

## **International voices for justice: Three women win essay competition on discrimination and violence in church and diaconia**

Award ceremony at the UEM General Assembly in Dar es Salaam

Dar es Salaam/Wuppertal, September 16, 2025 – A total of 32 authors from Africa, Asia, and Germany took part in the international essay competition organized by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) on the topic of violence and discrimination in the church and in diaconia. Among the participants were 17 men and 15 women.

The award ceremony took place on September 15 as part of the study day of the UEM General Assembly, which is meeting in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) until September 19, 2025, under the motto “The beam in my eye – discrimination in church and diaconia.” The winners presented their texts there in person.

The jury, consisting of Prof. Dr. Simone Sinn (University of Münster), Dr. Ipyana Mwamugobole (Evangelical Mission Worldwide), and Dr. Dennis Solon (Institute for Diaconal Science and Diaconal Management), awarded three works for their particular depth of content, relevance, and originality:

- 1st prize (1,000 euros): Nenny Ika Putri Simarmata from the Indonesian church Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) with her essay “The Church as a Lighthouse of Inclusivity: Facing Gender Discrimination”
- 2nd prize (600 euros): Françoise Niyonsaba from the Eglise Presbytérienne au Ruanda (EPR) with her essay “Neither Jew nor Gentile: Accessibility for Persons with Disability in Church Mission – The Case of the Church in Rwanda”
- 3rd prize (400 euros): Julia Karimi from the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland with her essay “Shattered Trust: The Church's Role in Addressing Anti-Black Racism and a Call for Institutional Transformation”

### **Essay collection published**

At the same time, the accompanying essay collection was officially presented. Of the submissions, 21 essays were edited by Pastor Félicité Ngnintedem and Dr. Dennis Solon and published by BPK Gunung Mulia (Jakarta, Indonesia) under the title “Breaking the Silence – overcoming discrimination and violence on the path towards a just and inclusive community.”

"Silence feeds discrimination and violence, leads to social division, and distorts the image of the church. Breaking this silence means critically questioning systems, structures, traditions, and even small everyday actions that perpetuate discrimination and violence. With this collection of essays, young people are raising their voices: they are breaking the silence that traps hundreds of thousands in the discriminatory machinery of the church and society. At the same time, they call on us, the community of churches, to take a firm stand against all forms of discrimination and violence and to make the church a safe haven of joy. This book is a first step. Others will follow. Because the fight against discrimination continues, and we will win it.

Or, as they say at the start of a race: "On your marks, get set, go!" says Pastor Félicité Ngnintedem.

#### **About „UEM“**

*The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Germany, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal communion of 39 members, including 32 Protestant churches in Africa and Asia as well as six Protestant churches and the v. Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel in Germany. 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.*