

UTH TURN

connect create change

COMMISSION ON YOUTH
A JOURNEY OF
NAVIGATING YOUTH TO
THE ECUMENICAL
MOVEMENT

**PRIORITIES OF THE
COMMISSION ON
YOUTH**

- Encouraging young people to be part of the National Ecumenical Movement.
- Networking with the Local and International Ecumenical partners for sponsorship and partnership.
- Connecting the member churches and the local youth movements with the Commission on Youth through organizing programmes both at regional and national levels.
- Strengthening direct partnerships with youth fellowships of the member churches and Commission on Youth and encouraging them to create ecumenical platforms for young people to Promote grassroot ecumenism.
- Identifying Young people to engage them in a process of articulating their faith and understanding about God.

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COMMISSION ON YOUTH - NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

MAY 2015

EDITORIAL

Greetings from the Commission on Youth – NCCI!

CoY caters to approximately 4 million young people around the Country with an aim of encouraging young people into the Ecumenical Movement. To achieve this end, the commission on Youth since its inception has been guiding young minds by journeying along with them in leadership building in various forms. The E - Newsletter which is introduced last month intends for a creative visibility and for wider circulation of the activities of the Commission on Youth. The focus of the financial year 2014-2015 has been organizing regional programmes in partnership with the member churches and bodies to ensure the presence of the Commission on Youth at the grassroots. Newsletter Volume 1 Issue 2 brings to you, information about the activities of the financial year 2014-2015. I hope and pray that this E-Newsletter will mobilize the Churches and the member bodies to organize similar programmes.

Rev. Ch. Sweety Helen, Executive Secretary, CoY, NCCI

Reflection: TREASURE IN CLAY JARS - 2 Cor. 4:7-9

We live in a society which extracts and demands more than our abilities and give a tag 'the best'. When we are not up to the expectation of the people, we are looked down and discouraged. If we ask any young man and woman to narrate their experiences then they can refer to rejection and discouragement very often in their lives. Because we don't perform in our exams and tests, you don't reach the target in your Job, you are axed from your team for bad performances, failure in maintaining your relationship, tensions at home etc. These discouragements and the encounter with the painful incidents make us feel like the Israelites who thought that God is distant from us. Youth struggle within themselves thinking no one understands what they are going through. Disappointment is such a danger because, it floods our lives all at once, and defeat slowly creeps in until we feel like giving up.

This scripture strengthens us by reminding us that we have a treasure in clay jars. These refer more literally to the vessels made of shells, which are very brittle. This also refers to the potter's vessel. We have to make a distinction between two terms here - the earthenware referring to those vessels which have been burnt in the kiln; and the potter's vessels referring to those vessels which have not been burnt in the kiln. The latter stand more chances of reshaping, in case if they are broken or defaced. Our lives are in recoverable form. Even though they are frail and easily marred; there is hope because by the skill of the workman (God) they can be easily built up anew. Even at times everything may seem lost but from this situation God brings us up and reshapes us to be what God wants us to be.

We should never feel that we are rejected and isolated, in fact we should realize our abilities and we should never be disturbed. Jesus walked in the same path before us; In fact, Jesus himself knows rejection greater than anyone else. God doesn't like us giving it up because his plans for us are far beyond our comprehension. As the potter reshapes the vessel so does God mend our hearts and restores us, so He can use you for something incredible. Therefore young men and women let us not be discouraged, because we have the indescribable treasure of God's love in our feeble lives. With this hope let us press forward in our lives.

Rev. Devakrupa Varakumar, Masters College of Theology, Visakhapatnam

PROGRAMMES OF COMMISSION ON YOUTH 2014-2015



ECCELSIOLOGY IN CYBER AGE, June 26-27, 2014

NCCI has organized a Young Theologians Conclave in partnership with support from The Church of Finland and promoters and partners from Church of Ireland and Church of England in Ecumenical Resource Centre, UTC, Bangalore from June 26-27, 2014. The theme of the Programme was "Ecclesiology in a Cyber Age". The diverse Challenges that were faced by the young people were discussed. The

various presentations have thrown light on the Cyber Age, Cyber space and the Cyber Church. The need of a relevant ecclesiology which is techno-friendly has been the tag line.



INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY AND ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION, August 12, 2014

The St. Thomas Orthodox seminary, Nagpur in partnership with the Commission on youth-

NCCI observed International Youth day on August 14, 2014 on occasion of the inauguration of the Satsangh- Theological Association Meeting from 2:30- 4:00 pm. The theme "Youth and Health Matters" was explored briefly. An Essay writing Competition also was organized for the young theological students on the NCCI centenary theme "Youth towards Integral Mission and grassroot Ecumenism".

Winners of the Essay Writing Competition: 1st— Rev. John Basy Paul; 2nd—Rev. Cand. William Charles; 3rd— Mr. Longkong Konyak

PROGRAMMES OF COMMISSION ON YOUTH 2014-2015

Mother's Day Prayer

Lord, we remember the mothers who have gone before us. **For their love, sacrifice, struggle and joy, we thank you.**

Lord, we remember the mothers of Scripture who are a part of our story as we are a part of your story. **For their courage, faith, love and fierceness, we thank you.**

Lord, we remember those who have not given birth to us, but are mother to us. **For their gift of themselves that they have given, we thank you.**

For the women who struggle with fertility, for those women whom society labels as less in their childlessness, for those whom who have lost children.

For their tears, for their strength, for their wisdom, for their lives, we thank you.

In your name we pray. Amen

by Claire Schoepp



NCCI TELUGU YOUTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY, October 1-3, 2014

The National Council of Churches in India- Commission on Youth in partnership with the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, organized a Youth leadership Training programme which was the first NCCI Telugu Youth Regional Assembly

from October 1-3, 2014 in Andhra Christian College, Guntur with the theme "Uth Turn: Rise Reflect Re-Pair". The leadership Training programme gathered around 300 young people from all denomination from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

"YOUTH IN A GLOBALISED WORLD", November 7, 2014

As part of the centenary celebrations, the Commission on Youth has organized a workshop for the participants of the centenary celebrations on the theme "Engaging Youth in the Globalised world". This workshop has discussed about the challenges faced by young people. It was discussed that, it is the most vulnerable who face the worst challenges of the Globalization. The young people who participated in the workshop have expressed that though they live in a world driven by technology, there are many limitations and restriction they face within families, Churches, educational institutions and theological colleges as well. They have expressed that they are deprived of their basic rights and are unable to have access to what is happening around the world especially in their theological college. They have suggested that youth have to be given opportunities of volunteering in various programmes organized by NCCI. They have come up with few suggestions with regard to the programme activities of the commission on Youth. It was suggested that the Commission on Youth should organize "Exposure programmes for the youth" so that the youth will have an opportunity of knowing the context and find ways and means to respond to that context.



DALIT YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME, November 23-25, 2014

The National Dalit Youth leadership training Programme organized by the National Council of Churches in India- Commission on Youth, Commission on Dalits, Student Christian Movement in India and the World Student Christian Federation from November 23-25, 2014 was held at SCMI, Bangalore. The theme of the programme was "Youth and Students for a Casteless World". 50 participants from all over India and also from the Asia Pacific region of the World gathered to discuss on the struggles of Dalit communities and interventions of young people can take to make better the lives of the Dalit communities.



YOUTH ECUMENICAL FORMATION AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME, January 29, 2014

Youth Ecumenical Formation and Stewardship Programme was organized by the Commission on Youth in partnership with the commission on Dalits, India Peace Centre and All India Council for Christian Women on January 29, 2014 in Kochi, Kerala.

This programme was organized as a pre-assembly workshop of the XI quadrennial assembly of AICCW. The workshop was an opportunity for young people to learn skills of drama, theatre, awareness of the social issues, its relevance to the Biblical texts. The young people enthusiastically participated in the workshop lead by Mr. Santhosh George.

PROGRAMMES OF COMMISSION ON YOUTH 2014-2015



WATER AND YOUTH CONCLAVE, January 31, 2015.

Commission on Youth – NCCI in partnership with SCMI organized a one day consultation on Water is Right – Water is Life with the theme 'Conclave on Youth and Water' in SCM Programme centre, Bangalore on January 31, 2015. The Conclave was organized as an observance of the Unity octave prayer week reflecting on the theme of Water from youth perspective. This was call from NCCI to observe the water is Life campaign. The programme was organized with an objective to bring and

challenge the young community to affirm water is Right to all and it is Life, to know the urgency and crisis due to water pollution and to make the young community to rethink the value and importance of water.



SMART CHURCH: YOUTH INITIATIVES FOR A COMMUNICATING CHURCH February 17, 2015

NCCI's Commission on Youth and Commission on Communications and Relations organized a Seminar entitled **SMART CHURCH: YOUTH INITIATIVES FOR A COMMUNICATING CHURCH** on February 17, 2015 in NCCI Campus, Nagpur. The purpose of this seminar is to provide space for young people from the member churches of NCCI to come together bringing their own experiences and ideas towards enhancing the ministries of the Church particularly in terms of consolidating its communication systems. The program provided input to clarify the context and orient the participant to leadership perspectives. The objective was to benefit the participants in terms of the cross-learning and networking opportunity.

Activities of the Executive Secretary



"RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF CHURCHES IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY" April 25, 26, 2014

The National Consultation on "Responsible Participation of Churches in Indian Democracy" was organized in CNI Bhavan, New Delhi on April 25-26, 2014. The Consultation has been organized as part of the Centenary Celebrations of the NCCI and the release of a Commemorative Postal Stamp by the Vice President of India remembering and reiterating the contributions of NCCI in the past 100 years. The consultation was organized by the Commission on Policy, Governance and Public Witness of NCCI to challenge its member churches and constituencies to take cognizance of the geopolitical scenario and to work towards responsible participation at a time when voting for the Lok Sabha.

CLIMATE TRAINING PROGRAMME, May 8-10, 2014- Orissa

The Climate training programme from May 8-10, 2014 in Koraput was organized as a follow up activity of the Youth Conference of Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church from October 10-13, 2013 in Sunabeda. The Programme aimed at encouraging the young people to be Climate leaders. A Bible Study was led by the Executive Secretary, Commission on Youth on the passage, Matthew 4:1-11. The bible study emphasized on the three temptations of Jesus Christ and related it to the temptations of Commercialization, Globalization and Imperialism.



YOUTH ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE, UELCI, May 17, 2014- Padhaar

The Youth Desk of UELCI called the youth of the member churches for a pilgrimage towards climate justice by attaining skills to understand the concepts of climate change clearly, to dialogue on possible solutions, to get involved and take action. 41 youth participants from the member churches of UELCI met together from 14 to 18th June 2014 at E.L. Church, Padhar, Madhya Pradesh. Rev. Christopher Rajkumar and Rev. Helen from NCCI conducted a workshop on Climate Justice through discussion, games and activities illustrating our actions that cause climate change and environmental crisis and the harmful effects that arise out of them.

INTERFAITH ROUNDTABLE ON HUMAN SEXUALITY AND HOMOPHOBIA, May 30-31, 2014

The Commission on Justice Peace Creation, Aneka- Trust, BTESSC organized a roundtable on interfaith response on Human sexuality and Homophobia. The programme aimed at defending the rights of the minorities and affirming diversity. It was emphasized that they too belong to the God created cosmic community. The Executive Secretary shared her views from the perspective of Christians.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME, June 5-8, 2014

The Evangelical Church in MP organized a youth leadership training programme from June 5-8, 2014 with the theme Vision 2014 Repent Redeem Revive in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh. The Youth leadership focused on various social issues and encouraged the young people to take the lead in establishing justice in the society. The Executive Secretary has led the bible study and few other sessions in this leadership programme.

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PRAYER POINTS

- We pray for the people in Nepal and specially for the victims affected by the recent earthquakes.
- We pray for the victims of recent attack in Karachi, Pakistan.
- We pray for the world peace and the youths around the world.

INVITATION FOR REPORTS



Commission on Youth—NCCI invites reports of youth activities, articles, Bible studies from the youth of the member bodies of NCCI for wider circulation through its E-Newsletter.



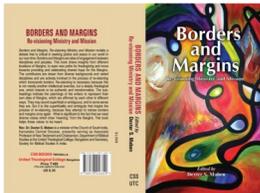
NCCI TELUGU REGIONAL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS, September 10-14, 2014

NCCI Centenary Regional Celebrations in Hyderabad were preceded by the Executive Committee and General Body meetings hosted by HMI

at Shivrampally, Hyderabad. The centenary celebrations began on September 12, 2014 in ACTC with an Inaugural worship Service in which Most. Rev. Dr. Dyvasirvadam, Moderator, CSI has delivered the address on the centenary theme. The afternoon session was led by the All India Council for Christian Women. This was followed by the public reception by APCC under the leadership of Dr. J. Oliver, APCC. **On September 13**, Symposium on NCCI Centenary theme presented by a panel of Speakers reflecting on perspectives of marginalized communities was hosted and organized by MBCBC, Shamshabad. This was followed by Interfaith Cultural Expressions organized by HMI in its premises. On September 14, the Executive Secretary- Commission on Youth preached in a CSI Cathedral in Hyderabad.

WCC INTERFAITH PROGRAMME, October 3-5, 2014

WCC Interfaith Programme on "Exploring Hybridity and Embracing Hospitality: Towards a theology of Multi religious belonging" was organized in Chennai from October 3- 5, 2014 in Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai. The Programme was an opportunity to listen to the various voices on hybridity and hospitality and to articulate a theology of Multi Religious belonging on the biblical foundations of hybridity and Hospitality. The Executive Secretary has led the participants in a bible study on October 5, 2014 on the theme.



UTC ALUMNI REFRESHERS MEET, October 21-23, 2014

The Alumni Refreshers meet met from October 21-23 in UTC Bangalore on the theme "Re-Visioning Ministry and Mission: Perspectives from Margins". This is a recurring feature of UTC to update and upgrade about the mission trends in the theological and ecumenical fraternity. The Executive Secretary presented a paper from the perspective of Dalits.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MINJUNG THEOLOGY AND CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES, October 23-26, 2014

International Conference on Minjung Theology was organized to commemorate the theological legacy of and the 30th anniversary of Late Prof Nam Dong Suh one of the originators of the Minjung Theology in Korea. This was organized from October 23-26, 2014 in Songdo International Campus, Yonsei University,

Korea. This was an opportunity to revisit the Minjung and engaging theological conversations and dialogues for a fresh pilgrimage of doing Ecumenical Theology of liberation in the new global contexts of this century. The Executive Secretary has presented a paper on Dalit Feminist Theology and mission shifts it has undergone to make itself relevant in its context.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS FINALE November 6-9, 2014

The NCCI centenary Celebrations have begun on November 6, 2014 with a rally that has begun from the All Saints Cathedral and has ended in All Saints cathedral. Before the rally began, an orientation was held in NCCI campus for 75 volunteers by the executive secretary-CoY for the centenary celebrations. The volunteers were oriented to be part of the rally and to support in the logistics of the rally and the thanksgiving service in the premises of All Saints cathedral. The inaugural address was given by Rt. Rev. Taranath S. Sagar, Preseident, NCCI. The thanksgiving service begun at 5:30 and Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches was the speaker. The inaugurations of the 'Indian Disability Ecumenical Accompaniment' and the 'National Ecumenical Forum for sexual minorities' marked a landmark in the Thanksgiving centenary celebrations.

The second day began with a worship led by the St. Charles Seminary followed by the Symposium in which the main speaker was Dr. Matthews George Chunakara who has spoken about 'Ecumenism and Ecumenical Movement in South Asia: Past : Present : Future'. The Symposium 2 focused on 'Ecumenism Economy Ecology' by Rev. Dr. Ulrich Duchrow. The afternoon sessions focused on missional conversations from the different commission perspectives. The third day focused on "Wider Ecumenism for the next Century" in the morning session which reiterated the thrust of ecumenism, the role of ecumenical movements and the challenges in the present day context. The afternoon session focused on the missional conversations part 2.



ROUND TABLE, November 10, 2014

NCCI has organized a round Table on November 10 in which many of its partners were present. The NCCI Secretaries presented Programmatic expressions of the respective commissions and have explored possibilities of partnerships with the partners.

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CHURCH OF SWEDEN PARTNERS MEET, November 17-19, 2014

The partners meet of Church of Sweden was organized from November 17-19, 2014 in Church Women Centre, Chennai hosted by UELCI. The partners meet was organized to strengthen partnerships through mutual capacity building and to ensure achievement of mutually agreed goals for the Church of Sweden. The theme for this meeting is Gender Justice and Equality, which is one of the focuses of CoS' focus areas in South Asia. Though NCCI is not an officially funded partner of CoS, NCCI Representatives was invited to present the programmatic expressions of NCCI in addressing Gender Justice and Equality. The Executive Secretary was sent as one of the representatives to present the activities of the commissions in connection to Gender.

SACYN - South Asian Christian Youth Network, Dubai, November 24-29, 2014

South Asia Christian Youth Network (SACYN) is a network of young leaders in South Asia. The concept has taken the form of a network in 2002 in Bangalore, India. This network was formed with a mission to build connections with church and mission at local, regional and global levels; and enables the South Asian Christian youth to be integrated, related and committed to both the local and broader community of which they are part. The Executive Secretary was invited to lead the group of 50 from various countries in a bible study on Diaspora communities in New Testament and a workshop on Women and Children as Migrant workers.



Internships



The regular feature of the Commission on Youth is to journey with young people encouraging

them to be part of the leadership of the Church and Ecumenical Movement by enabling them to understand their skills. One such initiative to engage Young people is Internship programme. Internships have been very helpful for young people as this has been a period to mould themselves by living, learning and experiencing Ecumenism in NCCI. Ms. Madhuri Rebecca Hembrom was the intern of the Commission on Youth from November 2014 - April 2015. Her leadership skills, enthusiasm in learning and her interest in organizing programmes is highly appreciable.



Jianthaolung Gonmei has completed BD (Bachelor of Divinity) 2011-2015 from The United Theological College, Bangalore. He is the member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Tamen-glong, Manipur. He joined Commission on youth as an intern for the period of May 2015 - March 2016.

Exposure Reports



First of all, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me this opportunity to attend the Women Writers Workshop at Henry Martin Institute, Hyderabad organized by ISPCCK. I thank the Executive Secretary of Commission on Youth for encouraging me to attend this programme. The programme has enabled me to develop my writing skills, thinking ability, skills of writing foot notes and Bibliography. The programme has encouraged me by enabling me to understand the benefits of writing. The practical activities, group discussions, sharing of experiences have enriched my theological thinking. Thanks to NCCI.

J. Anitha Bharathi, Andhra Pradesh



I still remember the day I landed in Chiang Mai to attend CCA's Conference on interfaith perspectives. A week flew like the wind and we didn't know. I consider this opportunity to represent NCCI - Commission on Youth in an International Conference as my privilege. As a youth leader from a pluralistic and multi religious society, this training program

was crucial for me. It opened the windows to understand the conflicts and violence happening in various parts of Asia and the importance of peace, justice and religious harmony. The training provided me with a better understanding of different religions. It also taught me how to work as an agent of Peace. The exposure we received from our resource persons is commendable. All the participants were able to build a strong fellowship within that one week. Truly this training is a fruitful one for me and I believe that this would help me in enhancing the youth activities especially with regard to Peace. The hospitality of CCA under the leadership of Sunila Ammar, Resource persons, Thai food, Thai people, places, friends from various Asian countries, all have left living images in my mind. I am grateful to all of them. I would also like to thank NCCI for gifting me with such an opportunity.

Regards
Neethu Elsa Varghese



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