



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

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

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,



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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 deceptions 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).



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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 Forward Alliance.
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 Enoch Wu Michael Tsai Shoichi Konda Rev. Steve Moore	TEF Task Force member
	Closing Remark	Moderator	



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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	Enoch Wu Michael Tsai Kim Sang-Duk Sonny Africa	
21:55 – 22:00	Closing Message	Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum	TEF Co-Convener



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Speaker/Panelist Bio:

Enoch Wu (吳怡農)



- Presentation Title: **Civil Defense: Practicing Resilience**

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.

Prof. Michael M. Tsai, MBA;JD. (蔡明憲)



- Presentation title: **How Taiwan is defying China's aggression, with total national defense & regional security cooperations**

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.

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Shoichi Konda (根田祥一)



- Presentation title: **What Overcomes the Cult-like World**

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.

S.K. (Steve) Moore, PhD



- Presentation title: **The Church in a Dis/Misinformation Age: Reality and Response**

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 researches 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*:



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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.

Billion Lee (李比鄰)



- Presentation title: **Fighting against disinformation & information operation via AI chatbot**

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.

Dr. KIM Sangduk (金相德)



- Presentation title: **Restless Truth and Resilient Faith: Christianity and Media in the Public Sphere**

- 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.



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Sonny Africa (Philippines)



- Presentation title: Disinformation, anti-democracy and militarism in the Philippines

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).