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Taiwan Ecumenical Forum Gathering begins

Hsinchu, TAIWAN: A meeting of the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF) organized and hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) began here today with a worship service attended by participants from different parts of the world.

In a sermon, Reverend Collin Cowan, general secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM) told the participants that they are here because they have made a choice for justice and peace, a choice to be part of the journey with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) in its quest and commitment to be the church, walking with Jesus amid the suffering and brokenness.

Terming the journey as a “discipleship journey,” Reverend Cowan, who is an ordained minister of the United Church in Jamaica and Cayman Islands, noted that “the issues that define this journey are real and live; they spring from the bowels of discontent of real people who carry the scars of a hostile past and suffer pain and indignity of empires in all its forms.”

According to him, TEF is a statement of defiance and a statement of courage which asserts that “we will stand together for justice and peace, even if we are the minority.”

Mr. Chen Chien-Jen, vice-president of Taiwan, who brought greetings from the government said that Taiwan is committed to working with like-minded countries to earn international recognition for it, and to promote democracy, peace and justice in the world.

Welcoming the participants, Reverend Lyim Hong-Tiong, general secretary of the PCT said that “the voice of Taiwanese people has yet to be heard and heeded by the international community.”

The PCT will identify with the suffering people of Taiwan and be a sign of hope for the Taiwanese society, the general secretary stated.

Professor Victor Hsu, Coordinator of TEF-PCT Task Force welcomed the gathering and introduced the members of the TEF steering group and the members of the meeting’s Listening and Discernment Group to the audience.

TEF participants heard presentations on “Contextual Bible study with indigenous people’s testimonies” narrated by Reverends Omi Wilang, Pusin Tali and Ljegean Tudalimaw. The ecumenical responses were by Reverend Linda Patton-Cowie, Mr Maungarongo Tito, and Ms Maureen Loste. Evangelist Yohani Isqaqavut moderated the session.

Theological reflections and discernment came from a panel comprising Dr Huang Po-Ho, Reverend Patti Talbot and Dr Roderick Hewitt and from the participants.

Earlier, some 40 participants of the TEF Youth Pre-Meeting made presentations, including a Youth Declaration.

The first day's meeting concluded with a welcome dinner to the participants by the PCT and a Taiwan Culture Night.

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