



UCJCI UPDATE

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UCJCI YOUTH AT GLOBAL FORUM

OUR VISION: "Touching
lives, Nurturing Disciples,
Seeking Transformation
through Christ."

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BIRTHDAYS. 2

PRAY



● **Rev. Dr. Clinton Smith**
(University Hospital)

● **Rev. Norman Francis**

● **Rev. Bevis Byfield**

● **Mr. Nigel Henry**

● **Miss Claire Trueman**

*Lord, your Word speaks
promises of healing and
restoration. Today we
claim those promises over
our friends and colleagues.*

On August 22, 2017 a Global Youth Forum was hosted at the Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa. Participants hailed from regions such as Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, the Pacific, South Asia and East Asia. This Global Youth Forum was postulated by Council for World Mission under the theme, "Building Disciples in the Context of Empire: Reimagining Church". The objectives of this forum were to; address the Empire; grow disciples and re-imagine church.

The first day of the forum, **August 23, 2017** involved Prayer, Team Building, Immersion and De-Briefing. Immersion was a sensitizing activity, where members were exposed to the history and culture of Africa. This was achieved through visits to the Hector Pieterse Museum and Mandela House. The following days had a general schedule of Bible Study; Thematic Presentations; Group Discussions; Struggle for Change Presentations and Cultural Expressions.

On August 24, the Bible

Study and the Keynote Presentation were done by **Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan**.

He spoke on the theme, "Building Disciples in the Context of Empire - Re-Imaging Church". **Under this theme he highlighted what discipleship is in the context of Empire**, and further explained that in order to combat the forces of Empire young people must be prepared to be; daring; defiant and determined.

Acts 5:17-32 was also used as a reference text. Here it speaks about the apostles preaching the word of God despite the many odds they face. **He therefore encouraged young people to be disciples who will be bold, and persistent in challenging the Empire.**

The Struggle for Change presentations were based on the Sunflower and FeesMust-Fall Movements.

The Sunflower Movement began in 2014 in Taiwan. It is a social and political movement led by University students and other civil groups against the Cross-Strait Agreement. Likewise, the FeesMust-Fall Movement is a student-based initiative which fights



Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan

for free quality Education in South Africa. The day ended with Cultural Expression from the African Region.

August 25, 2017 started with Bible Study led by **Rev. Sikhalo Cele**, under the topic, "Addressing the Empire". His main text was Exodus 3:1-22.

He emphasized that unity is key to addressing the empire and unity starts at the lowest levels.

He pointed out that the empire utilizes the classic strategy of divide and conquer.

Therefore we need to stand as one against the empire, remembering *Ubuntu*-**"I am what I am because of who we all are"**.



70:

Rev. Keith Gordon,
October 10

Rev. Dave Spence,
October 11

"Together we are stronger against the empire."

Rev. Phillip Peacock later did the thematic presentation. Here he addressed the fact that the empire is attractive and thus tries to seduce and co-opt us. He referred to **Isaiah 65**, and therefore encouraged young people to remain vigilant in the battle against the empire. Following this, the **'Struggle for Change Presentations'** were done. **Ms. Nikhila Henry** a young journalist, spoke about the discrimination that university students experience because of the Caste System.

Mr. Maina Talia, an Islander from Tuvalu, presented on the eminent climate change which is affecting the sea levels in Tuvalu. He used Matthew 4:21-51 as his reference text. Cultural Expression from East Asia and Pacific closed the day's proceedings.



Rev. Craig
DeLeon Deidrick
(above)



Rev. Kevin Calvert
(Left)

YOUTH AT GLOBAL FORUM

On **Saturday August 26, 2017**, Bible Study was conducted by **Rev. Dr. Lesmore Ezekiel**. He spoke on the topic, **"Growing Disciples"**. He used the following Bible texts, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-18 and Acts 2:32.

He mentioned that it is pertinent to know that being disciples of Christ requires us acknowledging that **Jesus Christ is our greatest teacher**. Jesus challenged the status quo of His time, healed the sick and restored life to the dead.

He highlighted the attitudes needed for growing disciples as; **honesty and integrity, selflessness, sacrificial and unconditional love** and being resilient in the face of oppressive forces.

Following the Bible Study, **Dr. HyeKan Kim – Cragg** led the Thematic Presentation. She challenged young people to "live out;" – a call invoking and discerning a vocation to follow Jesus. She also stated that as Growing Disciples we need a 'Creed to Believe' and a community to belong to.

Group discussions were held, followed by the Struggle for Change Presentations. **Mr. Rikko Voorberg**, founder of the Pop-Up Church presented on his **"Let's Bring Them Here" (LBTH) Movement**. With this movement he along with other members, provide food, shelter and clothing for thousands of refugees who enter the Dutch lands. The LBTH Movement is not a Christian movement but was founded based on Christian initiatives.

The second presenter was UCJCI's **Rev. Kevin "Nana Moses" Calvert**. He described the current struggle of **'Human Trafficking'** in Jamaica and the Caribbean. Lastly the European and Caribbean Nations ended the night with their cultural presentation.

The final day of the forum, August 27, Bible Study was led by Dr. Wai Ching Wong Angela. Her reflection was based on the theme: **"Re-Imagining Church"**.

Following this, UCJCI's **Rev. Kraig DeLeon Deidrick** expounded with the thematic presentation. He defined the words **"Re-Imagine"** and **"Radical"**. Jeremiah 1:7-9, Psalm 144: 12 and Acts 6:1-3 were used as reference texts.

He further explained the challenges that occur with re-imagining, these challenges include; **remembering that God is Supreme; knowing our identity; learning the system of Empire to effectively challenge the empire; viewing ideas from a different perspective and speaking truth to power.**

He ended with a challenge to young people to, be prepared to die for the cause .

Regions then met to formulate a strategy to tackle the empire within their individual context.

The Caribbean Region; (The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Island and The Guyana Congregational Church) developed a movement to address **'Human Trafficking' and the increased suicide rate**. The objectives of this movement are; to **educate and increase awareness; provide counseling to victims and to train volunteers.**

Other regions developed initiatives which focus on the education, political and social challenges within their context. **The closing worship was led by a local praise group.**

Apart from **Revs. Calvert and DeLeon Deidrick**, the UCJCI was also represented by **Dajon Sibbles (Cayman), Jodane Gilling and Natasha Anderson (Jamaica)**, while there were three representatives from the Guyana Congregational Union, namely **Delon Grandison, Lashauna Hector and Dominic Husbands.**

According to the writer of this report, **"The objectives of this forum were clearly met as the context the empire was addressed in the context of the various regions"**. For another it was an opportunity to understand the term "empire" and to experience **a spiritual 'top up', and 'eye-opener'.** ■

Send comments and news about your congregation to ucjciupdate@gmail.com