

The Lake Kivu Statement on Mission: Witnessing to Radical Hope in Catastrophic Times

In the beginning, the universe blossomed from the heart of original blessing; God the Creator who called creation into being, weaving cosmos and earth in threads of harmony and radiant beauty.

Each creature, star, and even grain of sand was declared “very good” by God, forming a tapestry where all existence pulsed in sacred unity. The world shimmered in perfection, and all things dwelling in joyful *oneing*.

Yet, humanity, entrusted with this luminous gift, wandered from the path. In yielding to shadowed desires and the restless urge for domination, humanity fell into sin, fracturing harmony and unleashing storms of conflict, violence, and estrangement.

The original blessing was veiled, and the world trembled under wounded hearts and broken trust. Creation, once whole, now groaned, laboured in pain and bore the scars of humanity’s fall, echoing with the lament of loss and longing for restoration.

The Triune God has heard this cry, sending the Son and pouring out the Spirit into the life of the world. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are called to a kenotic, diaconal, and reparative participation in the mission of God for justice, peace, and the flourishing of creation.

This calling inspired our three mission networks, the Council for World Mission (CWM), United Evangelical Mission (UEM), and Community of Churches in Mission (Cevaa), to gather at Lake Kivu from 26 to 30 November 2025. Participants came from 36 countries across the globe. Generously hosted by the Eglise Presbytérienne au Rwanda, we marvelled at Rwanda’s “thousand hills and thousand smiles.”

Standing on this sacred soil, we acknowledge with deep reverence the enduring memory of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, one of humanity’s most painful reminders of how division, hatred, and theologies of exclusion can turn neighbours into enemies. Rwanda’s ongoing journey of healing and reconciliation is a testimony of resurrected hope, inviting the global church to learn anew what it means to become communities of truth-telling, justice, forgiveness, and rehumanisation.

Like the disciples in the Gospels, we longed to hear the voice of our Lord Jesus on the lakeshore, seeking to discern the leading of God’s Spirit amidst liminality and uncertainty. In humility, faith and solidarity we offer this statement.

We lament the many-sided and interconnected catastrophe that faces us in today’s world, marked by

- ecological emergency on a heating planet, with zones being sacrificed and unjust burdens on the Global South.
- economic domination of neoliberal systems and techno-feudal empires that commodify life, deepen inequality, and render communities disposable.
- necropolitics deciding who may live and who must die, creating deathworlds that crucify people through racism, coloniality, and violence.
- militarization driven by imperial ambition, subverting multilateral norms and normalizing violence.
- AI-driven alienation of labour, surveillance, and platform monopolies that reshape identities and public life without accountability.
- Complicity of church and mission through idolatrous alliances with money-power and ultra-right politics.

We also lament the wounds and struggles of the neighbouring regions: the threats to civic space, democratic stability, and environmental integrity in Tanzania; the pressures on the communities; and the widening socio-economic inequalities across East Africa. We hold these struggles in prayer and solidarity.

We affirm that “mission begins in the heart of the triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation” (*Together towards Life* §2). Core elements of our vision of mission include:

- Mission is the action of God in the life of the world; our witness is humble, self-emptying service that resists domination and disrupts life denying systems.
- The Holy Spirit is the chief actor in mission; we discern the Spirit wherever life is affirmed in liberation, healing, reconciliation, and ecological restoration.
- Mission from the margins is our guiding light; centres must be converted by the margins, where Christ is encountered among the crucified of history.
- Mission means unity in communion for justice beyond institutional maintenance toward collaborative action with churches and movements for life.
- Mission means reparation, repenting of colonial complicity, redefining partnerships beyond donor-recipient logics, and practicing restorative justice.
- Mission means planetary solidarity, embracing Indigenous wisdom, ecological repentance, and socio-ecological transformation.
- Mission means hope, expressed in everyday practices that unite communities and catalyse change.

We further affirm the calling to *Transformative Ecumenism*, an ecumenism that does not settle for polite cooperation but reimagines Christian unity as a radical, justice-seeking communion that confronts empire, centres the marginalized, and rebuilds social, ecological, and spiritual life.

We imagine mission finding expression through

- deepening spirituality as a radical discipleship that creates hope in face of catastrophe.
- fostering kenotic witness that embodies the great reversal announced by Mary in the Magnificat, promoting leadership of women and youth, demonstrating creativity and sustaining networks of hope.
- reimagining partnership as deep solidarity, mutual companionship, and reparative practice.
- integrating eco-justice into worship, resisting economies of death and advocating for just transitions.
- engaging in nonviolent prophetic action for the defence of human rights and the demilitarization of global relations.
- celebrating craftivism and digital eco-praxis as forms of mission; fostering intergenerational understanding and collaboration.
- encouraging churches to decentre power, practice reparation, and form disciples for justice and ecological care.
- influencing governments to commit to climate justice, defend human dignity and demilitarize; campaigning for the reform of international economic architecture, strengthening multilateralism; calling powerful institutions to account, including multinational corporations and techno-feudal empires.

We commit, as representatives of UEM, CEVAA, and CWM, to:

- continue the collaborative journey we have begun, discerning together the meaning of God’s mission in our catastrophic times.
- explore opportunities for partnership in the formation of transformative leaders, equipping them to serve the mission of God in the years ahead.
- work together to empower local congregations, enabling them to cultivate radical discipleship tailored to their unique contexts.

Through these ongoing efforts and partnerships, we seek to embody our shared calling and contribute to the transformation of the world in alignment with God’s purpose. “Let your light shine” is a radical commissioning be visible in truth, justice, and mercy. On Rwanda’s soil of grief and reconciliation, we confess our failures, receive forgiveness, and rise as wounded healers. By God’s grace, we will shine as sacrament not spectacle until the crucified and risen Christ is seen in our humble service, courageous solidarity, and reparative love.