

Press Release

United Evangelical Mission mourns the death of Pastor Dr Jochen Motte

Committed advocate for justice, peace, and human rights has passed away

(Wuppertal, January 14, 2026) – On January 8, 2026, Pastor Dr Jochen Motte passed away at the age of 63. The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) bids farewell to a long-standing colleague, theological companion, and influential figure in its international ecumenical work.

Dr Jochen Motte was born on September 6, 1962, in Neunkirchen (Saar). He studied Protestant theology in Wuppertal, Tübingen, and Bern and was ordained as a pastor of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland in 1990. In 1992, he received his doctorate from the Barmen School of Theology Wuppertal with a thesis on the theology of Walther Zimmerli.

In the same year, Dr Motte joined UEM as assistant to the director, Pastor Peter Sandner. In this function, he played a key role in the internationalization process of UEM. In 1993, he was appointed to UEM's board of directors and took on responsibility for the area of justice, peace, and integrity of creation. From 2006 to 2008 and from 2011 to 2024, he was deputy general secretary of UEM.

His service was guided by the conviction that Christian faith is inseparably linked to the commitment to human dignity, justice, and peace. Dr Motte brought this attitude to the church and society in numerous international and ecumenical projects, conferences, and publications. He became widely known in many congregations for his annual human rights campaign.

Beyond UEM, Dr Motte had been involved since 1994 in the coordination group of the Human Rights Forum, a network of over 50 German non-governmental organizations. Since 2005, he had also been a member of the German Federal Government's Advisory Council on Crisis Prevention and Peace Promotion, where he brought church perspectives into political discourse.

On November 4, 2025, Pastor Dr Jochen Motte retired from the service at UEM and was relieved of his duties as a pastor of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland.

"Jochen Motte's passionate commitment to justice, peace, and integrity of creation was a defining expression of his Christian faith. In our long journey together, I—and we as UEM—have learned a great deal from his clarity, his persuasiveness, and his dedication. His persistent commitment to human rights, even beyond church boundaries, has represented the UEM credibly both nationally and internationally. We lose him as a friend and colleague. He remains a lasting example of how the church must stand with people who are marginalized and in need," said Pastor Dr Andar Parlindungan, General Secretary of UEM.

The United Evangelical Mission looks back with gratitude on the life and work of Pastor Dr Jochen Motte. His commitment to justice, peace, and integrity of creation remains our mission and obligation. Our special sympathy goes out to his family. In Christian hope, UEM trusts that he is now at peace with God.

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 Foundations 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.