

WSCF makes spirited impact at global gathering

WSCF put forward a confident presence at the recent World Council of Churches ninth General Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

SCMers and senior friends were there in large numbers as church delegates, stewards, workshop leaders and in the WCC Latin American youth camp.

The February 2006 General Assembly was a massive undertaking, organised around the theme "God in your Grace, Transform the World" and was attended by almost 4,000 people. Alongside sessions for delegates, the assembly hosted a "Mutirão", a huge forum of workshops and displays from churches, NGOs and ecumenical organisations. Named as a youth assembly by the WCC, the programme included a Youth Pre-Assembly and a Young Ecumenist's Group designed to boost young people's participation. Under 30s were invited to join in the assembly's "ecumenical conversations" as well as in worship, Bible studies and plenary sessions. WSCF members participated in all these aspects of assembly life and acted as advisors to the WCC, leaders of Bible studies and worship and in the "Bate Papo" (inter-generational dialogue).

Senior friend and Uniting Church of Australia advisor Sandy Yule was impressed with the WSCF spirit on display,

"As one of the few youth-oriented organisational manifestations of the church at an Assembly promoting its focus on youth, the WSCF profile was strong and positive"

Executive Committee (ExCo) member Michael Perkins (Aotearoa New Zealand) enjoyed the impact of the WSCF group as they arrived at the Youth Pre-Assembly,

"We really made a splash when we arrived in the red T-shirts (stamped with the slogan, 'World Student Christian Federation: Ecumenism Guaranteed - since 1895'). It was exciting to be the centre of a stir of interest".

Four of the Assembly's Mutirão workshops were led by WSCF staff and students, offering WSCF's critical perspectives on issues of Gender, Empire, Migration and Students.



Photograph © WCC/Paulino Menezes

▲ WSCF leaders present WCC General Secretary with a WSCF "Ecumenism Guaranteed" T-shirt. Pictured in foreground from left: Ms Ruth Kobia, Rev'd Dr Sam Kobia, Dr Ken Guest and Ms Georgine Kengne Djeutane.

A colourful WSCF display highlighting the various facets of the federation's work drew many senior friends, supporters and enquirers throughout the duration of the assembly. SCMers at the display shared news of WSCF with thousands of assembly participants.

They collected hundreds of names of people wanting more information and handed out several thousand WSCF leaflets and publications. Cuban senior friend and former WSCF General Secretary Manuel Quintero noted with pleasure that the WSCF display in the main exhibition hall was "impossible to miss"

Norwegian student Ingjerd Jøssang spent many hours staffing the WSCF display and was struck by the positive response from so many different people;

"It was so much fun and inspiring! People from all over the world came to our display, told us that they were students and active in the SCM in their home country, or they asked about WSCF and were inspired by the work we do" Ingjerd found it was a great chance to get the sense of WSCF's history and global reach, "Meeting all the senior friends from around the world... Wow. They were really happy to

see us and wanted to hear what's going on in WSCF today. I especially remember one senior friend from Latin America who said, 'I'm so happy to see WSCF here. All the things I learned about social justice and human rights I learned in my SCM' "

The decision to have high levels of WSCF involvement in the WCC gathering came from the 2004 WSCF General Assembly's call to raise the profile of the federation.

WSCF Chairperson Ken Guest reflected that WSCF's "visibility strategy" had proved highly successful in Brazil,

"The whole federation should be very proud of the excellent and energetic work of the ExCo at the WCC Assembly. "You people are everywhere!" one ecumenical partner told me. By the end of the two weeks, everyone at the Assembly knew that the WSCF is alive and ready to reassert its place at the centre of ecumenical leadership formation"

WSCF congratulates the many senior friends who were elected to leadership positions in the World Council of Churches at the Assembly.

Federation celebrates diversity at prayer



▲ WSCF students, staff and senior friends join together to lead the 2006 Universal Day of Prayer for Students liturgy at the WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

WSCF students and friends were out in force to lead the Universal Day of Prayer for Students in Porto Alegre this February.

Joining in prayer with SCMs celebrating the day across the globe, over two hundred worshippers joined in the liturgy at the Chapel of the Pontifical University in Porto Alegre, venue of the WCC Ninth General Assembly.

According to WSCF General Secretary Michael Wallace, the event was marked by the diversity of its leaders,

"It was wonderful being part of a liturgy led by so many different women and men, who represented such a wide spectrum of nations and generations" he said.

The service was opened by Dr. Kang Moon-Kyu (Korea), WSCF Centennial Fund trustee and outgoing WCC President. Dr. Kang described the event as "joyful" and was delighted to take part in the WSCF witness to the broader ecumenical movement.

This year's UDPS liturgy was prepared by the WSCF North America Region on the theme of Empire, the federation's theme for 2006. A WSCF document on the theme names Empire as "the coherence of economic, cultural, political and military powers that constitutes a global system of domination".

Leadership of the service was shared amongst WSCF students, senior friends and staff including WSCF ExCo members from Finland, Indonesia, USA, Cameroon, Lebanon and Norway. Music in the service was lead with voice and guitar by SCMer Bogdan Popescu (Romania) and Jeb Garcia (Philippines). Theologian and former WSCF Chairperson Dr. Mercy Oduyoye (Ghana) participated in the service and was happy to find the current WSCF generation taking the lead. She described WSCF at prayer as a "living sign of hope" and believes the federation can offer the wider ecumenical movement a vision of unity in Christ.

WSCF senior friend the Rev'd. Aquila Yabaki (Fiji) and ExCo member Morten Skrubbletrang (Denmark) read scripture lessons related to Empire; Exodus 1:8-20 (Hebrew midwives oppose imperial power) and Matthew 13:31-35 (parables on the Reign of God). Alessia Passarelli (Italy), Carla Khijo (Lebanon) and Gabriela Miranda Garcia (Mexico) offered reflections on the theme from their perspectives as young women leaders in WSCF. Ms. Khijo talked about the destructive power of new global empires and called on WSCF to be part of the struggle for change,

"Let us transform the destructive will of

current Empires, for in Christ we have the power that goes beyond politics, economics and arms. We have the power of love and with this power we can transform the world"

While Gabriela spoke on the position of women in the Empire, Alessia drew on the theme of migration to underscore her personal response. Ms. Passarelli shared that as a European she is an "insider of Empire" when it comes to freedom of movement in Europe and freedom from definition as an "outsider". She contrasted the EU concept of "insiders and outsiders" with the model of Jesus, who formed community amongst those on the "outside". She summed up with a challenge for students to learn where they stand in the current global system and to search for alternatives.

The liturgy included a prayer "for better co-operation among all branches of Christ's church, so that in our unity we may work for justice both outside and within the Empire". During the service SCMer offered prayers and lit candles for the federation, for students and for WSCF's national movements around the world. Senior friend and incoming WCC president, the Rev'd Dr. Ofelia Ortega (Cuba) brought greetings from Rev'd Dr. Philip Potter (former WSCF chairperson and third WCC General Secretary) and gave a blessing to conclude the service. Dr. Ortega was impressed with the inclusive approach to WSCF leadership and saw it as a positive model for the whole ecumenical movement, especially at a youth assembly.

"The Assembly encouraged us to work for a better integration of youth in the life and work of our ecumenical organisations and the WSCF liturgy helped us to keep this vision"

The 2006 UDPS liturgy is available on the WSCF website www.wscfglobal.org under WSCF in Action - WSCF Global Activities.

WSCF farewells Middle East Regional Secretary



Elias El-Halabi (38) completes his term as WSCF Middle East Secretary in October this year. Mr El-Halabi (Lebanon) has led WSCF Middle East as its Regional Secretary through eight years of growth and new developments in what he calls "a very troublesome region".

A member of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, Elias has particularly enjoyed the ecumenical and interfaith dimensions of his post. As Regional Secretary he has been constantly inspired by the transformation of young Middle Eastern Christians through WSCF programmes. He completes his term with the satisfaction of leaving behind the Christian Iraqi Youth

Committee, a newly developed ministry that was established with his help.

Elias will continue doctoral work in Muslim-Christian Studies and as a board member of the Orthodox Youth Movement in Lebanon and Syria as he looks for a new vocational challenge. He departs the job with a sense he'll never leave the federation,

"I cannot help but be in relationship with the WSCF. The federation has shaped me from inside out. WSCF is not a job, it is a school of thought and ecumenism is a lifestyle "

WSCF welcomes new Secretary for North America



The Rev'd Brandon Gilvin (30) has been appointed WSCF Regional Secretary for North America, the first such appointment for two decades. Mr Gilvin (Kentucky, USA) is a minister of the Christian Church USA (Disciples of Christ) and has a background in religious studies and creative writing. A newcomer to WSCF, Brandon brings a passion for building

the ecumenical student movement in North America. From April 2006 he will be based at the new WSCF North America Regional Office in Toronto, Canada. He comes to the job from his previous role in Communications and Advocacy for the All Africa Council of Churches in Nairobi.



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▲ WSCF Executive Committee Meeting participants pictured in February 2006, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Back row from left: Elias El-Halabi, Yarkus Perez Gandara, Tamara Walker, Michael Perkins, Hermione Kingbo (behind), Georgine Kengne Djeutane, Eilidh Whiteford (behind), Carla Khijo, Abraham Chikasa (behind), Joëlle Morgan, Youhanna Kamal Shawky (behind), Alessia Passarelli, Ken Guest (behind), Gabriela Miranda Garcia, Sunita Suna, Bogdan Popescu (behind), Hanna Tervantoko, Brandon Johnson and Necta Montes. Front from left: Udan Fernando, Brandon Gilvin, Adèle Djomo Ngomedje, Nina Nayoan, Ingjerd Jøssang, Suvi-Maria Juni, Sameh Effat Fahmy and Michael Wallace.

ExCo reviews work and plans ahead

The WSCF Executive Committee (ExCo) met in Porto Alegre this February to review the federation's work and plan for the next two years. ExCo looked at programme highlights from the regions, gender justice strategies and future funding plans.

Africa Regional Secretary Georgine Kengne Djeutane started the regional reports with an overview of her million-strong region. She focused on the growing edge of the 26 current movements and shared details of new movements who hope to join the federation.

Regional Secretary of Asia-Pacific Necta Montes spoke on leadership formation, the region's main programme focus. She reported that Asia-Pacific's formation strategy is based on building SCMs which can "provide ecumenical and alternative presence and maintain the critical voice of the critical minority in the campuses and the universities".

Europe's Regional Secretary Hanna Tervantoko highlighted the region's Lingua Franca language training courses in Eastern Europe and the recently held conference on Higher Education in Feketi, Serbia & Montenegro. The September 2005 conference involved 55 participants from 24 countries and was the first WSCF conference in the Balkans in living memory. ExCo members Gabriela Miranda (Mexico) and Yarkus Perez (Chile) reported on the Latin America and Caribbean region. Their report highlighted communication projects in the national movements and restructuring of the Regional Committee. Middle East Regional Secretary Elias El Halabi brought ExCo's

attention to the region's leadership training seminars for young Iraqis. He reported that many of those who had attended the seminars had risked their lives to be there. The region hopes the newly formed Iraqi Christian Youth Committee will affiliate to WSCF at the next GA.

The Middle East Region's Christian-Muslim project also received a mention, "WSCF's inter-faith programme is youth-based and this is what makes it unique. We are working on issues that may come up in discussion between two students and we're trying to present an alternative. If we don't do anything fundamentalism will get worse".

ExCo member Brandon Johnson (USA) reported that the re-establishment of the regional office in Toronto and the appointment of a Regional Secretary (Brandon Gilvin) begins a new and exciting era for North America. In Brandon's words, the North America region is "very happy and hopeful at the new state we find ourselves in".

A day-long Women's Commission meeting during ExCo saw women's leadership and gender equity emerge as ongoing issues for the federation. Georgine Kengne Djeutane pointed out that WSCF women have entered leadership at inter-regional and regional levels, but says this had little influence on some of the national SCMs. Asia-Pacific Regional Secretary Necta Montes agreed that WSCF still has work to do on gender justice, "Just because 50% of programme participants are women doesn't mean that everyone is on board. There is still a long way to go for women in the

federation". Speaking of the Commission and the new position of Inter-Regional Women's Co-ordinator, ExCo donor representative Tamara Walker (United Methodist Church USA) was quick to affirm WSCF's ongoing efforts. She applauded the federation's commitment to women's work at a time when other ecumenical organisations are cutting women's desks and staff. In their Vice-chairs' reports Adèle Djomo Ngomedje and Eilidh Whiteford focused on the communications strategy and the Inter-Regional Women's programme. Further reports from Chairperson Ken Guest and General Secretary Michael Wallace challenged ExCo members to consider setting higher fundraising goals for the federation.

Michael and Ken argued that the downward trend in funding from European and Australasian donors means that WSCF needs to work on building up its own capital fund. They challenged the federation to increase the size of the Centennial Fund from the current US\$1 million to US\$10 million asserting that an endowment of that size would cover core infrastructure expenses and protect the federation from future grant decreases.

In the treasurer's report, Youhanna Kamal Shawky reported that aside from declining grants on the horizon, WSCF finances are in good shape. ExCo looked at the functioning of the Ecumenical Assistance Programme (EAP) and appointed a new commission to manage and monitor the programme.

The next meeting of the WSCF Executive Committee will be held in Alexandria, Egypt in 2007.

WSCF pays tribute to Feliciano Cariño

The federation was sad to learn of the death of long-serving Philippine ecumenist and former WSCF General Secretary Dr Feliciano Cariño (70), who died in Hong Kong in November 2005.

Dr Cariño played a major part in the life of the federation, starting his leadership contribution as chairperson of SCM Philippines between 1958 and 1960. Feliciano's leadership skills were recognised by the global movement when he was elected as General Secretary at the Addis Ababa General Assembly (GA) in 1973. He served as General Secretary till the Colombo GA in 1977.

Dr Cariño brought his skills of perceptive analysis and diplomacy to this time, which saw the restructuring of the movement's leadership and administration into six global regions. Fely's work also secured the funding WSCF needed at this crucial stage. Dr Cariño once again brought his skills to WSCF in his work building ecumenical relations in China and as Vice-President of the University Christian Movement in the USA.



▲ Dr Feliciano Cariño

After his years of leadership with WSCF, Dr Cariño continued a long career in Asian ecumenism, gathering a reputation as an innovative ecumenical thinker and a teacher par excellence. He lectured in Christian ethics and philosophy at the Philippine Christian University in Manila, where he was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1981 to 1986. Dr Cariño served as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines from 1988 to 1995 and as General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia from 1996 to 2000.

WSCF Asia-Pacific Regional Secretary Ms Necta Montes travelled to Dr Cariño's funeral in the Philippines in November 2005, carrying with her the tributes and condolences of the federation. The full text of the WSCF tribute to Dr Cariño can be found on the WSCF website www.wscfglobal.org, under WSCF News.

Federation mourns beloved friend

WSCF has lost a beloved and long serving former staff member and officer, Marie-Jeanne Coleman (née de Haller). Dr Coleman (87) passed away in Kingston, Ontario, Canada in January 2006.

Marie-Jeanne served WSCF as a Programme Secretary and assistant General Secretary in Geneva from 1945-1953 and as Vice-Chairperson till 1956. She was an accomplished theologian and was the second woman to graduate in theology from the University of Geneva. Queen's University Ontario later granted her an honorary DD. In WSCF she put her theology into practice, working in organisation and planning but also to foster understanding and reconciliation between students, especially at the interpersonal level.

The 1956 WSCF General Committee (Tutzing) praised her saying, "Few persons in modern Federation history have left it so deeply in their debt. She gave herself without reserve to the whole range of Federation tasks... and countless practical decisions in the Federation's everyday life still bear the imprint of her commonsense and wisdom. But most of all, students all over the world remember her as a personal friend, who had a remarkable gift for seeing the heart"

Tributes to Marie-Jeanne can be found in the News section of the WSCF website www.wscfglobal.org

WSCF remembers former treasurers

WSCF was sad to learn of the death of former WSCF officer Henry Hetland (87) in January 2006. A Lutheran pastor and university chaplain, Henry Hetland served as WSCF Associate Treasurer 1960-1964. He worked in the WSCF Geneva office on the groundbreaking Strasbourg 'Life and Mission of the Church' conference. When he finished his time in Geneva Henry was thanked for his contribution as "a delightful and loyal colleague and a keen advocate of the Federation". Memorial website: www.henryhetland.org

WSCF was sorry to hear that former Treasurer the Rev'd Dr Philip Zabriskie (77) died on Christmas day 2005. Dr Zabriskie served WSCF as treasurer from 1964-68. An Episcopalian priest and well-known Jungian Psychologist, Dr Zabriskie taught and practised Jungian analysis in New York and was a founding member of the Jungian Psychoanalytic Association. The association's obituary relates that "Philip transmitted the integrity of a considered and dedicated life".

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If you would like to support our work financially, please send a cheque made out to the World Student Christian Federation and post it to us at the Inter-Regional office address above.

If you prefer you can contribute via a direct electronic transfer to our bank account:

Account number: LO790.08.11

Banque Cantonale de Genève

Swift code: BCGEGHGX

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