

# U<sup>TH</sup> TURN

connect create change

YOUTH CONCERNS - NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

## PRIORITIES OF NCCI—YOUTH CONCERNS

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

## On Being a Leader: A Letter of Experience (Isaiah 55: 8-9; Jeremiah 29:11)

**"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the lord... so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"**

I thank our Almighty God for giving me this opportunity to share the love of God throughout my journey with the youth.

My name is Anok Longchar from Molungkimong Village, Mokokchung, Nagaland, and recently working as a Youth Pastor in the beautiful village of Nokpu in Nagaland. The fresh memories of the year 2013, 9<sup>th</sup> of June still lingers in my heart, for, that was the day I realized God's call for me to serve the youth; to be with them, work for them and lead them towards God's righteousness. I also remember the day I was commissioned as a Youth Pastor; a young man with no work experience, yet, with prayers and faith started my journey.



That first year of ministry with the youth taught me a lot about young people as well as a lot about me. At first, I began working with a small section of youth. Within this group, I came across few faithful teenagers who were more of a social club than a community of faith. I planned on building relationship with these young people, and from the moment I started to know them and their families, our friendship grew. They started opening their hearts and talked about what was going on in their lives. One thing that shocked me is that, majority of these youth are growing up in broken and wounded families. From then on, I started analyzing the Do's and Don'ts about this group of youngsters. I also extended my ministry towards their families by having fellowship and by letting them understand and believe that there is power in the name of Jesus to break every chain of our weakness and heal our brokenness. I also started to invite them to watch Christian movies, which helped them to know more about God's love.

As time went by, and with the increase of youth, I noticed some important factors of interest among them. Therefore, I started to adopt these interests of theirs in doing God's ministry. Three important things I would like to mention; Youth love music and with the little knowledge that I have in music, I started teaching them how to play guitar. Through this, it helped me to know them better and now, it is amazing to see them trained up and praising God through songs by playing their own guitars. Secondly, I also saw that youth love creativities, therefore we started coming up with lots of creative program like youth revival, youth camp, youth open air service, bible study, house competition, small group fellowship, youth award Sunday, entertainment, sharing love, festivals of praise, cross Sunday, bare foot Sunday, sharing the blessings etc. Thirdly, there are some youth who don't come to church but they love playing sports. For them, we usually organize sports ministry, where many youth have encountered and are still encountering God. It is also one of the most active ministry in today's generation. There were also times in youth service where I use to teach them how to pray, sing, lead the service, and to be disciplined inside the church. Now, I am blessed to see them with lot of potentials, enthusiasm and willingness to praise God and to take part in all the activities. Above all to know more about God.

## Inside Story

### On Being a Leader: A Letter of Experience

1

### From Young Minds

2

### Updates

3-4

### Invitations

5

Youth are like waves in an ocean; they are the most powerful groups among any. To work with them is to have lots of energy in physical, emotional and spiritual. Sometimes I am satisfied with the strength in terms of their commitments and their participations and sometimes it is like still water where I am discouraged by seeing their nominal attitudes towards God and their behaviors. But at the end of the day, it is also a blessing to see some of the youth surrendering their life and praising God with their open heart. When we are in a right ministry of God, we taste and experience the goodness, love and blessings of God, where he leads and guides us in everything. I have also experienced his loving arms around me in times of discouragements and distress. I have faced lots of difficulties and temptations even up to the level of thinking to quite my ministry but our God is so gracious and faithful that the peace that he send instills my heart and helps me to understand that he knows my plans and his plans are better than mine, he comforts me, blesses me, rescues me and he shows me the way. Working with youth has also molded me up a lot and sharing the gospel, showing the right path and shaping them has given me wonderful experiences that need to be cherished. With God's grace, in these five and half years, my ministry with the youth is still fruitful. They have now become my family and I, their family. The most blessed word to hear from their mouth is them, calling me 'Dad.' This keeps me reminding that to serve God is a wonderful given opportunity. May the good Lord Bless us all.

**Anok Longchar, Youth Director, Nokpu Baptist Church (ABAM)**

## Ecumenism: Embracing Diversities towards Oneness

Ecumenism refers to the efforts made by Christians of different Church traditions and cultures to inculcate closer relations and better understanding within the communities. The term ecumenism comes from the Greek word *Oikoumene*, which means ‘the whole inhabited World.’ This gives out the feeling of a ‘united family.’ And if this notion is extended beyond Christianity, we can integrate all the religious and social community into this one united family.

When we talk about ecumenism, one must also incorporate issues related with social justice, economy, ecology, cultural, and political, that carries the meaning of fairness, impartiality, reasonableness, integrity, etc., in terms of distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society. Poverty, death penalty, caste discrimination, civil rights, environmental rights, heterosexism, access to education and health welfare, gender discrimination, etc., these names of atrocities are not new to us. We have been listening to these terms years after years, but alas! till date we don’t have proper measures to eradicate such problems which disturb the harmony of a society. It is high time we have to find proper solutions to terminate the issues and be empathetic towards the victims of these crimes. In fact, empowering the weaker sections of the society, minorities, oppressed, etc., can be one of the principals of ecumenism.

Along with the above discussions, one must also take note of the pluralistic society in terms of religion in our Country. For e.g., one religion tells- “*Salaam Alaikum/Assalamu Alaikum*” meaning, ‘may peace be with you,’ other tells of ‘Love your neighbour,’ and then another tells “*Bhavantu sabha mangalam*” meaning, ‘may all beings be happy.’ Be it Islam, Christianity or Hinduism, etc., every religion promotes peace and harmony. This way we can extend our ecumenism beyond Christianity and serve its purpose in a wider way. It is a concept that should be alive and active and should be served effectively through our thoughts, words, and actions.

Regardless of what has been said, we also should not overlook the reality of distinctions and differences that are happening inside the churches. One must always remember that ecumenism first should happen within Christianity, where the churches and the denominations come together in order to extend the ‘Oneness’ beyond the borders of Christianity towards the whole inhabited world, bringing ALL in the ‘Household of God.’

**Romena Gorai, Intern of SCMI, assisting in NCCI as part of the Change Makers Programme of SCMI**

## The Chain of Volunteering Towards Transformation



India is one of the most rapidly growing economy in the world, but the paradox of the largest population of poor in the world also remains. On one hand, Forbes magazine highlighted the achievements of young Indian entrepreneurs in their recent issue and on the other hand, apart from these elite group, the young people in India are still struggling to prove themselves. The reasons are inequality in the areas of income generation, globalization and unemployment, which most of the time affects the youth of India today. Some elements are trying to swipe off the financial aid which the youth used to receive earlier for their higher education. The modern day media also highlights some additional key issues and challenges that the youth in India faces which can be mentioned as religious fundamentalism that hampers harmony and democratic ideologies, economy injustice, educational imbalances, employment problems and health care, etc.

These issues in fact, affect different sections of population in India; the middle and lower class, marginal and the communities of minority. Even within these groups, youth are the most affected ones. They are not given much importance with regards to the roles they need to play in contributing to a sustainable growth towards their country and towards their overall development in many key areas of life. Generation gap, unemployment, and identity crisis maybe the key factors of these feelings of estrangement from other group of people and confusing them about existing political-socio-religious-cultural norms in the society. These things are causing unrests among the youth of India which if not addressed at proper time may cause chaos in the society as well as in their lives and families.

Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and Religious Organizations need to extend their helping hand towards the youth, helping them in finding more alternatives towards life in a more meaningful manner. And this is where volunteerism comes in to play; a great role for the young people. Volunteerism cannot be specifically one sided. It has to happen in two ways, one volunteering to help the other and the other responding to do the same for the second other and the chain of volunteerism continuing until they all reach the common goal.

The idea of this volunteerism in the context of Indian youth is that, different organizations, be it political, social, or religious, should come out in the limelight in order to help find youth their potential area and interest of work through whatever talents and gifts they possess in order to become useful instruments for their people and for the country as a whole and they in response volunteering to work for their fellow youth who are in the same situation as they were once. Youth volunteerism through the help of different government and private organizations in areas like education, economic development, health care, relief care and other important areas can be covered as they can be the young work forces who can be partners in transforming India in whole; a holistic transformation.

**Saurabh Khobragade, Intern, NCCI-DATA Concerns**



## Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

All India Press Release

Ref: DS/248/2018

14 February, 2018

### Young Leaders from Different Faiths to attend the Pre-Synod Meeting in Rome

*Hindu young leader from Mumbai and Sikh from Jalandhar to participate*

Bangalore 14 February, 2018: The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India has chosen five young people to represent the Church in India at the Pre-Synod Meeting in Rome, scheduled to be held from 18 to 24 March, 2018. Out of the five, two will represent the Sikh and Hindu faiths stated Most Rev. Franco Mulakkal, Chairman of the National Youth Commission of the CCBI.

Mr. Inderjit Singh will represent the Sikh religion from the Jalandhar diocese, Punjab and Mr. Sandeep Pandey, the Hindu faith from the diocese of Vasai, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Mr. Percival Holt, the National President of the ICYM from the Delhi Archdiocese, Mr. Paul Jose, General Secretary of ICYM from Kottapuram Diocese, Kerala and Ms Shilpa, the Spokesperson of ICYM from Rourkela diocese, Odisha. These five youth will travel for the Synod to Rome in March 2018 and spend six days discussing issues related to young people.

There will be about three hundred young leaders from different countries participating in this pre-synod meeting. Pope Francis has convoked this pre-synodal meeting of young people from around the world to meet and debate the topic "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment", which is also the theme of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

The results of this event will be summarized in a document and given to the Bishops participating in the XV Ordinary Synod which will be held from 3 to 28 October, 2018 at the Vatican.

The subject of young people is the one that emerged with utmost support. It is also in continuation of the subject on the family, which was already discussed in detail. The pope accepted the topic on young people, and he recognized the urgency. Pope Francis expects a movement, a powerful path, a true meeting with the youth and is eager to listen to them and walk with them. This meeting will gather them all both within the Church, or those farther away.

Cardinal Baldisseri, the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops said, "I would like even those far from the faith to see a welcoming Church that is able to offer an attractive message of hope, capable of proposing ideals".

Most Rev. Franco Mulakkal, the Chairman of the National Youth Commission said; "We want our young people in India to be aware their existence and work for a harmonious and peace loving society. Young people are peaceful and compassionate. They are in need of guidance and patient listening. India, being the largest democracy is a young country and the entire world looks up to India".

The selection of the five delegates from India will give them an opportunity to have an audience with Pope Francis on Palm Sunday.

**Franco Mulakkal**

Chairman, National Youth Commission, CCBI

**Fr Chetan Machado**

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<http://ccbi.in/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ConferenceofCatholicBishopsofIndiaCCBI?ref=pf>

## 57<sup>th</sup> Kristian Thalai Pawl (KTP) General Conference (2018)



The 57<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Kristian Thalai Pawl (Christian Youth Fellowship), Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram Synod was held from 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 at West Phaileng, Mizoram, with the theme, "Carrying the mark of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). The message, based on the theme was delivered by Rev. Vanlalzuata. The Biennial General Conference of the KTP is the biggest gathering of the youth in the state. This year, the total turnout was estimated to be around 28,000 delegates. The conference was divided into three sessions – business session (attended by a representative from each Pastorate and Branches), Public worship service and fellowship or variety programme.

The business session at the West Phaileng Chhimveng Presbyterian Church, was presided by Rev. Zothansanga,

Leader CKTP. Overtures from different Pastorates were subjected. Prior to the business session, elections of the Central Committee members for 2018-2020 was presided by the Synod Moderator, Rev. F. Lalrinnunga; twenty members were elected from the 46 nominees. The Conference approved an annual budget of Rs. 16,08,000.00 to be borne by the affiliated Pastorates. While the business session was conducted, a parallel session was held at the Pandal. The theme of the forenoon session was "Duhthlanna" (Choice) and of the afternoon session was "Youths - called to preach the Gospel."

During the conference, a Music Video album of the Mizoram Synod Choir and a booklet on the theme of the KTP for the year 2018 were dedicated. A total of 37 Choirs from different Pastorates, along with the Mizoram Synod Choir and the Presbyterian Choir, Lunglei performed during the worship services. The Variety programmes witnessed special items performed by different Pastorates. It was also graced by a thematic speech from the committee members of the CKTP. The General Conference hosted delegates from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Youth), South Asia Christian Youth Network (SACYN), Presbyterian Youth Joint Conference (PYJC), Myanmar, North East India Christian Council Youth Assembly (NEICCYA), Mizoram Thalai Kristian Pawl (MTKP), Mizoram Baptist Church; Evangelical Church of Maraland KTP and Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran Thalai Pawl (LIKBKTP). Establishment of KTP dates back to Feb. 16, 1954. At present, there are 860 Branches in 205 Pastorates, with a total of 1,47,665 members (Males-92,220 & Females-55,445) are registered. (Via Email)



**Central Kristian Thalai Pawl (Christian Youth Fellowship)**  
Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod, Aizawl, Mizoram

## Consultation on Ecumenical Formation and Capacity Building for Young Dalit, Tribal/Adivasi Theologians



The National Council of Churches in India – Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi (NCCI-DATA) Concerns in partnership with Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW) – Germany, Christian Service Agency (CSA) and Leonard Theological College (LTC) organized a three days Consultation on “*Ecumenical Formation and Capacity Building for Young Dalit, Tribal/Adivasi Theologians*” from 1st-3rd February 2018 at Mahatma Gandhi Assembly Hall, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur. A total of 41 delegates participated, out of which 30 were Theological Students from twelve different theological colleges/seminaries in Northern, Eastern and Central regions of India, affiliated to the Senate of Serampore Colleges and 11 of them were Resource Persons.

The consultation was focused on bringing the ecumenical understanding, importance and emergence that are needed in the contemporary context among the Christian communities across India. The interactive sessions and series of paper presentations reflected on the contemporary situations and problems of the marginalized and the form of injustices they go through in India that are directly related to the issues faced by the subaltern/marginalized including the diverse gender communities. The key issues were based on their situations in the phase of caste, identity, forest, land, violation of their fundamental rights, gender issues, backwardness in the cyber age, and the issues related to diverse gender communities with a response to what the Church, Theological institutions, the Christian communities by large and the Ecumenical society holds the responsibility by bringing out valuable alternatives and solutions towards the socio-political, economical and ethical situations of the marginalized communities.

In the final phase of consultation, a Statement of the consultation prepared by the Statement Drafting Committee was presented on the basis of outcomes of the sessions and group discussions. It was reviewed and finalized by the young theologians collectively. It is as given below:

We, 30 young theologians from 12 theological colleges across Northern, Eastern and Central India representing different social and cultural identities as well as churches from different parts of India, gathered at Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2018 for a Consultation on Ecumenical Formation and Capacity Building for Young Dalit, Tribal/Adivasi Theologians organized by NCCI's Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi Concerns. During our discussions and deliberations, we dealt with many concerns such as trends and development of ecumenical movement from various contextual issues including struggles for Dalits Rights; Rights of indigenous people; Rights of women and children; Youth in the Cyber Age; Human Trafficking, Human Sexuality and Gender Diversities; Prophetic communication; Ecumenical formation; Inter-Religious harmony and Ecological justice.

We **affirm** that:

- God has created humankind in God's own image. In the household of God, there is no discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, race, creed, or religion.
- Unity is the essence of Christianity and the Christian community can transcend differences and divisions by coming together to address social concerns and campaign against evil forces that undermine or violate people's rights and dignity on the basis of their gender, generation, caste, tribe, ability or sexual orientation.
- Our God is the God of love, compassion and justice who always takes the side of the oppressed in their struggle for justice and liberates them from oppressive and unjust systems.
- The ecumenical spirit transcends ecclesial realms and facilitates visible unity and symbiotic living with all of God's creation, peace and reconciliation with people of all faiths, and commitment to social causes.
- The Church has to take serious cognisance of the changing socio-political, cultural and technological context, and should engage with the same meaningfully, relevantly and effectively.
- The Church is called to remain committed particularly to the cause of Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi communities in her prophetic ministry.

We **reject and condemn** any discrimination and social injustice within and outside the church, denying the rights to the fullness of life of women, youth, children, Dalits, Tribals/Adivasis, sexual minorities and of nature.

We therefore make the following **recommendations** to the churches and theological institutions for effective ecumenism and social justice:

- To declare and accept social diversities in gender, caste, race or creed as designs of God.
- To widen the ecumenical movement beyond ecclesial relationships within and among the churches, and even beyond inter-religious relationships to inter-human relationships and integrity of all creation.
- To be more inclusive, and to be more sensitive towards sexual minorities and marginalized sections of the society.
- To incorporate teachings of peace and reconciliation not only in curricula, but also to practice the same in day to day lives.
- To understand and interpret the Scripture in a holistic manner of inclusivity and ensure justice and equity for all creation.
- To strengthen prophetic communication with regard to issues of women, children, Dalits and Tribals/Adivasis, sexual minorities and nature.
- To publicly affirm the identity of Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi communities and promote their spirituality.
- To make use of Dalit/Tribal/Adivasi cultures and traditions in strengthening grassroots ecumenism.

Source: <http://ncci1914.com/2018/03/02/statement-of-the-consultation-on-ecumenical-formation-and-capacity-building-for-young-dalit-tribal-adivasi-theologians/>; <http://ncci1914.com/2018/03/02/consultation-on-ecumenical-formation-and-capacity-building-for-young-dalit-tribal-adivasi-theologians/>

## Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA 2018)

Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA), a week-long training organised by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), at the Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand will take place between 26 August to 1 September, 2018.

The YAPA program's main aim is to train a new generation of young peace activists and nurture their role in respective societies as peace builders.

The week-long YAPA training focused on intercultural and interfaith learning as a base for addressing topics, such as conflict transformation and peace building. It emphasises the links between intercultural and interfaith dialogue, human rights and conflict transformation as key elements in long-term sustainable peace processes, while exploring and developing the participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.

<http://cca.org.hk/home/major-event/httpcca-org-hkhomenews-and-eventssca-invites-applications-for-young-ambassadors-of-peace-in-asia-training-2017>

## Apply for 4<sup>th</sup> Youth Leadership Workshop on Global Citizenship Education

**Deadline:** 25 March 2018

The Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) is seeking applications for its

"4th Youth Leadership Workshop on Global Citizenship Education (GCED)" from 20 to 26 May 2018 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

The one-week Workshop aims to build capacity of dynamic youth leaders around the world to identify strategies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Target 4.7, and to carry out innovative initiatives on fostering global citizenship through advocacy. While enabling participants to deepen their understanding of GCED, the Workshop allows the young leaders to play a major role and become part of a wider network of youth leaders for GCED.

### Objectives

- To deepen youth leaders' understanding of global citizenship and enhance their advocacy skills
- To provide a forum for participating youth leaders to discuss and establish action plans suitable for the implementation of GCED at local, national, and regional levels
- To identify innovative youth-led initiatives on GCED in different regions

### Expected Outcomes

- Youth participants' capacity enhanced in implementing GCED at local and global levels
- Increased commitment of the youth participants in fostering global citizenship
- Action plans developed by sub-groups for the implementation of follow-up activities
- Announcement of the vision statement of GCED Youth Network
- A set of actions of GCED Youth Network established for its future activity

### Eligibility Criteria

Participants will be selected on the basis of their previous experiences, present engagement and future commitment in educating and engaging with youth for the promotion of global citizenship at the local and national levels. Applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Between 18 and 24 years of age
- Citizens of the Official Development Aid (ODA) recipient countries
- Minimum 2 years of active experience in youth activities
- Knowledgeable in GCED related issues and priorities
- Proficiency in spoken and written English

### How to Apply

Applications must be submitted online. For more information, please visit [http://apceiu.org/board/bbs/board.php?bo\\_table=m34&wr\\_id=54](http://apceiu.org/board/bbs/board.php?bo_table=m34&wr_id=54)

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## Applications Welcome- Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity



Applications are now open for YATRA (Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity) 2018, an inter-religious training programme of the WCC. The intensive training course, held annually since 2014, seeks to enable young Christian leaders from Asian churches to contribute towards the building up of just, harmonious and peaceable communities by equipping them for ministries of justice and peace from an inter-religious perspective.

YATRA – (which is a common term for pilgrimage in many Indo-Asian religions and languages) is intended to reflect the idea of pilgrimage in resonance with the WCC's call to its member churches to embark on a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

This year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the WCC. Alongside its ecumenical quest for the visible unity of the churches, the WCC has embraced inter-religious dialogue and cooperation as an authentic form of Christian presence and participation in an increasingly pluralistic world since 1967. The WCC understands the concern to reconcile one's faith as a Chris-

tian to the wider call to dialogue as an important challenge for Christian witness. YATRA, with the 2018 theme "Passionately Christian and Compassionately Inter-religious" will offer an opportunity to re-examine this concern in a creative and critical manner.

This year, the residential period will take place from 7-20 July in Hong Kong at Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, a co-host of YATRA 2018.

The residential phase is preceded by a 4-week-online learning from 6 June – 4 July 2018. Experience has shown that the combination of online and experience-based learning enables participants to be academically sound and practically grounded, and thus fosters a holistic learning environment. The deadline for applications is 18 March 2018.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/applications-welcome-youth-in-asia-training-for-religious-amity>