

11th IYCS Asian Session and Council

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St. Lukas Apostolic Centre

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THE ORIENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CHRISTIAN STUDENTS ASIA FOR 2009-2012

Introduction

Reflections on the theme, “*Called to be Stewards of Creation, Students Strive for a Green and Just World,*” brought about many realizations among us - sixty-one delegates comprising of student leaders, animators and chaplains from 14 national, collaborator and observer movements, regarding the dangers that humanity face. We critically reflected and strategized to set the course of direction for the next three years based on the issues of **Climate Change, Food Crisis and Human Rights**.

The exposure program provided the participants a firsthand experience on the topics of discussion. These were validated in the respective country reports, reflection sessions, forums, debate and discussion on the impact of these three issues to the lives of the peoples and the planet as a whole. These led to the education of the heart through experiencing the richness of life and challenges we face.

We realized that

- Unsustainable development methods used on the planet earth have contributed greatly to **climate change**. Human activities such as agriculture, mining and industrialization have led to serious damage of the Earth. Deforestation resulting in landslides, concentration of greenhouse gases and polar ice caps melting due to global warming causing rising sea levels, threatening coastal human settlement. Increase in the Earth’s temperature has led to the growth of algae in the sea killing aquatic lives and threatening livelihood of fisherman in some countries.

The people who contribute the least to climate change are the ones most affected. Climate change is a problem faced by all the nations in the world, and that action must be taken by everyone to effect change. The importance of sustainable development must be emphasized as a long term solution to overcome the crisis.

- **The food crisis** is a result of a natural as well as a human failure. Climate change and land management issues have led to a reduction in crops while failure to have proper distribution channels lead to shortage of food. Furthermore, the rising costs of living means food becomes more and more unaffordable in poorer countries while wastage remains high in rich countries.

- Through a series of sessions and dialogues we became familiar with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to cast in stone the minimum rights humans deserve for living. Since all rights are co-equal and none can be compromised, all countries experience some form of human rights violation with the only difference being the severity of violation. Furthermore, the United Nation (UN) has only a certain level of operation and cannot assist in all circumstances. Therefore, we need to highlight our actions for **human rights education**.

We reflected that

“God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good...” (Gen.1:11)

- God created the world and found it good. He created the world as an expression of his love and concern. We are called by Christ to be stewards of God’s creation. We are not the owners but the custodians of this world. It is our mission to sustain the earth to its full integrity. The world’s resources are enough for all humans to enjoy if we curb selfishness and greed. Mindfulness at the impact of our actions, particularly on how we make use of the world’s resources is a moral responsibility that we must take to heart.
- The teaching of Christ and His Church insist on just distribution of wealth. While feeding the multitudes Jesus taught the values of sharing as well as avoiding wastage of food. The irresponsible treatment of nature results in dangerous consequences detrimental to the whole of humanity. The land problems eventually become food problem. The food crisis presents itself to the Christian community as a challenge of our faith and combating food crisis becomes a responsibility of one and all.
- Dignity is a central aspect of the human psyche and since all humans are made in the image and likeness of God, all of us deserve equality and should show mutual respect even the least of our brothers.
- Human rights cannot be fully understood through classroom lessons alone. Involvement in the multifarious human situations is necessary to further one’s knowledge of human rights. YCS should hence take on the role of an educative movement.

We strongly to commit to:

1. Lead by example in order to encourage people to make the changes we want to bring about.
2. Fight against the damaging impacts of climate change on a big scale. Cutting down on energy wastage, the promotion of clean and renewable energy, and the promotion of

the 3Rs (Reduce, Re-use, Recycle) through cutting down usage of plastics and promotion of re-useable bags are just to name a few.

3. Aim at increasing greenery in their country by introducing tree planting initiatives and Clean and Green Campaigns where volunteers aid in the maintenance of parks.
4. Promote awareness of climate change through regular environmental movie showcases and voicing out against organizations that contribute to environmental damage would make the desired impact.
5. Strongly support sustainable development in agriculture. In the meantime, processes such as converting agricultural waste into useful products such as fertilizer and biofuels should be done to reduce wastage and protect the environment.
6. Organize campaigns to stop food wastage and promotion of local food in opposition of junk food that generally results in higher wastage. By means of food drives, collecting food items from richer classes to redistribute to the needy, we will be able to provide greater relief for the hungry.
7. Bring awareness on human rights to equip them with the knowledge essential to safeguard them. This can take on the form of 3 simple steps: 1) learning about the situation, 2) learning about our rights, 3) finding the most appropriate method of contribution. Also, educating through poems, essays, poster making and camps will engage students more actively and bring about greater interest. Given the modern times, education through E-Campaigns will also yield a greater audience.
8. Call on developed countries to contribute to the education of the children in lesser-developed nations through means of sponsoring education.

Conclusion

The first step of any journey is always the hardest to take. It represents a breaking free from our comfort zones to enter a new regimentation. However, as Stewards of Creation, the responsibility of care taking falls upon us and we have to stretch out which means discomfort.

Through our learning, we have seen the other side of the fence and have formulated our decision – the YCS methodology of See, Judge and Act falls short, should no restorative action be taken. And we as a united YCS family decide action must be taken now. Time is nigh, and in God's time and authority, we shall restore humanity.

The Delegates of the 11th IYCS Asian Session and Council