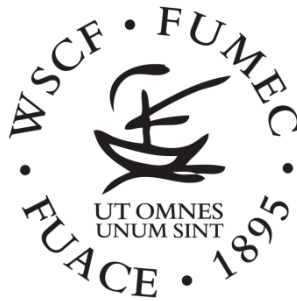


# WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION



## Universal Day of Prayer for Students 2017

**Theme: Identity, Diversity & Dialogue: Affirming the Image of God and  
Reclaiming the Wholeness of Life for All**

February 28 2017

Prepared by the WSCF Asia Pacific Region,  
together with the WSCF Inter-Regional Office

## Introduction

### **WSCF works for dialogue, understanding and unity within the church and communities, affirming the dignity and voices of all people.**

The WSCF Bogota General Assembly (GA) in 2015 has mandated the WSCF to continue its work on Identity, Diversity and Dialogue (IDD), specifically on the issue of Human Sexuality. The GA theme, 'We are many, we are one' represented the vast diversity of members within WSCF, and the single unity we have in Christ. As a diverse global federation, we work across boundaries of race, sexuality, gender, class or culture to protect the dignity of all people through dialogue and prayer, especially those who suffer discrimination from those in positions of power. This is our conviction.

As we begin the process of dialogue, we first need to know ourselves as fellowship with diverse gifts. We invite you to read the following statement from the IDD General Assembly Resolution to remind us of our context and the self-understanding of our community. We also invite you to engage in prayerful reflections using this UDPS liturgy as a beginning of this journey of affirming the richness of our diversity as part of the wholeness of God's creation.

*The WSCF has an ecumenical fellowship engages many people with different ways of thinking, feeling, and experiencing the world, including, both in national movements and in the Federation people who are marginalised because of their sexuality and gender identity. The WSCF exists to accompany the SCMs in their contexts and struggles. In the presence of the cloud of witnesses that have emerged from the WSCF over the past century, we cannot hold in silence the crisis of conscience that now faces the global and local Christian community around the inability to effectively address differences of perspective on this topic and relate to the people especially affected. The WSCF remains committed to pursuing unity and the realization of the Body of Christ now as throughout its history. The WSCF has a prophetic, Christian identity. This means that we are called to advocate for justice, liberation, and peace. Continuing dialogue about sexual and gender diversity affirms our commitment to our own identity.*

*There is a difference of belief amongst members, movements, and regions of the Federation on the biblical and theological imperatives around sexuality. There are some members and movements that find the notion of LGBT rights to be in conflict with God's revelation to us and who see heterosexuality as a normative part of God's creation while other sexualities are seen as contrary to the will of God. There are some members, movements, and regions of the Federation that feel unable to openly and publicly discuss this topic, regardless of their personal beliefs, due to their cultures and their relationships with their churches. There are some members, movements, and regions of the Federation who feel unable to do anything other than advocate for the human rights and full inclusion of LGBTQ people, and who feel that we are not fulfilling our prophetic role as WSCF if we cannot jointly speak against violence against and for the basic human rights of sexual minorities. Therefore, the question of how to relate to the notion of LGBT rights is a divisive issue that can lead SCMs to question each others' commitment to Christian discipleship and to building God's new world among us.*

*Despite of our differences on this topic, the WSCF has common theological understanding that should underlie the difficult conversations around human sexuality:*

- *Every person equally bears the image of God. As every human bears the imprint of God, we have no option but to affirm the dignity of all people.*
- *The very nature of God is community through the Trinity. Part of the nature of the Trinity is interrelatedness, as the parts of the Trinity correlate and dialogue with each other. This applies to us too: when in dialogue with each other, there is always a third person present: God. It is good to remind ourselves that we are not alone when we are reflecting on these issues.*
- *We have to address dualism, as it is in opposition to dialogue and diversity. Dualism means to divide things into binary opposites: body vs soul. This dualist view has led to the demonization of the body and spiritualisation of the soul, and to the idea that sexuality is sinful. This has implications for how we view each other. Since Christianity is Word becoming flesh, then the body and spirit are not separate from each other.*

With our self-understanding, we invite you thru the UPDS 2017 to begin the process of dialogue in your SCMs and communities to reflect on our vision to build God's Kingdom, where the wholeness and fullness of life for all is celebrated and affirmed.

Praying with you,

**Necta Montes**  
General Secretary

**Sunita Suna**  
Regional Executive for Asia Pacific and  
Program leader for IDD

## Preparation to celebrate the UDPS

- Appoint a small committee of interested persons to organize the service and to assign parts to leaders and readers. Try to involve a diverse group of people to prepare for the liturgy.
- Feel free to adapt the service for your region and/or context.
- Try to organize a good choir to lead the singing. The choir may vary/change the sung parts and select different hymns or songs if desired. Parts to be sung may be spoken if preferred. You can also replace the suggested songs in this liturgy to adapt to your local language and customs.
- Brainstorm creative and symbolic acts in the service that would serve to highlight the theme of Identity, Diversity and Dialogue (IDD) and as Christian students creating a world of peace.
- Give adequate time for the preacher (student, Senior Friend, or clergy) to prepare a short sermon (recommended 7-12 minutes). She or he may select other Bible readings for the service as the spirit leads.
- If you wish to add a service of Eucharist together with this prayer service, please do so according to your tradition.
- Organize the collection. This year, devote your collection to the Give One Be One Campaign to help support the work of the Federation.
- Inform churches in different parts of the country and invite them to organize this service in

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

### Invocation

Music / Bhajan (according to the tradition of the local SCMs)  
(during invocation participants will bring elements to the Table to express diversity)

### Call to Worship

**One:** People will come from East and West, North and South  
to worship God upon the holy mountain!

**Many:** We come, praising God!

**One:** People will come- women and men, young and old, gay and straight,  
black and white and red and yellow and brown!

**Many:** We come, praising God!

**One:** People will come in peace, breaking down old misunderstandings,  
welcoming strangers, learning new languages,  
greeting one another as sisters and brothers and friends!

**Many:** We come, praising God!

**One:** Praise God who made us all, who loves us all,  
who calls us together so that we might sing Alleluias!

**All:** Praise God! Alleluia! Amen.

**Response:** *Ay, Ay Salidummay, let us give thanks to God*

### Opening prayer

**L:** God we the leaders of WSCF have gathered here rejoicing our diverse gifts from different countries, SCMs, faith traditions, cultures, and contexts. We celebrate our diversity and the wonders of God's love, truth, justice, and peace.

**All:** **We are faith motivated, living in ecumenical fellowship and are witnesses to the ecumenical spirit. We come from diverse denominations and churches and are brought together by the ecumenical spirit. We believe in the unity of the churches expressed in our common ecumenical witness.**

**L:** God, you made us be neighbors, members of one family, created us to be helpers and friends to one another, entrusting to us your justice and your peace as a faith community of students and young people around the world to commit ourselves and affirm our common faith in the mission and vision of the federation.

**All: Today we come before you to recognize that we are many, yet one in you and one with one another. Help us to be the people you call us to be - humble, caring, welcoming, affirming, truthful, loving... May we hear the voice of your Spirit calling us to be transformed by the loving presence of a God who works with us, who walks with us, and who empowers us to continue our journey to a wholeness of life for all.**

**Song: AS WE GATHER IN THIS PLACE TODAY**

As we gather in this place today  
Holy spirit come and have your way  
Have your way  
As we lay aside our own desires  
Sweep across our hearts with Holy fire  
Have your way

This is your house your home  
We welcome you Lord we welcome you  
This is your house your home  
We welcome you today

As we offer up our hearts and lives

Let them be a living sacrifice  
Have your way  
Be glorified in everything you do  
Be glorified in everything we say  
Have your way  
This is your house your home  
We welcome you Lord we welcome you  
This is you House your home  
We welcome you today

As we pray Oh Lord draw near  
It's your voice we long to hear

**Celebrating Diversity**

Almighty God, through your Holy Spirit you created unity in the midst of diversity;

We acknowledge that human diversity is an expression of your manifold love for your creation;  
We confess that in our brokenness as human beings we turn diversity into a source of alienation, injustice, oppression, and wounding.

Empower us to recognize and celebrate differences as your great gift to the human family.  
Enable us to be the architects of understanding, of respect and love;  
Through the Lord, the ground of all unity, we pray. (*www.xavier.edu*)

**Peace and Welcome**

*(Participants will say peace in their own languages and welcome each other according to their local tradition)*

## **Voices**

L : We live in a divided world - divided based on class, caste, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, physical ability and many more. One section of the society dominates the “other”. A fragmented and alienated society is created by us, refusing to accept and respect the “other”.

### **Voice 1**

We heard stories and voices of refugees/migrants becoming the victim of the system of injustice. Borders and walls are created, discriminated and marginalized based on their race, identity, nationality, economic conditions. We hear the cry of the Rohingyas –stateless and unwanted people. Ignored by the world the violence and humiliation they experience in their lives. We hear the plight of women being subjected to violence in their community, refugee camps and even in their own homes.

***A moment of silence.....***

### **Voice 2**

We heard stories and voices of people and young students, struggling with their sexuality and gender identities in the community, of those who face stigmatization or being labeled as ‘sinful’ for living out their identity according to their sexuality and gender orientation. We heard of cases of corrective rape, criminalization of homosexuality, suicide committed by the lesbian/ gay/ bisexual/ transgender (LGBT), lack of acknowledgment of one’s perceived gender, lack of access to sex reassignment therapy.

***A moment of silence.....***

### **Voice 3**

We heard the stories and voices of Dalit students, women and children, the oppression, and violence they experience in a caste-ridden society. We heard the story of Rohit Vemula, a young Dalit Ph.D. student from India, killed himself due to the humiliation and caste discrimination he had to face in the University by the authorities. We hear the cry of the black people experiencing racism and violence in different parts of the world

***A moment of silence.....***

*(Suggestion: You can add as many voices as you want to reflect local and specific issues in your SCMs or community.)*

All :God, you made me in Your image, teach me to love myself as You love me.  
 God, you made me in Your image, allow me to show that image to the world.  
 God, you made me in Your image, help me to see Your image in all those I meet.  
 God, you made me in Your image, teach me to conserve and protect all Your creation.  
 God, you made me in Your image, bless, protect, and keep me and all Your children safe.

**Song: Walls that Divide**

**WALLS THAT DIVIDE**

KEY: E; ALSO SEE 'E♭' VERSION.

Words by WALTER FARQUHARSON      Music by RON KLUSMEIER

1. Though an - cient walls may still stand  
 2. When vest - ed pow'r stands firm en -  
 3. The truth we seek in var - ied  
 4. The church di - vi - ded seeks that  
 5. This bro - ken world seeks last - ing

proud and ra - cial strife be fact, \_\_\_\_\_  
 trenched and breaks an - oth - er's back, \_\_\_\_\_  
 scheme, the life that we pur - sue, \_\_\_\_\_  
 grace, that new-ness we pro - claim, \_\_\_\_\_  
 health and vi - tal u - ni - ty \_\_\_\_\_

though bound - ries may be lines of hate,  
 when waste and want live side by side,  
 u - nites us in a com - mon quest  
 a u - ni - ty of serv - ing love,  
 God's peo - ple, by God's Word re - newed,

pro - claim God's sav - ing act! \_\_\_\_\_  
 it's Gos - pel that we lack \_\_\_\_\_  
 for self and world made new, \_\_\_\_\_  
 that lives praise to God's name, \_\_\_\_\_  
 cast off all sla - ver - y \_\_\_\_\_

*Refrain*

Walls that di - vide are bro - ken down;  
 Christ is our u - ni - ty! \_\_\_\_\_

Chains that en - slave are thrown a - side.

*Fine*

Christ is our lib - er - ty! \_\_\_\_\_

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 Music Copyright © 1974 by Ron Klusmeier.



## Bible Reading

**John 4:4-9, Acts 8:26-40, 1 John 4: 7-8, Malachi 2:10, Revelation 7:9**

*(Suggestion: The participants will divide into small groups and choose a bible text and each group will study the bible text together and have a round of reflections. After the group sharing they can create some symbolic action on identity, diversity, and dialogues)*

## Intercessory Prayer

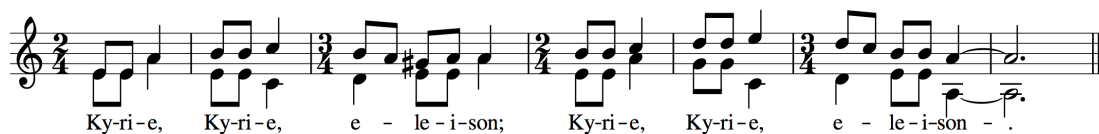
**L:** Christ came to the world to seek and save the lost. However, we see there are lots of lost ones in the world, due to their discriminated identity, and lack of dialogue to the world. May all of us come before God today with what we can offer to God and to the lost ones. Let us commit to respect the identity of everyone, embrace diversity within and outside of the churches, and understand people who are different from us with empathy.

*(Suggestion: you can have a 10-minute meditation, to come before God and pray for the lost ones and for an inclusive community.)*

*[10-minute silence]*

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

**All:** Kyrie Eleison (sing as below).



**L:** God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus Christ. In different identities, we shall unite with you in harmony. May you take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

**All:** Kyrie Eleison (sing).

**L:** God, give us wisdom and a tender heart to be inclusive and embrace diversity. Be the leader of our lives, and guide us to live according to the example of Christ, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, in all identities.

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

**All:** *Kyrie Eleison (sing).*

**L:** God the fountain of wisdom, be present with us when we have a dialogue with our sisters and brothers, friends and communities, who may be yet to break their boundaries to appreciate the world with diversity. Grant us the courage to communicate with conviction, through Jesus Christ our lord and liberator.

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

**All:** *Kyrie Eleison (sing).*

**L:** Almighty and everlasting God, may you bless and strengthen the Student Christian Movements and the World Student Christian Federation. We pray for movements in solidarity. May you empower SCM staff and local movements all around the world to be with the lost ones and bring them to God.

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

**All:** *Kyrie Eleison (sing).*

**L:** God grant us a tender heart to understand our brothers and sisters; take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever may hinder us from the godly union. May we be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and love, may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord and liberator.

**All:** *Amen.*

## Re-reading The Lord's prayer

*Our God who is present everywhere, particularly in the struggles of our people,*

*Let your name be proclaimed by our acts of justice and truth,*

*Help us to realize your sovereignty by being in solidarity with one another,*

*Inspire us to do your will, the will for transformation and your willingness to die for us, on this earth, as you practiced,*

*Gives us daily your knowledge to share our food, resources & ourselves with others, as you share them with us,*

*Lead us not into the temptation of practicing caste and being self-centred,*

*Deliver us from all kinds of oppression & discrimination*

*For your reign, power & glory shall come unto us when all of us live in the spirit of a community governed by mutual dignity, respect, and equality. Amen*

## Draw the Circle Wide (Sing)

Draw the circle, Draw the circle wide(2x)

no one stands alone, please stand side by side

Draw the circle, Draw the circle wide.

Draw the circle wide, Draw it wider still Let this be our song,

no one stands alone, standing side by side, Draw the circle, Draw the circle wide.

## Prayer

**All:** Spirit of light, let your truth shine upon us

Spirit of calm, make us aware of God's presence

Spirit of courage, drive out the fear from our hearts

Spirit of fire, ignite us with the prophetic voice of Christ

Spirit of peace, make us the peacemakers of the world

Spirit of Joy, inspire us to proclaim the good news

Spirit of love, make us open to accept and embrace others

Spirit of power, strengthen us with your unfailing love

Spirit of truth, guide us all in the footsteps of Christ – Amen

## **Closing Song**

### **SCM Solidarity Song** (*collection will be done for Give One, Be One*)

The song we sing not for ourselves  
For those who are oppressed and chained  
Build up a new society;  
Let's share and feel with them

*Come SCM's unite be one,  
Pull out injustice from this world,  
Live with people, build together,  
One day we'll reach a new just world*

The way we work not for ourselves,  
For those who are oppressed and poor,  
Suffer with them and let us know;  
That our struggle will win

The life we owe not for ourselves  
Women and men work hand in hand  
The unity will triumph;  
We share the vision and hope.

## **Act of Solidarity**

As a Christian community yearning for God's peace and justice, we commit to stop all forms to discrimination, marginalization and all forms violence against humanity and all of God's creation. We invite you to sign-in on a petition for Faith IDAHOBIT or the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. You can visit and sign the link below:

<http://inclusivefaith.eu>

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*Sources: The More Light Presbyterians Retreat & Mission Weekend New Orleans, LA, 2006,  
Asian week of CCA in 2012, BAEM – URC 2016  
Asian consultation on Church responses to human sexuality and gender identities  
Intercessory Prayer, reference taken from the book of common prayer*

