



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

Two-Day Webinar Handbook

*Light after Darkness -- Becoming a community of
solidarity and resilience*

Date: 22 & 23 May, 2023



Taiwan
Ecumenical
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ASIA PACIFIC KAIROS: A prophetic call to journey together with the PCT in pursuit of justice and peace
for the people of Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God” Micah 6:8

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Concept Paper for TEF Webinar 2023

Light after Darkness -- Becoming a community of solidarity and resilience

The years 2020-2022 have not been easy for Taiwan. The island is faced with invisible challenges of the worldwide pandemic and disinformation, coupled with visible threats from authoritarian countries like China and Russia in the Indo-Pacific region.

How has the government and the people of Taiwan faced the ever-changing yet persistent challenges? What was the role of the Church and Christians in Taiwan amidst the events? How can we, as one body in Christ, support each other - the world in solidarity with Taiwan, and Taiwan as a source of hope and encouragement to the world?

The Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Taiwan

The 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine shocked the world that is still recovering from the extended worldwide COVID-19 pandemic when Russian President Putin announced a “special military operation” against Ukraine on Feb. 24. To date, tens of thousands of Ukrainians and Russians have died and millions of citizens displaced, marking the incident as Europe’s largest refugee crisis since World War II.

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine-Russian War last year, scholars and media have been quick to compare the political situations between Taiwan and Ukraine. As Ukraine is faced with relentless invasion from Russia, Taiwan has also been harassed constantly by military intimidation from China. It is evident of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) ’s animosity against Taiwan: almost daily intrusion into Taiwan’s airspace by Chinese military aircraft or drones. The CCP’s escalation of military threats against Taiwan not only intensifies Taiwanese people’s concerns toward China, it also destabilizes the Indo-Pacific region, and intimidates all citizens in the area. Furthermore, the CCP threat extends outside the Indo-Pacific area to anyone who stands in solidarity with Taiwan. To the democratic countries around the world that have sent support or diplomatic visits to Taiwan, the Chinese government is swift to react in protests on social media, press conferences, sanctions, and even intensification of military threats in the region. Joseph Wu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan told the US’ National Public Radio that regarding the current development in Ukraine, “Taiwanese government is taking the war in Ukraine into very serious internal discussion.” In geo-political common interest, Taiwan plays an outsized role in the Indo-Pacific region toward regional peace and justice. Therefore, if Taiwan is not safe, it is probable that the countries in the Indo-Pacific region will be affected economically and politically.

In order to build Taiwan’s resilience against the Chinese military threats, the Taiwanese government has announced in December 2022 the extension of compulsory military service to one year from four months starting 2024. Moreover, several organizations from the civil society have taken up the responsibility to provide training on civil defense to the locals. These actions are inspired from Ukraine where its ability to hold off much larger Russian forces enables the international community time to render assistance; therefore, the move to further defend Taiwan is not to intimidate or



threaten, but to be prepared and equipped when adversity comes its way. The PCT urges the ecumenical partners to engage in conversation on how national defense policies and resilience can be efficient in countering military threats.

In a time of conflict and threats to war, the Taiwanese churches have been prayerful about the escalated military threats in the region and all those living in fear. The Church also sends out resources and medical assistance to the Russia-Ukraine war zone, and continues to pray for our brothers and sisters of Ukraine in pain and suffering, with our faith found in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “...the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.”

Invisible challenges of COVID-19 pandemic

In January 2020, the COVID-19 virus broke out worldwide, and has since changed the many aspects of our everyday lives; it is no exception in Taiwan. Moreover, being one of the first countries to alert the WHO of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan had to tread through without the support and information from the WHO. However, it is not the first time that Taiwan has encountered a pandemic under the circumstances: in 2003, Taiwan underwent the SARS (Severe Accurate Respiratory Syndrome) pandemic, and the experience prepared the Taiwanese people to be more alert to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, not only was Taiwan one of the top countries that have dealt with the pandemic, it was able to support other countries with exports of medical and humanitarian aid in various kinds under the “Taiwan Can Help” initiative. In addition, churches were able to gather in-person for the most part, and had been good neighbours as a source of hope and care to each of their communities, for it is written in Scripture: “do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4) We encourage our ecumenical partners to share in their countries’ experiences in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, and how faith has been a source of hope during the time.

The unseen warfare of disinformation

Although Taiwan was rather resilient in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic during the time, Taiwan was facing another underlying battle: continuous attacks of fake news and disinformation. For example, messages were circulating on social media that the Taiwanese government lied about insisting on the COVID-19 virus to be merely a flu. Other examples discredit the government’s measures to contain the pandemic, and provoked the public to hoard and stockpile essentials. Disinformation similar to this cultivates a “cognitive warfare” against Taiwan where the invisible weapons are used to confuse, distract, and polarize the society. Despite the different sources of disinformation, all are with the similar malicious intention to destroy the public’s trust and confidence towards policies implemented by the government, and to cause division amongst the public.

Nonetheless, the Taiwanese government recently founded the Ministry of Digital Affairs, specified on addressing disinformation “without censorship or takedowns” by building the public’s



“immunity” to disinformation, and by using tools to fact-check, a joint effort between the civil society and the government. The Taiwanese church communities have also contributed to educating its members about discerning between facts and lies, and to be wise with the information that they receive, for we are reminded in Ephesians 4:25, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." The challenge of countering disinformation in the digital age requires global cooperation; therefore, the PCT hopes that TEF can serve as a platform for discussion of how policies around the world and our faith can be tools to resist lies and deceits in disinformation.

The World and Churches United as One body in Christ

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by intensification of disinformation and military intimidation from the CCP, Taiwan has received a surge of international attention. With such attention, Taiwan is grateful that the world has not only taken notice of the happenings in Taiwan, but also to stand in solidarity with Taiwan against the threats and attacks targeted at Taiwan. For example, more than 200 politicians, government officials, as well as members of civil societies from more than 70 countries around the world visited Taiwan during the 2022 World Movement for Democracy, and many more from the 2022 Regional Religious Freedom Forum for advocacy of human rights, freedom and democracy. Furthermore, diplomats and parliamentary delegations have also shown their support of Taiwan by visiting Taiwan on topics of combating disinformation, geopolitical security, trade collaborations, and pandemic prevention.

As one body in Christ, we as Christians are called by our Lord to be brothers and sisters, regardless of nationality, race, and background. In this time of trials and difficulties for Taiwan with both invisible and visible warfares, we as the Taiwanese churches plead the world to keep Taiwan in your prayers. As Taiwan will be the designated country for The World Day of Prayer this year, we sincerely invite fellow Christians and our ecumenical partners to join in prayers for Indo-Pacific peace and regional justice as our Lord Jesus said, “Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” (Matthew 26:41). Likewise, with the pandemic and battles still happening in the Indo-Pacific region and in the world, churches in Taiwan will be persistent in our prayers and support for the world. As it is written in the Bible: "Carry each other's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2), the Taiwanese church believes that we are called to keep prayerful and helpful to all of our brothers and sisters, and trust in our Lord for deliverance of all those who suffer. The Taiwanese churches have faith that one day, we, as one body in Christ around the world, will rejoice: “Thanks be to God! He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57).



Taiwan Ecumenical Forum Zoom Webinar

1. Date: 22 & 23 May, 2023
2. Time: 20:00~22:00 (Taiwan time)
3. Theme: Light after Darkness -- Becoming A Community of Solidarity and Resilience

22 May, 2023 (Monday)			
Taiwan Time	Content	Speaker/Panelist Name	Profile
20:00 – 20:05	Welcome Message	Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum TEF Co-Convenor	Current General Secretary, Council for World Mission (CWM); Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) Ordained Minister; Former WCC staff
20:05 – 20:35	Civil Defense I	Director Enoch Wu: <i>Civil Defense: Practicing Resilience</i>	Founder & Executive Director of <i>Forward Alliance</i> .
20:35 – 21:05	Civil Defense II	Elder Michael Tsai: <i>How Taiwan is defying China's aggression, with total national defense & regional security cooperations</i>	MBA. JD. Former Minister of National Defense, Taiwan Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT)
21:05 – 21:45	Panel Presentations	Japan: Mr. Shoichi Konda: <i>What Overcomes the Cult-like World</i> Canada: Rev. Dr. Steve Moore: <i>The Church in a Dis/Misinformation Age: Reality and Response</i>	Advisor to “The Christian” (interdenominational weekly newspaper), Editorial Advisor to “Cult 110” United Church of Canada (UCC) Ordained Minister; Religious Area Analysis (RAA) and Religious Leader Engagement, (RLE)
21:45 – 22:00	Q & A	Moderator: Taiwan: Ms Anita Chang Mr. Enoch Wu Mr. Michael Tsai Mr. Shoichi Konda Rev. Steve Moore	TEF Task Force Member
	Closing Remark	Moderator	



23 May, 2023 (Tuesday)			
Taiwan Time	Content	Speaker/Panelist Name	Profile
20:00 – 20:05	Opening Message	Moderator: Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang-En	Senior Pastor for Theological and Educational Ministry, Che-Lam Presbyterian Church in Taipei; Contract Research Fellow, Research and Development Centre, PCT; Retired Professor of Church History, Taiwan Theological Seminary
20:05 – 20:35	Disinformation	Ms. Billion Lee: <i>Fighting against disinformation & information operation via AI chatbot</i>	Cofounder of the <i>Cofacts</i>
20:35 – 21:15	Panel Presentation	Korea: Dr. Kim Sang-Duk: <i>Restless Truth and Resilient Faith: Christianity and Media in the Public Sphere (a Korean Perspective)</i> Philippines: Mr. Sonny Africa: <i>Disinformation, anti-democracy and militarism in the Philippines</i>	Adjunct Professor, Sungkyul University Executive Director of <i>IBON</i> Foundation – an independent think-tank providing research, information and education services to social movements in the Philippines and abroad
21:15 – 21:30	Theological Reflection	Canada: Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson	Former General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC); Former TEF Co-Convener; United Church of Christ (UCC) Ordained Minister
21:30 – 21:55	Plenary Discussion	Ms. Billion Lee Dr. Kim Sang-Duk Mr. Sonny Africa	
21:55 – 22:00	Closing Message	Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum	TEF Co-Convener



Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF) Webinar

22 & 23 May 2023 at 20:00 - 22:00 (Taiwan time)

Theme: Light after Darkness: Becoming A Community of Solidarity and Resilience

CWM GENERAL SECRETARY'S OPENING REMARKS

Dear brothers and sisters,

Warmest Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you all to this webinar on the theme “Light after Darkness: Becoming A Community of Solidarity and Resilience.”

At the outset, on behalf of the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF), and Council for World Mission (CWM), I would like to begin by expressing our thanks to all of you for joining this webinar, and also for remembering Taiwan in your prayers, especially during the World Day of Prayer on March 3rd this year.

We are gathering here in this two-day webinar, in the context of China’s intensified intimidation of Taiwan in the recent past. Sandwiched in the geopolitics between China and US, Taiwan has been under the constant threat of war. The tension between China and the US has escalated in recent years, as the resurgence of the neo-cold war structures became more evident in many parts of the world. Chinese military Aircrafts and Vessels have made frequent incursions into the waters and airspace around Taiwan, not only impacting cross-strait relations but also posing serious threats to security in the Indo-Pacific region. Of course, the concerns have further increased in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war adding fuel to an already blazing fire. With China taking more aggressive steps in the recent past through constant airstrike stimulations and provocations, Taiwan has become more vulnerable.

We are gathering here in the context of the Taiwanese people’s struggles for peace, justice, and self-determination. Taiwan has been one of the most isolated nations in the world during the Covid-19 Pandemic, primarily because of its exclusion from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Health Regulations (IHR) due to political pressure from China. Taiwan was not allowed to participate in the global response to the pandemic, including accessing information and resources, sharing data and best practices, and participating in international discussions and decision-making. The international community need to continue its efforts in supporting the people of Taiwan in their struggles for Peace, justice, and self-determination.

We are gathering here in the context of misinformation orchestrated and spread by the Chinese government. It is to defame Taiwan and create divisions between Taiwan and its trusted allies. In addition, continuous attacks of fake news and misinformation about Taiwan are also causing confusion, distraction, and polarisation within the Taiwanese society.

Taiwan’s isolation during the pandemic and the ongoing struggle for peace and self-determination highlights the importance of greater global cooperation within and beyond the Indo-Pacific region.



Such a crisis calls all of us to unite together with solidarity.

The theme of our webinar, “Light after Darkness - Becoming A Community of Solidarity and Resilience”, encapsulates the hope that emerges even in the most challenging times. It reminds me of a slogan that was prominently used during the reformation: *Post tenebras lux* or Light After Darkness. The reformers perceived an apocalyptic vision in the midst of the darkest age. Equally hopeless today, the true light is coming to the world to give light to our hearts for the people who have lost their ways, joys and hopes of life. God comes to be with us to bear our pains and sorrows and to transform the world together with us. Even if the darkness is likely to kill the whole world, the darkness cannot win over even a tiny light. Moreover, when small lights march together, empowering each other and encouraging together, the darkness never wins the light. When we believe this, we are already marching in the light of God!

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the speakers, panellists, and all the participants. May these two-day sessions enrich us to embrace shared values, promote open dialogue, and prioritise cooperation so that Taiwan can navigate the challenges of the conflict and emerge as a beacon of hope and unity with resilience.

Jooseop Keum
General Secretary
Council for World Mission



Topic: Civil Defense



Mr. Enoch Wu (吳怡農)

Enoch Wu is the Founder and Executive Director of Forward Alliance, a Taiwanese NGO focusing on national security and civic engagement. Forward Alliance's flagship program provides crisis response training for its volunteer corps, empowering citizens to play a direct role in enhancing Taiwan's resilience.

Mr. Wu served on Taiwan's National Security Council from 2017 to 2019. His portfolio included homeland security and critical infrastructure protection. Before joining the National Security Council, Mr. Wu led an Executive Yuan interagency task force, under the direction of Premier Lin Chuan, to review Taiwan's protective security policies for government affairs.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Wu spent a decade in the financial industry, working primarily for Goldman Sachs in Hong Kong.

Mr. Wu graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in economics. He is a reserve NCO under the R.O.C. (Taiwan) Army Special Forces Command.



**Remarks by Enoch Wu at Taiwan Ecumenical Forum “Light after Darkness - Becoming a
Community of Solidarity and Resilience”**

May 21, 2023

Mr. Enoch Wu (吳怡農)

Practicing Resilience

My gratitude to the Presbyterian Church for this invitation, to share with you our work here in Taiwan.

Today, I would like to speak about our communities.

First, at the national level, we are a community of over 23 million civilians – to be more precise, over 23 million citizens. Citizens who argue with each other, like siblings often do. And who then reconcile with each other, like families always do. Also, citizens who freely practice their own faith – by the way, we are home to a million Christians.

We are citizens who vote. Citizens who, through direct action and participation, brought about changes in society and shaped Taiwan into who we are today. Our labor rights, our civil liberties, our protection of the most vulnerable amongst us. These progress all came about because Taiwan is a community of engaged citizens.

All of this may remind you of your own communities – and you would not be wrong. Indeed, there are universal truths about what makes a community, and what holds a community together.

And yet each community is special in its own way.

One of the ways that Taiwan is unique, to the rest of the world, especially of late, is that we as a country are caught in the crosshairs, a target of the Chinese government, who believes that Taiwanese do not deserve the fundamental right to exist as a community.

But we are much more than what an autocratic government is imposing upon us. Taiwan is not defined by Chinese aggression.

In fact, we are among the most liberal democracies in Asia, and that says a lot considering that we held our first free presidential election not even 30 years ago, after a century of colonial rule and martial law.

When you look past the international headlines, you’ll find a country that is diverse and vibrant, one that is just as noisy and rambunctious as the next democracy. You’ll find a nation of people simply striving for a better life, just like you.



You'll find citizens who care not just for themselves and their families, but also for the broader community. Nearly a quarter of Taiwan's population have volunteered their time to improve society in one way or another.

So what is Forward Alliance doing?

Forward Alliance is a nonprofit, founded in 2020 to empower citizens to protect and serve their country. Our programs are designed to engage civilians to vote, to volunteer, and to train.

What do I mean by "training"? A critical component of our work is to provide local communities the knowledge, skills, and organization to help themselves in times of need. So One way that we empower citizens to serve their communities is by training civilian crisis responders.

90% of our volunteers are between the ages of 20 and 50. They come from all walks of life – diverse backgrounds and all genders; students and retirees; stay-at-home parents and young professionals. All of them have one thing in common: they want to help.

Why is this work important?

First, because Taiwan has a lot of earthquakes. We sit on 36 active faults at last count. The previous magnitude 7.4 earthquake took the lives of over two thousand people and injured 11,000 more.

We also see our share of typhoons every year.

On top of these natural threats, we face a neighboring regime that is using its military against us with an increasing frequency.

So Forward Alliance is building a volunteer corps that can mobilize in case of a disaster – whether it's natural or manmade.

Our volunteers are being trained in crisis response, including emergency casualty care, light search and rescue, communications, navigation, and the essentials in sheltering. We have trained five thousand civilians over the past year.

This work is also important because it enhances Taiwan's resilience.

We are preparing for the worst case scenario that the government cannot show up in time during a disaster. We are stronger when more people are trained to help themselves.

We work to enable local action teams to take initiative independently. We only have sixteen thousand firefighters nationally, that's one firefighter for every 1,500 civilians. It does not take an expert to see



that the public must play a key role in a major disaster.

When properly trained and organized, we can complement government initiatives – whether working with first responders or the military. On the other hand, if civil society is completely unprepared, communities break down, and society falls apart.

The better prepared we are as a nation, the more credible our defense, and the more likely we can deter war and preserve peace.

But there is another reason that this work is essential: it brings communities closer.

When people work together, we build solidarity. The shared experience reminds us that we are in it together. And that’s important for any community.

This is why our community teams don’t just train. They seek to help each other during normal times, too.

As an example, our volunteers just completed a book drive serving incarcerated mothers, and donated over a thousand children’s books. And if books have the power to offer relief, and perhaps possibilities, for mothers and children in the worst circumstances, we want to help where we can.

I once asked a volunteer of ours, Michelle, who has lived all over the world, what “community” meant to her. She said:

“Our lives are interconnected, intertwined. A person matters to another person. Community means living with a curiosity and openness about others—especially those with different life paths or who struggle in ways that go unseen. Community means helping others who have less, and letting this be your source of self-respect.”

We matter to each other. We help those who have less, or those who are going through a rough patch. This is how people in Taiwan treat each other.

It is how we engage with the world, too. Our rescue teams were on scene after the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria. During the pandemic, our health professionals were engaged around the clock with their international counterparts.

I hope that you can see that, like communities around the world, we’re doing everything we can to help ourselves. Not only that, we extend a helping hand whenever and wherever we can – as we should.

I hope that in addition to the great work that you’re already doing in your communities, all of you will continue to learn more about the plight of Taiwan, and to remember Taiwan.



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台灣普世論壇

Day 1 - 22 May 2023

I'm often reminded of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr's words: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

In the global community, our lives are indeed interconnected and intertwined. And I hope we will always work together to defend the most vulnerable, wherever they are.



Prof. Michael M. Tsai, MBA;JD. (蔡明憲)

Prof. Michael Tsai received his law degree from National Taiwan Univ; MBA from Univ. of Wisconsin; Juris of Doctor from California Western School of Law. After passing the State Bar Examinations, he had practiced laws as an attorney at law for a few years, in the States of Cal., N.J. & N.Y.

After returning to his homeland-Taiwan, Prof. Tsai was elected to serve at National Assembly, and Legislature consequently, responsible for revisions of national constitutions & legislations, as well as the formulations of national policies including defense and foreign affairs.

Prof. Michael Tsai had also served respectively, as Minister at the Ministry of National Defense; as Senior National Security Advisor at NSC; & as Deputy Representative to the U.S.A.

Prof. Michael Tsai, is now teaching as an adjunct professor at Taiwan's national educational institutions, in the fields of constitutional & human rights law, defense policies, & international relations.



**How Taiwan is defying China's aggression,
with total national defense & regional security cooperations
Prof. Michael M.Tsai, MBA;JD. (蔡明憲)**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. I am honored to be invited to speak to and share with you on the subject of how Taiwanese people and their government defied and deterred China from aggression with our national military defense, civil defense, and with the regional security cooperation (i.e. from the United States, Japan, Canada, Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Australia, India, etc.).

With respect to humanity, I would like to share with you about how Taiwan, as a democratic and free nation, and its government and people working together have defied and deterred China's aggressions. For the last 2 years or so, China's jetfighters fly over and circle Taiwan airspace and its surrounding areas almost every day. The highlight of this was last August, when the U.S. House Speaker, Madame Nancy Pelosi, came to Taiwan for an official visit. The following week, China sent almost 250 jetfighters over Taiwan airspace for four days. China even fired missiles over the north of Taiwan's airspace and territory. That, to many of us, is aggression. It is an intimidation not only against the Taiwanese people, but also against the Japanese people and to many nations in the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, I want to share with you how the Taiwanese people and its government have been working together over the past few years trying to build up our defense capabilities for our national self-defense.

My good friend and young scholar, Enoch Wu, is mentioned earlier quite well and I know he returned to Taiwan to work in civil defense for many years. In the year 1999, when I was serving as a congressional legislator, I, along with many legislators, we proposed and passed a bill called "Taiwan's national defense law". This bill, especially its Article 3, which says Taiwan's national defense is a national total defense including military defense, civil defense, economic defense, psychological defense, scientific or digital defense. Therefore, we are building up a national and total defense in almost every aspect of society, and not only military defense or some aspects.

While I was serving in Taiwan's National Defense Ministry, I proposed an active military defense in cooperation with civil defense. Military persons and civilian persons should work together, hand by hand, eyes by eyes, action by action. That's the best way to defend Taiwan and defend the Asia-Pacific area and maintain peace and stability and prosperity all together. Therefore, I'd like to show that what we have done for the last couple of years under the government auspices of Madame President Tsai Ing-wen and many NGOs and civilians working together, we believe that total national defense military defense in one hand and civilian defense in the other – and also, we are asking for all the aspects of the civilian, including the economic, business, educational personnel, high school kids and college kids, man and woman, young and old, we should work together to defend Taiwan and to strengthen our national capability for self-defense in order to deter China from making aggression.



Therefore, the concept of total national defense, we have that become a national role for over 24 years now, since 1999, but we still have lots of things to do to strengthen our national defense. Also, most recently, particularly in the last few years, China's communist government has engaged in substantial penetration against Taiwan through misinformation to penetrate our government offices, households, computers, even concentrating on penetrating the mass media. Therefore, this is serious intimidation from China's side against Taiwan. Therefore, this is why Taiwanese people are working together to defy China's communist government's aggressive action against Taiwan – not only on the military side but also in the civilian, digital intimidation against Taiwan. Although I am retired from active government office, but I still work hard with many NGOs and civilian friends and government officers, because we know that it is only when Taiwanese people are working together and remain united that we can deter China from taking aggression against Taiwan. This is one part I want to share with you.

The next part I'd like to share with you is this: Maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is not our sole responsibility. For the past 15 to 20 years, I have appealed to many good friends (American, Canadian, Japanese, European, Singaporean, and Philippine friends), we say that to maintain peace in the Asia-Pacific means that we should work and cooperate together. I mentioned that China's military strength is much stronger than 20-30 years ago. Therefore, one of the most effective deterrents against China's aggression is by working together through regional and states cooperation (like NATO after World War II when European nations worked together under the leadership of the United States and UK and France), which is the most important and crucial deterrence against aggression from the soviet union block and helped maintain peace and security in Europe and around the world.

Therefore, I have advocated for many years and appealed to the US and Japan, that there are many ways in which we can work together to maintain peace and stability in this area because collective security cooperation is very important to deter our common enemies – China's communist government, the PLA forces from taking aggression not only across the Taiwan Strait, but also across the South China Sea and the East China Sea near Japan's Okinawa area. Therefore, in the last several years whenever I met with American and Japan friends, we would discuss how to work together to build up an emergent management mechanism among us together by the use of telecommunication in form and in substance to give a message to China that we are working together as a collective security cooperation, just like an Asian NATO, to maintain peace and deter aggression in the area. I remember that in 1996, US President Clinton sent two aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait and nearby waters because China fired 8 missiles aimed at northern and southern parts of Taiwan surrounding waters. President Clinton asked Mr. William Perry (the then US Secretary of Defense), why he was asking for two aircraft carriers instead of one. Mr. Perry said: Mr. President, I asked the US to send two of our aircraft carriers to show our determination along with the Japanese and Taiwanese Self-Defense Forces, to give China a very clear deterrence signal that we are determined to work together and ask China's PLA to stop the intimidation and aggression.



I asked Mr. Perry several years ago when he was visiting Taiwan and we were having lunch together and he told me this story. Therefore, regional security cooperation is vital to Japan, Taiwan, the United States, to Philippines, the European nations, etc. because, as a Christian, I know that we are one in Christ. If there is a crisis in Taiwan, Japan will also be in crisis; This is what the former Japanese PM Abe Shinzo said last December. Therefore, if Taiwan is in danger - or even worse, taken over by China - then Japan, Korea, USA, Philippines will be in trouble and that's why we should work together to form a strong, decisive security cooperation.

Therefore, in conclusion, I'd appeal to all friends, churches, Christians, non-Christians to unite together against the totalitarian regime of China and tell China clearly that we love peace with justice, but peace without justice is not real peace. I pray for all of our friends to pray together, work together, and act together in peace and justice. Thank you!



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Day 1 - 22 May 2023

Panel Presentations



Shoichi Konda (根田祥一)

Advisor to “The Christian” (interdenominational weekly newspaper), Editorial Advisor to “Cult 110” (In Japan, 110 is the emergency number to call for incidents and accidents)

Worked in the Christian media for 43 years as a reporter and editor, writing articles for newspapers and magazines. His scope includes cult issues, human rights, religious freedom, pastoral care, and war responsibility. After serving as editor-in-chief, he is currently an advisor. In Japan Holiness Church, to which he belongs as a lay preacher, he has worked on war responsibility of churches and prevention of harassment. He is a member of the Japan-Korea Holiness Church's Joint History Study Group and teaches pastoral studies, human rights, and contemporary society and faith at several seminaries.



What Overcomes the Cult-like World?

Shoichi Konda (根田祥一)

April 24 in 2022, when Orthodox Easter was celebrated, two presidents attended Mass. One of them, Putin, at the Russian Orthodox Church and the other, Zelensky, at the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. On that day when they prayed to the same God, the fighting continued. Many question why Christians who worship the God of peace would kill each other.

In that Easter celebration, Moscow Patriarch blessed Putin's ambition to “Russify” Ukraine. In response, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine declared its complete independence and autonomy from the Moscow Patriarchate. The madness of war destroys reliance between close nations, and sometimes hinder the unity of a body of Christ (Eucharist) as well.

Two months before the Easter, Russia invaded Ukraine and launched a war. President Putin's statements and actions, manifested through this war, make him look like a cult leader “Guru”. He reworded the war of aggression as a “military-technical measure” and publicly stated that Russian troops never target civilians.

But in reality, they have repeatedly bombed schools, hospitals, train stations, markets, and apartment buildings. And then, horrible torture and genocide have also been revealed.

The president lies, deceives, and cheats. He manipulates people to follow him by doing so. He arrests or assassinates opposition leaders and journalists. He attacks and silences those who speak the truth. In Russia, the media is regulated and it is difficult to know what really happen in Ukraine. For this reason, even after the war criminals, public opinion in Russia is reported to be in majority support of President Putin.

If a lie is told over and over again with conviction, people will believe it to be true. By regulating information and mind-controlling through propaganda, people are made to view their opponents as “enemies”. The only “truth” for them is the value they accept, and everything that contradicts it is dismissed as false. These things that are happening in Russia/Ukraine right now are all associated with the characteristics of cults. Cult leaders lie and deceive for what they believe to be “truth” and “justice”.

Now the Western media say the war in Ukraine as a battle between “authoritarianism” and “democracy”.

Indeed, what Putin and other authoritarian leaders, claim as “justice” is a “threat” to the rest of the world.

As the concept paper says, the Chinese Communist Party's escalation of military threats against Taiwan not only intensifies Taiwanese people's concerns toward China, it also destabilizes the Indo-Pacific region, and intimidates all citizens in the area. This is true for us Japan as well. From the perspective of a democracy that values human rights and individual dignity, they are Cult-



like dictators and oppressors.

But then, is our “democracy” really working? Looking at the Western world in the last decade, I cannot say yes. A generation of young people who sympathize with dangerous groups such as neo-Nazis is on the rise, and far-right parties are gaining power. Hate speech and hate crimes are increasing, and exclusionism is on the rise in democratic countries.

A symbolic event was the emergence of the 2016 U.S. President Trump.

Mr. Trump cut off critical media by shouting “Fake news!” and spread “conspiracy theories” that were not based on fact, such as “votes were stolen”. Whereas, the facts of his alleged “conspiracy” have never come to light. Instead, a real conspiracy came to light after the 2016 presidential election, in which Russia used cyberattacks and propaganda to interfere with the campaign of his opponent, Hillary Clinton.

However, still enthusiastic Trump supporters cheered his agitation and continued to believe the propaganda that there were “irregularities” in the presidential election in 2020.

Then, on January 6, 2021, Trump supporters turned into a mob and stormed the U.S. Capitol. This was an unbelievable incident in a country that was said to be “a model of democracy”. A democratically elected president spreading a lot of lies, inciting hostility toward the opposing side, and creating serious divisions in the nation. All of these things are the mind control technique used by the cult.

It appears as if society as a whole has become a cult.

Indeed, the march to the U.S. Capitol included Hyun-jin Moon, son of Sun Myung Moon, founder of a famous cult the Unification Church and his disciples. He is with a crown made of bullets and called the “king”.

The Sanctuary Association he leads is known as “gun church” where people attend services with rifles.

He is an enthusiastic Trump supporter, and the Sanctuary Association gathered with the religious right and far-right forces in October 2021, holding an anti-government rally.

President Trump, during his presidency, invited cult leaders who call themselves “prophets” to the White House to receive advice and pray for him.

In September 2021, he gave the keynote address at an online festival of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). It’s a Unification Church friendship group, and he praised Mother Moon who is the president of UPF and the Unification Church.

At the same convention, former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was another keynote speaker.

Mr. Abe was shot and killed by a young man last July. After his arrest, he stated that his motive for the crime was a revenge to the Unification Church. His mother joined the Unification Church, donated all her money to it, went bankrupt, and lost everything. His brother committed suicide and



he had to give up his college education. His family had been destroyed by the cult. He said that he made the decision to target Abe after seeing a video of him speaking at UPF meeting on YouTube.

The Unification Church changed its name in 1994, and it is an ironic black joke that its name is “The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification”.

This incident led the media to report on the seriousness of the cult's damage as well as the close relationship that Japan's ruling politicians have had with the Unification Church for over 60 years. It became clear that the policies of the current conservative parties have much in common with the Unification Church's claims.

Japan has been criticized for being behind the G7 countries in its legislation on human rights, and the media reported that this is due in part to the influence of the Unification Church propaganda. Japan's conservative ruling party the LDP joined hands with the Unification Church because of their anti-communism, but they have created many victims by leaving the powerful cult in control. This is a serious responsibility.

The cult's mentality is ruling everything and some of guru's goal is world domination. It is based on the delusion that if the whole world accepts their doctrine, they would be happy.

Cult leaders have ambitions to become the ruler of the world, not only religiously, but also culturally, economically, and sometime politically.

That domination is achieved by having all people obey to the only values the dictator insists on. Diversity is not allowed at all. Those with different ideas and positions are labeled “enemies”. The loyalty of members is mobilized by promoting the threat of the “enemy.”

These things are exactly what is happening now in authoritarian states such as Russia and others. The crisis facing the world is very similar to the risk of cult problems.

We in Japan have experienced this risk in the past. Until World War II, the Japanese government was controlled by the military motivated by extreme nationalism. The motivating force that they used to drive people to war was the national Shintoism centered on the Emperor System. They forced upon all the people the fantasy that Japan was a “land of gods” that had been consistently ruled by emperors since ancient times, and that the emperor was a “living god”. Of course, it was all fake, but sometimes lies drive nations to reckless war.

In 1931, the Japanese Army justified invading to Northeast China by creating its own fake news that the railroads they laid had been attacked.

For more than half a century, the Japanese leadership have been feeding their children fake-based teachings in education, raising Kamikaze attack soldiers who commit suicide attacks offering their lives to the Emperor. The military government, deceiving all of Japan and the world, invaded Asian countries, announcing that the fight was to liberate East Asia from Western colonialism. (Just like Putin announces now, Russia would liberate Ukraine.)



However, they built Shinto shrines in the Asian countries they occupied and enforced them to worship the Emperor, as a living god. These are the very cult that enforces their beliefs through mind control.

At that time, Japanese church was unable to resist this apparent oppression of idol worship. Many of the church leaders, like most of the people, were mind-controlled and followed the national policy. In 1944, the president of the United Church of Christ in Japan sent a letter to brothers and sisters in Asia, encouraging them to worship the shrine.

The church committed to nationalism is powerless and unable to fulfill its role as the light of the world and salt of the earth. What Japan did in Asia was not liberation, but a brutal war of aggression. The driving force of that war was the fear of being destroyed by the enemy and the impatience to fight before that happens.

Now we see the same principle at work in Russia and other countries. What drives Putin and other authoritarian leaders is fear and the desire to control everything to escape that fear and dominate their kingdom.

To do so, they control information, suppress journalists and democratic activists, and mind-control their people with fake news.

It is history repeating itself like “*déjà vu*.”

The way Putin is now using the Russian Orthodox Church to mobilize his people under the banner of “Great Russianism”. Trump's slogan “Make America Great Again” and “America First” get the people excited.

Some of countries have been trying to make their people submit to the regime through education and propaganda to see those who are different from them as the enemy. All these policies are no different from mind control by cults.

Japan's destructive cult Aum Shinrikyo drove its members with the delusion that they would be attacked by the state; the 1995 Aum terrorist attacks were genocide committed by brainwashed disciples who believed the fake news told by its leader guru. The cult mentality justifies even violence under the banner of their "justice."

So how can the world overcome this cult mentality? The answer is not easy. But we have at least two things to learn from history and our experiences.

One is to distinguish truthful information from fake news. In wartime Japan, no one could tell the truth because of strict control of speech by the militarist regime. The majority of the population was mind-controlled by government propaganda, and no one could stop the military from pushing ahead with reckless war.

However, a small number of Christian educators did not listen to the propaganda that U.S. and



U.K. were the devil. And they continued to risk education to develop international sensibilities.

After the war, they were asked to draft the Fundamental Law of Education under the Peace Constitution and laid the foundation for democratic education. They were the "remnants" of hope left in a world of darkness. They were not mind-controlled by the common sense of militarism and did never give up global solidarity even if they were suspected of being spies leading to the enemy. They were aware that their identity belonged not to nationalism but to a global community in Christ.

Information is controlled in Russia now, but sometimes things are different from they were 80 years ago. In a society with a well-developed Internet, even if the government regulates information, it is impossible to block it completely.

In fact, in Russia, the older generation, who only have access to state-run media, support Putin, but the younger generation, who have access to a variety of information through social networking services, are aware that the government's announcements differ from the tone of opinion around the world.

On the other hand, in countries where information is freely available, such as the U.S. and Japan, some people are misled by fake news that abounds on the Internet. As they continue to view large amounts of the same type of information, they assume conspiracy theories as if they were truth. The same thing happens online like as cult members are repeatedly fed restricted information. To avoid this danger, it is essential of media literacy, to be in contact with as wide and varied a range of information as possible, and to be able to judge that information.

Farther more, another thing for media literacy to work is solidarity. When Russia invaded Ukraine, it was Christians with international networks who noticed that the government's statements were false. The General Secretary of Russian Evangelical Alliance sent an open letter to President Putin the day before the invasion of Ukraine calling for a peaceful solution, and two weeks after he issued a statement to the international community in Christ.

The following is an excerpt.

To my dear brothers and sisters around the world:

As the General Secretary of Russian Evangelical Alliance, I mourn what my country has done in its military invasion of another sovereign country, Ukraine.

All these events cause me deep sorrow, bitterness and regret for decisions taken by the leadership of my country, and a great compassion for those suffering as a result of this decision.

Today, as a citizen and as General Secretary of Russian Evangelical Alliance, I apologize to all those who have suffered, lost loved ones and relatives, or lost their place of residence as a result of this military conflict. My prayer is that you will find strength from the Lord to extend your hand of solidarity and forgiveness, so we can live as the people of God to our world.

May our heavenly Father help us all.

With deep respect, your brother in the Lord,

Vitaly Vlasenko



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

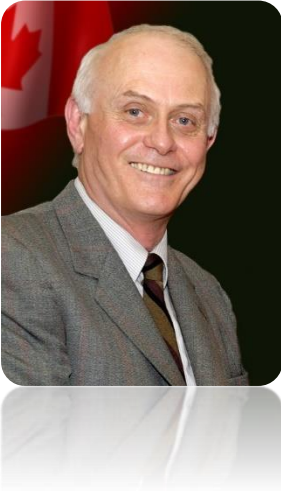
Day 1 - 22 May 2023

Some of other Christian organizations with global networks were also able to judge information from the perspective of God's people without getting caught up in nationalism. They are sustaining the friendship both in wartime Russia and in Ukraine.

For the himself is our peace, who has made us both one
and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

(Ephesians 2:14)

How to counter fake news is a key issue today. In a world divided by fake news and broken by hostility, the solidarity of the community of peace in Christ is the key to a light of hope.



S.K. (Steve) Moore, PhD, an ordained minister with the United Church of Canada, served as a Padre in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for 22 years, retiring in 2012. His operational tours include pre-Dayton Accord Bosnia (1992-1993), Haiti (1997-1998) and the conducting of doctoral research at the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (2006), Afghanistan, completing his PhD in 2008. His post-doctoral work with the, now, Canadian Army Land Warfare Center, Kingston, resulted in the development of the chaplain operational capabilities of Religious Area Analysis (RAA) and Religious Leader Engagement (RLE, 2011), concepts that can be generalized to civilian contexts. Presently, Dr. Moore is researching and writing RAA and RLE Joint Doctrine as part of their integration into education and training in the CAF.

He was a guest lecturer with the annual Civil-Military Relations Program at the United Nations Training School Ireland (Dublin: 2011-2014); a member of the Understand to Prevent (U2P) Research Team, a British-led initiative comprised of military and civilian researchers from 13 NATO and NATO-Partner nations (2015-2017), contributing to the U2P Handbook (2017). In 2018 he was a keynote speaker and Panelist at the Commonwealth Conference, the Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

Author of numerous articles and book chapters, Dr. Moore published *Military Chaplains as Agents of Peace: Religious Leader Engagement in Conflict and Post-conflict Environments* with Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group (Lexington Books, 2013). The Monograph, *Religious Leader Engagement as an Aspect of Irregular Warfare: The Dénouement of a Chaplain Operational Capability*, published in 2020 by the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, CFB Kingston, ON. His most recent article, *Religious Leader Engagement: Global Warming, Sea-Level Rise and the Impact of Mass Migration in 2050 and Beyond*, Canadian Army Journal, 19.1, 2021, pp. 6-21, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/mdn-dnd/D12-11-19-1-eng.pdf.



The Church in a Dis/misinformation Age:
Reality and Response

Rev. S.K. Moore, CD, PhD

Introduction

As a former Canadian Armed Forces chaplain, I'm presently researching and writing military doctrine for the royal Canadian chaplain service. as such, I'm required to frame my writing in the larger military context, which means an appreciation of the circumstances of war.

Let me share a slide that i think will help us frame some of what we're about here today as we consider what your concept paper referred to as cognitive warfare.

Slide: Matrix of Competition

Warfare has changed dramatically in recent decades. the diagram before you, called the matrix of competition, provides a more accurate portrayal of the kinds of competitive activities that are known to the contemporary context along two separate axes:

Horizontal Axes: no/covert state involvement to overt state involvement...

...to the Vertical Axes: persuasive activities to coercive activities.

Instead of simply categorizing activity in terms of the level of violence associated with it, the matrix describes activities according to the method (coercive to persuasive) and the nature of the actor employing it.

The three colored blocks in the diagram depict the progression of warfare from the grey zone

...to the green box representing irregular or limited warfare

...to the reddish box depicting regular or conventional warfare...something we all want to avoid.

Grey zone conflict is a relatively new term and more accurately captures the kinds of threats that transpire globally in the contemporary context...

It is in the *grey zone* that "...adversaries try to achieve war-like objectives without becoming engaged in armed conflict or direct confrontation...something that is called sub-threshold activities."

Look at some of these red dots, taking into consideration in which quadrant they are found:

- Joint Military Exercises: President Tsai visited the Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy in California the Chinese launched a 3-day navy & air force exercise around Taiwan.

This was below the threshold of conflict but, nonetheless, coercive and threatening.
(overt/coercive)

- Economic Sanctions: overt/persuasive
- Freedom of Navigation: US Navy Ships sail through the Strait of Taiwan
(overt/persuasive)



- Politician / Military visits: Nancy Pelosi visit in Aug., 2022. (overt/persuasive), which resulted in cyber-attacks and website hacking. (Covert – coercive)

Slide

China apparently took the trip as a provocation and rattled its saber. Cyberattacks on Taiwanese government units set a new daily record, which was 23 times greater than the previous one. At the same time, 7-Eleven stores on the island were hacked to display the message, “Get out of Taiwan.”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2023-02-14/spy-balloons-no-match-for-china-s-cyber-attacks-suggests-taiwan>

This is what the authors of your concept paper for this forum described as the ‘cognitive warfare’ of ‘dis/misinformation’, which falls within this category of sub-threshold activities.

Slide: Renee DiResta quote. This is how she describes cognitive warfare – Stanford Internet Observatory in California

This is a kind of *warm war*; not the active, declared, open conflict of a hot war, but beyond the shadowboxing of a cold one.

Slide: Barak Obama quote @ Stanford Cyber Policy Center (21 April 2022)

last year Barak Obama spoke at the Stanford Cyber Policy Center. this is what he had to say about today’s misuse of social media.

It is not necessary for people to believe this information in order to weaken democratic institutions. you just have to flood a country’s public square with enough raw sewage...raise enough questions...spread enough dirt...plant enough conspiracy theorizing...that citizens no longer know what to believe.

This is the fight that we’re in!

Slide

Open Society Foundation

- Sofia, Bulgaria – founded by billionaire and philanthropist George Soros

Slide: Media Literacy Index

They developed an instrument called the media literacy index, which included 35 European countries and had editions in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. In 2022 the number of countries was expanded to 41 in Europe to allow for further comparison. The index has predictors which determine a country’s media literacy but ranks societies regarding their potential for resilience in the face of the post-truth phenomenon.

Animation: Media Freedom, Education, Trust in people and E-participation.

The model employs several indicators that correspond to different aspects related to media literacy and the post-truth phenomena: media freedom, education, trust in people and e-participation.



Slide – Finland

Finland has ranked first for each of the five years. For our purposes today, I'll cite Education (in particular, Finland) and Trust (societal & interpersonal).

Officials say Finland's success is not just the result of its strong education system, which is one of the best in the world, but also because of a concerted effort to teach students about fake news. Media literacy is part of the national core curriculum starting with the youngest to the eldest students.

Slide - Primary School

Finland takes the fight seriously enough to teach it in primary school. They start by using fairy tales and fables. take the wily fox who always cheats the other animals with his sly words (Metaphor for a certain type of person or form of communication).

Slide: Secondary Schools & Post-secondary Institutions

multi-platform information literacy and strong critical thinking have become a core, cross-subject components of a national curriculum that was introduced in 2016.

Animation: Maths, Art, History, Language

In maths lessons, pupils learn how easy it is to lie with statistics.

In art, they see how an image's meaning can be manipulated. (ai...what's coming)

In history, they analyse notable propaganda campaigns,

While Finnish language teachers work with them on the many ways in which words can be used to confuse, mislead and deceive.

Slide: photo of students in Helsinki

The exercises include examining claims found in YouTube videos and social media posts, comparing media bias in an array of different "clickbait" articles, probing how misinformation preys on readers' emotions, and even getting students to try their hand at writing fake news stories themselves.

One educator stated, "what we want our students to do is ... before they like or share in the social media they think twice – Who has written this? Where has it been published? Can I find the same information from another source?"

The Fins have successfully combined fact-checking with critical thinking and voter literacy. Other countries are seeking to copy Finland's blueprint. Representatives from a slew of EU states, along with Singapore, have come to learn from their approach to the problem.

Let me transition quickly here into a potential response of the church or religion writ large. In doing such, I want to bring forward another of the media literacy indexes, that of trust: societal and interpersonal.

Slide: Religion's Strategic Spaces,

Sociologists increasingly recognize that religion can occupy strategic social spaces within civilian



society which potentially lend themselves to creating incentive for change. Precedent exists that when certain causal factors present, the religious realm has been the impetus for significant change where other initiatives have failed.

Animation: I call this Religious Leader Engagement.

Despite the negativity that can be associated with religion, religious leaders in many instances still maintain a high degree of trust emanating from the general population.

The social capital they enjoy brings with it a certain moral authority, which contributes to a receptive atmosphere among the populace to their ideas and proposals.

Animation: Individuals

Religious leaders can be defined as Middle Range Actors, - religious leaders known and appreciated at the grassroots level (among the people) and, due to their credibility, concurrently have access and influence at some of the highest levels of civil leadership.

In pursuing necessary change, individual religious leaders have been able to transcend differences that may exist across religious boundaries...in pursuit of coming together with those of kindred spirit with a view to creating a new narrative... to bringing about needed societal change. we call them boundary spanners.

Boundary Spanners bridge that which normally divides and join hands with others of like mind in an effort to bring about change. I believe God's Spirit moves in such ways.

I would suggest to you today that there are those of other faith traditions in Taiwan who deeply share your concerns...who are appalled by the constant assault of dis/misinformation on Taiwanese society emanating from China. I would also suggest if there was something they could do to combat this 'cognitive warfare' they would gladly do it.

Animation: Intellectual

Religious organizations within civil society often constitute intellectual spaces where societal injustice may be opposed. The intellectual capital represented in the cross-pollination of ideas among the religious leaders of the various faith traditions cannot be underestimated. Coming together in open and honest dialogue may give rise to new and creative narratives...as to how such subversive interference may be addressed. This shared intellectual space serves as an incubator of sorts.

God dwells in the midst of the collaborative efforts of God's children who join together to confront the forces of evil in whatever form it takes.

In this instance, where outside forces continually drive wedges of confusion and doubt via mis/disinformation among your citizenry...dialogue across religious boundaries may prove beneficial in the collective.

Animation: institutional

It is in the institutional space of religious organizations where the intellectual challenges of change are enacted, often extending beyond the local, to regional and sometimes international levels in terms of support—institutional capital. Faith traditions have a built-in way to communicate with the grassroots...large segments of the population. Religious institutions possess significant infrastructure via churches, temples, shrines, mosques, and synagogues...places of worship...community hubs.

It is also true that religious groups are often the most effective when they are part of a general coalition dedicated to future change. Any new narrative or approach emanating from a coalition of



religious leaders from the various faith traditions may attract other civilian society organizations in support of your cause. ...and thus, begin to fortify your society against the onslaught of its harmful effects on democracy.

Animation: Superordinate Goals – achieving together what one cannot accomplish alone.

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The synergy of collaborating together can bring about significant change. As representatives of the Christian church in Taiwan, gathered in this forum...as you consider how best to respond to the destructive forcers of dis/misinformation confronting Taiwanese society...

- Food for thought would be for select leaders of the Christian church of Taiwan...
- Reach across religious boundaries to those religious leaders you have reason to believe would be open to dialogue – kindred spirits;
- Come together to dialogue on your shared concerns on the devastating societal effects of manufactured dis/misinformation...together determine and develop a strategy.
- Consider together borrowing a page from the Finnish playbook in creating together a strategy to support your government in curriculum development at all educational levels as a means of combating the ills of social media.
 - teach your youth to differentiate fact from fiction;
 - to discern fake news from truth;
 - responsible usage of social media

Animation: blocked text

“Without facts, you can’t have truth. without truth, you can’t have trust. without these, we have no shared space and democracy is a dream.”



May 22, 2023 TEF Webinar: Light after Darkness -- Becoming a Community of Solidarity and Resilience, Q&A Session Notes

TEF Task Force member Anita Chang moderated the session.

Christopher Lin asked a question of Enoch Wu and Elder Michael Tsai. He first commented on Mr. Wu's presentation, which focused on the Forward Alliance and response to disasters or military adversities, and asked a twofold question: How do they see civil organizations collaborating with each other and working on a coordinated response? And, how do these civil organizations, and maybe in collaboration with the government, raise awareness among the Taiwanese people? Because it is important for people to be aware of the adversities Taiwan is facing now.

Enoch Wu responded by saying that coordination and collaboration are absolutely essential in response to crises, whatever the crisis (such as a natural disaster or military invasion) may be. In each case, although the cause of the crisis may vary, the characteristics and aftermath are often the same, for example, disruption to essential services, the impacts on critical infrastructure, and mass casualties. In the early stages of a disaster, the cause may even be unknown. For organizations like Forward Alliance, the focus is on maintaining the basic functions of society and emergency response, regardless of the cause. NGO coordination is very important and there can never be too many people involved. For example, post-hurricane-Katrina in the United States, when essential services, the state, and law enforcement could not respond, it was necessary for everyone to step up if possible. But, it is also important for NGOs to coordinate with the government when possible because the government can respond on a larger scale and larger numbers of resources available. On the other hand, the government may not be able to react as quickly as would be ideal; it may not be able to be everywhere all at once, but it may be able to do the coordination function that NGOs may not be able to do. Forward Alliance works with first responders on a regular basis. Most of the trainers are active duty firefighters or work on the front lines either in the emergency room or in the military or in law enforcement. It is important to begin that engagement now because professional first responders need to learn to trust civilians. Trust is built by working and training together. When this project started, people asked about the tension between professionalism and volunteerism, but this is the wrong way of looking at the problem. Professionals need to understand that volunteers will help them do their job in a major crisis when things start to fall apart.

Mr. Wu then gave the floor to **Elder Michael Tsai**.

Elder Michael Tsai commented that when Taiwan faced natural disasters like earthquakes or typhoons, at times, thousands of people suffered. In reference to Christopher Lin's question about coordination and cooperation between the government and NGOs or the civilian defense, he noted that in the U.S. when there are natural disasters, the federal government sends in the National Guard, and if the situation worsens, then the government sends in the armed forces to help. In Elder Tsai's experience in Taiwan (and he was personally involved on several occasions), the Ministry of National Defense in Taiwan would automatically send the armed forces to go to a disaster area to



help. The civilian rescue force, including many from the local police force and firefighters, who are very well prepared to rescue people, would then help alongside the armed forces. One of the missions of the national armed forces is to fight the enemy in a war, and another important mission is to go into disaster areas to rescue people and help people who are suffering. Recently, the Taiwan government formed the National Mobilization Bureau. In the case of an emergency, such as a Chinese invasion, then this Bureau would quickly, effectively mobilize all the national forces, including the military forces, the civil defense, the schools, and civil servants. They have to mobilize all the material resources and personnel to get into the disaster area. President Tsai Ing-wen recently has asked that all the young men over 18 years old serve compulsory military service from four months to one year, starting next year. Also, the National Defense Forces must mobilize to help with the training of the reserve forces. Taiwan has about 2.5 million reserve forces, and starting four to five months ago, all the reserve forces had to be called back for military training, in case they would need to assist the national armed forces for self-defense against enemy aggression against Taiwan. In these ways, the government is working together with the civilian government agencies to automatically mobilize the reserve forces to get into disaster areas.

Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang-En asked Rev. Steve Moore if the curricula he mentioned that is used in primary and secondary schools in Finland is publically available. He commented on the presentations by Dr. Moore and Mr. Shoichi Konda as forming a contrast. On the one hand, Dr. Moore mentioned the strategic space and social capital of religious leaders; on the other hand, Mr. Konda discussed how religious and political leaders misused their social capital to mislead society.

Rev. Steve Moore responded by mentioning the Open Society Foundation (Bulgaria) that he included in his powerpoint and also that the Finnish government would be more than willing to share resources as many EU countries as well as Singapore have solicited their help.

Mr. Shoichi Konda stated that his position is difficult to explain.

Rev. Steve Moore maintained that wherever religion exists, there have always been various interpretations of a given faith; as a result, people around the world sometimes take extremist views. He noted that he had been in Afghanistan, where the Taliban takes a very extreme approach in their views of their faith. But he acknowledged that the flip side of that, which is a more of a peacemaking, peace-building aspect of faith traditions, could be effective. He noted that there is a lot of reading that can be done on the question they asked and it is too much to be covered today; he suggested to TEF Executive Secretary Nancy Lin that it would be a good topic for a future forum.

Elder Michael Tsai mentioned his experience of serving in the Taiwan National Defense Ministry. Fifteen to sixteen years ago he was asking to develop a curriculum and teaching instructions for high school and college students. This curriculum was called the Total National Defense with Education, and instructors (both military experts and civilian instructors) were trained for three to four months to go to every Taiwanese high school and college to train young people: to



raise their consciousness and sense of responsibility, strengthen their national identity, and teach them to help defend the nation if it were to become necessary. Elder Tsai commented that when he left his position, this training program was not activated, and he hopes that Taiwan's government leaders in national defense would reactivate this kind of education and total national defense program.

Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum responded by saying that although on the one hand he is fully supportive of the efforts to defend the country, on the other hand he feels uncomfortable because of painful memories of his teenage and university years when the dictators in Korea brainwashed young people, forced them to do military training, and taught them to kill people. When theological students refused to participate, they were put into military concentration camps – in his case, for three years. He noted that there is a need for self-defense, but he also asks -- what is the role of faith community in this situation? Maybe Chiang Kai-Shek's plan of developing nuclear weapons is the easiest way to defend ourselves. Recently the Korean president asked the U.S. to send nuclear weapons to Korea, so the U.S. is planning to bring submarines armed with 24 nuclear missiles, and to put them right in front of China. He believes this would be catastrophic for maintaining peace in the region. It would mean the return of U.S. military weapons to South Korea after 42 years of withdrawal. On the one hand, of course, strengthening military forces is necessary for the purpose of self-defense, but on the other hand, people need to bring a hermeneutics of suspicion to these military forces. What is the distinctiveness of a Christian approach in regard to civil defense? That definition and strategy, and also the theological interpretation, are crucial; otherwise, the risk of re-creating a society similar to what was experienced in the past is high.

Mr. Enoch Wu responded. He thanked Rev. Dr. Keum for his comments and noted that he especially appreciated what he said in light of the fact that South Korea and Taiwan share similar histories in their eventual transition to a full democracy. Right now in Taiwan they are wrestling with a critical question -- what is the difference between conscription and national service? Conscription is by force and by law. Conscription can happen in a regime, and it is what is happening right now in Russia; young men in Russia are being sent to participate in a conflict they may or may not agree with. National service is about citizenship and is present in a democracy. Service cannot be forced, but it is about a shared burden, a shared sacrifice towards a common goal. Citizens need to identify with the value and the meaning and the ultimate worth of their service. If they do not, then that service needs to be reformed and restructured. National service is critical to democracy-- it is about serving one's community, and the nation. If done right, national service strengthens identity and builds solidarity. If done wrong, then young men may end up in concentration camps. In Taiwan the problem is that many of the institutions are legacy holdovers from the authoritarian past, and they now have to learn how to function in a democracy. In the longer term, how can Taiwan transform the problem it faces? A continued arms race and more nuclear weapons may deter, but it will continue to extend the conflict. True change and lasting peace require collectively working towards a solution that is not purely military. The core of the problem right now is the authoritarian regime that is attacking civil liberties and basic values both in their country and abroad. Until the Beijing



leadership changes and governance changes in a way that respects minority rights and fundamental values, then this problem will continue. Encouragement of liberalization and democratic movement in China is critical.

Mr. Wu also responded to an earlier question regarding communication. There are two parts to communication. One is communicating the threat, and the second is communicating to the public what to do. In Taiwan, everyone understands the threat. The problem is communicating with the public exactly what they should do in a crisis and, in doing so, give people agency. If the problem that is presented, like the problem of national security, is too big, it leads to helplessness, or numbness, or paralysis. Individuals and families need to know about specific options and courses of action that they can take to help themselves, their families, and their communities. For example, when a warning system sounds, they should know what to do.

Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson then commented on Mr. Wu's stating that the central problem is the authoritarian regime in China, their effect on their own people and their effect on Taiwan. Rev. Dr. Ferguson's opinion is that the problem cannot be defined that way anymore. For example, the Presbyterian Church in Cuba would talk about the need to struggle against the brutal authoritarian regime of the United States that has destroyed their economy over seven decades. He noted that the Latin American country he lives in currently has had a U.S.--imposed war on terror combined with the war on drugs that is directly responsible for the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and countless deaths as a result of a militarized approach. What is important is resilience and empowering people out of the context of two and perhaps three empires that are in conflict and that each in its own zone of influence is bad for the planet and for human existence. People cannot only focus on the power relationships that most affect them personally. If a problem is too big, people cannot act. But if the problem presented is too small, people will not be inspired through hope. People have to come together. They have to seek their own well-being. They have to learn in new ways to reform their communities from the grassroots up, but at the same time no one can afford to ignore global geopolitics. How do the micro work and national defense policies that have been reflected on in this webinar intersect with the fact that it is not just China that is a global problem, but at least three empires and conflicts. Without falling into despair, people need to care not just about themselves but also about their brothers and sisters around the globe; they need to care not just about the national context but also the global context.

Ms. Anita Chang asked for clarification as to whether Rev. Dr. Ferguson was asking a question or making a comment.

Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson then restated his comments as a question, saying that the question to the speakers, as they are concentrating on their local and national actions in relation to the threat and domination of China and wanting to build international solidarity about that, is the following: how would the speakers respond to the fact that if people from other countries (such as from countries in



Latin America or Filipinos) were discussing the issue, they would describe the United States in the same way the speakers have described China?

Ms. Anita Chang thanked Rev. Dr. Ferguson for his comments and the reminder that the situation needs to be viewed from different perspectives.

Ms. Anita Chang's closing comments:

She thanked everyone for attending today's conference. She thanked the speakers: Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum, for his opening comments on the importance of justice, peace and self-determination; Mr. Enoch Wu from Forward Alliance, for speaking about the importance of training civilians for resilience in the face of disaster; Elder Michael Tsai, for his comments on the theme of working together regionally and globally to safeguard and deter authoritarian regimes; Shoichi Konda, for his comparison and contrast between cults and authoritarian regimes regarding the mind-controlling misinformation propaganda that is common to both; and, Rev. Steve Moore, for his comments on the importance of education on media literacy, and the importance of religion/religious leader engagement in the face of disinformation and misinformation. She noted that the main theme of the speakers for the webinar were safeguarding democracy through resilience and working together. The difference/contrast between brainwashing and propaganda versus education, either from the government level or from the NGO defense level, was discussed. And, a common theme for this discussion was the need for a bottom-up/grass roots NGO response from civilians and from churches in the face of disaster – a response from civilians all around the world working together with a common goal to safeguard democracy and peace in the world.



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

Day 2 - 23 May 2023

Topic: Disinformation



Billion Lee (李比鄰)

Billion co-founded Cofacts since Cofacts' first pitch in 2016 and has contributed most of the content inside the fact-check database, she is a contributor in civic tech open-source community and lecturer. She does fact-checking works and is responsible for fact-check community, audience engagement and public relation in Cofacts for 7 years.

She was sent to PolitiFact and International Fact Check Center, Poynter Institute for Professional Fellows Program supported by the State Department.

Billion is familiar with professional fact-check tools and helps train others learning fact-check skills; she has held fact-checking workshops media literacy lesson for general public and minorities.



Fighting against disinformation & information operation via AI chatbot

Billion Lee (李比鄰)

Cofacts is an open-sourced project that combines collaborative fact-checking and a chatbot in closed messaging app LINE, which has over 95% of market share in Taiwan. It consists of a chatbot, a website, and a crowd-sourced database. LINE users can forward any suspicious message and get an immediate response of fact-checking results right inside the closed messaging app. On the other hand, the Cofacts website displays all the user-reported messages, and enables fact-checkers to “reply” the messages; these replies will become part of the chatbot’s automatic response.

During Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian officials claimed that public health facilities in Ukraine were "funded by the U.S secretly" falsely. English language influencers elaborated the talking point, which was spread by Russian propaganda. Some other examples are “The plan that the U.S. would destroy or invade Taiwan”, “The U.S.-Taiwan Public Health Protection Act will lead US government controlling Taiwan”, some misleading photos show that “People's Liberation Army reached the coast of Taiwan straits”, or “Ukraine uses illegal strategy to force teenager under military service, so he suicided.”...When the user sends us a message that is not found in our database, the chatbot asks if they want to submit the message to the database. But before that, we ask the user to explain why they think this message is a hoax. What’s their doubt in their mind? This information is helpful for fact-checks to plan the replies precisely, and it also helps the user to put their feelings or doubts of internet messages into words. We believe this is essential for media literacy.

The database, composed of user-reported messages and crowd source contributed “replies”, is opened for anyone to access to maximize interoperability and form a “Cofacts ecosystem”. It is the only open-source and fact-checking project. Cofacts put all of the data and numbers in the analytics, so that think tanks, research institutes may use the data to conduct great reports.

The usage of analytics is publically available on cofacts.tw/analytics, also everyone can see what is actually being forwarded to the chatbot.

How to use this fact-check chatbot?

Whenever a user receives a message and they want to check it, they can just forward the message into Cofacts. It is a chatbot that sits right inside the LINE messenger. It will automatically respond with the content written by Cofacts fact-checkers. If the user is satisfied with the response, they can choose to forward the response back to the original chatroom. If the chatbot receives a fresh message that is not in the database, it will ask the user to submit the message to our open database. You may see the trend on the platform and download the csv file type data for research. We store lots of information in the accumulative database. Furthermore, In closed messaging apps, viral messages propagate from one closed chat room to another. One may see the same message again and again



across different chat rooms.

Cofacts has been recognized by some international media, such as NHK, CBS, BBC...etc . They arrived in Taiwan and reserved some interviews with the Cofacts project director. Founded in 2016, Cofacts has grown over 290,000 chatbot subscribers and collected more than 110,000 instant messages. Cofacts is highly experienced in combating disinformation. According to the usage analytics report, the system serves thousands of daily active users. Coming from various backgrounds and expertise, the Cofacts team have developed the collaborative fact-checking system from scratch; they have open-sourced all of their contribution, from the source code of their software to design documents, in their open working folder located at <https://bit.ly/cofacts-quickstart> .

Cofacts users could understand the accurate information by the automatic fact-checking chatbot, and they could visit Cofacts fact-check website as well. Over 25M page views in 2021, and over 6M different people use the website to seek those fact-check reports. Cofacts reveals its impacts on the users feedback. Over 50k fact-check replies toward the suspicious messages are recognized as helpful by the fact-checking chatbot users.

It is not difficult for well-educated elites, but who could help those confused elders, countryside families, or lower education status. People might believe in the false information so that they would lose their trust toward the real situation. However, if someone forward this disinformation on the social platform, the channel would soon receive a fact-check reply to clarify that it is a wrong translation of misdiagnosed with flu in their closing chatroom.

Taiwan has been suffering from information manipulation because it would reveal in many ways; for instance, the request Cofacts has received and the number of disinformation that Cofacts combats. Since Taiwan is a democratic jurisdiction, if citizens are deceived by disinformation, it might change the cognition of the general public and environment. Cofacts would like to rebuild the trust, not the government, not to politicians, but to the real democracy and citizen's need.



Dr. KIM Sangduk (金相德)

- Name/Position: **Dr. KIM Sangduk (金相德), Adjunct Professor, Sungkyul University**
- Introduction: Dr. Sangduk Kim graduated a M.Div. and Th.M. program at Boston University and Emory University respectively, and received his Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh, focusing on peace, media, and public theology. His PhD thesis is "Public Theology for Peace Photography: A Critical Analysis of the Roles of Photojournalism in Peacebuilding, with the Special Reference to the Gwangju Uprising in South Korea". He worked as a director of research at the Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development (CISJD) in Korea over four years until he recently retired, and is now teaching theology, ethics, and media and culture at several universities in Korea.



**Restless Truth and Resilient Faith:
Disinformation, Hate, and Christian Identity in the Korean Context**

Dr. KIM Sangduk (金相德)

1. Why disinformation now?

Disinformation is not a new concept but it becomes quite an important concept these days. The definition of disinformation is "false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) to influence public opinion or obscure the truth."¹ It is distinguished from misinformation. While misinformation refers to "false information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead", disinformation means "false information spread to deceive people."² Therefore, disinformation is a form of false information that has the intention to mislead an individual or society.

To what extent, should we consider disinformation now? It is because disinformation intimidates seeking truth and justice in our society by concealing the truth. It also disrupts proper communication between individuals and groups in the public sphere. It often results in social conflicts by increasing hate and discrimination because people believe what they want to do. It is called the post-truth phenomenon. My argument is that disinformation should be discussed in a larger context. In this paper, I consider the threat of disinformation on three levels such as fake news, media environment, and post-truth society. I rather focus on the Korean context, in the past and today, highlighting the negative impacts of disinformation on Korean society.

1) Fake News

Firstly, disinformation is widely known as fake news. Technically speaking, fake news cannot be news because every news should be based on a fact. If not, it is not news but false information—and disinformation is distinguished from misinformation as mentioned earlier. There is a concern that if we keep using the frame of fake news, we might have a doubtful perspective on news, saying “Can we trust this particular news?” or “This is fake news (because I don’t like it).” Which one is true news, and fake news? Who can judge, by what authority, the verity of news? These days, it can be changed easily by one's perspective because people believe as they want to believe no matter if it is fact or not. This is why fake news is not just a term but a socio-political phenomenon.

The term “fake news” was named in Oxford English Dictionary in 2016. It is directly related to former US president Donald Trump when he ran for a presidential campaign. At the time, most of the American media were either negative or disinterested in him. Trump had to find another way to win the election so he decided to use his social media such as Twitter. He used his social media very aggressively regardless it is true or not because his "intention" was for drawing public attention back to him. According to Canadian journalist Daniel Dale, Trump made more than 15 false claims over 76

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “disinformation”

² Cambridge Dictionary, “misinformation” and “disinformation”



minutes on average during the election (Sep. 15 – Nov. 8).³ Since then, major legacy media started to run fact-checking systems, which becomes one of the most difficult challenges to the media. Media literacy, including fact-checking, is an essential skill for contemporary citizens. In other words, fake news is still working effectively and powerfully. Some individuals and groups want to use fake news with a certain intention like one's interest.

2) New Media Environment

Another thing we consider with disinformation is the media environment, especially since the entering of the "new media" era. New media refers to a new way of communication based on information technology that enables instant, interactive, and international communication. We can think about new media on three different levels such as digital media, social media, and online media. Firstly, new media refers to digital media. Digital media is a counter concept of analog media. In the digital media society, almost everything is replaced and reproduced in the digital space. Since many things are easily reproduced, originality and authenticity have vanished in the digital society. Walter Benjamin describes it as "the loss of aura" in the age of mechanical reproduction. Disinformation such as fake news is too easily produced and circulated in the digital society.

In the era of mass media, the role of the speaker who delivers a message is given to a few people or groups. It was a privileged and exclusive power that enables to manipulation of social discourses. This is why the media should be watched by the public. The media is fundamental to building and sustaining a democratic society. In social media, however, the role of a speaker is not monopolized by particular groups, but instead, everyone can be a speaker using one's social media. Social media enables us to become both a speaker and audience as we want. The distinction itself in the context is meaningless. Anyone can express one's faith and thoughts using one's social media. So we are all equal as users instead of the division of speaker/audience. The problem is that, however, we often forget our responsibility for what we say, not checking whether it is based on fact, not enough considering how it sounds to somebody. The system of social media is not enough to be ethical/responsible to others compared to the legacy media. Disinformation is easily created and quickly circulated through social media without proper ethical guidelines.

The third feature of new media is online media. Since after the web 3.0, online media becomes worldwide. Literally speaking, we live in the global village as Marshall McLuhan once states. Through the world-wide-web, we are connected and share our thoughts and lives instantly. The boundary of physical distance is overcome by online media all day and night. It is an eye-opening experience that enables us to live *glocally*. However, we should notice that the dramatic change in online media can be used negatively. The threat of disinformation today has no limit or national boundary. Although disinformation should be watched and controlled within the legal system of a country, online media sometimes disregards the limit. Many fake news are produced outside of a related country because fake news has no national identity.

³ Emily Tamkin, "CNN public editor: Daniel Dale's fact-checking mission checks out", *Columbia Journalism Review*, (September 11, 2019). See https://www.cjr.org/public_editor/daniel-dale-trump.php



We live in the new media environment based on the fast development of high technology. That technical progress certainly has advantages, but it has disadvantages, too. As we live in the digital, social, and online media environment, the threat of disinformation also becomes bigger and stronger. Charles J Hanley, a former journalist for Associated Press, once describes the situation we are facing. He gave a keynote speech at the 2014 International Conference for Peace Museum held in the NoGeunRi Peace Museum, South Korea. Hanley won the Pulitzer Award for his truth-seeking efforts regarding the NoGeunRi incident as the tragic massacre of civilians by US soldiers during the Korean War. In doing so, he thought his role was done. However, he argued at the conference that we are now challenged to "a new media war" because of the development of new media. Traditionally, the role of media/journalism was a tool of truth-seeking but it becomes ambiguous—either seeking truth or spreading false information with an intention. We live in the era of disinformation and the media becomes a new battlefield of historical distortion.

3) Post-Truth Society

Lastly, we need to enlarge our discussion on disinformation in our post-modern society. Specifically, I want to focus on the post-truth phenomenon. "Post-truth" as an adjective is "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief."⁴ The concept of post-truth is complex and comprehensive, so I want to invite you to think about two things related to post-truth. The first question is "What is post-truth?" Simply speaking, in a post-truth society, feelings sometimes matter more than facts. To an extent, it is not important whether news or someone's argument is fact or not; BECAUSE what or how I am feeling matters more than verity. What is true or not can be varied depending on one's perspective. As mentioned repeatedly, "We believe what we want to believe".

More importantly, the second question is "Why it occurs?" In his volume, *Post-Truth (2018)* Lee McIntyre argues that post-truth is not always related to one's strong faith or ideological identity but rather closely connected to one's advantage. According to him, "Someone does not dispute an obvious or easily confirmable fact for no reason; he or she does so when it is to his or her advantage. When a person's beliefs are threatened by an "inconvenient fact," sometimes it is preferable to challenge the fact. [...] but the point is that this sort of post-truth relationship to facts occurs only when we are seeking to assert something more important to us than the truth itself." Therefore, he continues, "post-truth amounts to a form of ideological supremacy, whereby its practitioners are trying to compel someone to believe in something whether there is good evidence for it or not. And this is a recipe for political domination."⁵

2. Disinformation, conflict, and a group identity

Insofar, I have considered disinformation from three levels such as fake news, the new media

⁴ See Oxford Dictionary, "post-truth".

⁵ Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), 13.



environment, and the post-truth phenomenon. There is no such thing as "fake news" from a journalistic perspective because news must be based on fact, and seeking truth and justice for a peaceful society. Moreover, "fake news" is a small part of the post-truth phenomenon in which some people care only about themselves (their advantage) more than others no matter what is fact or now, and no matter truth or not, no matter justice or not. The point is that truth and justice can be seen differently from one's perspective. And one's perspective is deeply connected to (formed by) one's group identity, tradition, narrative, history, and so on. Therefore, all things come to a consequence, that is, "**a group identity**" is a fundamental element of conflict these days.

One example is the "white supremacy" phenomenon in the USA. The slogan "Make America Great Again" was only for Trump and his supporters, not for all Americans. By gathering his supporters together, Trump and his camp try to take political domination. For the sake of that, nothing matters whether it is true or not. He intentionally abused false information on his social media, and his supporters liked them because they wanted. What is worse is that repeated experiences of the cycle of producing and sharing disinformation made hate and discrimination not only *visible* but *allowed* in the public sphere. It would be undeniable that hate crimes occurred frequently, and their level of violence intensified since Trump's campaign. In short, disinformation was abused to take political domination. To gather their supporters together, Trump intensified their group identity by excluding the others.

3. A Korean Context: Far-Right Movement and Korean Churches

The case of disinformation misleading to political conflict is also found in the Korean context, in the past and until today. For instance, we can think about a historical event such as the Jeju 4.3 Incident.

1) Jeju 4.3 Incident

The Jeju 4.3 Incident (1947-1954) was one of them. The Jeju 4-3 Incident refers to "the incident causing civilians' sacrifices in the process of armed conflicts and the suppression operations beginning March 1, 1947, to April 3, through to Sept. 21, 1954."⁶ During the tragedy, a group of people from the North-West Youth Association (NWYA) were sent to Jeju. The NWYA consisted of young refugees coming down to South Korea during the Korean War and the majority of them were Christians who attended the Youngnak Presbyterian Church. Tragically, they were deeply involved in the massacre which was partly related to disinformation. They believed all the local people in Jeju were communists who were their enemies killing their families and neighbors. In the cold war context, the power of disinformation was powerful enough to make them blindfolded by hate and anger. It has become one of the most tragic events in Korean history.

2) Taeguekgi Rally and *jongbuk-gay*

Many of you, if you are not Korean, would not know what *jongbuk-gay* is. In Korean, "jongbuk"

⁶ See the Jeju 4.3 Peace Foundation website at <http://jeju43peace.org/historytruth/fact-truth/facttruth-article1/>



refers to pro-communism (or a commie) and gay indicates a gay like the LGBTQ. The term “jongbuk-gay” represents the anti-communism and anti-homosexuality in far-right groups in Korea. This unbecoming combination of the two words emerged in the Taegeukgi rallies (太極旗集會, also known as the Pro-Park rallies) since 2016. The rallies were held by far-right groups in Korea, supporters of Park Geun-hye who had served as the 11th President of South Korea from 2013 to 2017 when she was impeached and convicted on related corruption charges. Her father, Park Chung-hee was also president from 1963 to 1979, serving five consecutive terms after he seized power in 1961. Park Geun-hye likewise her father was an iconic figure for those who missed Park Chung-hee who led the explosive economic growth under the authoritarian regime.⁷

The Taegeukgi rallies emerged as the anti-impeachment of Park Geun-hye. According to the 2019 Korean Democracy Annual Report, "In December 2016, when the candlelight demonstrations demanding the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye were at their peak, the side opposing the impeachment launched a headquarters for a national campaign toward the rejection of the President's impeachment and began holding demonstrations. After the Constitutional Court decided on President Park Geun-hye's impeachment in 2017, this headquarter repositioned itself as a headquarter for the campaigns to invalidate the impeachment decision and rushed to long-term action, continuing a weekend rally into 2019 to criticize the ruling power and assert the injustice of the impeachment decision."⁸⁹

Although it seemed a democratic form of rallies, its historical background is more comprehensive than it looks. Suk-koo Rhee, a professor at Yonsei University, views the rallies as “a new form of local cold war mass politics” that has been going on since the establishment of the Korean government traumatized from the Korean War and the division of the Korean peninsula.¹⁰ Rhee analyzes the social context of the rally as below:

If, in the old days, the ideological clashes between the military regime and democratic activists primarily involved conflicts over the issues of national security law, workers' rights, and political reform, the frontline of this ideological war has more recently been redrawn in such a way as to polarize the masses themselves into two very large hostile groups. As a result, conservative citizens who call themselves Taegeukgi protesters and ultra-rightwing Christians have positioned themselves at the one end of the

⁷ It seems true that South Korea established rapid economic growth during the Park Chung-hee regime, yet it should be avoided to assert that the success was because of Park's authoritarian regime. There are different factors and conditions to impact economic growth nationally and internationally. Furthermore, it should be remembered there were many socio-political issues such as human rights and corruption during the regimes.

⁸ Institute for Korean Democracy, *2019 Korean Democracy Annual Report*, Korea Democracy Foundation. 82.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Rhee Suk-koo delivered a lecture with the title "Taegeukgi Rallies" as a New Form of Local Cold War Mass Politics" at the University of California, Irvine on February 4, 2023. See the summary of the lecture at <https://www.humanities.uci.edu/events/taegeukgi-rallies-new-form-local-cold-war-mass-politics>



ideological spectrum, with the liberal and liberal-left citizens positioned at the other."

The Korean Democracy Annual Report describes the participants of the rallies "generally act within the framework of legal order without causing any serious physical violence." However, the reports pointed out that "a few of the participating organizations and leaders have openly advocated extreme rightwing slogans and propaganda that deny the pluralism of political views and ideas, which are a potential threat to democratic order. Radical rightwing parties such as the Our Republican Party (formerly the Korean Patriots' Party) and various hard-liners and rightwing organizations have been actively participating in these rallies."¹¹

As Isolde Charim argues, many conflicts in our plural society gather "we" as a group identity by hating "them".¹² To unite their supporters, the extreme participants used the hate and discrimination strategy, that is, *jongbuk-gay*. By intensifying the feeling of hate for the others such as a commie and gay, the campaign tried to take control no matter what it causes. Disinformation, again, was abused for the sake of patriotism. However, it was not true patriotism but malicious propaganda to accelerate hate and discrimination. It is argued that patriotism becomes a civil religion for them.¹³ Interestingly enough, some Christian groups also joined the rallies and shared their identity as anti-communism and anti-homosexuality.

3) Involvements of Korean Churches

Here I will introduce two cases briefly. The first example is, what I call, a Jeon Kwang-hoon controversy. Jeon Kwang-hoon is a South Korean Pastor (Sarang Jeil Presbyterian Church) and former president of the Christian Council of Korea (CCK). He is also a far-right politician and was an active member of the Christian Liberty Unification Party (CLUP).¹⁴ During the Taegeukgi rallies, he became popular like a rockstar for his outspokenness. Like other far-right politicians, he criticized the progressive parties as communists and anti-American groups rejecting the unification of Korea. What was special, however, he used lots of conspiracy theories and religious discourses. He often described himself as a prophet, champion, and even Bonhoeffer. Among his supporters, many of them supported him not only for his political stance but also for his religious leadership. However, he is neither a champion nor a prophet. Although CLUP was a minor party, they anticipated getting a seat in the Parliament upon the popularity of Jeon Kwang-hoon in the 2020 General Election. But it went to

¹¹ 2019 Korean Democracy Annual Report, 82

¹² Isode Charim, *Myself and the Others: How We Hate the Others and Reject the Changes*, Lee Seung-hui trans. (Seoul: Mineumsa, 2021; original German edition published in 2018).

¹³ Chun Kwan-Yul, "The triangle of patriotism" as the secret of the Taegeukgi rallies", Sisa-IN (April 3, 2017), <https://www.sisain.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=28778>

¹⁴ Although CLUP was a minor party, they anticipated getting a seat in the Parliament upon the popularity of Jeon Kwang-hoon in the 2020 General Election. But it went to failure, they changed their name to Liberty Unification Party (LUP), pulling out their "Christian" identity in 2022.



failure, they changed their name to Liberty Unification Party (LUP), pulling out their "Christian" identity in 2022. Jeon Kwang-hoon knew no shame in his false information and hate speeches as other far-right groups did. Just like him, some Korean Christians had no shame in their violent words, thoughts, and identity as those who hate *jongbuk-gay*.

4) Esther Prayer Movement

How could it become an identity for Christians to hate somebody? We Christians are called to love another as we love God. The great commission "love your neighbor" has no limit; yet for some Christians, it only applies to "their neighbors", not everyone. *Jongbuk-gay* seems particularly unforgivable. This is a fundamental issue: what kinds of Christian identity do we need in our society? Unfortunately, Korean churches were criticized as a group of hate and discrimination, not love and mercy.

The second case is more directly related to our discussion on disinformation. Esther Prayer Movement (EPM) in Korea is a Christian group working on various ministries. In 2018, one of the major Korean newspapers *Hangyeoreh* pointed out EPM as "the factory of fake news" (2018. 9. 27). The *Hangyeoreh* analyzes over 100 Youtube channels and over 50 Kakaotalk chat rooms in 2018. After the research, they concluded that many of the fake news on Youtube and social media were originally produced by EPM. Those contents were mainly about islamophobia, homophobia, North Korea and Security, social slander(anti-politicians), spiritual warfare, etc. It is very similar to the frame of *jongbuk-gay* during the Taegeukgi rallies. Many Christians were exposed to fake news and also shared them without any hesitation because they believed that the fake news are true no matter whether they are true or not. In short, they wanted to protect their identity as anti-communists, anti-homosexual, anti-muslim, and so on, not as those who love one another.

4. Conclusion

Disinformation has impacted our society in many ways, particularly inciting hate and discrimination such as white supremacy in the USA and *jongbuk-gay* in the Korean context. Sadly, Korean churches are not free from the frame of hate and discrimination. This phenomenon is deeply related to disinformation. So we need to understand what disinformation is and how it works in our society.

Disinformation has the intention to mislead individuals and groups. Disinformation is more popular in the new media environment because disinformation is more powerful in our post-truth society. Disinformation incites conflict in the public sphere, threatening harmony. It appears in the form of politics but parasitizes desires, especially the desire for group identity which often excludes others. It may cause hate, discrimination, violence, and conflict.

Disinformation can be founded in Korean history such as Jeju 4.3 Incident. It was not ended but continues until today. These days, unfortunately, Korean churches seem vulnerable to the disinformation battle, even stigmatized as "a factory of fake news". The contents are regarding hate and discrimination such as homophobia and anti-communism, which is opposite to Jesus' teaching to love one another.



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

Day 2 - 23 May 2023

What should we do now? We need to find a way at three levels: (1) a response to disinformation at an individual level, civic level, and governmental level; (2) a response to a new media system wisely (not just technology but communication culture); and (3) a response to post-truth deliberately and persuasively on how we live together in our plural society. Thank you.



Sonny Africa

Sonny Africa is Executive Director of IBON Foundation – an independent think-tank providing research, information and education services to social movements in the Philippines and abroad since 1978. He has been an active educator to people's organizations and a resource person for NGOs, government, schools and media since the 1990s.

Jose Enrique A. Africa is the Executive Director of IBON Foundation – an independent non-government organization providing research, information, and education services to people's movements in the Philippines and abroad since 1978. He is also a Board member of the alternative media outfit AlterMidya and the civil society network Council for People's Development and Governance (CPDG), a fellow of the Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG) and the Center for Anti-Imperialist Studies (CAIS), and an editor of the on-line news magazine Bulatlat.

He has worked as staff in the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), evaluator of NGOs with Management Systems Advancement, Inc (MASAI), legislative officer in Congress, and as a rural community organizer. He has been an active educator to people's organizations as well as a resource person for schools, NGOs, government and media since the 1990s.

His writings on socioeconomic and political issues have been published by IBON, international NGOs, UNICEF, and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). He obtained his Master's degree (MSc) in Development Studies and Bachelor's degree (BSc) in Philosophy and Economics, with upper second-class honors, from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).



Disinformation, anti-democracy and militarism in the Philippines Sonny Africa

Please refer to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dtCX7H_JnI



Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson
(Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC)

Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson is a pastor, theologian and social justice advocate from the United Church of Canada. He was elected to the post of general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in May 2014, entering office in August 2014, for a seven-year term. Previously Ferguson served as the international ecumenical advisor for the Programme for Ecumenical Accompaniment in Colombia (2011-2014), the World Council of Churches representative to the United Nations (2006-2010), the World Council of Churches' representative to Jerusalem (2004-2006) and the executive minister of the United Church of Canada's Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit and ecumenical officer (2002-2004), among many other missional and ministerial roles.



Theological Reflection: Canada:
Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson

Please refer to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nr-ovEkkvtY>



May 23, 2023 TEF Webinar: Light after Darkness -- Becoming a Community of Solidarity and Resilience, Q&A Session Notes

Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang-En moderated the session.

Mr. Shoichi Konda asked Mr. Sonny Africa about the People Power Revolution in the Philippines (in 1986) that opposed Marcos and why the Marcos family has been able to maintain power.

Mr. Sonny Africa responded that Filipinos have forgotten the problems under the Marcos dictatorship, especially due to a huge disinformation campaign painting the Marcos era as “the golden years,” and it is amazing how many people believed this disinformation. Just 3 years after the Marcos’ were thrown out, the wife ran for governor, the son ran for Congress, and the daughter also. The Marcos regime was supported by political elites and was so powerful that they were able to avoid being referenced as negative in political textbooks. And so now the Filipino population, not having been taught about the Marcos family through the educational system, does not know the regime; additionally, people’s minds were skillfully manipulated through a disinformation campaign over the past 10 to 15 years. This is depressing, but it is a reminder that there is no effort too small when it comes to countering disinformation. At the time the Marcos’ were thrown out of power, there should have been a campaign to give correct information in textbooks and a campaign to remember the victims of martial law under the Marcos regime (as was done in Germany after the Holocaust). There should be something as in Europe where Holocaust deniers are subject to liabilities. In the Philippines none of those measures has been taken. However, it is not too late. The one positive is that in the recent election there was at least a small information campaign launched to counteract the disinformation campaign.

Mr. Shoichi Konda stated that the Philippines is largely a Christian country and many Christians are powerful and influential in society. He asked if they can they use their power to resist the stream of disinformation.

Mr. Sonny Africa noted that the Catholic church was powerful in the campaign against the Marcos dictatorship, not just in the months leading up to the People Power uprising but also in the years of the dictatorship, supporting and giving shelter to activists and people involved in the anti-dictatorship movement. He also made the point that the political elites are extremely self-serving. In the 1980s the political elites fragmented the Catholic Church in order to make it more vulnerable to political manipulation. It was a conscious effort to cripple the Catholic Church because of its actions against the Marcos regime. Also, some Christian factions in the Philippines are very politically motivated and are making statements at election time about which candidates they support. These other Christian groups almost constitute small voting blocs, for example 5 --10 million per bloc; they form because their businesses depend on political alliances for success. The Catholic Church has become fragmented, and some Bishops actually supported the former president Duterte, even at the height of the drug war (in which Duterte cracked down on drug dealers). Faith and Christian virtues have been diminished by the disinformation social media campaign because if facts don’t matter and faith is relative, then anyone’s beliefs can be challenged and this has spilled over from the political realm.

Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson added that one of the human rights reports he was involved in noted that the red tagging campaign in the Philippines has particularly targeted church groups when they try to



see justice as a practice of their faith. Not only is there coopting of church leadership but there are also attempts to remove freedom of religious actors to be agents of social change. When they do try to enact social change they are attacked. Some examples are people from the United Church of the Philippines, and there are many other examples. There has been a deliberate political, militarized and ideological attack against churches when they try to act as agents of social change.

Victor Hsu asked what can be done about disinformation. Once information is broadcast on the internet it is out there and cannot be retracted or changed. This is the reality and it is difficult for institutions and organizations to respond. What has been discussed in the two webinars (both yesterday and today) has been very informative and shows the magnitude of the difficulties faced with disinformation. He would like to know steps people can take to combat misinformation.

Elder Michael Tsai expressed his appreciation for the comments of Dr. Kim and Mr. Africa; he now understands better how mass media influences the government in Korea and in the Philippines. He said he would like to share about how in Taiwan they strengthened civil defense and how they have handled anti-democracy in Taiwan for the past 40-50 years. In law school in the U.S. he studied the Constitution and was struck by how the Preamble declares that “we the people” in the name of God are born free and equal with dignity. Elder Tsai lamented that people in Taiwan were not born with freedom and dignity and had to pay the price for freedom. When his law classmates in the U.S. asked why, he said that Taiwan had been under martial law for the past 38 years. There were no free elections, and many people spent time in political jails or even sacrificed their lives for freedom. Thirty-three years ago he decided to return to Taiwan to organize people for democracy. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has been very involved in this effort to organize the people. At that time people marched in the streets calling for freedom, equality, and human rights (as Taiwan at that time was under Chang Kai Shek). Now, Taiwan has free elections and freedom of speech. However, politicians and rich shareholders control the mass media; therefore, freedom of press has been suppressed in Taiwan during the last several years. He suggests that right now organizing people for social change and transitional justice is the most important thing. He asked Dr. Kim and Mr. Africa if organizing people using non-violent protest, as it has been done in Taiwan, is possible in South Korea and the Philippines.

Dr. Kim Sang-Duk responded by saying that in his experience (maybe because he is part of the younger generation) South Koreans (especially younger people) are ready to fight for their own interests, but he is not sure they are ready to go out into the streets to fight for the grand narrative of peace or justice. Justice and peace are seen as political. No common understanding of justice exists; Koreans are lazy about discussing the meaning of justice and peace and how to have common ground or how to co-exist peacefully.

Mr. Sonny Africa said that in the most recent election in the Philippines the young people showed they were willing to go into the streets and fight for a better candidate than the Marcos administration. Right now they are pushing a campaign to bring workers into the streets, many of whom are older and less optimistic about the elections but are willing to take action about issues close to their hearts. They are also working with the urban poor who have suffered as a result of budget cuts. In recent years, people who demonstrate in the streets have been vilified as destabilizers, terrorist supporters, and have been red-tagged. People will take action when their own interests are at



stake. Both social media activism and lobbying have a role but also have limits. Right now people are scared to take to the streets, so that activists need to show that they are not scared; courage is infectious, and helps people realize that they need to stand up to make things better for themselves and others.

TEF Task Force member Anita Chang asked a question of Chris Ferguson. First she thanked him for his reminder of Christ's mission for reconciliation and liberation for the oppressed and marginalized. Ms. Chang noted that Taiwan is marginalized in the international community, and she thanked the webinar participants for being in solidarity with Taiwan. She mentioned Taiwan's position as being sandwiched between two empires, not by choice, but by the reality of its geopolitical situation. She also asked what steps can Taiwanese and members of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, especially youth, like herself, take? And, how can people break from the trap of expansionism and create a life-flourishing community when, among the general public, there are no resources and people are frozen in fear? There is also apathy that stems from fear. She asks for prayers and also suggestions regarding steps to take.

Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson responded by saying that the question of fear relates directly to how empire works. He mentioned that inter-Taiwan solidarity is very important, as Mr. Africa made the point that people need to see their own interests represented. It is necessary to ask who is suffering if everyone is threatened, but also to ask who is most suffering and most marginalized within communities. Strengthening relationships, for example, with the indigenous peoples, can provide new links about how to mobilize people, and also help people feel hopeful and less scared. Solidarity can be formed around not just protecting oneself but also protecting others and can come from the grassroots level, for example, from churches, community groups, etc. Reaching out, through churches and other organizations, to other struggling communities globally that are caught between empires, is also necessary. Solidarity can be forged between and among the victims of empire and strategies developed to reach out to people in the Philippines and the Korean peninsula and so on and to all those who are similarly victimized, but not through government structures, but instead with the marginalized of society. For example, many years ago mothers of people who were disappeared in South America connected with mothers of political prisoners in South Korea and this linkage created a whole new energy for resistance and mobilizing for change. It is important that even when a whole society feels victimized people listen even more deeply to the most marginalized within their own society.

Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang-En mentioned that Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum was invited to make some closing remarks but was not feeling well so he had to go rest. However, he gave some written remarks to Rev. Dr. Cheng to be read aloud. Rev. Dr. Keum's comments are as follows:

Churches often feel helpless in the face of war and violence. And so it is necessary to expand the notion of mission as common witness in particular communities as well as in the public sphere. Public witness takes the world's agenda as a missional agenda. Churches can seek together to offer distinctive and constructive insights informed by faith for healing and reconciling communities. Ecumenical history of public witness shows that unity in mission and common witness are powerful sources of solidarity and support, and provide encouragement to overcome violence and conflict. People of faith need to speak the truth that the emperor is naked without any shame. During the Cold



War era when churches from East and West were in conflict, Karl Barth argued for “the third way,” which does not follow black and white logic but instead calls for churches to show their Christian identity by promoting reconciliation. Barth also promoted a prophetic voice of coexistence and asked the churches to transcend the history of ideological struggle and conflict and to live in the Kingdom of God and the glory of Jesus Christ. Barth’s response was not a passive response or Christian disillusionment in regard to the Cold War conflict; rather, he called for the churches to be more actively involved responding to the conflict, and their response should follow the third way between East and West, emphasizing reconciliation as the task of the people of God. Even in the neo-Cold War the churches should follow the third way of reconciliation. The third way does not ignore historical context or suffering people but focuses on active witnessing through a ministry of healing and reconciliation and asserting missional identity as communities of solidarity and resilience. Churches need to be a prophetic voice rising above the geopolitical struggles and not be held captive by them.

Rev. Dr. Cheng closed the webinar by thanking TEF and colleagues for organizing the webinar, the speakers for their inspiring words, and the participants for their solidarity.



TEF Webinar

Light after Darkness: Becoming a Community of Solidarity and Resilience

Closing Remarks

Jooseop Keum

In many cases religion has fuelled the escalation of conflicts. Even within the same tradition of the orthodox Christianity, different sects and factions justify the conflicts in Ukraine in the name of the Triune God. Some could argue that it was politicians who actually caused the conflicts and justified them in the name of religions. Even in that case, there is still a question, “Can we refuse together to serve as the emperor’s clothes?”

I believe that the core of major teachings of world religions is wisdom of life. If we are preaching on the nature and salvation of life, we should be able to work together to safeguard life. Religion is a powerful source of peace and reconciliation in conflict situations, if we are able to work together.

Churches, as individuals, often feel helpless in the face of such developments of war and violence. Therefore, it is necessary to expand our understanding of mission as common witness in our community as well as in the public square. Public witness takes “the world’s” agenda as a missional agenda. We need to seek together to offer distinctive and constructive insights from our treasury of faith to help in the building of healing and reconciling communities. The ecumenical history of public witness testifies that unity in mission or common witness is a powerful source and symbol of solidarity and support and encouragement to overcome conflicts and violence. We should speak the truth in front of power that the emperor is naked without any shame.

When the churches and theologians were in ideological confrontation between East and West during the Cold War era, Karl Barth argued for what he called “the third way,” urging them to escape from a black and white logic. He called the churches to show their Christian identity by promoting reconciliation. In the whirlpool of the Cold War, Barth maintained a prophetic voice of “co-existence.” He asked the churches not to identify uncritically with one of the two sides because “the present conflict of East and West” is “the world-political struggle for power.”

He warned that by being too close to any one of them, the churches would end up justifying a secular power which wanted to dominate the whole world. He also asked the churches to transcend the “natural history of the world” i.e. the history of power struggle and ideological conflict, and to live in “the Kingdom of God and the Glory of Jesus Christ.” He also suggested to the Christians: “What we can do in the midst of the conflict can only consist in the wholehearted, sincere and helpful sympathy which we are in duty bound to extend to all its victims as far as lies within our power.” Barth’s claim was neither a passive response nor “Christian disillusionment” in regard to the Cold War conflict. Rather, he claimed for the churches a more active and fundamental involvement in the conflict. This what he meant by the Christian churches adopting “the third way” between East and West. He, especially, emphasizes “reconciliation” as the task of “the people of God in world-occurrence” and “the ministry of the Christian community.”



I believe that even in the context of the rise of neo–Cold War, reconciliation ought to be the third way of the churches too. This “third way” is not ignoring historical context or suffering people. Rather it promotes active witnessing through the ministry of healing and reconciliation and showing distinctive missional identity as communities of solidarity and resilience. Indeed, it is a prophetic voice, which called for the churches to move beyond the geopolitical struggles, and not be held captive by them.

On behalf of the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the colleagues who has organised this significant seminar and all the speakers for your inspiring inputs and the participants for your solidarity!

Two-Day Webinar 2023 Clips:

Light after Darkness - Becoming a community of solidarity and resilience

