegal" and in breach of existing laws is arbitrary and unjust - more so as these places of worship were built with the tacit approval of the British authorities then and thus their existence was known to them.

3. The Prime Minister should be aware that Pakatan Rakyat which governed Selangor in 2008 had issued guidelines that places of worship of more than 100 years old were to be allowed to remain and those existed before 2008 will be allowed to remain until they are relocated to suitable sites. These guidelines were subsequently adopted by other States and the Cabinet too had said then that no decades old places of worship will be demolished without first consulting the Temple authorities and a suitable site made available to them.

4. The MCCBCHST therefore calls upon the Prime Minister to clarify his statement and specify whether it applied to places of worship which were in existence before Merdeka and the existing policy of not to demolish them until a suitable alternative site has been made available to them.

The Prime Minister's statement as it is now had called on local councils to clean up houses of worship built in violation of law, implying that they should be demolished. This statement, unless explained will encourage individuals like Zami Vinoth and others to stir racial and religious tension and agitate for Non-Muslim houses of worship to be demolished.

5. The MCCBCHST calls upon the Prime Minister to withhold his directive to

local councils to "clean up areas" (demolish) where houses of worship were built in breach of existing laws, until matters including position of places of worship built before 1957 is clarified and decided. All the decades old places of worship including Temples and Gurdwaras had made applications to the Land authorities to be allocated land. Some have even applied repeatedly but always rejected.

...State governments are partly responsible for this problem and they should review their restrictive policies...

Thus, the State governments are partly responsible for this problem and they should review their restrictive policies and allocate land in a just and equitable manner to Non-Muslim places of worship too. This will definitely reduce substantially the building of places of worship without approval.

Finally, the MCCBCHST calls upon the government to uphold election pledges and policies with regards to relocations of places of worship as no one would want to build a Temple etc. in violation of the law, if the land could be allocated to them, lawfully. ■

MCCBCHST

11 February 2026

* Statement signed by: Venerable Seck Chaio Ying (President MCCBCHST and Vice President - Malaysian Buddhist Association (MBA), Bishop Dr. T. Jeyakumar (Deputy President MCCBCHST Exco Member Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM))





Imagine a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.

A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge gender equality.

The Council of Churches of Malaysia wishes all women a blessed International Women's Day 2026!

#GiveToGain

LOCAL NEWS

Malaysia's main interfaith group urges PM to clarify directive to local councils on unauthorised places of worship

KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 11: THE Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) has called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to clarify his statement directing local councils to "clean up" areas where houses of worship were built without approval.

In a statement, the council cited a *Free Malaysia Today* report on Feb 9, in which Anwar said enforcement must be carried out in accordance with the law and that local councils must ensure unauthorised places of worship do not continue to operate.

MCCBCHST said the prime minister's statement appeared overly general, potentially applying to all non-compliant places of worship, including those built decades ago. The council highlighted that many temples and other houses of worship were established during the colonial era, before Malaya gained independence in 1957.

At that time, there were no local councils or the National Land Code, which was only passed in 1965. MCCBCHST said categorising these historic places of worship — some over 100 years old — as "illegal" is arbitrary and unjust, especially since they were built with the tacit approval of British authorities.

MCCBCHST also noted that guidelines issued by the Selangor state government in 2008 allowed places of worship older than 100 years to remain in their original locations. These guidelines, the council said, were later adopted by other states, and the Cabinet had stated that no decades-old place of worship should be demolished without consultation with authorities and the provision of a suitable alternative site.

The council urged the prime minister to clarify whether his directive includes places of worship established before independence and to specify how existing policies protecting historic sites would be upheld.

MCCBCHST warned that the current wording of the statement could encourage individuals to stir racial and religious tensions by calling for demolitions. It also called on state governments to review restrictive land allocation policies for non-Muslim houses

of worship, noting that some decades-old temples and gurdwaras have repeatedly applied for land allocation but were consistently rejected.

"This will reduce the construction of unauthorised places of worship and ensure equitable treatment," the council said.

The MCCBCHST urged the government to adhere to its election pledges and policies regarding relocations, stressing that lawful access to land would prevent the need for building without approval.

The statement was signed by its president Venerable Seck Chaio Ying, deputy president Bishop Dr T Jeyakumar, and other office-bearers representing the Malaysian Buddhist Association, Christian Federation of Malaysia, Federation of Taoist Associations Malaysia, Malaysian Gurdwaras Council, and Malaysia Hindu Sangam. ■

* <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2026/02/11/malaysias-main-interfaith-group-urges-pm-to-clarify-directive-to-local-councils-on-unauthorised-places-of-worship/208885>

Iban Study Bible launched in Kuching after eight-year effort

KUCHING (APRIL 18): THE Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM), in collaboration with the Association of Churches in Sarawak (ACS), launched the Iban Study Bible (*Bup Kudus Edisi Studi*) at St Basil's Church, Taman Everbright in Batu Kawa here on Friday night.

ACS chairman Right Rev Datuk Danald Jute, who is also the Anglican Bishop of Kuching, Sarawak and Brunei, officiated at the launch ceremony, which featured a procession, a welcoming Iban *ngajat* performance accompanied by live *taboh* music, as well as a testimony sharing by translator Julian Mambak.

Prior to the official unveiling of the book, a thanksgiving service was conducted, followed by a dedication for the book's completion.

Among those present were Batu Kitang assemblyman Datuk Lo Khere Chiang; BSM general secretary Rev Matthew K. Punnoose; ACS secretary Elder Ambrose Linang; St Basil's Church vicar Archdeacon Joseph Dusit Ijau; community leader Temenggong Nelson Kloni Kanang; and church leaders from various denominations.

In his address, Danald said ACS is grateful to BSM for its dedication and faithful service.

"By the grace of God, this (book completion) has become a reality. There is a beautiful and powerful truth that we must remember: our God speaks our language.

"What an amazing truth that is. God speaks in Iban. God speaks in Mandarin and other Chinese languages. God speaks in the languages of indigenous communities. God speaks in every language. This is the wonder of the Gospel, that the living God communicates with His people in words they understand," he said.

"There is a beautiful and powerful truth that we must remember: our God speaks our language."

"Because God speaks our language, our language is honoured and made sacred. Translation is not merely a technical task; it is a declaration that God desires to be known personally by His people. Through Scripture in our own tongue, we hear His voice clearly and intimately," he added.

In his speech, Punnoose said the BSM has long been committed to serving communities in many languages.

"In Sabah and Sarawak alone, there are about 40 indigenous languages. Each language is precious and treasured, because language carries identity, culture and faith. This project reflects our commitment to ensuring that God's Word is accessible and meaningful to every community."

He said the Iban Study Bible project took eight years to complete, including challenging periods during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The trial edition of the Iban Study Bible was first launched by BSM on Nov 30, 2024, alongside the Bahasa Malaysia Alkitab Kudus Malaysia (BM Formal) and Alkitab Berita Baik (Edisi Studi) during its 40th anniversary celebration at PJ Evangelical Free Church in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

On the translator, Punnoose said Julian was among the earliest translators of *Bup Kudus Baru* (New Testament) in the 1990s and is the sole translator of the latest Iban Study Bible.

The ceremony concluded with a fellowship dinner and presentation of the book to several church leaders and invited guests. ■ *The Borneo Post*



Danald (right, back row) and other invited guests holding up the Iban Study Bible in a group photo. (Photo by Churchill Edward)

* <https://www.theborneopost.com/2026/04/18/iban-study-bible-launched-in-kuching-after-eight-year-effort/>

AWAKE IN BABYLON — Part 1 of 6

The Blue Pill

*You didn't choose distraction. Distraction was chosen for you.
And the system that chose it has been running longer than most people realise.*

This is Part 1 of Awake in Babylon, a six-part series on how to live faithfully in a world engineered to keep you asleep. The full series is available at chrisannechin.substack.com.

ON Tuesday evening not long ago, Anthropic – the company behind the AI model Claude – officially launched their most powerful AI model to date, described by the company as “by far the most powerful AI model ever developed”. A genuine step-change in capability. A moment that, by any measure, should have stopped the news cycle.

It didn't.

Most people scrolling their feeds that evening saw something about trade wars. A political update. A celebrity. A clip that made them laugh, then made them feel vaguely empty, then led them to another clip. By the time they put their phone down, they couldn't quite remember what they had been looking for.

The most significant AI launch in history passed on. The world scrolled on.

This is not a coincidence. This is the system working exactly as designed.

The Matrix Was a Documentary

In 1999, the Wachowskis released a film called *The Matrix*. In it, a man named Neo discovers that the world he inhabits every day is a simulation — an elaborate construct designed to harvest human energy while keeping its inhabitants pacified, entertained and unaware. At the film's pivotal moment, Neo is offered a choice: take the blue pill and remain in comfortable illusion, or take the red pill and see reality as it

truly is. He takes the red pill — and nothing is ever the same.

It was science fiction. It was also a remarkably accurate description of where we were headed.

Most people who use the Matrix reference treat it as metaphor. I want to treat it as diagnosis.

Because here is what is actually happening.

*The goal was to
consume as much
of your time and
conscious attention
as possible.*

Attention is the most valuable resource on earth. Not oil. Not data. Not even money – because money follows attention. Every major platform you use has been engineered, at extraordinary cost and with extraordinary

sophistication, to capture your attention, hold it as long as possible, and convert it into revenue.

This is not speculation. It is the business model, stated plainly in the investor documents of every major social media company in existence.

You are not the customer. You are the product. Your attention is what is being sold.

The engineers who built these systems have spent two decades studying exactly which psychological levers to pull to keep you engaged. Variable reward schedules – the same mechanism that makes slot machines compulsive. Social validation loops. Outrage triggers. Infinite scroll. The deliberate elimination of any natural stopping point.

Sean Parker, one of Facebook's founding presidents, said it plainly after he left: they were deliberately exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology. The goal was to consume as much of your time and conscious attention as possible. While he was there, he helped build it.

This Is Babylon 2.0

The Tower of Babel account in Genesis 11 describes something that should sound familiar. The most capable people of their generation, pooling their intelligence and resources toward a single ambitious destination. The most sophisticated project in the known world, promising connection, progress and human greatness.

Daniel did not win by mastering Babylon's systems. He won by having a centre that Babylon could not touch.

It did not end well. Not because the ambition was unintelligent. Because the ambition had no ceiling and no accountability.

The attention economy is built by people doing exactly the same thing. The most sophisticated engineering, the most comprehensive understanding of human psychology — pooled, coordinated, and directed toward a single goal: capture the human mind and monetise it.

Babylon did not announce itself as a prison. It announced itself as civilisation. The most advanced city in the known world. It offered Daniel education, status, integration into the most sophisticated system of its age. The offer was generous. The cost was invisible. Which is precisely what made it dangerous.

Your phone offers you connection, information, entertainment, belonging, identity. The offer is generous. The cost

is invisible. Which is precisely what makes it dangerous.

The Irony the Church Needs to Hear

There is a painful irony worth naming here. Many Christians have spent enormous energy trying to “beat the algorithm” — posting at the right time, using the right hashtags, gaming the platform’s recommendation engine to get Christian content past the filters. The instinct is understandable.

But consider what this approach actually concedes. It accepts the algorithm’s terms completely. It measures success by the system’s metrics — reach, engagement, virality. It treats the platform as a neutral distribution channel that just needs to be navigated cleverly.

It is the digital equivalent of trying to win Babylon’s competitions while quietly importing your own food. Possible, but limited. And it misses the deeper question entirely.

Daniel did not win by mastering Babylon’s systems. He won because he had a centre — a daily practice of prayer, a community of accountability, and an identity rooted in God rather than empire — that Babylon could not reach, buy, or threaten out of him.

That is the model. And it begins not with better content strategy, but with understanding what the system is actually doing to you — and deciding, with eyes open, what you will and will not allow it to form in you.

The Only Question That Matters

The distraction economy has one primary product: a version of you that is perpetually busy, perpetually stimulated, and perpetually too distracted to ask the questions that would actually change anything.

What am I for? What is my life building toward? What would I do with my attention if I chose it deliberately?

Socrates said the unexamined life is not worth living. The attention economy has made a business model out of preventing examination.

*What am I for?
What is my life
building toward?
What would I do
with my attention
if I chose it
deliberately?*

The blue pill keeps you comfortable. It keeps you distracted. It keeps you scrolling past the most important developments of your generation — like the emergence of technologies their own creators describe as potentially the most transformative and dangerous in human history — while you watch something that makes you feel just engaged enough not to notice what you are missing.

The question is not whether you are in Babylon. You are. We all are.

The question is whether you are awake inside it. ■

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Editor’s Note: On April 7, 2026, Anthropic officially announced Claude Mythos Preview, a new AI model deemed so powerful and effective at finding and exploiting software vulnerabilities that the company is restricting its release due to severe cybersecurity risks.

In Part 2: *The Loneliness Machine* — The loneliness epidemic is the most under-discussed crisis of our generation. Governments have declared it a public health emergency. And the industry that caused it is selling you the cure.

Chrisanne Chin

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Joint statement on widening conflict in the Middle East raises deep concerns for humanitarian and social impact

THE World Council of Churches, Middle East Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Methodist Council, Mennonite World Conference, Christian Conference of Asia, and ACT Alliance joined in expressing their deep concern regarding the humanitarian and social impacts of the widening conflict in the Middle East, and the threat it poses to the peace and security of the region and the world.

“Having endured many years of complex political, economic and social challenges, the people of Iran—numbering more than 92 million—now face the immediate threats of the current conflict, and a very uncertain future,” reads the statement. “The humanitarian risks and suffering will inevitably escalate the longer this conflict continues.”

It must be emphasized that the joint Israeli and US attacks are clearly illegal under international law.

The statement also expresses grave concern over reports indicating serious violations of international humanitarian law during the ongoing military operations.

“We insist that as a matter of moral and legal obligation all conflict participants must protect civilians from harm, and refrain from targeting civilian areas

and infrastructure,” reads the statement. “Moreover, we fear that the conflict may result in a new period of prolonged violence and instability in the wider region.”

The statement further notes that the conflict is now impacting the lives and livelihoods of people, communities, and societies in the whole region. “Along with the rest of society in Iran and the wider region, churches and Christian communities face the dangers this war poses for their future,” reads the statement. “It must be emphasized that the joint Israeli and US attacks are clearly illegal under international law.”

The statement urges that Israel and the US must not be permitted to once again create a desolation and call it peace. “They must take responsibility for the consequences of their actions, including the consequences for the future of the people of Iran whose freedom they claim to promote,” reads the statement.

Emphasizing that as Christians we do not recognize any divine licence to kill, destroy, displace or occupy, the statement affirms that “war is in-

compatible with God’s very nature and will for humanity, and against our fundamental Christian principles.”

The statement laments the absence of morality and legality, the prevailing arrogance and ideologies of power, and the replacement of conscience with political utility.

...war is incompatible with God’s very nature and will for humanity, and against our fundamental Christian principles.

“We proclaim the God-given human dignity and rights of all people, equally and without discrimination,” reads the statement. “We reject the brutal logic of war and domination. We seek the gift of peace.” ■

MARCH 9, 2026



* <https://oikoumene.org/news/joint-statement-on-widening-conflict-in-the-middle-east-raises-deep-concerns-for-humanitarian-and-social-impact>

WCC Easter Message 2026: “one big source of hope in these troubled times”

MAR 26: THE World Council of Churches Easter message reflects on how we can celebrate Easter in a time in which shouts of joy are so often drowned out by cries of despair.

“So many victims of war, economic injustice, sexual violence, political oppression, climate disasters, and religious persecution are to be mourned,” the message notes. “Can we authentically celebrate Easter without addressing these sufferings?”

The text reflects that Easter is the cornerstone of our faith as Christians.

“It is the one big source of hope in these troubled times,” the message reads. “Jesus tremendously inspired the people of his time when he spoke words of love and words of hope, when he touched people with his healing hands, when he led

together people from very different backgrounds into one loving community.”

The message emphasizes that Easter does not promote spiritual pacification in the face of suffering that is otherwise unbearable.

“May we celebrate this Easter as a time of reassurance that in all the abysses we presently experience in the world, there is more to come,” reads the message. “This outlook continues to unite us in our global church community. It connects us with all people on this earth, who are together with us created in God’s image.” ■

* <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-easter-message-2026-one-big-source-of-hope-in-these-troubled-times>

Digital justice symposium closes with joint commitment to action

APR 15: THE symposium “Our Common Future: Advocating for Digital Rights and AI Accountability” drew to a close with a shared commitment to advocacy, education, and networking among faith-based, ecumenical organizations and civil society actors.

The symposium brought together 25 invited participants representing key ecumenical networks and partners over two days in Berlin, Germany, organized by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC), Evangelische Mission Weltweit – Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany, and Brot für die Welt.

In focus as participants gathered for closing deliberations at the historic Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche on Tuesday: the task of consolidating partnerships and collaboration, and identifying individual as well as institutional strengths and opportunities for advocacy towards digital justice and AI accountability.

‘Speaking out in the strongest possible terms’

The development of advocacy commitments came following updates on technological developments and assessment of the governance landscape on the first day.



In his presentation, **William Jones**, an associate of the Futures Program at the Future of Life Institute (FLI), underscored that the development of digital technologies should actually benefit all of humanity, and pointed to the lack of accountability in a few major tech companies currently pushing the development of AI solutions without broad consultation with the general public.

“When the CEO of a big tech company says that a certain development will happen and is in fact inevitable, what they are really saying is that for

them, that particular development is expected to be profitable,” he said.

“My work at FLI focuses on trying to support religious leaders to speak into these issues because we feel that in Silicon Valley there’s a real absence of moral wisdom,” Jones added.

Looking at the group gathered in Berlin, he continued: “One of the things that’s really great about coming into work with institutions like the WCC and WACC and these other groups that are present here is that they do have that broader representation.”

“You’re not just hearing a kind of blind hype, but instead people who are thinking about the moral questions, about the real serious ethical problems and the deeper spiritual questions as well. Do we want to create AI systems that are more intelligent and autonomous than humans? Most people would say no. That voice needs to be heard and those points need to be made in the strongest possible terms by religious leaders,” Jones said.

Mobilizing engagement around core questions

A strength of the group gathered in Berlin was the diversity of networks and partners present, and the opportunities identified for advocacy engagement for digital justice and AI accountability in both short and long-term.

A key focus of discussions revolved around questions of lack of transparency and accountability in the current stage of global AI development, and more particularly, the question of what was dubbed at the meeting “the right to know”.

As phrased during the closing day, participants committed to begin to raise a core set of fundamental questions – in whatever places or spaces they are each currently at – in order to help orient conversations about AI and digital justice as it’s being experienced and developed around the globe: ‘Who benefits?’ ‘Who knows?’ and ‘Who controls?’

As **Serena Tiburtini**, World Student Christian Federation-Europe’s regional secretary and global programme coordinator for youth, security, and peacebuilding, reflected: “Digital justice is much more complex than the term can just suggest, because it’s not just about using AI responsibly as it is. It is also about shaping the structures that will make it just and responsible for all.”

Do we want to create AI systems that are more intelligent and autonomous than humans? Most people would say no. That voice needs to be heard...

Advocacy, education and networking

In the closing session, conversations zeroed in on three action areas for digital justice and AI accountability: advocacy in international and national spaces; building critical thinking through existing and new educational resources and methodologies; and ensuring continued cross-sectoral networking.

Participants observed the importance of lifting up voices often unheard,

of standing up as representatives of faith communities to provide a moral guiding voice, but also of moving into concrete advocacy and action before the issues at hand are beyond control.

Annika Lindé of ACT Church of Sweden underlined the opportunity to draw on knowledge and experiences gathered through other civil society engagement in similar or adjacent fields such as climate justice advocacy, or gender justice methodologies.

At the same time, observed **Emy Osorio Matorel** – an advisor for digital analysis and strategy at CAMECO – it is also important to value more deeply the small acts taken already by agencies and communities around the globe.

“We often want to go to the United Nations and in one step try to change the world, but even in the absence of that, there is so much that we can do in our spaces and communities,” she noted.

WCC moderator **Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm** observed in closing that we are challenged to act with urgency.

“The speediness of these developments,” Bedford-Strohm reflected, “are such that we cannot simply think we will take another two years to reflect and then come up with something. I believe we all agree this is so important and so urgent, that we need to be much, much faster, and I do hope we can be successful in this.” ■

* <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/digital-justice-symposium-closes-with-joint-commitment-to-action>

Digital ministry must go beyond content creation to shape identity, values and faith formation, say young Asian communicators at AEYA-2026

CHIANG MAI, THAILAND: DURING a panel discussion at the Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly (AEYA), young Asian communicators reflected on the impact of social media on youth.

Responding to the question “Does Technology Make Us Less Human? Impact of Social Media on Youth in Asia”, the panellists offered a compelling exploration of social media’s impact on youth in Asia.

Moderated by **Qarlene Rishiqa Dharminder** from the Asia Collaborative

Mission Societies, Malaysia, the session featured three young speakers from Myanmar, the Philippines, and Australia, who shared their perspectives.

Sa Samuel from the Church of the Province of Myanmar (Anglican) spoke about the situation in Myanmar, where access to free internet is restricted. In

such a context, people must go to great lengths to access social media platforms and even basic search engines, while remaining constantly aware of the risks tied to their digital footprint.

Mr Samuel emphasised that everyone shares responsibility in the digital space, whether as content creators or

consumers. He said that social media should not be used solely for worldly engagement, but also as a platform to serve God. Urging participants to shine their “light both offline and online”, he stressed that one’s digital presence should reflect deeper spiritual values.

Jhoanna Kyle Juan Ragasa from the United Methodist Church in the Philippines reflected on the growing role of technology in everyday life, noting that while it has become inseparable from human experience, the deeper question lies in how it is used to live out God’s commandments.

Describing social media as more than just a tool, Ms Ragasa said it functions as a “formation system” that shapes identity, values, beliefs and faith. Algorithms influence what people see, feel and consider important, raising the question of whether individuals are shaping these systems or being shaped by them.

“If algorithms shape people, then the Church is called to penetrate the people’s algorithm—not for popularity, but for presence, truth and transformation.” This involves showing up in digital spaces with authenticity, creating content that reflects truth, justice and grace, interrupting cycles of hate and misinformation, and offering narratives that restore human dignity, said Ms Ragasa.

Ms Ragasa further added that we are not just called to go viral; we are



called to be faithful. The Church is not called to compete with technology, but to discern and redeem it. She also stressed that digital ministry goes beyond content creation. It is about formation, discipleship and witness, calling on believers to use technology to share stories, proclaim the Good News and affirm what it means to be truly human.

David Abel Toogood from the Uniting Church of Australia shared personal reflections on his use of social media, highlighting the intentionality he now brings to his digital life.

Mr Toogood invited participants to consider what it means to bring one’s whole self into both online and offline spaces, and to carry the “yoke of Christ” in a digital age.

Addressing the role of technology design, Mr Toogood noted that while current algorithms are often created to hold users’ attention for as long as

possible, they can also be shaped by more ethical intentions, where technology works with users to help achieve their goals rather than hinder them. He called on young and ethically minded technology experts and entrepreneurs to continue imagining a different and better digital world.

A facilitator who assists churches in creating leadership pathways for youth and young adults, Mr Toogood urged participants to reflect and examine their engagement with technology. He posed a series of questions, ultimately challenging AEYA participants to consider whether their digital habits align with their values and their relationship with God. He also highlighted the words of Jesus, “*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light,*” as a guiding principle for navigating the complexities of the digital world. ■



* <https://cca.org.hk/news/digital-ministry-must-go-beyond-content-creation-shape-identity-values-and-faith-formation-say>
 ** The **5th Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly (AEYA)** was organised by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) from 17–21 April 2026 at the Sirindhorn Learning Resource Center, Payap University, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, under the theme “*Break Every Yoke*” (Isaiah 58:6). More than 200 young people from churches, national councils, and youth organisations across Asia took part in the five-day gathering, which called participants to reflect on and respond to the many challenges facing youth in Asia today. Previous youth assemblies were held in the Philippines (1964), India (1984), Indonesia (2018), and India (2023).



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