

DECEMBER 2023

WSCF AP

NEWSLETTER



Candles IN THE TURMOIL

World Student Christian Federation Asia Pacific Region

— WSCF AP

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Taiwan SCM Gathering at East Gate Presbyterian Church of Taiwan

EDITORS

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TEXT AND PHOTOS

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DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Anastasia Hilda

Greetings

by Yowanda Yonggara,
Regional Executive, WSCF Asia Pacific

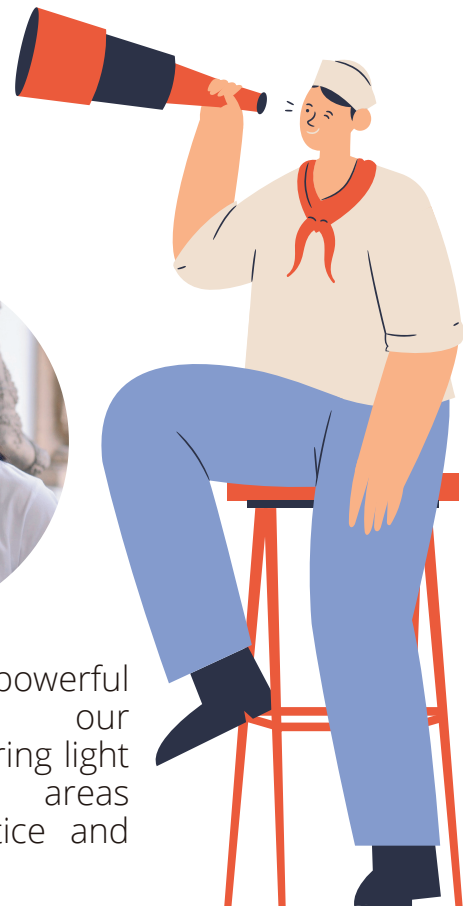
Dear National Movement, SCMerS, Senior Friends, and Ecumenical Partners,

As we conclude the second semester of 2023, I am filled with a sense of deep gratitude and reflection on our shared ecumenical journey. This period has been marked by a series of enriching experiences that have not only strengthened our faith but also our commitment to addressing the pressing social justice issues of our time.

Our engagements, ranging from the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum to our collaborations with Student Christian Movements in the region, have been pivotal in deepening our understanding of the complex challenges facing our world. These gatherings have been a living testament to our ecumenical spirit – uniting us in our diverse contexts and experiences yet binding us in a common quest for justice and peace.

The 15th CCA General Assembly and the Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly were significant milestones, reinforcing our role as an ecumenical body devoted to nurturing young leadership and amplifying voices in the pursuit of a just world. The Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCA's General Assembly and the climate justice workshop with Bangladesh SCM were further expressions of our dedication to ecological stewardship and youth empowerment.

Our participation in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign and the spiritually enriching "Candles in the Turmoil" Christmas Virtual Fellowship



have been powerful reminders of our commitment to bring light and hope into areas marred by injustice and strife.

As we step into the festive season and the coming New Year, let us continue to embody the values of compassion, justice, and peace that are at the heart of our ecumenical calling. Let us also hold in our thoughts and prayers those in places like Gaza, who continue to endure hardships and long for peace and justice.

I am inspired and hopeful for the year ahead, knowing that our collective efforts will continue to make meaningful contributions towards a more just and peaceful world. Your passion, commitment, and support are invaluable as we continue to walk this path together.

May this season be a time of renewal and strength for all of us as we strive to embody the principles of our shared faith and commitment to social justice.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with hope, peace, and justice.

In Solidarity and Hope,
Yowanda Yonggara

REGIONAL UPDATE

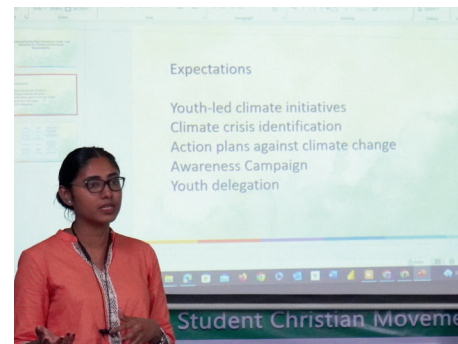


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WSCF AP Goes to “Taiwan”



Steering Towards Change: **The Taiwan Ecumenical Forum Steering Group Meeting 2023**

In a time of escalating conflicts and changing geopolitical dynamics, the Steering Group of the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF) convened for a crucial meeting in Taipei on September 7th and 8th, 2023. This event, significant for being the first in-person gathering since the pandemic, brought together key members, including Yowanda Yonggara, the Regional Executive of the WSCF Asia Pacific. The meeting was a vital opportunity to address the new challenges facing the world and the forum's role within it.

Refocusing Goals and Strengthening Leadership

The Steering Group engaged in deep and strategic discussions aimed at recalibrating the goals of the TEF in response to the evolving global context. A key focus was on enhancing the leadership of the forum and extending partnerships with other global and regional ecumenical bodies, as well as with partner churches. This effort was not just about reinforcing existing ties but also about expanding the forum's network to embrace broader collaborations and perspectives.

Navigating Global Shifts

The meeting addressed the shifting landscape of global geopolitics, recognizing new actors emerging in the realm of imperialism. The group critically evaluated the challenges posed by transnational corporations and the ultra-wealthy, whose influence often exacerbates the disparity in wealth and power distribution. Additionally, the increasing trend of militarization and its implications, particularly for regions like Taiwan, was a key point of discussion.

Analyzing and Adapting to Contextual Changes

The Steering Group underscored the importance of continual discernment and adaptation to these changing times. The pandemic had laid bare many global challenges, necessitating a relevant and honest approach to addressing these issues.

Commitment to Solidarity and Empowerment

A renewed commitment to support Taiwan, its people, and churches in the face of international isolation and potential threats was a significant outcome of the meeting. The group emphasized the importance of listening to and amplifying the voices of indigenous communities, recognizing them as primary victims of imperialism. The Steering Group also stressed the vital roles of youth and women in the TEF, acknowledging their invaluable contributions to the forum's journey.

Urgent Calls for Ecumenical Engagement

The Steering Group issued calls for the ecumenical movement and global church to undertake critical analysis and theological reflection, tools essential for resisting oppressive structures and fostering new paths of hope. The group advocated for an end to Taiwan's isolation, urging the global church to stand with the Taiwanese people. Additionally, the need for effective communication strategies and dialogues, including engagement with the Chinese Christian Council, was highlighted as crucial for promoting Christian unity and justice.

In conclusion, the 2023 Taiwan Ecumenical Forum Steering Group meeting marked a pivotal moment of collective discernment and commitment. The decisions and directions taken at this meeting are set to guide the WSCF Asia Pacific in their mission, reinforcing their resolve to act as beacons of hope and catalysts for positive change in a world in dire need of peace and justice.



From left to right : Jacquelyn - WSCF AP Standing Committee, Rev. Sudu Tada - PCT Associate General Secretaries Indigenous Mission Committee, Yowanda Yonggara AP Regional Executive, Rev. Tan, Sin-liong PCT General Secretary, Chi Kang - PCT Ecumenical office Specialist



Visiting the Taipei Unit of Taiwan SCM at PCT Office

The following day, an important meeting was convened with key figures: Rev. Chiā, Hūi-koan, the PCT Program Secretary for Campus Ministry, Rev. Chi-Kang Chiang from the PCT Ecumenical Office, and Jacquelyn Tsai-Hsun Tsao, a member of the WSCF AP Standing Committee from Taiwan. This gathering was a platform for in-depth discussions about the ongoing work of both WSCF AP and Taiwan SCM. The conversation delved into potential areas for future collaboration, exploring ways to strengthen ties and enhance the impact of their respective missions.

In a significant effort to foster collaboration and understanding, the WSCF Asia Pacific Regional Executive embarked on a movement visit to the Taiwan Student Christian Movement (SCM), and the General Assembly Office of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) on September 11th and 12th, 2023.

On the first day, the Regional Executive met with a reverend Pok Hien from the Taipei Unit who provided a guided tour of their office. This visit offered insights into the operational aspects of Taiwan SCM, which functions under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) Campus Ministry. The interaction highlighted the unique approaches and strategies employed by Taiwan SCM in its campus ministry efforts.



Meeting with PCT Program Secretary for Campus Ministry



This visit was a significant step in reinforcing the bond between WSCF AP and Taiwan SCM. It emphasized the importance of mutual support and partnership in advancing the objectives of the student Christian movement and the broader ecumenical community in the region.

WSCF AP Regional Executive's Visit to Taiwan SCM & PCT



WSCF AP Goes to “India”



Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs 21st General Assembly

"Uniting for a Resilient Future: APAY General Assembly 2023"

The Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCA's (APAY) General Assembly, a beacon of hope and unity in the ecumenical community, convened in Chennai, India, from September 15th to 20th, 2023. Following the 5th Youth Assembly from September 13th to 15th, this event epitomized the spirit of collective resilience and transformation, aligning with its theme: "Journeying Together, As a Resilient Community: Transforming lives through Vision 2030."

Embodying the Mission

Anchored in the PARIS BASIS, the foundational principle of the YMCA movement, the assembly brought to life the vision of an ecumenical Christian movement inspired by God's love as revealed in Jesus Christ. The YMCA's commitment to spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and advocating for a society marked by justice and peace was palpable throughout the assembly.

A Message of Unity and Solidarity

Yowanda, representing the WSCF Asia Pacific as its Regional Executive, delivered a heartfelt greeting at the opening ceremony. Her speech underscored the deep connection between the YMCA and WSCF, both organizations sharing a commitment to peace and a just world. Highlighting global interconnections and various national challenges, from Taiwan's quest for international recognition to Myanmar's struggle for democracy, Yowanda's words emphasized the vital role organizations like YMCA play in promoting peace, justice, and unity.



Celebrating Young Leaders and Global Solidarity

The 5th Youth Assembly, preceding the General Assembly, showcased young leaders articulating their visions for change. Their perspectives on global interconnectedness resonated deeply, especially given the current geopolitical climate. Yowanda's participation in this assembly highlighted the importance of youth leadership in shaping a more just and peaceful world.

Welcoming New Leadership

A key moment of the assembly was the election of the new APAY board for the 2023-2027 quadrennial. Reverend Philip Thomas from Malaysia SCM, a senior friend, was elected as the new APAY president. In a spirit of collaboration and shared mission, WSCF Asia Pacific extends congratulations to APAY for the successful assembly and warmly welcomes the new board, looking forward to future collaborative endeavors.

Looking Forward

As the APAY General Assembly concluded, it left behind a legacy of inspiration and a renewed commitment to the YMCA's mission. WSCF Asia Pacific eagerly anticipates continued collaboration, embodying the principle of 'Ut Omnes Unum Sint' – that all may be one – in their collective efforts to transform lives and uphold the integrity of Creation.



— SCM India

In a profound demonstration of commitment to environmental stewardship, the Student Christian Movement of India (SCMI) North Tamil Nadu Region organized the "Time for Creation Prayer" event on September 21, 2023, at the Church of South India (CSI) Bishop Newbigin College of Education. This event was a part of the global Season of Creation, a time for Christians worldwide to unite in care for our planet.

Before the seminar, **Yowanda Yonggara** and SCMI General Secretary, **Dakerlin Mukhim** visited the Church of South India Synod Centre. There, they met with Revd. C. Fernandes Rathina Raja, the General Secretary of the CSI, and Prof. Dr. Vimal Sukumar, the Honorary Treasurer, expressing gratitude for their warm reception and invaluable support.



WSCF AP visit to CSI Synod Centre in Chennai. In Picture are CSI General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, SCMI General Secretary and AP RS.



Uniting for Earth's Stewardship: SCMI's Commitment to Creation

At the event, **Yowanda**, alongside **Dakerlin Mukhim** and **Dr. S. Stephen Jebanesan**, Diocesan College Secretary, served as chief guests. Yowanda shared the vision and goals of the WSCF Asia Pacific, emphasizing the federation's role in promoting environmental consciousness within the Asia Pacific region.

This celebration, part of a broader ecumenical initiative extending from the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation to the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, highlighted the critical role of Christian communities in advocating for the planet's wellbeing. The efforts of Dr. V. Regina, the College Principal, Dr. J. Nirmala, the SCMI Staff Advisor, and Gnanamani, the SCMI Chennai-SCMI Program Secretary, in organizing this event were highly commended.

This gathering not only served as a period of reflection and prayer but also reinforced the Christian commitment to ecological stewardship and the care of creation.



(Left-Right : Joel (AP Standing Committee), Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala (Chairperson of SCMI), Yowanda (APRS), Dr. Sethu (SCMI Treasurer) Dakerlin (SCMI GS)

Bridging Movements: WSCF AP's Visit to SCMI National Office

Continuing her journey of ecumenical engagement, the Regional Executive of the WSCF Asia Pacific visited the SCMI National Office in Bangalore the following day. This visit provided a unique platform for meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas with students from various SCM units and the SCMI staff.

During this interaction, she shared insights into the workings of the WSCF Asia Pacific and recounted her personal experiences as a member of the SCM in Indonesia. This exchange was particularly enlightening for the students, as it offered them a glimpse into the challenges and operations of SCM in a different cultural context. Her stories and experiences from Indonesia sparked curiosity among the students, leading to discussions about the specific challenges faced by SCM in Indonesia and the strategies employed to address them.

This visit also opened a window for the students to express their concerns about the current state of the Indian education system and societal issues. It was an opportunity for a candid and open conversation, where students voiced their thoughts and apprehensions about the challenges they face in their local context.

The visit exemplified the spirit of global solidarity and mutual learning that characterizes the WSCF. It was not just an exchange of experiences but also a moment of building connections and understanding the diverse challenges and contexts each SCM unit operates in. This interaction highlighted the importance of listening, sharing, and supporting each other in the journey towards social justice and educational reform.



Special Report: WSCF AP at the 15th CCA General Assembly in Kerala, India

In late September 2023, the World Student Christian Federation Asia Pacific (WSCF AP) had the honor of participating in the 15th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) held in Kottayam, Kerala. Themed 'God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation', the event marked a pivotal moment for ecumenical dialogue and action in the region.

Engagement in the Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly (AEYA)

Prior to the main assembly, WSCF AP took an active role in the AEA from September 25 to 27. The Regional Executive, Yowanda Yonggara, and Arr Wai, an Ex-Co member of WSCF AP, served as speakers for the panel discussion on "Youth Leadership in Church and Ecumenical Movement." Their insights contributed to a vibrant discourse on the vital role of youth in shaping the future of the church and its ecumenical mission.

Ecumenical Greeting and Advocacy for Youth Inclusion

During the General Assembly, Yowanda Yonggara extended greetings on behalf of WSCF AP, emphasizing the significant contributions of the youth to the church and the broader ecumenical movement. The message underscored the often-overlooked voices of young generations, particularly in their active engagement with social issues, and the need for their involvement in church decision-making processes. This call to action resonated with the assembly's theme, highlighting the urgency of inclusive, transformative action in times of global crises.

WSCF AP Booth and Informal Gathering for Senior Friends and Partners

WSCF AP established a booth in the convention hall, showcasing its activities and initiatives through brochures and visual presentations. On September 30th, an informal gathering for WSCF AP senior friends and partners provided a platform for sharing experiences and updates. This session allowed for a deeper connection among participants, reaffirming the enduring impact of WSCF AP on individuals and their professional and spiritual journeys.



Sharing session with Karen Puimera (WCC Ex-Com Member) and the youth at Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Kerala.



WSCF AP Senior friends and Partners Gathering.



RS with the newly elected CCA Chairperson Bishop Rael (Senior Friend from the Philippines)



With Dr. George Zachariah

Observing the Assembly’s Decision-Making Processes

One of the assembly’s critical agendas was the election of new CCA officers and executive committee members. WSCF AP celebrated the election of Bishop Euel Norman Marigza from the Philippines as the new Moderator of CCA. Additionally, Rev. David Anirudha Das from Bangladesh and Su-Hong Lim from Taiwan, both senior friends of WSCF AP, were elected as executive committee members. The presence of these individuals in key roles signifies a promising future for collaborative efforts and ecumenical endeavors in the region.

Reflecting on the Assembly’s Impact

The 15th CCA General Assembly was not just a gathering but a testament to the power of collective ecumenical action. The participation of WSCF AP, particularly in advocating for the inclusion and leadership of youth, highlighted the need for diverse voices in addressing the pressing challenges of our times. The event served as a reminder of the ongoing commitment required to uphold justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, in line with the assembly’s theme.



WSCF AP Booth at CCA GA



Church Session: Reconciliation with God’s Creation for Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace

As the assembly concluded, WSCF AP looked forward to continued engagement and collaboration with CCA and its member bodies. The event reinforced the belief that collective efforts are crucial for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by churches and communities across Asia. It affirmed that by working together, embodying the spirit of renewal and restoration, significant strides can be made towards a more just and equitable world.



Bangladesh SCM

01 Engaging Youth in Climate Action: Bangladesh SCM's Climate Justice Workshop

The Bangladesh Student Christian Movement (SCM), with support from WSCF Asia Pacific, hosted a significant workshop titled "**Youth Leading Change: Climate Justice through Cultural Movement**" in Dhaka Caritas from October 5th to 8th, 2023. This event brought together approximately 50 students from various SCM units across Bangladesh.

Focused on climate and economic justice, the workshop aimed to enlighten youth about the pressing climate crisis and its specific impacts on Bangladesh. It sought to empower young participants to become active advocates for climate action and social responsibility, using cultural forms of expression to voice their concerns, ideas, and solutions. Additionally, the workshop emphasized supporting at-risk communities in building resilience to climate-related crises and reinforcing the link between environmental stewardship and faith-based values.

Notable speakers included former WSCF Chairpersons, now influential figures in their respective fields, such as **Rev. David Das**, General Secretary of Bangladesh NCC, and **Keka Adhikary**, former WSCF AP Chairperson. Their contributions added depth and perspective to the discussions.

The Regional Executive for WSCF AP, **Yowanda Yonggara**, led a session on the final day, focusing on "*Climate Crisis Action and WSCF AP's Position*". Her session provided insights on understanding the climate crisis, youth empowerment, advocacy strategies, global collaboration, and ethical considerations in climate action. It was an interactive session designed to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in addressing climate challenges while reflecting on WSCF AP's viewpoints.

The workshop marked a step forward in engaging and mobilizing youth for impactful climate action, reflecting a collective effort to tackle one of the most pressing issues of our time.



NCC Bangladesh

02 Fostering Ecumenical Connections: WSCF AP's Visit to Bangladesh NCC

The WSCF Asia Pacific's visit to the Bangladesh National Council of Churches (NCCB) marked a significant step in strengthening ecumenical ties. Led by Regional Secretary **Yowanda Yonggara** and accompanied by WSCF AP Chairperson **Monika Biswas**, Bangladesh SCM Chairperson Daisy Roy, and Student Secretary Utshob, the delegation engaged in fruitful discussions with NCCB General Secretary **Rev. David Das**, a former WSCF AP Chairperson and Christian Conference of Asia Executive Committee member. Topics included WSCF AP's current initiatives, ecumenical work challenges, and exploratory talks about Bangladesh SCM's potential NCCB membership. The visit, highlighting the spirit of cooperation, ended with a shared meal, symbolizing a shared commitment to future collaboration.



Critical Dialogues at WCRC Consultations: Tackling Contemporary Challenges

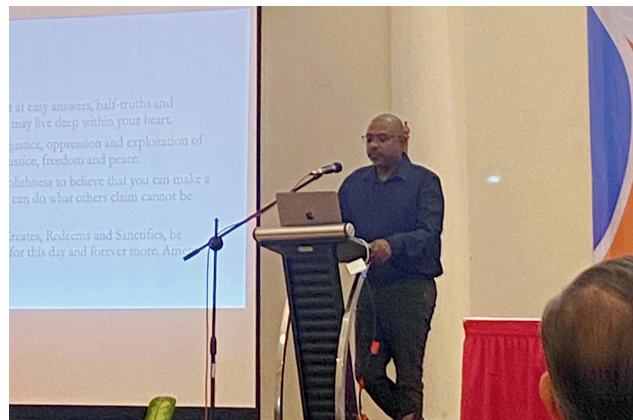
The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) held two significant consultations in Jakarta from October 18th to 25th, 2023, delving into pressing global issues. The first, centered on Ecology, Economic, and Theology, aimed to unify these domains in addressing the climate crisis, leading to a critical theological statement for the Decade for Climate Justice. The second consultation, "Reading the Signs of the Times," focused on interpreting current global situations from the perspectives of the marginalized, challenging the church to rethink its role and mission in today's world.

These sessions provided a fertile ground for profound dialogue and theological inquiry. Contributors from various backgrounds, including those from WSCF Asia Pacific, offered a myriad of insights, deepening the conversations. The initial consultation successfully linked economic and ecological matters with theological thought, generating valuable resources for churches grappling with these intricate issues.

In the second consultation, participants dissected the power dynamics affecting marginalized groups, culminating in a principled statement that addresses the world's pressing issues and offers guidance on the church's mission in such complex times. This segment also saw the presentation of papers that are set for publication, contributing significantly to broader ecclesiastical discussions.

WSCF AP Regional Executive Yowanda Yonggara was invited to be the Panelist for the second consultation. Her presentation, "Reading the Signs of the Time from the Youth Perspectives," delved into the less-discussed but rapidly emerging issue of the Digital Order's influence in shaping societal norms and individual identities. She articulated how technology companies increasingly determine our identities, extending beyond nature and nurture to the realm of algorithms. Yowanda emphasized the staggering power these tech companies hold, shaping thoughts and defining identities through online information and algorithms, often leading to increased societal division and hatred.

Her insights underscored the urgency for the church to engage with and understand this new digital landscape. Yowanda's perspective highlighted the importance of recognizing how the digital era influences not only individual beliefs but also broader societal dynamics, calling for a proactive and informed ecclesiastical response to these emerging challenges.



WCRC

WSCF AP Goes to "Indonesia"



AWRC's Feminist Theology Workshop: Addressing Women's Leadership Challenges

The Asian Women Resource Centre (AWRC) for Culture and Theology conducted a critical workshop, the 2023 Women in Leadership Feminist Theology Workshop, from December 7th to 11th, 2023. This significant event, organized in collaboration with Indonesian Christian universities and institutes, saw the participation of WSCF Asia Pacific as a member of AWRC.

The workshop featured seven sessions, each focusing on different aspects of women's leadership through a feminist theological lens. These sessions included storytelling on women leadership, feminist analysis of leadership experiences, biblical and theological perspectives on women, body and self, and the intersections of gender, education, and leadership.

One of the workshop's primary goals was to develop modules or a curriculum on feminist theory in Indonesia and to establish a Women Leadership School. This initiative aimed at empowering women and addressing the deep-rooted challenges they face in leadership roles.

A key part of the discussions involved the challenges faced by women in organizations, including WSCF AP. The patriarchal culture ingrained in society also permeates organizational structures, often relegating women to superficial roles that appear inclusive but lack substantive empowerment. Women's opinions are frequently undervalued, and their participation is limited to "women-empowerment" divisions rather than key decision-making positions.

These challenges often deter women from seeking more significant roles within organizations. Women who assert their capabilities face alienation and exclusion, not only from male colleagues but also from other women who may resist change. Additionally, women who attain high positions encounter jealousy and the burden of being exemplary role models. They are often unfairly labeled as "bossy" or "emotional," facing unrealistic expectations and societal stigma.

This insightful workshop highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in organizational cultures to genuinely empower women leaders. It emphasized the importance of creating supportive environments where women can thrive without the fear of judgment or alienation, a crucial step towards achieving true gender equality and inclusivity.





WSCF AP Goes to “Thailand”

WSCF AP at ICHRP Conference & 4th General Assembly in Bangkok

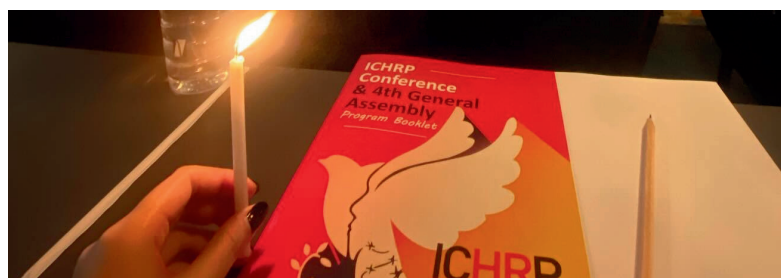
The International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) held its **Conference** and 4th General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, from November 6th to 9th, 2023, **focusing** on **US counterinsurgency impacts in the Philippines**. The event, attended by over 120 human rights advocates from more than 30 (thirty) organizations worldwide, marked the first post-pandemic face-to-face meeting of the global interfaith network, including representatives from WSCF Asia Pacific.

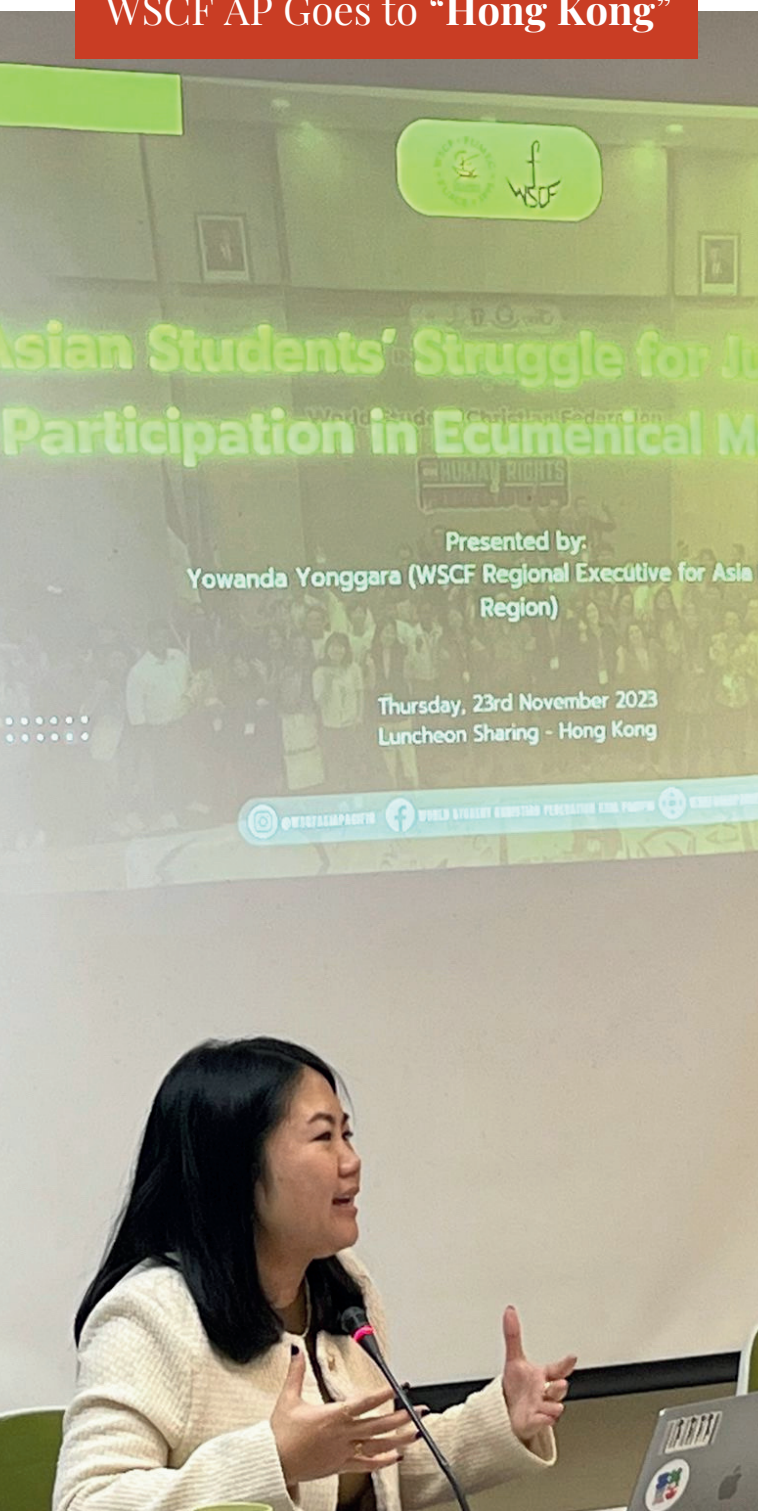
The conference centered on the ongoing human rights violations in the Philippines, facilitated by US military aid and tactics, and their detrimental effects on peace aspirations under the new Marcos regime. Advocates from various sectors – labor, peasant, faith, indigenous, women’s, and human rights – convened to strategize on expanding the solidarity movement for peace and rights in the Philippines.

Key speakers, including **Edith Burgos** of Karapatan National Council and **Suzanne Adely**, President of the US National Lawyers Guild, offered critical analyses of the counterinsurgency programs and their historical roots, drawing parallels with other global struggles for liberation.

The **4th General Assembly** saw the renewal of ICHRP leadership and the election of new members to the ICHRP Global Council. The assembly also revised by-laws, approved a comprehensive action plan, and united on resolutions to oppose various repressive acts and campaigns under the Marcos regime.

The participation of WSCF Asia Pacific in this significant event underscores their commitment to global human rights advocacy and solidarity with the Filipino people. The conference and assembly provided a crucial platform for discussing and addressing the pressing issues of human rights violations and counterinsurgency impacts, fostering a stronger international coalition for justice and peace.





A Confluence of Voices: Ecumenical Engagement at Chung Chi College

In the latter part of 2023, The Chinese University of Hong Kong's Divinity School of Chung Chi College became the venue for a remarkable ecumenical gathering. This event marked a moment of unity, dialogue, and reflection, emphasizing the significant role of ecumenical movements in advocating for a world characterized by justice and peace.

Centered around the theme of nurturing peace and fostering understanding, the session provided a platform for an enriching exchange of ideas and experiences. It underscored the vital contributions of ecumenical organizations and movements in promoting inclusivity and mutual respect among diverse communities.

The discussions delved into the essence of activism and collaboration, highlighting the transformative potential of collective efforts in addressing global challenges. This gathering served as a powerful reminder of the importance of solidarity, empathy, and the shared pursuit of a just and peaceful society.

As a beacon of hope and collaboration, the event showcased the strength found in unity and the enduring impact of ecumenical engagement in cultivating an environment of understanding and respect. It was a testament to the power of collective action in making strides towards a more harmonious and equitable world.



WSCF AP'S ONLINE ACTIVITY



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WSCF AP Joins the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

During the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, spanning from November 25th to December 10th, the Women's Committee of WSCF Asia Pacific actively participated in this global campaign. Initiated in 1991 at the Women's Global Leadership Institute, the campaign highlights violence against women as a critical human rights issue.

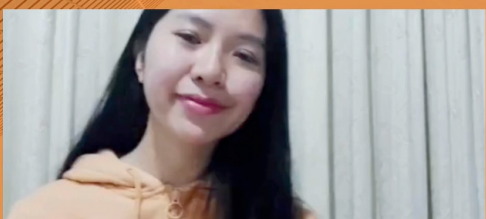
This year, WSCF AP's Women's Committee spearheaded an online campaign, rallying SCM units across the region, including India, Taiwan, Indonesia, Myanmar, along with the WSCF AP Chairperson. The initiative aimed to raise awareness and advocate for the elimination of violence against women and girls. Through digital platforms, SCM members in Asia Pacific joined forces to amplify their voices, demonstrating solidarity in the fight against gender-based violence and underscoring the urgency of this global issue.



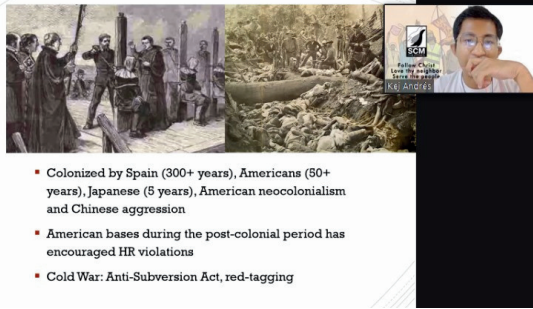
Take a look to WSCF AP's #16DoA campaign through our official social media

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

WSCF ASIA PACIFIC



History of Human Rights in the PH



- Colonized by Spain (300+ years), Americans (50+ years), Japanese (5 years), American neocolonialism and Chinese aggression
- American bases during the post-colonial period has encouraged HR violations
- Cold War: Anti-Subversion Act, red-tagging



WSCF Asia Pacific Christmas Virtual Fellowship

"Candles in the Turmoil"

WSCF AP – "HRJP Committee"

ALL:

Hallowed be Your name

Joel :

You revealed your name in a blaze of fire from the midst of a bush, Calling Moses to liberate his people from the oppression of slavery, To face Pharaoh with God's word of warning. You revealed your name as "hearing the cry of the oppressed,"

WSCF AP's 'Candles in the Turmoil': A Christmas Fellowship of Hope and Solidarity

The WSCF Asia Pacific Christmas Virtual Fellowship, held on December 9th, 2023, with the theme "Candles in the Turmoil," provided a meaningful platform for global reflection and solidarity. This special event, initiated by the Human Rights, Justice, and Peace Committee of the WSCF AP, brought together SCMerS, senior friends, and ecumenical partners to focus on the enduring hope amidst global turmoil.

The virtual gathering was opened by MC **Jessica Warouw** from GMKI (Indonesia SCM), who gracefully set the tone for an evening of fellowship and reflection. Participants from various regions shared their names, locations, and Christmas greetings, creating a tapestry of diverse voices united in the festive spirit.

WSCF AP Regional Executive **Yowanda Yonggara** extended a heartfelt welcome, expressing gratitude for the collective efforts and resilience of the community. She underscored the significance of the gathering in embodying the true spirit of Christmas – a beacon of love, peace, and compassion in challenging times.

The fellowship featured a Bible Reflection by **Dr. David Gill**, a senior friend from Australia SCM, whose insights added depth to the theme. Representatives from SCM Philippines, SCM Myanmar, and SCMI India, including **Kej Andres, Justin**, and **Rev. Siamlaron (Aron)**, shared stories of global solidarity, highlighting the challenges and aspirations from their respective contexts.

Participants were treated to **song performances** from **Bangladesh SCM** and **Myanmar SCM**, further enriching the event's cultural and spiritual tapestry. These performances, including a pre-recorded dance from Bangladesh SCM supporting Palestine and a Christmas song from Myanmar SCM, underscored the fellowship's theme of unity and peace.

The event culminated in a symbolic and powerful **Virtual Prayer Vigil** led by Yowanda Yonggara. Attendees lit candles, collectively praying for peace and justice worldwide, embodying the theme of being 'Candles in the Turmoil'. This moment of solidarity and reflection served as a powerful reminder of the light that can emerge from the darkness and the role of community in navigating turbulent times.



In conclusion, the WSCF AP Christmas Virtual Fellowship was not just an event but a manifestation of hope, unity, and the transformative power of collective action. It reinforced the commitment to being beacons of light in a world facing turmoil, continuing the journey towards a just and compassionate world.

WSCF AP's 'Candles in the Turmoil': A Christmas Fellowship of Hope and Solidarity

Under President Duterte (2016-2022)

Category	Count
VIOLATION OF CIVIL POLICE UNDER THE RODRIGO DUTERTE GOVERNMENT	
481,918 FORCED EVACUATION	442 EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS
574 FRUSTRATED EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS*	2,957 ILLEGAL ARREST WITHOUT DETENTION
20,348 INDISCRIMINATE FIRING	1,341 ILLEGAL ARREST AND DETENTION
USE OF SCHOOLS, MEDICAL, RELIGIOUS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES FOR MILITARY PURPOSE	47,587

*DATA DOES NOT INCLUDE DRUG-RELATED EJKS

Speakers: Kej Andres (SCM Philippines)



Bible Reflection by Dr. David Gill



Speaker: Rev. Siamlaron (SCM India)



Speaker: Justin (Myanmar SCM)



Photo session

— *Resonance of Dissonance by*

LIM

Su-Hong

SCM Taiwan Member, Newly Appointed
Ex-Committee Member of CCA



The 15th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) ended in early October. Before the general assembly, CCA coordinate several pre-conference events such as the Youth Assembly and Women's Assembly, so I had more opportunities to engage in dialogue with youth representatives from various countries of Asia.

Despite our diverse backgrounds, we were surprised to discover how similar our situations were! We all faced the dirge of societal setbacks such as—democratic regression, economic injustice, prevailing patriarchal culture, human rights violations, and geopolitical conflicts.

Even within the walls of the church, things were not entirely well. Issues such as the plight of church politics, the gap between generations, monopolization of the voices, and challenges faced by ambitious youth is no different because these challenges have crossed national borders. For young Christians, these issues became even more concerning, as the church is supposed to be the prophet in society. However, when the church itself becomes a represent of imperialism, it may lead to distortions in the spirit and behavior of the community of faith, and then to a worrisome collapse.

Conversations with ecumenical partners often conclude with sighs and silence, but someone would break the pattern, expressing with confidence, "We are the youth, the future of the church, and the hope of the Lord remains."

During the conference, several youth delegates noticed that the official schedule did not arrange a time slot for the declaration of the pre-assembly, so they strive hard to seize the opportunity to present the declaration aloud, which was finally approved by the moderator. With the youth delegates uniting, we read the entire statement aloud, standing together to express our stance. At that moment, young delegates stood scattered throughout the venue, creating a meaningful scene.

This made me reflect further, what about my home country Taiwan? Looking back on the "Taiwan Church Youth Fellowship" (TKC) in 1949, which facilitated the Presbyterian Church in the North and South were unified. While it's essential to celebrate this significant historical event, it's more worthwhile to contemplate the calling and mission of the youth, in this land and this generation.

Resonance of Dissonance

As emphasized in the current CCA Youth Conference Declaration: "Churches must take heed and see young faithful's vital role in the church, not only as the future of the church but as partakers of God's mission now – one with the rest of God's children." The above quotes provide us with signposts to move forward.

Taking the "consensus decision-making system" used for the first time at this conference as an example, This system is supposed to enrich dialogue with diverse perspectives, has paradoxically limited the voices of the youth due to a certain cultural context common to Asia. The CCA still has a long way to go before it can become a "consensus-based CCA" in the future.

The conference also elected new members of the Executive Committee (Ex-Com). In the composition of the new committee, the proportion of youth remains low, so the responsibilities and symbolic significance of the youth Ex-Com members are even more significant. I was selected as a youth committee member, despite not intending to be nominated before attending this conference. When I was still in the mood of uncertainty and apprehension, many youth representatives came forward to congratulate and encourage me. They inspire me to do my best and be a voice for young Christians in Asia as an Ex-Com so that youth can become a more active in CCA. However, we knew that this is a difficult task.

The disbanded and reformed Japanese idol group Keyakizaka46 had a song called "Dissonance," Which elicited a huge hit and response from young generations across borders. One lyric goes: "Break existing concepts with dissonance / It's strange when everyone gathers but there's only one voice / Stick to your own will!"

While observing the immaturity in practicing a consensus decision-making system, and the challenges faced by youth committee members at this assembly, even though the church and societal structures remain rigid, the ecumenical youth in Asia are resonating with each other. By leveraging the energy of autonomous assembly and network-building, and continually emitting out our "dissonance" to the church community, only then can the Christian faith become a new generation's light and salt in the "today" of our local and Asian context.

(This article is translated and adapted from "Resonance of Dissonance" which was published in the "Taiwan Church News" in Nov. 15, 2023. Special thanks to YANG Yu-Jung, the youth of TKC, for her assistance.)





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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

In our ongoing efforts to strengthen our community, we humbly appeal for your financial assistance. Your support will enable us to continue organizing impactful programs, supporting SCM activities, and managing our recent office relocation. Each contribution, regardless of its size, helps us maintain our momentum and furthers our mission. To lend your support, kindly transfer your donation to the bank account details we will provide. Upon making the transfer, please inform our regional office by sending an e-mail to wscfap@wscfasiapacific.org with the proof of your transaction for our records. We deeply appreciate your generosity, and on behalf of everyone at the WSCF AP, thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our ongoing journey. Your support means more than you could possibly imagine.

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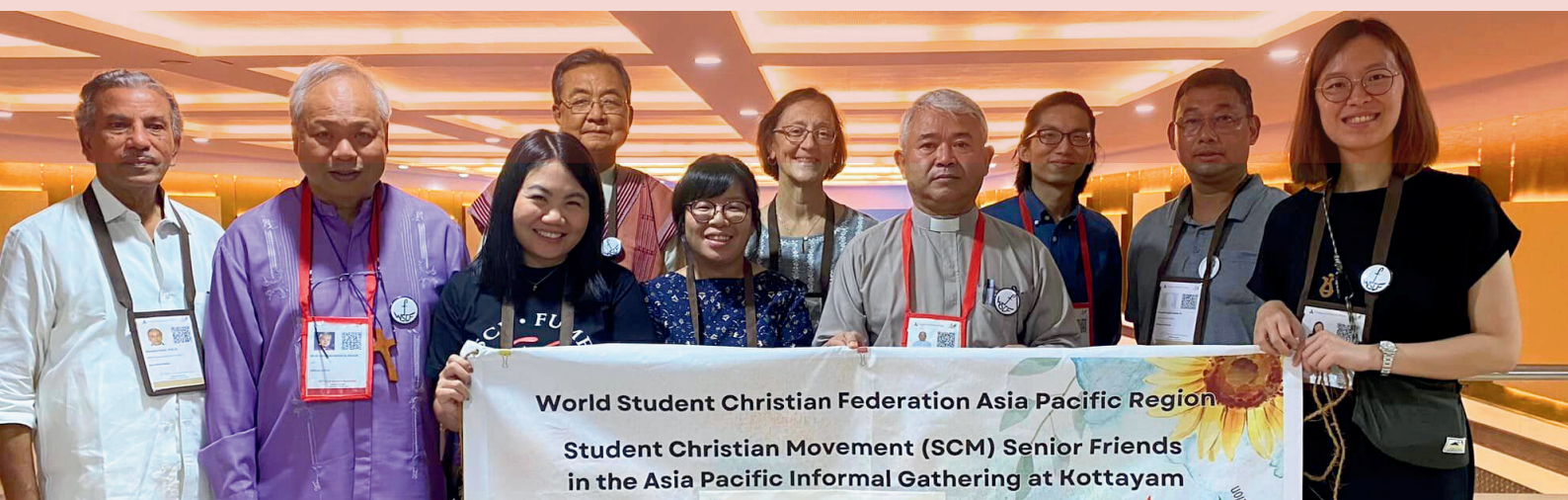
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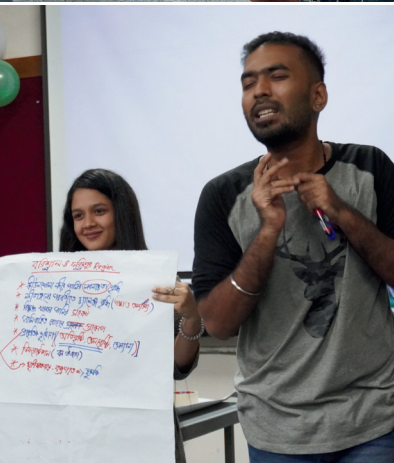
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WSCF AP continues to strive towards fostering Christian unity and social transformation in the Asia-Pacific region. We invite all our friends and supporters to join us on this journey. Whether you are a student, a young leader, or someone passionate about making a positive change, there are numerous ways you can get involved and contribute to our collective efforts.

Stay up-to-date with all the latest news, events, and opportunities by following us on social media and subscribing to our newsletter. Together, let's create a thriving community of young Christian leaders united in our commitment to make a difference.

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