

Press Release



**UNITED
EVANGELICAL
MISSION**

Communion
of Churches
in three Continents

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30 Years of UEM: “Sharing Mission”

Sharing Mission, Embracing Diversity.

(Wuppertal/Pematangsiantar/Dar es Salaam, June 30, 2026) In June 1996, the first General Assembly of the international United Evangelical Mission (UEM) took place at the Zionskirche (Zion Church) on the premises of the von Bodelschwingh Bethel Foundations in Germany. The delegates of the then 33 founding members adopted a constitution that, for the first time, granted the African and Asian partner churches full and equal membership. In addition, they elected Soritua Nababan, an Indonesian theologian from the Global South, as the first Moderator of the new mission.

To this day, the UEM remains a unique international communion comprising 38 African, Asian, and German churches, as well as the von Bodelschwingh Bethel Foundations. This summer, the members are celebrating the founding anniversary with a variety of events and activities centred on the theme of sharing.

Asia Region Celebrates with 1,600 Guests and a Major Fundraising Success

The Asian member churches kicked off the celebrations: On June 20, at the invitation of the Simalungun Church (GKPS), they hosted an anniversary celebration with approximately 1,600 guests at the Smesco Convention Center in Jakarta. The celebration featured a festive concert and musical performances by the GKPS and other churches from Indonesia. It was held under the theme “Faith Beyond Fear” and highlighted the hope and shared faith of the churches. The ceremony was also attended by Prof. Dr. Otto Hasibuan, Indonesia’s Deputy Coordinating Minister for Law, Human Rights, Migration, and Corrections. In his welcoming speech, he thanked UEM for having made an important contribution to the development of the church and society in Indonesia for 30 years—and indeed for many decades beyond that—through a wide range of social, humanitarian, and environmental programs.

Even prior to the event, under the leadership of Ephorus Robinson Butarbutar, UEM’s Asian Vice-Moderator and former head of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), donations totalling approximately 26,000 euros had been collected for UEM. A spontaneous fundraising drive during the ceremony added another 34,000 euros.

United Evangelical Mission (UEM)

Dr. Martina Pauly · Spokesperson
Rudolfstr. 137 · 42285 Wuppertal · Germany
Fon +49 (0)202 89004-135 · Fax +49 (0)202 89004-179
Pauly-m@ve mission.org · www.ve mission.org

Africa Region: 1-Euro Campaign and Laying of the Cornerstone of the New Regional Office

The Africa Region is also combining the celebrations with a large-scale fundraising campaign. In July, a “1-Euro Donation Campaign” for the UEM will be held in all congregations of the African member churches. Given the rapidly growing congregations in the region, this fundraising campaign promises to be particularly successful. At the leadership level, the Northwest Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania will host an anniversary celebration for all African member churches on August 9 in Bukoba, following a five-day partnership workshop. On August 16, the cornerstone will also be laid for the new UEM regional office, “New Home for Africa,” in the Kigamboni district of the Tanzanian metropolis of Dar es Salaam.

Anniversary Brochure Showcases UEM from Eight Viewpoints

UEM’s vibrant understanding of mission is richly illustrated in an English-language anniversary brochure. Under the heading “Sharing Mission,” the missionary work is examined from eight viewpoints. Topics covered include the sharing of financial resources and decision-making authority, mutual support in times of crisis, collaborative learning, and dealing with the postcolonial legacy. The brochure features contributions from past and present companions, staff members, and decision-makers from Africa, Asia, and Germany. A retrospective on 30 years of UEM also traces the milestones and defining events of the international mission organization.

“30 years of UEM’s internationalization are more than just an anniversary—they are a sign of God’s work in our communion. The celebrations in Asia, Africa, and Germany, as well as the publication “Sharing Mission”, show how people are shaping the church together across cultures, nations, and the burden of colonial history. That is exactly what it means to be a Christian today,” summarizes Dr Andar Parlingdungan, General Secretary of UEM.

The brochure “Sharing Mission – UEM 1996–2026 from 8 Viewpoints” [is available for download here](#).

About „UEM“

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Germany, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal communion of 39 members. The UEM consistently pursues a holistic understanding of mission. This includes improving the living conditions of suffering and disadvantaged people while respecting their personal dignity and taking their cultural context into account.