



Global momentum from South Korea: Impressions from the WEA General Assembly 2025 in Seoul

A report by Michael Girgis, Zurich (Switzerland), November 4, 2025



Summary of the event

The 14th General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) took place in Seoul (South Korea) from October 27 to 31, 2025 - under the motto "The Gospel for Everyone by 2033".

Around 7,000 leaders from 161 nations came together to discuss the future of **evangelism, discipleship and global cooperation**.

This report provides a concise overview of the key themes, decisions, and impulses emerging from the assembly — including the **Seoul Declaration**, the realignment of the **Mission Commission** (MC), and the reactivation of the **EEMA** with its significance for Europe.

In addition, it offers personal reflections and encounters that convey the spiritual depth and cultural diversity of the conference. The report also outlines potential implications for Switzerland, Germany, and Europe.

Anyone seeking to understand the current state of the global church and mission — the dynamics shaping them, and the new ways in which North and South are coming together — will find this an inspiring summary of a gathering that is helping to set global trends.

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Note:

This report was prepared on the basis of personal participation and evaluation of official documents, reports and discussions during the WEA General Assembly 2025 in Seoul. It reflects the observations and assessments of the author and does not claim to be an official representation of the World Evangelical Alliance.

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1. Introduction and Context

The **14th General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)** took place in **Seoul (South Korea) from October 27 to 31, 2025**. Under the motto **"The Gospel for Everyone by 2033"**, around **850 delegates from 124 nations** gathered, more countries than ever before in the 179-year history of the Alliance.

Since the last assembly in Indonesia in 2019, the WEA family has grown significantly: **27 new national alliances** have been added: the movement now represents **161 countries** organized in **nine regional alliances**. This growth particularly strengthens the presence of alliances from **Africa, Asia and Central Asia, from Mauritania to Kazakhstan, from Burundi to Uzbekistan**.



On the first two days (Monday and Tuesday), the assembly was opened by a **joint conference** with around **5,000 Korean pastors** and around **1,000 leaders from Africa, Asia and Latin America (COALA 3.5 Gathering)**. In total, over **7,000 evangelical leaders** from all over the world came together in Seoul, an impressive sign of global solidarity and missionary passion.

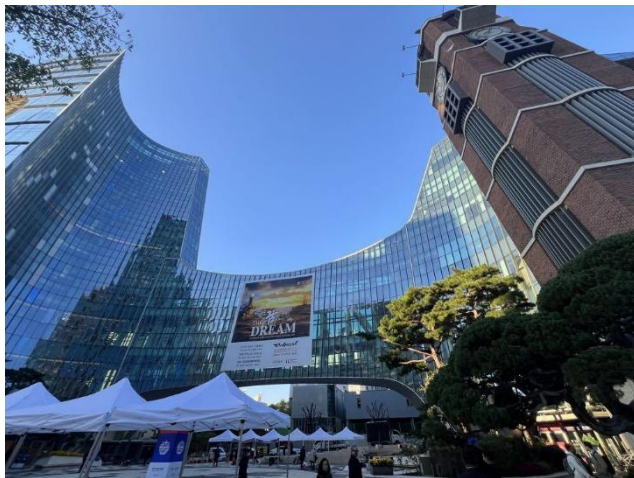
At the start of the assembly, representatives marched into the **SaRang Church** with the flags of **161 nations** - a strong image of the global diversity and unity of the WEA family.

In Seoul, it became clear how much the balance has shifted within world Christianity. *"It is no longer the West that determines what is considered evangelical."* This shift characterized the entire conference: **Evangelicalism today is predominantly a movement of the Global South.** Around **70% of all evangelicals** live in **Africa, Asia and Latin America.** *"Each new national alliance represents thousands of churches and millions of believers advancing the gospel in their respective contexts,"* explained **Dr. Brad Smith**, interim director of WEA's Alliance Engagement Department. *"This growth demonstrates the vitality of evangelical witness across cultures and nations."*



The WEA deliberately described the General Assembly as a kind of **"Working Family Reunion"** - a working meeting of the worldwide family in which global and local expressions of faith met and learned from each other.

It is no coincidence that **Seoul** was chosen as the venue: over the past **140 years**, the Korean church has undergone a remarkable development from a mission field to a **missionary force**, with around **22,000 missionaries sent out worldwide**, South Korea is now the **second largest missionary nation in the world** (source: Korean Research Institute for Mission).



The **organizing committee in Seoul** was a joint initiative of the **World Evangelical Alliance** and leading **Korean churches**, chaired by **Rev. Jung-hyun John Oh** and **Rev. Young-hoon Lee**, with the participation of the **Korea Evangelical Fellowship (KEF)** and other partners. The host churches **SaRang Church** and **Yoido Full Gospel Church** created an impressive atmosphere of prayer, fellowship and globalism. Thousands of volunteers and prayer warriors were involved in the awareness that this would

enable a "spiritual return" in term of the flow of the gospel: *"We want to pass on something of what we have received."*

Through this hosting role, South Korea has become a symbol and expression of its historical transformation from a former mission field to one of the most dynamic mission countries in the world.

The year **2033** marks the **2000th anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus Christ** - a global reference point for evangelism, discipleship and social transformation. The General Assembly in Seoul took this historic date and linked it to the vision **"The Gospel for Everyone by 2033"**. It was not only a constitutional leadership meeting of the WEA, but also a **spiritual landmark**: a shared call to discover the faith in the resurrection as a driver for **innovative evangelism, deepened discipleship and stronger partnerships worldwide.**

A special moment was the **installation of Rev. Botrus Mansour** (Nazareth) as the **first General Secretary of the WEA from the Middle East**, accompanied by the **election of a new International Council (IC)**.

The General Assembly thus became a living mirror of the global evangelical movement: dynamic, diverse and Christ-centered.

2. Program and Focal Points

The five-day program included plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions and regional forums. The focus was on topics such as:

- **Mission 2033** - the unifying vision across all continents to make the gospel accessible to all people by the year 2033.
- **Discipleship and wholeness** - the renewal of a missionary spirituality that combines word and deed.
- **Unity in diversity** - a call to live the global evangelical movement as "one family with many languages and cultures".
- **Persecution and restoration** - solidarity with oppressed Christians, especially women in crisis contexts.

A special highlight was the **art exhibition by the internationally renowned artist Akiane**, who artistically interpreted the theme "Gospel for Everyone". This creative dimension underlined the diversity of forms of expression within the global movement, from art to technology to social initiatives.

In terms of content, the meeting culminated in the **"Seoul Declaration"**, which reiterates the central concerns of the global alliance. It affirms the **authority of the Bible** as the common foundation of faith, calls for **humility and unity across cultural boundaries** and takes a stand on current issues of **pluralism and sexual ethics**. The declaration is intended as a **guide for a credible and context-conscious following of Jesus** in an increasingly complex world. The Seoul Declaration in English can be found here: <https://bit.ly/4hRzDJb>.

In the opening and closing assemblies, the common commitment was reaffirmed: *The Gospel remains the good news for all people - everywhere.*

3. Leadership and Guiding Principle

On the closing day, **Botrus Mansour** (Nazareth) was installed as the new **General Secretary of the WEA**. This is the first time that an **Arab evangelical Christian** has taken on this role.

The press described him as *"not a dazzling, charismatic speaker, but a level-headed advocate"*. His appointment is seen as a sign of a "power shift" in world Christianity, away from the West and towards a polyphonic global movement.

The **lawyer and Baptist pastor from Nazareth** was blessed by his own church pastor at the opening ceremony, a symbolic act for the new anchoring of the WEA in the Middle East and the emphasis on unity in diversity. *"The appointment of the Palestinian Christian Botrus Mansour symbolizes unity in diversity. But it is also a sign of a shift in power."* In his inaugural speech, Mansour said: **"We will reclaim what it means to be evangelical - bearers of good news."** He thus set a programmatic accent for an evangelicalism that is not defined by demarcation, but by good news and credible witness.



At the same time, a new **International Council (IC)** was elected, which will act as the global governing body in future. The new International Board reflects the voices of the Global South more strongly than before. **98 WEA member alliances** took part in the vote and elected the new international governing body - a visible step towards **greater participation and shared responsibility** in global governance.

In his opening speech, **Godwill Shana**, previous Chairman of the Council, emphasized: *"Unity means more than formal membership. It lives from genuine partnership rooted in the gospel."*

4. Mission Commission (MC) and EEMA – New Developments

An important focus was on the future of the **Mission Commission (MC)** and the **European Evangelical Mission Alliance (EEMA)**.

Global: Updates on the future of the Mission Commission (MC)

The most important points in brief

In future, the **Mission Commission (MC)** will be more closely integrated into the **World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)** and at the same time structurally realigned. Under the **co-leadership of Jay Mātenga (Asia) and Ruth Wall (Europe)**, a new **Steering Committee** with a **maximum of 18 members from nine world regions** is being created.

The MC now sees itself as a **platform of "reflective practitioners"**, practitioners who live, reflect and develop mission together. In future, it will work in a more **theme-oriented** way, focusing on topics such as **missiology, contextualization, generational change, sending and receiving in mission** and the **integration of data and research**.

The next global **MC Gathering** is planned for **September/October 2027 in Nairobi (Kenya)**.

50 years of the Mission Commission - review and renewal

As part of the General Assembly, a special meeting of the **Mission Commission (MC)** took place on October 26, 2025, 50 years after its founding in 1975 following **Lausanne '74**.

The beginnings of the MC were visionary: under the influence of leading figures such as **René Padilla**, a global forum was created that included the **majority world** in the responsibility of world mission from the outset. Even the first chairwoman - remarkably, a **Korean leader** - symbolized the polycentric character of this movement. At that time, the young Korean missionary movement had around 100 missionaries; today there are around 22,000.

The goal was clear from the outset: *"We need a better bridge between sending and receiving countries."* This bridging function between sending and receiving countries, between the West and the majority world, has shaped the identity of the MC to this day.

For decades, MC has shaped the missiological landscape through publications and learning processes on topics such as **missionary training, member care, spirituality and mission, church and mission** as well as the concept of **polycentric mission** (since 2016).

From Think Tank to a Platform for Reflective Practitioners

Today, the **Mission Commission (MC)** sees itself less as an academic forum and more as a **platform for reflective practitioners**, people who live mission, reflect theologically and learn from one another.

It is networked with **164 national alliances** worldwide and thus forms a unique network for **learning together** and **initiating and implementing new things together**.

"Participants who attend an MC gathering are not merely being invited to the table, but into the kitchen - where new possibilities for the strengthening of missions are developed." (MC Code of Good Practice 2022)

In this community, the focus is not on theory, but on lived practice: observing **what God is doing in different contexts** and learning from each other **how the gospel is taking shape today**.

The central questions are:

- What has God done in the past - and what is he doing today?
- How can the church live in a post-colonial world in a way that is both **sending and receiving**?
- How can **humility, generosity and mutual appreciation** be demonstrated in a global missionary family?

At the same time, certain **global trends** are becoming increasingly important:

- **Postcolonial perspectives:** Mission is no longer thought of primarily from the West, but from many cultural centers.
- **Reverse mission:** Growing missionary movements from the Global South and the diaspora are shaping the spiritual dynamics in Europe and North America.
- **Diaspora mission:** Migrant communities are becoming bridge-builders between cultures and nations.

- **Indigenous mission:** In some contexts, Christianity is still perceived as "Western", which sometimes leads to persecution. This is precisely why the MC emphasizes the importance of **contextual, locally rooted expressions of the Gospel**.

"Lifelong global friendships are made during MC participation. These connections form organically as the Lord knits hearts together."

(MC Code of Good Practice 2022)

Such relationships form the heart of MC and help to ensure that concrete cooperation grows from joint reflection.

New Structures, New Generations

With the anniversary, the MC leadership was also renewed. **Jay Mātenga** (Asia) and **Ruth Wall** (former head of the Global Leadership Council) will now **co-chair the MC Steering Committee**. This steering committee replaces the previous Council and will comprise **a maximum of 18 members** from **nine regions of the world**, who will meet more frequently than before (see <https://weamc.global/who-we-are/governance/>). In addition, there is a network of around **25 "synergists"**, experts who initiate and support specific projects as thematic catalysts.



The MC thus remains a family that is globally connected but regionally rooted. Anyone wishing to become part of the movement can join as an **MC Associate**, a new form of affiliation and participation. The application can be found here: <https://weamc.global/goodpractice/>.

Goals and Priorities 2025-2027

For the coming years, it is becoming apparent that the MC will set the following **strategic priorities** in particular:

1. **Missiology and the Church:** clarifying the understanding of mission in a biblical and cultural context. *What is mission, how do we talk about it, and is the term even biblical?*
2. **Kingdom collaboration at the next level:** Strengthening collaboration between national, diasporic and global initiatives, including in partnership with **COALA**.
3. **Transformation of mission organizations:** Developing structures characterized by servant and learning leadership.
4. **Friendship as a foundation:** Relationships, trust and mutual awareness are consciously understood as the basis of missionary cooperation. *"Friendship first; new things are created on the way."*
5. **Young generation:** How can young leaders be integrated into existing structures and encouraged to take on responsibility?

6. Further topics:

Role of **data, women, contextualization, intergenerational leadership** and the interplay between **"Receiving well" (West)** and **"Sending well" (majority world)**.

Vision and Outlook

MC's new guiding vision can be summarized in one sentence: **"Local churches should flourish, nourished by global community."**

With this, MC is focusing on a network that promotes humility, generosity and mutual learning, a global family that listens, receives and gives together.

The next **global MC Gathering** will take place in **Nairobi (Kenya) in September/October 2027**. There, the new leadership structures and values will be further developed together.



Europe: Updates on the Future of EEMA

The most important things in brief

Changes are also afoot in Europe. Within the **EEMA** (European Evangelical Mission Alliance), the **European network is being reactivated**. With **Jiska Chin-A-Teh (NL)** and **Rodrigo Assis da Silva (D)**, a new co-leadership team is ready to take over from **Wolfgang Büsing**. The aim is to achieve sustainable funding from 2026 and intensify cooperation in light of **Hope for Europe (in October 2026)**.

In the run-up to the **WEA General Assembly** in Seoul, **Jiska Chin-A-Teh** reported on the latest developments regarding the future of the **European Evangelical Mission Association (EEMA)**. After an intensive period of preparation with health recovery and travel arrangements, she was able to hold talks with **Rodrigo Assis da Silva** and **Wolfgang Büsing** shortly before her departure to discuss the next steps for the EEMA.

Transition of Leadership

As the former EEMA Board is currently no longer active, the formal appointment of new leadership is proving challenging. Nevertheless, the meeting in Frankfurt and the subsequent email exchange within the group **showed** broad support for a **transition of leadership to Jiska Chin-A-Teh and Rodrigo Assis da Silva**. Both have expressed their willingness to take on this responsibility as a team.

The practical steps of this new management structure will be further specified in the coming weeks. The plan is to involve people who have been actively involved in EEMA in the past in order to strengthen the network's basis. **Rodrigo Assis da Silva** and **Jiska Chin-A-Teh** intend to invest time and energy in the development, which also includes clarifying the financial basis and a possible fundraising strategy.

Communication and Financial Contributions

Wolfgang Büsing and Jiska Chin-A-Teh plan to send an e-mail to all former active members and partners of the EEMA in the near future. This will summarize the most important results of the meeting in Frankfurt and invite the countries and networks to get actively involved again. In addition, it is planned to levy **an annual financial contribution again** from **2026**, similar to what was done in the past. The exact amount is still to be determined, as the last contribution was made in 2019. The first step will be to determine what funds are needed in future to effectively support the network.

Meetings and talks in Seoul

During the *WEA General Assembly* in Seoul, *Jiska Chin-A-Teh* took the opportunity to hold numerous discussions with participants and provide information on current EEMA developments. On **October 31, 2025**, a joint dinner was held with people who would like to become actively involved in the EEMA in the future. This meeting also served to discuss the next **“Hope for Europe” conference**, which will take place in Albania in **October 2026**. For more information, visit: <https://www.europeanea.org/hope-2026/>.



These discussions and initiatives are intended to prepare the next steps for a renewed, broad-based and future-oriented EEMA.

5. Prospects for Switzerland, Germany and Europe

The new composition of the **WEA governing body (International Council)** was of particular importance for Europe: **Reinhardt Schink** (German Evangelical Alliance) was elected as a German representative on the International Board.

A total of six people from **Switzerland** took part in the General Assembly: **Marc Jost** and **Wilf Gasser** (both SEA), **Michael Girgis** (AEM), **Olivier Fleury** (JC2033), **Timothy Kristian Goropevsek** (Christian Daily International) and **Markus Hofer** (WEA).

In his report, Marc Jost highlighted the strategic importance of the 2033 focus and emphasized the importance of **making** the global concerns and priorities of the WEA **fruitful and anchoring them at national level**.



In terms of content, the topics of **discipleship**, **persecution**, **collaboration** and **unity** in particular shaped the meeting. At the same time, new forms of **global cooperation and governance** were discussed intensively. A clear challenge emerged for the West in particular: A new learning attitude is required: **less control, more listening, mutual trust and learning in partnership** from the churches of the global South.

What became apparent in Seoul also carries weight for us in Europe. The global alliance movement reminds us that mission today is **polycentric**, with many voices, perspectives and forms of expression.

For **Switzerland, Germany and Europe**, this means

1. **Making our voice heard**

The EEMA and national alliances (SEA, AEM and other networks) are invited to contribute to what is emerging in Europe in terms of **innovation, theological reflection and cooperation**. We have something to contribute, but not from a position of strength, but as part of a **learning, global community**.

2. **Combining unity and mission**

Networks such as *gospel ecosystems* or *Hope for Europe* demonstrate this: When churches and ministries work together across borders, the gospel becomes credible, locally and globally. **Unity is not a strategy, but part of our identity, our calling and our message.**

3. **2033 as a common horizon**

The global call "The Gospel for Everyone by 2033" invites us to leave visible traces of the Gospel in our cities, relationships and societies. It is an invitation to **walk together across denominations and generations.**

These three lines - **voice, unity, horizon** - will also shape the work of **SEA, AEM** and **EEMA** in the coming years. They invite us to continue thinking together about what it means to live and work as part of a **global family of disciples of Jesus**.

6. Encounters and Personal Impressions

What touched me most in Seoul **was the encounter with the worldwide body of Christ**. Experiencing people from all regions and cultures of the world together - praying, singing, reflecting, searching - was fascinating, a real privilege and a deep broadening of horizons. It was like seeing the riches of heaven on earth for a few days.

I made new acquaintances and found new friends. We laughed and cried together, shared stories, expressed pain and hope and encountered God together. In these moments, I realized that the gospel is not a theory, but a relationship, a lived community.





I learned a lot through the exchange with brothers and sisters from all over the world, with leaders from Russia and also from Ukraine, with Arab Christians of Palestinian origin from Israel, with new friends from Kyrgyzstan, South America, China and Africa. Each of these encounters was like a small window into what God is doing around the world.

Such experiences are difficult to put into words. They broaden the view, open the heart and remind us that we are part of a large, colorful, sometimes suffering, but deeply hopeful family. The conference allowed me to experience what defines us at our core: **"Incarnation, not information.** The gospel is not only taught, but incarnated."

Seoul has shown that God's mission continues - diverse, networked and borne by hope.

7. Review - What Remains?

The General Assembly in Seoul sent a strong signal:

- **Renewal of the Great Commission** - concrete, communal, global.
- **Strengthening unity** - especially between the Global South and North.
- **Responsibility for the persecuted** - from awareness to practical action.
- **New governance model** - more participatory and decentralized.

At the same time, the challenge remains to combine the strong dynamics of the Global South with sustainable global participation of all regions, especially **women, NextGen and migrant churches (diaspora).**

In conclusion:

The General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance in South Korea was encouraging in many ways, a strong sign of global connectedness and at the same time a reflection of the current shifts in world Christianity. At the same time, it became clear that this awakening also has its areas of tension, especially when it comes to **genuine intercultural cooperation** and the **visible inclusion of women** in all areas.

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