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The Women's Commission Participation in the WEA General Assembly

October 2025 in Seoul / Korea

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World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) – Women’s Commission

Pre-General Assembly (GA) Gathering and GA Participation Report

Dates: 26 October – 1st November, 2025

Location: Seoul, South Korea



1. Overview of the WC participation in the WEA General Assembly

The 14th General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) convened in Seoul under the theme “The Gospel for Everyone by 2033.” The Assembly brought together

approximately 850–900 delegates from 124 countries, in addition to thousands of Korean pastors and church leaders.

Members of the Women’s Commission were featured throughout the assembly. Dr Seble Daniel had the privilege of opening the gathering with a devotional and presenting a paper on Women in Ministry at GETI workshop. On a panel Cinthia Hieber used her own experience and spoke powerfully about



intentional visibility for people with disabilities. Sarah Scott Webb was a co-presenter of an article on a theological framework for health and flourishing.



As part of the main session attended by seven thousand Korean pastors and all GA participants, a panel of leaders—Emma van der Deijl, Irene Kibagendi, and Martha Das—addressed the reality of gendered and strategic persecution. They highlighted how violence against women is often used to destabilize entire communities and how, even within the church, survivors of sexual violence frequently face rejection and shame.

2. Purpose of the Pre- Global Assembly Gathering of the Women's Commission

The WEA Women's Commission (WC) intentionally organized a pre-Assembly gathering for its regional leaders on 26 October 2025.

Aim:

To foster deeper connection among Women's Commission members globally by **reconnecting, encouraging, fellowshipping, listening, learning, and worshipping together.**

Delegates: 60

Nations Represented: 41

Target Audience: Women in leadership — including regional and national WEA leaders, partner organizations, and Korean women leaders.

3. Opening Session

Welcome and Opening Prayer: Dr. Seble Daniel, Executive Director,



Women's Commission, WEA warmly welcomed participants and Irene Kibagendi offered the opening prayer.

4. Devotion: Rev. Esmé Bowers, Director for Church Engagement, WEA

Rev. Bowers spoke on **the power of love and truth**, reflecting on **John 15:26**:



“But when the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthener, Standby) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of Truth who comes from the Father, He will testify and bear witness about Me.”

She addressed pressing global issues—depression, trafficking, domestic violence, gender discrimination, early marriages, cultural biases, childlessness, poverty, refugee crises, war, and the marginalization of women in leadership—and reminded participants that the Holy Spirit empowers believers to live faithfully, lead courageously, love sacrificially, and bear witness to the Gospel amid these challenges.

5. Introductions and Presentation of the WC Strategic Plan

Dr. Seble Daniel introduced the WC Executive Team, Regional Leaders, invited guests, and speakers. Following that *StacieNicole Simmons*, Media & Communication Development



Officer, WC–WEA shared the outcomes of the strategic planning process conducted in Nairobi, July 2025, emphasizing heightened advocacy and awareness around regional concerns.

She noted that although she never previously identified as a “women’s ministry leader,” her passion for **oneness and collaboration between men and women** has long shaped her ministry.

Through her work with the Women’s Commission, she has encountered the unique challenges women face globally and the need for mutual support.

She highlighted two core purposes of the gathering:

1. **To learn from one another**, and
2. **To listen deeply to one another.**

Key Global Priorities Identified

1. Support for women in leadership
2. Sound biblical teaching on gender
3. Reduction of violence against women and girls



Vision and Mission Statements

Vision:

A global voice for women and girls truly flourishing as they embrace their identity in Christ Jesus.

Mission:

To engage, equip, and empower girls and women to realize their God-given gifts and lead Christ-centered lives.

These statements emerged through **months of prayer, consultation, and refinement.**

Strategic Initiatives & Updates

- Monthly **global prayer gatherings**
- Webinars with **over 1,000 participants**
- Development of upcoming **podcasts**
- Launch of the **Women in Leadership Training Program**
- Emphasis on collaboration, values alignment, reconciliation, advocacy, mentoring, and contextual resourcing



StacieNicole invited participants to share events, needs, and testimonies from their regions, emphasizing that **“we are better together.”**

She concluded with a charge:

“God is intentional. Each woman is uniquely created for a purpose. We hear you, we love you, and we are delighted to be here with you.”

6. Inspirational Message: Women in Leadership

Speaker: *Elke Werner, Chair, Women in Leadership*

Elke began by asking why women were chosen as the first witnesses of the Resurrection despite lacking legal standing. This, she argued, reflects God’s intentional use of women in His mission.



Key Themes

- Women were vital contributors to the **early church**, and they remain so today.
- Women's unique contributions matter *because* they are women, bearing distinctive gifts from God.
- Revival movements often elevate women, while rigid structures tend to silence them—something the Church must guard against.
- Women must take their place at **decision-making tables**, not only in behind-the-scenes ministry roles.
- Leadership requires courage to walk through the doors God opens.

Elke shared significant moments from her ministry journey—stepping into unfamiliar roles, preaching to thousands, and preserving opportunities for future women leaders.

She urged women to avoid the **“queen bee” mentality** and instead make room for others.

Closing Exhortation

Referencing **Psalm 56**, she encouraged:

“God opens doors in front of us. Walk through them freely and courageously.”



7. Panel Discussion

Theme: *Empowering Women in Global Church Leadership*



Moderator: Dr. Seble Daniel

Panelists:

- Rev. Dr. Lisa Pak – Korean-Canadian theologian, mobilizer, global church leader (Finishing the Task)
- Rev. Dr. Jung-Sook Lee – Korean theologian, church historian, former President of Torch Trinity Graduate University

Summary of Key Insights

- **Allies & Calling**

Dr. Pak underscored the importance of both male and female allies in affirming women's ministry, noting her own early encouragement from a male pastor as decisive.

- **Korean Church History & Current Barriers**

Dr. Lee traced women's leadership in Korean Protestantism from 19th-century missionary schools to today's ongoing limitations, where societal progress has outpaced ecclesial acceptance—particularly in ordination.

- **Navigating Cultural Tensions**

As a second-generation Korean-Canadian, Dr. Pak described leading within both egalitarian and hierarchical cultures, calling for wisdom, relational intelligence, and spiritual discernment.

- **Theological Engagement: 1 Timothy 2:13**

Panelists noted that primogeniture is inconsistently used to restrict women, pointing to many scriptural exceptions. A holistic reading affirms women's longstanding roles as leaders, teachers, and prophets.

- **Persevering Amid Resistance**

They named the realities of exclusion and misunderstanding, urging women to cultivate:

- a strong sense of calling
- prayerful resilience
- steadfastness without bitterness
- accountability to God above all
- **Women Supporting Women**

Speakers stressed rejecting internalized patriarchy, fostering intergenerational mentorship, and ensuring women do not walk alone in ministry.

- **Leadership Character**

True leadership rests on Christlike character—integrity, humility, and wisdom—rather than gendered stereotypes.



○ Final Encouragement

Difficult contexts do not negate God's calling; they often clarify it.

8. Group Conversations & Table Discussions

Facilitator: Cathie Ostapchuk

Table Topics

1. Supporting Women in Leadership
2. Training and Development
3. Networking and Partnerships
4. Biblical Gender Clarity
5. Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls



Symbolic Activity: The Key



Participants received symbolic keys representing:

- **Truth** – biblical truth shaping identity
- **Calling** – personal vocation
- **Community** –

relationships sustaining the journey

Women wrote:

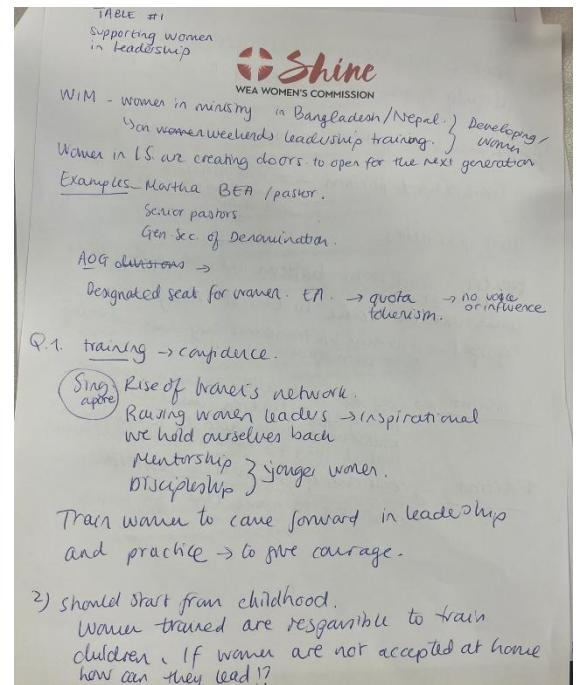
- One door God is opening
- One truth or Scripture giving them courage

These were later attached to the “Unlocking Truth”.

Discussion Outcomes

Tables shared:

- **One key insight** representing regional voices
- **One actionable step** to strengthen women's leadership or advocacy



9. Closing Prayer & Commissioning

By **StacieNicole Simmons**, inviting participants to hold their keys as a sign of commitment to God's truth and an affirmation to unlock and courageously walk through the doors God has placed before us.

The Pre-General Assembly Gathering of the Women's Commission created a vital space for reflection, theological engagement, collective discernment, and spiritual encouragement.

The gathering reaffirmed:

- The indispensable role of women in the global Church
- The need for sustained advocacy for women's full participation in ministry
- The importance of regional collaboration, contextual leadership development, and biblically grounded empowerment

The Women's Commission remains committed to equipping and advocating for women and girls worldwide as they step boldly into God's calling.



10. Panel on Co-Leadership



As a side event during the General Assembly, the Women's Commission organized a panel discussion on shared leadership. The session was facilitated by Elke, the Chair for Hope for Europe – Women in Leadership. The panelists included Co-General Secretaries of the European Evangelical Alliance Connie Main Duarte and Jan Wessels, as well as Berto Kado, a bi-vocational youth pastor and Executive Secretary to the General Secretary

of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. The panel discussion was offered twice and was well attended. It underscored the biblical foundations for shared leadership.

11. Networking Dinner and Prayer



The Executive Team of the Women's Commission also organized a networking and experience-sharing meeting during the Global Assembly for regional leaders and partners. Participants were divided into groups of five and invited to share their experiences at the Assembly, what they found most helpful, what was least helpful, and what they found interesting or humorous.

Following that, the Regional Directors for Asia, Latin America, and Africa shared their key learnings and best practices. Partners—including the World Freedom Network, Restored (CNEDA), Gender and Religious Freedom, and Rise in Strength—also gave brief presentations about their ministries and encouraged regional leaders to engage with them and invite them to serve in their respective contexts. We also had the privilege of praying for Dr Peirong Lee.



To God be the glory!
Regional Leaders and the Executive Team