

# MISSION ECHO

UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION AFRICA REGION

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UNITED  
EVANGELICAL  
MISSION



## UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear esteemed readers,  
Shalom!

We glorify the LORD Almighty and thank Him for His grace and mercies upon us.

The **UEM Africa Region** sends its greetings to all of you and thanks you for taking your precious time to read this **Mission Echo** magazine, covering the period from July to December 2025.

You will get information on the 11<sup>st</sup> **UEM General Assembly** that was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, East Coastal Diocese, from 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

This magazine also provides information on African churches that are members of **UEM**, some joint programs implemented, and other events aligning with the vision of the **United Evangelical Mission**.

Other points include *The understanding of the theology of Land in the context of human dignity in Africa; The Power of Partnership; The experience of The Presbyterian Church of Rwanda in Implementing Community-based inclusive development for persons with disabilities; A reflection on the pastoral ordination of women in the CBCA; The New Head of the UEM Division in Africa; Training aiming at transformation;* and other special events.

I encourage you to read the whole magazine for your edification and growth. For all ideas, feedback, requests and contributions, please contact us at: **africaregional@vemission.org** or **Musongya-c@vemission.org**

Thank you for networking with us. Kindly continue reading the Mission Echo magazine. It is our joy to serve, learn and grow together.

We wish you peaceful and joyful Christmas season and prosperous New Year 2026.

Yours,  
Christine Musongya.



Region Manager:  
**Rev. Dr Ernest Kadiva**

Editor:  
**Christine K. Musongya**

Consulting Designer  
**Michée Wabomundu**

United Evangelical Mission  
Africa Region  
P.O.Box 75240  
Fax: 00255 22 2125967





## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION

By UEM Team

**T**he United Evangelical Mission (UEM) held its 11<sup>st</sup> General Assembly from September 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> 2025, at Giraffe Hotel in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. The event brought together 69 representatives of the 39 members from Africa, Asia, and Germany and was an opportunity for them to discuss, pray and celebrate. The host church was the East Coast Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT-ECD). The theme of the assembly was a verse from Matthew 7:3: **“The beam in our eye: Discrimination in the Church and Diaconia.”**

The UEM GA was preceded by the Pre-Assemblies of Women and Youth as well as by the Africa, Asia and Germany Regional Assemblies. Besides, for the first time also, a Pre-Assembly of men took place and discussed issues of discrimination and how they are linked to our conception of masculinity.

During the UEM General Assembly, the following topics were presented and discussed:

1. Study day on discrimination in the church and diaconal sphere;
2. Mutual recognition of ordination, Reports from the respective regions;
3. The award ceremonies for the international essay competition and the award for innovative partnership forms;
4. Financial issues;
5. Recommendations of the pre-consultations of women, young adults, men, presented and discussed.

The 11<sup>st</sup> UEM General Assembly made the following key decisions and resolutions:

### **A comprehensive protection package against sexualized violence:**

- ◊ Churches and diaconal institutions should be safe places that offer protection and healing;
- ◊ The application of binding protection guidelines;
- ◊ The establishment of confidential reporting systems;
- ◊ Comprehensive support for victims of sexual



violence;

- ◇ The Council was tasked with appointing independent ombudspersons in all three UEM regions;
- ◇ Necessity to develop a protection concept for children, young people, and vulnerable adults that also applies to international encounters;
- ◇ Specific appointment of women to leadership positions so that leadership in the church and in diaconia can reflect the diversity of God's people;
- ◇ Consistent implementation of an intersectional approach to effectively overcome multiple disadvantages. Structural changes, pastoral care, advocacy, solidarity, and practical support should contribute to reducing multi-layered discrimination;
- ◇ Resuming measures to combat HIV/AIDS;
- ◇ Development of programmes that prevent psychological stress in children and young people caused by digital technologies.

### **Recognition of ordination and more participation for young adults**

- ◇ The delegates decided on the mutual recognition of ordination within the UEM communion as soon as possible to facilitate the exchange of theologians;
- ◇ An amendment to the constitution also makes it possible to convert the legal status of **UEM** as an association under old law to the contemporary legal form of a registered association;
- ◇ The rotation of the moderator's position taking into account the Africa, Asia, and Germany regions is now stipulated in the constitution;
- ◇ The Council will be expanded to include two more seats for young adults. In future, they will have three votes instead of just one for all regions.

### **Partnerships rethinking and sharing responsibility**

- ◇ Church partnerships are to be certified in



future according to the criteria decided upon at the International Partnership Conference in 2023;

- ◊ New forms of cooperation are to be developed. The next Partnership Award will be presented on the theme of "Peace and Justice";
- ◊ The delegates reaffirmed the joint financial responsibility of all three regions in view of the dwindling resources of German churches. For example, measures were decided upon for fundraising, investments, third-party funding acquisition, cost savings, and contributions. A new goal-oriented process structure will also help to align the work of the UEM more clearly with goals and financial possibilities in the future.

Remember, the General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of **UEM** and meets every three years, consecutively in the three **UEM**

regions. It provides a central opportunity for representatives of the international members to come together in one place to discuss, pray, and celebrate together.

The **UEM** general Assembly closed with renewed unity and purpose: "We thank God that our 11<sup>st</sup> General Assembly in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, was peaceful and constructive. The active participation of all 39 members strengthens our common witness for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. With the words from Philippians 4:13, we go forward with hope and confidence into the future: God is the strength of **UEM** and its members," said Rev. Dr. Andar Parlindungan, General Secretary of **UEM**.

The next **UEM** General Assembly will take place in 2028 at the invitation of the member churches GKJW and GKJTU on the Indonesian island of Java.

# LAND AS THE MISSIONAL AND CONTESTATION SPACE IN AFRICA: MISSION FROM THE MARGIN

By Rev Prof Dr Leepo Modise

## INTRODUCTION

Land and mission are two sides of the same coin. Missional activities require land to take place. The Western missionaries acquired land to build schools, hospitals, church buildings and universities. The native chiefs had plenty of land to contribute to the mission of God; ironically, the Western missionaries had an economic agenda. The land and mission cannot be separated from each other. The mission from the margin, the centrifugal mission that needs to start from the centre and then move to the circumference, is no longer the case; the mission now begins from the circumference and moves to the centre, meaning it originates from the margin. The land is very central to the mission from the margin. Land is the point of departure for defining who the people from the margins are in relation to land.

## THE LAND ISSUE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

In South Africa and Africa in general, the question of land is inseparable from the African's history of dispossession, inequality and socio-economic injustice. The native Land Act of 1913 in South Africa, now 112 years in retrospect, institutionalised racialised land ownership by restricting Black South Africans to merely 13% of the land. This legalised dispossession not only entrenched poverty, but also produced theological, cultural and economic disruptions that continue to reverberate today (Modise and Mtshiselwa, 2013).

As highlighted by Modise and Mtshiselwa (2013), the themes of socio-economic injustice and land remain central in South African Scholarship. Their work demonstrates both the ambivalent and complex role played by missionaries. On the one hand, certain missionaries actively assisted African people and church leaders in

acquiring land, sometimes by navigating the bureaucratic systems of colonial and Bantu Administrations, purchasing land, or holding land in trust on behalf of African communities. On the other hand, missionaries also encouraged the migration of young black men from their ancestral lands to work in the gold and diamond mines, inadvertently reinforcing systems of labour exploitation and rural dispossession. This act created poverty for many South African blacks who were living from the products of the land. Makula (2005), in his book *A Quest for Ubulungisa Justice in the Distribution of Land in South Africa*, attests to such a contribution. He contends that in the process of land dispossession, black Africans lost their source of income and food security (Makula 2005:29). The missionary enterprise, therefore, became entangled in the colonial project: it offered spiritual and educational opportunities while simultaneously participating, directly or indirectly, in structures that fractured African families, displaced communities, and reorganised African relationships to land. Understanding this ambivalence is crucial for doing mission from the margins today, where land remains a theological, economic, and spiritual symbol of dignity, agency and restoration. The Naboth land story in the Old Testament remains a significant example for African people about the vital link between land and the ancestors. The theology of disrespect for the ancestors is closely tied to the theology of land dispossession. Naboth resiliently and persistently refuses to give away the land because the land belongs to his father. In African philosophy and other marginalised communities, anything that belongs to the late father or ancestors is not for sale or to be given away; the one who inherits it would rather die for it. Moreover, land is considered sacred because "We are land and land is us." The Aboriginal

Australians, as described by Burge (2010), convince us that the Land is sacred, filled with ancestral dreaming that determines kinship, marks holy sites, and informs ceremonies. All species of life, including humans, are bound to the Land. Land does not belong to people; people belong to Land. In the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), addressing the land issue is crucial to achieving the five pillars of UEM in the global South.

### **MISSION FROM THE MARGIN AND LAND**

Mission from the margins is a theological concept that reconceptualised mission work to centre on and be led by marginalised communities, challenging traditional models of mission from the centre. It suggests that those on the margins, such as the poor, women, racial or religious minorities, are not just recipients of mission but are its vital agents. This approach seeks to dismantle oppressive structures, affirm the agency and hope of marginalised people, and find God's presence in their structures and experiences.

Most of the marginalised are the victims of land dispossession, oppression, dehumanisation and exploitation. As equally important as the mission from the centre land was to pursue mission projects, including constructing church buildings, schools, hospitals, clinics, universities, and addressing food security. In the reverse process to redress the colonial mindset within the mission, land is of paramount importance. Doing a mission in a landless context is equivalent to doing a mission in a vacuum; that mission will produce blind faith instead of Active faith, which sees the Creator God as the God of providence who supplies land and its resources to sustain the people of God. Doing a mission in the landless context is equivalent to remembering our Lord Jesus in the landless situation.

The Eucharistic elements that strengthen the

mission's product, which is the church, are the products of the land. Eucharistic elements, namely bread and wine, as components of food production and symbols of sharing the body of Christ, are particularly relevant in the context of economic and ecological inequality and injustice in South Africa, Africa in general and marginalised Christians elsewhere, where land is also required to produce these elements. These elements need not be imported, for the image of a 'White Jesus' was itself introduced from elsewhere. Instead, the bread and wine produced from African soil can meaningfully symbolise Jesus, who himself lived as a marginalised person in occupied Palestine under the Roman Empire. The land thus becomes essential to sustaining this remembrance of our Lord Jesus amongst us. The sharing of the product of the land during Holy communion need to be a symbol of the sharing of the profit. The farmer and the farm worker produce the elements for Eucharist; they share the product of their labour (Bread and wine) as exploiters and the exploited in the church, while they cannot share the profit of the land as the people who have worked the Land. These are the signs of how the bread and wine, as the products of the Land, are shared as the body of Christ in the world of injustice, inequality and exploitation. Avila (2012) confirms that the bread and the wine are not objectified in the Eucharist as part of a material, reified cosmos, but as a product of a properly social phenomenon of sharing a meal, of taking together. Nor are the bread and wine to be "swallowed as is"; they are to be examined and judged (Critically, as in a crisis) before being eaten to the right social relationships of production that precede and shape the fruit of human labour. It will be of paramount importance to examine the impact of the Eucharist on the participants around the table of the Lord's Supper. How do these events impact the sharing of Land and preserving the Land from desertification, food, and wealth

amongst the rich and the poor, farmers and farm workers, as well as exploiters and the exploited? These challenges related to landless and mission areas should be addressed through the five pillars of UEM.

- **Advocacy:** Defending human rights, supporting peace initiatives, promoting good governance, and protecting the environment.
- **Diaconia:** Bearing witness to the mandate of loving one's neighbour through promoting qualification programs, improving living conditions, ensuring medical care, and supporting disaster relief.
- **Development:** Focusing on sustainable development projects within communities.
- **Evangelism:** Proclaiming the Christian message of God's love and salvation, sharing the Word of God, developing evangelistic programs, and encouraging interfaith dialogue.
- **Partnership:** Living out an international communion based on equality, facilitating mutual visits and exchanges of personnel, and strengthening multilateral relationships.

The land serves as a breeding ground for the mission. In the context where land is a source of conflict, UEM need to be seen as providing theological and active participation through pillar one, Advocacy. The marginalised ought to champion this advocacy, as they are the people who have experienced marginalisation. The promotion of living conditions under Diaconia to ensure access to medical care and support for disaster relief is crucial for building hospitals and clinics, as well as facilitating the free

movement of mobile clinics. Under development, sustainable development requires space for agricultural programs, industries, schools, and projects. Evangelism and partnership require land and mission as the interconnected space to promote Christian fellowship, celebrating the Eucharist together as the united body of Christ in the free space where there is land to do so.

## CONCLUSION

The history of Western missionary engagement on the African soil reveals how the acquisition and control of land often intertwined genuine evangelistic intentions with colonial economic interest, leading to the dispossession and marginalisation of indigenous communities. Yet, from these margins emerged resilient expressions of African and other marginalised people elsewhere in Christianity that reclaimed land as a sacred gift, a site of identity, and a platform for mission shaped by local agency. Understanding land as a missional and contested space that invites the church, in particular, UEM in Africa and Asia today, to confront historical injustices, promote equitable stewardship, and affirm mission as a partnership rooted in dignity and justice. Mission from the margin, therefore, challenges contemporary Christian communities to reimagine land not as a commodity to be possessed, but as a shared space for liberation, healing, and the flourishing of the people God loves.

# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP: REFLECTION ON ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10

By Dean Botumelo Moilho

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:  
If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” — Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*  
*Two are better than one*



Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 is a rich passage about the immeasurable value of a friend, just one friend. Someone who is there to lift you up when you fall and to help you when attacks are coming against you. This passage is a powerful message showing our need for friendship, for good friends who love us, who are for us, who rejoice with us, and who weep with us, who are there to pick us up when we fail in any way, when we fall, and when we are prey to temptation and sin. They are there to lift us up to be a warming presence for us.

In partnership, we see people who are experiencing different challenges in this world, God makes us to be kind to each other and stand with each other.

Partnership is one of the strongest principles God has given to His people. In a world where challenges are complex and responsibilities are heavy, Scripture reminds us that no one is designed to walk alone. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 teaches us that working together multiplies strength, increases effectiveness, and provides

protection in times of weakness.

With regard to this passage, let me share the partnership experience between Lahn and Dill with Northern Circuit in Evangelical Lutheran church in Botswana.

Mutual support we receive through our partnership includes financial support, exchange trips for women and young people, information sharing with clergy professionals, visits from official delegations, staff exchanges (e.g., volunteer exchanges or hiring of clergy professionals in the partner circuit), launching income-generating projects, and Sunday school activities (music workshop). These numerous partnership activities make our circuit unique and exceptional.

As Ecclesiastes reminds us, partnership is not just useful; it is powerful. It strengthens our witness, multiplies our impact, and sustains us through every season. Together, we go further. Together, we stand stronger. Together, we fulfill God's mission.

# AND MALARIA LEFT HER AND SHE BEGAN TO SERVE THEM THE EUCHARIST

By Prof Dr. Eonique K

*A reflection on the pastoral ordination of women in the CBCA, based on Mark 1:29-31*

I am a female theologian and a member of the Baptist Church in Central Africa (CBCA) where the ordination of women as pastors is still a major challenge. No one doubts the momentum of the various strategies used by the Circles of Committed Women Theologians of the CBCA, certain leaders within the same Church, partners such as the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), friends, and sister churches in order to revitalize this struggle. However, given the resistance encountered despite these numerous strategies, I reflected on how Doctors of Theology, particularly biblical scholars within the CBCA, can contribute to this fight by providing Christians with biblical teaching modules that could gradually raise their understanding, as they are often rooted in a culture of simplistic and literal interpretation of the Bible.

Thus, as the first woman Doctor and Professor of Theology in the “New Testament Field” of the CBCA, I initiated a project called “Being Trained at the Feet of Jesus,” which provides church members with a series of teachings (unfortunately, until now only in French) in the form of simple morning Bible devotions on social media. The goal is to develop teaching modules that will encourage the CBCA to make a greater effort in combating a simplistic reading of biblical texts, particularly those concerning women.

In this article, I personally wanted to show, using one of the biblical texts presented in the form of somewhat in-depth meditations and already published on social networks, an example from which Christians can discover for themselves that the desire to exclude women from pastoral acts is the result of the CBCA tradition rather

than a concern for fidelity to the authors of the New Testament.

The text is precisely the account of the healing of Simon’s mother-in-law according to Mark 1:29-31. A series of meditations on this text has already been published to point out to my CBCA readers that one of the key messages of this story is to answer the question of whether women can serve the Eucharist. To this end, in various lessons, I try to explain, among other things:

*1) Some key vocabulary words: For example, the “House” in verse 29*

I would like to point out to my readers that in the Gospel of Mark, there are two ways to say “house” in Greek. The masculine form is “hoikos” (here I am transliterating the Greek word) in Mark 2, 1; 3, 20; 7, 17, 9, 28, and the feminine form is “hoikia” in Mark 1, 29 ; 3, 27 ; 6, 10 ; 7, 24 ; 10, 10.29 ; 13, 34. The masculine form can be translated as “where one inhabits, at home, at one’s own place, inside.” The feminine form, however, emphasizes the idea of “where one lives.” It refers to the house with all its necessary contents that foster life: one’s loved ones or family living under the same roof and one’s possessions. “Into the house of Peter and Andrew”, in 1, 29 can therefore be translated as “in the dwelling or more practically in the family of Peter and Andrew”.

In the same perspective, I point out that the connection in verse 29 between “just leaving the synagogue” and “going into the house” is not a coincidence. I show that Peter’s house, beyond being understood as the dwelling place of Peter’s

family, can here allude to Jesus' "schoolhouse." I inform readers that in the first century, the "schoolhouse" was the true centre of teaching for the Scribes. People usually gathered there on the Sabbath after the synagogue service. Following these explanations, the reader is led to notice that in Mark, when Jesus comes "to the house", practically Peter's house in Capernaum, he is often seen teaching (2, 1-2 ; 3, 20 ; 7, 17, 9, 28). Readers are particularly led to note that in Mark 1:29-31, the house functions as a new place of worship. It is clear that the author emphasizes the shift from the Jewish synagogue to the homes of Christians. It is Peter's house, no longer the synagogue, that becomes the centre of teaching and healing.

## *2) The Literary Context of the Text*

From a literary point of view, I point out that in the Gospel of Mark, there are thirteen accounts of healings, four of which take place in Houses. I would like to draw my readers' attention to two points. First, of the four healings in the house, three involve women: Simon's mother-in-law with a fever (Mark 1,29-31); Jairus's daughter who is near death (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43); and the Syrophenician woman's daughter (Mark 7,24-30). Second, all three healings of these women are related to meals: the verb "diakoneo (to serve) alluding to the service of the meal that Simon's mother-in-law provides after her healing (Mark 1,31); the invitation to give the "daughter of Jairus" the meal after her healing (Mk 5,43) and the allusion to the children's bread which should not be given to dogs as Jesus' response to the Syrophenician woman's request for the healing of her daughter (Mk 7,27).

In a simple way, I point out to my readers that in the context where Mark emphasizes the

transition from the Synagogue to the homes of Christians as a new framework for worship, these meals are not just simple meals: they are indeed the Eucharist.

There is therefore a pedagogical intention behind such a reading of the text presented to my female and male readers: to challenge my Church, the CBCA, that Mark teaches that in the Church opposed to the Jewish Synagogue, the woman is not only healed of all kinds of diseases, even of impurity like the fever from which Peter's mother-in-law suffered, but she also serves the Eucharist.

Through such simple daily meditations, I believe I am contributing to the struggle for the ordination of women to the pastoral ministry. I think it is time for my Church to consider the value of the women who work within it. These women are not committed for their own interests, but for the benefit of the Church, because of their faith and their vocation. Thus, on behalf of women who suffer in their hearts and identities from the exclusion from the priesthood imposed upon them by a tradition that is not justified by biblical texts, this article is intended as a challenge to what must be considered an infidelity of the Church to the Holy Spirit who was at the origins of Christianity.

May my Church, the Baptist Church in Central Africa, made up of women and men who are disciples of Jesus Christ, have the courage and determination to demonstrate its fidelity to the Spirit of the Church.

# EXPERIENCE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN RWANDA IN COMMUNITY-BASED INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (CBID)

By Rev. Christopher R.



The Presbyterian Church in Rwanda has taken significant progress to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities within both the Church and Community. Through its Diaconia Unit, the Church has long supported vulnerable groups, but the call for deeper and more intentional inclusion became more pronounced following the 2019 General Synod, which recommended prioritizing the participation of persons with disabilities in all Church activities.

In response to this recommendation, the Church initiated the child empowerment program aimed at supporting children and youth with disabilities, particularly in the domains of education and health. While this initiative marked an important beginning, it became clear that the program alone could not adequately address the diverse and complex needs of persons with disabilities.

To enhance the quality and impact of its support, the Church adopted the Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) approach. This model promotes shared responsibility among community members, Faith-Based

Organizations, NGOs, and local authorities. It is grounded in a holistic strategy inspired by the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Matrix developed by the World Health Organization in 1972, which focuses on five key domains: Health, Education, Livelihood, Social, and Empowerment.

Based on the experience from the communities of Nyarugenge District, this approach has already demonstrated powerful impacts on the lives of persons with disabilities. In collaboration with partners such as local Hospitals, the Church provides support in the health by covering health fees, offering assistive devices such as prostheses and orthoses, and delivering training on the causes and prevention of disability. Pregnant women and other community members have particularly benefited from training on disability prevention, Sexual and Reproductive Health, as well as the use of locally available rehabilitation tools.

In the domain of education, the Church mobilizes schools and communities to ensure that children



and youth with disabilities are able to attend nearby public schools instead of being sent to special centers far from their families. In fact, leaving their home areas for studies sometimes hinders their reintegration into community life after completion of their studies. The Church also encourages full participation of persons with disabilities in community life, including sports and leisure activities, vocational training, marriage, and religious services.

To promote economic inclusion and self-reliance, the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda has started the development of initiatives such as the community savings and loan groups that include persons with disabilities and their families. These efforts are complemented by financial support such as the provision of the livestock and training for the leaders of local Financial Institutions like Banks and Umurenge Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) to facilitate the access to financial services for the persons with disabilities.

All these initiatives are reinforced through the

continuous training and community awareness campaigns planned for strengthening the empowerment. To uphold the principle of “Nothing about us without us,” the Church works closely with the National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda (NUDOR) and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). However, despite the progress made, challenges remain, particularly the limited use of sign language and braille which continue to hinder the Church’s efforts toward the fully effective inclusion.

The persons with disabilities and other community members are expressing their appreciation for this approach, affirming that inclusion is increasingly becoming a reality. They continue to remind the community not to focus on the “dis” but on the “ability,” emphasizing that disability does not equal inability.

# TRAINING TO TRANSFORM SESSION FOR EEC PASTORS

By Mr. Eli Leuwe



**T**he Protestant Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in Ndoungué hosted the third session of the EEC GENERATION 2.0 Project, from 18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025. It is an ambitious programme of pastoral capacity building initiated by the Evangelical Church of Cameroon and coordinated by Pastor Dr Bernard KOPP, first Vice-President of the Church. For this session, 100 participants, including 92 male and 8 female pastors from different synod regions, gathered for several training modules designed to address contemporary mission challenges. The objective was to equip a generation of competent and relevant pastors who are grounded in the EEC strategic vision.

The workshops focused on the following:

- Introduction to the strategic framework: - Mission, vision, objectives and strategies
- Leadership and personality profiles
- Church, natural disasters and diaconia, from subsistence to participatory transformation
- Being an EEC worker in a knowledge-based and changing society: Innovate or perish!
- Entrepreneurial approach to management
- Introduction to parish marketing and strategic communication
- Networking: when knowledge must be shared
- Online storage and archiving: the importance of the Cloud for the church
- Artificial intelligence: opportunity or threat for the EEC?
- Dysfunctional families and a broken society: what is the role of the church in the 21st century?
- Mediation and conflict resolution: tools and approaches

- Financial governance as a fundamental element in achieving the EEC objectives
- Administrative writing,
- Planning and conducting an online meeting,
- Digitalization of church worship procedures,
- Online storage and archiving: the importance of the cloud for church structures,
- How to promote local entrepreneurship for the youth,
- Breeding beetles and growing mushrooms.

This session, which is part of the EEC desire to prepare its workers to respond effectively to the spiritual, social and organizational needs of communities, was characterized by a spirit of fellowship, a studious atmosphere and a shared vision.

The closing ceremony took place on 26 November 2025, attended by the Church President, Pastor Alexandre Billa Mbenga, and other members of the Head Office.

On behalf of his colleagues participating in the third session of Generation 2.0, Pastor Dr Tayo Hyppolite said, “We commend this innovative initiative and express our gratitude to the EEC partners — the United Evangelical Mission and the Evangelical Church of Westphalia — for their significant contribution to the programme success”. After singing the EEC anthem with enthusiasm, participants received information on the origins of the Generation 2.0 project, why communities need to develop project documents and the current status of the Ndoungué station. They returned home with joy, happy to have taken part in the third session of EEC Generation 2.0



## NEW HEAD OF THE UEM DIVISION IN AFRICA

By Christine

Following the announcement by the Council of the **United Evangelical Mission** concerning the appointment of **Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Muhozi** from EPR Rwanda as the new Head of the **UEM Africa** Department, effective from 1 November 2025, the **UEM Africa** regional office in Dar es Salaam is pleased to welcome him once more.

His appointment reflects the continued commitment to strengthening organizational leadership, management and enhancing the mission in Africa Region. Reverend Emmanuel Muhozi brings valuable experience in theology and administration.

In his new role, he will contribute to the fulfilment of the **UEM** objectives by actively

providing leadership in the theological, personnel, administrative and financial aspects of the division work, promoting ownership and participation, maintaining a fundraising strategy, promoting ecumenical exchange between **UEM** members, and enhancing the Africa Region work in a variety of ways aligning with the 5 **UEM** pillars.

The Africa Region extends warm congratulations to Reverend Dr Emmanuel Muhozi and invites the entire **UEM** member churches of the Region to support him in prayers as he carries out his work linked with heavy responsibilities.

May God's wisdom and grace guide him in the fulfillment of this calling.

# New Leadership for a New Season of Mission

By ELCRN Team



On 2 November 2025 in Okahandja, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) welcomed Rt Rev Abraham ||Kheibeb as the new bishop, marking an important step forward in the Church's ministry. He has taken over from Bishop SAGEUS KEIB who retired.

Bishop ||Kheibeb, along with Deputy Bishop Lorenst Kuzatjike, General Secretary Pastor Asser Bock, and Associate General Secretary Pastor Maureen Dausas, will lead the Church's mission with a focus on service, unity, and faithfulness to the Gospel. The team also includes lay representatives, theologians, and other key leaders, showing ELCRN's tradition of shared responsibility between clergy and lay members.

At the consecration service, Bishop Abraham ||Kheibeb spoke about the spiritual foundation of Lutheran identity, saying:

"Lutherans, listen to God—through His Word, in prayer, and in faithful service to His people."

Synod Chairperson Elder Johannes Mabos Vries spoke about the importance of unity and accountability in the new leadership, saying,

"This leadership represents our collective commitment to walk together as a Church, grounded in faith, good governance, and service to our communities."

As the Church enters this new chapter, Bishop ||Kheibeb has set several key priorities to strengthen its witness and impact:

- Spiritual Renewal of Membership: Encouraging deeper discipleship and a stronger faith in all congregations
  - Financial Sustainability: Looking for ways to support the Church financially, such as using church guesthouses for tourism
  - Pastors and Elders' Mental and Holistic Health: Making the well-being and support of Church leaders a top priority
  - Strengthening Partnerships: Working together with ecumenical and development partners to build strong relationships
  - Enhanced Membership Engagement: Giving members more chances to be involved and take ownership of Church life and mission
  - Nationwide Crusade and Outreach Services: Expanding evangelistic and renewal events throughout the country
  - Listening Leadership: Encouraging leaders to listen with empathy and lead with integrity, always guided by Christian values
- ELCRN invites its members, partners, and the wider Namibian community to pray for the new leadership as the Church continues to share Christ's message in both words and actions. The Church remains committed to unity, faithful mission, and serving others with compassion.

# CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON EDUCATION ABOUT THE ART OF NURTURING CHILDREN

By Christine M.



The capacity building workshop on the Art of Nurturing children held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025, in Kinshasa-DR Congo, brought together pastors, parents, Sunday school teachers, and Evangelists from Tanzania, Cameroon, Namibia, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo for a transformative learning, reflection, and experience sharing.

Hosted by the “EGLISE DU CHRIST AU CONGO - ECC”, the workshop had these objectives: to understand the art of nurturing children and develop related strategies and practices; to develop the participants’ and institutions’ skills in nurturing children; and to describe how parents, pastors and the Christian community can support children’s spiritual development, including faith development.

In his welcome address, Reverend Moïse Mateso, the ECC First National Vice-President stated that “In a world marked by violence, children are often the first victims of social imbalance. This workshop will offer a support programme tailored to the challenges faced by children.”

During the workshop, participants shared a contextual perspective and best practices in children ministry. They reflect on a crucial

question: What kind of education and capacity building about the Art of Nurturing Children in the country facing civil conflicts: Case of DR Congo. In order to understand the paradigm shift in the art of nurturing children, participants realized that the most appropriate approach to adopt in Sunday school programmes is “In Step with the Master Teacher” approach that helps children to know, love and obey God. Work in small groups allowed participants to openly discuss the challenges families and Sunday school teachers face in the respective countries, the role of parents and social media in the life of children.

A key theme throughout the workshop was the idea that “*Children are a gift from God, entrusted to families and the wider faith community*”. Their earlier years are the foundation upon which their future character, values, and choices are built: **“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”** Proverbs: 22:6.

To promote the holistic development of children within the family and enhance children’s ministries in the modern era, the Church must prioritize and invest in children’s ministry as



an integral part of its overall mission. We must avoid the mindset that ‘children are the church of tomorrow’.

In fact, Jesus said, **“Let the children come to Me and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”** Matthieu 19:14.

*Recommendations regarding children ministers and ministry:*

To people in charge of teacher training:

1. To implement a training programme for those responsible for children’s ministry before they take up their posts, as an untrained Sunday school teacher poses a danger to children;
2. To organize an annual update, to refresh and evaluate various resources of children ministry;
3. To involve church leaders and parents in the ministry and encourage them to create a safe environment and meet the needs of children (construction of child-friendly rooms, provision of playgrounds and facilities);
4. To define and standardize the curriculum for Sunday school;
5. To make ownership of a hardcover Bible one of prerequisites for appointment as a children’s minister.

6. To organize a transition programme for older children (aged 13-18) between Sunday school and youth ministry.

*To churches:*

1. To strengthen family and stakeholder relationships;
2. To equip children with the tools they need to build strong relationships with their parents;
3. To assist them in their spiritual growth and protect them from harmful influences;
4. To base their moral compass on Bible teaching;
5. To train parents in child nurturing.

*To the Africa Regional Office of the UEM*

1. To rethink a holistic approach to nurturing children that addresses all aspects of their development;
2. To support “In Step with the Master Teacher” training programme for parents, children, ministers and pastors.

At the end of the workshop, the atmosphere was filled with energy and hope. Participants committed to apply the skills learned, knowing that every effort to uplift a child contributes to a stronger family.

# THE IMPACT OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

By Leah Enock

UEM has been running volunteer programs for many years, thereby promoting youth exchange among its member churches. These programs operate under the **North-South**, **South-North**, and **South-South** frameworks.

The **South-South** Program involves youth from churches in Africa and Asia. Through this program, young people from these regions volunteer within Africa or Asia for one year, fostering learning opportunities, promoting intercultural exchange, and sharing experiences with host communities. All UEM member churches in Africa and Asia are invited to apply. Youth applicants must be active members of their churches, aged between **18 and 28 years**, and endorsed by the head of their church. During the program, volunteers actively support the work of their host institutions for one year.

In the **2025/2026** period, seven volunteers were recruited for the **South-South Program**: four from Africa and three from Asia. Of these, **four volunteers** are serving in **Africa**, while **three from Africa** are serving in **Asia**.

The impact of this program lies in encouraging and preparing young people to serve others through their God-given talents. The program acts as a bridge for young people to learn new cultures, broaden their perspectives, and strengthen their social skills and resilience.

This initiative reflects UEM's ongoing commitment to building the internal capacity of youth within its member churches, fostering leadership rooted in ownership and mission values. We strongly believe that the future of the church lies in the hands of its youth. The program provides young people with opportunities for exposure, allowing them to experience different contexts of faith and service and to bring these experiences back to inspire their fellow youth. Through mutual learning, strong partnerships are formed.



**Proud** shares:

“My three-month volunteer experience at HKBP AIDS Ministry was not only a time of service, but also a journey of personal transformation. Coming to Indonesia for the first time, I faced challenges such as language barriers, which often made communication difficult. Yet, these challenges taught me patience, humility, and the importance of listening beyond words. I discovered that kindness, presence, and empathy can bridge gaps where language falls short.”

**Mario Sibarani** adds:

“Living and working abroad has fostered independence and self-reliance in me. I had never lived abroad or had relatives outside my country, but this experience opened doors to new friendships and a new sense of family. Through this journey, I have learned to live independently, improve my problem-solving skills, and overcome challenges to achieve my life goals.

**Heureuse** says:

“My stay at Ruhija Music School has been a blessing. I had the opportunity to share my musical talents by teaching young people how to play musical instruments and sing. I thank God for bringing me from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Bukoba, Tanzania, where I live with the community and serve the church through my talents. I am energetic and eager to serve more and would welcome additional activities.”

**Theodoron Sekerebau** from Indonesia is volunteering at ELCT Ndolage Hospital in Bukoba. She shares:

“This program has given me the chance to learn a new culture in Africa. Language barriers were challenging at first, but the community has helped me learn Kiswahili, which has been a great advantage. I am happy to work at the hospital reception, where I help patients register and guide them through the consultation process. The community has even given me local names such as Kemilembe and Kokutona, which makes me feel at home and enjoy my stay.”

These testimonies clearly reflect the positive



impact of the volunteer program in helping young people discover their hidden potential. Churches are encouraged to provide returning volunteers with opportunities to share their experiences, inspire fellow youth, and contribute meaningfully to their churches and communities.

# Diakonia Digitalized Elections: An Innovation Now Deeply Rooted at CBCA Virunga/Goma!

By Michée Wabomundu



In several African countries, elections have often been sources of division moments marked by divergent opinions as well as tension, whether within governmental institutions or even in some religious organizations. In an effort to be light and salt in this world, an innovative solution has been implemented in one of the CBCA parishes, a member church of the UEM. The Media and IT Commission had the renewed honor and joy of participating in the preparation and successful conduct of the digitalized Diakonia elections of CBCA Virunga Parish, held on Sunday, July 20, 2025, in Goma.

This was not the first time the parish adopted this modern approach. Once again, voters used electronic voting machines, further strengthening a progressive and responsible digital culture in the management of electoral processes within the Church.

Out of 44 candidates, 21 were elected following a transparent, orderly, and secure voting process, marked by the active participation of 609 voters in less than 30 minutes.

It was a true pleasure for the Independent

Parish Electoral Commission, led by a former UEM volunteer, Mr. Michée W., to establish an interactive database, carefully collect candidates' information, test, and ensure the smooth operation of the vote management system, which compiled votes simultaneously.

We were deeply encouraged to see even elderly members confidently using digital tools, just like the youth of the 21st century demonstrating their strong commitment to their Church and their willingness to actively support its ministries.

The Church of today cannot ignore digital tools. When used wisely, these tools enable the Church to fulfill God's mission more effectively, reach a wider audience, mobilize young people, and integrate their skills as added value for God's work.

CBCA Virunga, one of the 463 CBCA parishes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, continues to demonstrate that "order and decency" remain strong foundations even in the realm of technology.

# BEING AFRICAN CHURCHES IN PUBLIC SQUARE

By Rev Dr Ernest Kadiva

Being African Church in public square involves a holistic approach that extends beyond spiritual nourishment to actively addressing socio-economic, social justice, and community development and political challenges. For example, we read of growth in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in several African countries annually. But signs of increasing impoverishment of a larger number of people abound. This situation is due to diverse challenges including injustice, poverty, corruption, inequality, and high unemployment rates, especially among the poor and the young people. Poor social infrastructure and services such as health, education, transport and agriculture also contribute to impoverishment. All these challenges are underlying factors of poor health and child mortality rate, hunger due to food shortage, devastating pandemics such as HIV and AIDS, cholera, malaria, struggling under the so-called dependency syndrome and lack of financial independence, instability and violence that are politically, socially and religiously motivated, even coordinated and carried out.

Africa has gone through a very sad period where human life has become very cheap. This is clearly visible in the senseless killings and destruction of human lives across the regions. In churches, there has been an increase in false prophets and teachers who spread misleading teachings that have claimed people's life and property.

The pressing question is how church communities can actively engage in public issues and collaborate with various societal actors to

promote social good and enhance community well-being.

The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement explains that the term "public theology" first appeared in English in an analysis of the contribution of Reinhold Niebuhr by Martin Marty (1974), but it points towards a wider and deeper strand of theological reflection rooted in the interaction of Biblical insight, philosophical analysis, historical discernment and social formation. Martin Luther King became a model of public theology in its activist mode, re-invigorating a tradition, obscured temporarily by notions of inevitable secularization, that the clergy are "public intellectuals". The idea also appeared in German theology introduced by Wolfgang Huber, as related to the church preaching to public, that theologians and pastors may address public matters, since the inner architecture of civil society always has moral and spiritual dimensions that demand attention and guidance.<sup>1</sup> (Max L. Stackhouse 2002,

According to Scott R. Paeth in his book "Exodus Church and Civil Society", theology can be public theology if it takes three factors into account : the analytic, interpretive, and constructive<sup>2</sup>. . These three factors respectively describe the relevance, identity and relatedness responsibility of theology with broader questions of public concern. They show how theologians may engage meaningfully and in an intelligible manner with those realms of inquiry which encompasses all dimensions of human action in the world such

<sup>1</sup> Max L. Stackhouse, Public Theology. Nicholas Lossky, John Pobee (eds), Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002, 1131-1132.

<sup>2</sup> Scott. R. Paeth, The Exodus Church and Civil Society: Public Theology and Social Theory in the Work of Jurgen Moltemann, Great Britain: MPG Books Ltd, 2008, 62.

as the questions of human rights, justice, politics, economics, ecology and others in connection with faith. Ronald Thiemann argues that Christian faith has a responsibility to interact creatively with the surrounding culture.<sup>3</sup> Konrad Raiser affirms that churches and other religious groups are called to remind the state of its pro-active role in establishing a greater degree of justice, peace and protection of people's livelihoods. "The churches need to take vigilant role, raising their voice against any decisions taken by government or promoted by powerful interests in society which have negative impacts on the economic, social and cultural rights of all citizens".<sup>4</sup>

Doing public theology requires having a creative vision for society, a transforming vision for life here on earth, a vision of how the church positively changes history and culture. Charles Villa-Vicencio echoes that being the church of Christ, the church is also called to be the church of continuing transformation or reformation, its identity is given in Christ- the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. To him doing public theology is a service which involves the creation of new citizen, who rises above despair through participation in the reconstruction and national building process.<sup>5</sup> The Bible shows that, "where there is no vision people perish" [Proverbs 29: 18]. And St Paul argues, "therefore, I run thus not with uncertainty, thus I fight not one who beats the air" (1Corinthians 9 :26). This implies that doing public theology without a clear vision is like boxing the air or taking a trip without knowing the destination, which may lack direction, lines of communication, sense of commitment, accountability, control, and evaluation, all of which are very important elements in doing public theology.

Doing public theology also needs commitment. In fact, without commitment, there is the danger of mouthing theological clichés that are not grounded in the reality of the context within which it is required to minister.<sup>6</sup> Participation in a public conversation by contributing beliefs to which one is not committed is counterproductive and perhaps ultimately incoherent.

Public theology in the most general sense is a systematic reflection on issues relating to public life, carried out in the light of theological conviction and with the aid of the theological disciplines. Theology in this context is a systematic reflection of faith as navigating through specific historical and cultural contexts.

Public Theology involves theologians participating in contributing to the formation of a sound economic and political sphere, among others. It constitutes a shared public truth derived from rational reflection or human experience. In participation in the global public sphere and in critique on economic, social, political and environmental issues, public theology enables theologians to be dialogical and pastoral, as well as analytical and prophetic.

Therefore, public theology is an approach that attempts to speak of GOD in the contemporary world of globalization and secularism neither too early, nor too late, that uses both the language of faith and the language of mediation in the public sphere and knows when and how to use which. Since globalization, science and technology, political and economic changes affect not only the faith and life of the Christian community, but also

3 Scott. R. Paeth, *The Exodus Church and Civil Society: Public Theology and Social Theory in the Work of Jurgen Moltemann*, Great Britain: MPG Books Ltd, 2008, 83.

4 Konrad Raiser, *For a Culture of Life: Transforming Globalization and Violence*, Geneva, WCC Publication, 2002, 29.

5 Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Civil Society and Ecclesial," in Fritz Erich Anhelm(eds): *Consultation on Theology and Civil Society God's People in Civil Society: Ecclesiological Implications*, 1995, 117.

6 Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Civil Society and Ecclesial," in Fritz Erich Anhelm(eds): *Consultation on Theology and Civil Society God's People in Civil Society: Ecclesiological Implications*, 1995, 124.

the communities, churches are, therefore, obliged to play an important role in the ethical control of these changes. However, reassessing ethical positions in the light of changing circumstances needs thorough theological programs, moral awareness, and theologians' who can participate critically, analytically and constructively in the discussion of ethical issues raised by these changes which lead to peace destruction in Tanzania.

### **UEM Contributions**

United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in its main areas of work use pastoral letters, prayer alerts and other platforms to speak out on evangelism, political issues, good governance, democracy, and social reforms. In the UEM, there is a strong call for churches to utilize their spaces to address good governance, promote justice, ethical leadership and social good. All UEM programs provide strategies on how the Christian faith must move beyond private belief and engage more actively in public issues to promote societal well-being.

This involves learning, research, dialogue, and collaboration with ecumenical institutions and other secular sectors to develop approaches that improve human well-being. Through this approach, UEM has enabled its member churches to bring about significant positive changes in the lives of people and their environments, building community structures that uphold values of compassion, justice, diaconal work, mutual respect and development.

Forms of partnership in UEM have expanded and evolved to include strategic partnerships. By creating strategic partnerships across sectors, thematic, institutional, age groups and gender, these forms have enabled the accommodation of diverse perspectives and resources as well as addressing social challenges and developing initiatives that promote innovation, social justice, equity and equality.

With regard to the above general principles stressing the role of churches in dealing with all aspects of life, we invite our readers to send us articles proving how public theology is concretely applied in their respective churches.

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**Rev Prof Dr Leepo Modise**  
Moderator of URSA and professor of systematic theology at the University of South Africa.



**EEC team**  
Eglise Evangelique du Cameroun



**Rev Dean Boitumelo Moitho**  
Pastor at Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana-Northern Circuit



**Leah Enock**  
Admirative Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator at UEM Africa region.



**Prof Dr. Eonique Basambya**  
Associate Professor of New Testament in theology department at ULPGL Goma.



**Michée Wabomundu**  
UEM former volunteer and digital platforms specialist.



**Christopher Rukundo**  
serves as the responsible of Diaconia and Youth within The Presbyterian church \_EPR in Rwanda.



**Rev Dr Ernest William Kadiva.**  
Head of UEM Regional office Africa.



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