



FOCUS BRIEFS

October 2017

NAVIGATING THROUGH TURBULENT TIMES



In the last few months, the nation of Kenya has been going through very trying moments in navigating through the national elections. Most Kenyans have experienced varying levels of anxiety and a sense of shame following the tensions and conflicts occasioned by these elections. In this process, so much has been lost including lives and property. Our hearts reach out to the students, Associates, and many Kenyans who in some way may have been victims. We thank the many Christians who took time to pray, and engage positively in order to have a settlement to the current politics in the nation.

We are all cognizant of the fact that in such moments, Kenyans, including Christians, have suffered the temptation towards negative ethnicity, anger, and hatred. As a result of this drift, we must pray individually and collectively for God's mercy and forgiveness, and the restoration of sanity in minds and hearts. In his sermon on the mount, Jesus set certain ideals on which we must continually mirror our lives. In Matthew 5:21-22, he admonishes on murder and amplifies further that anger is tantamount to murder in the heart and such shall be judged while Matthew 7:3-5 addresses the hypocrisy of focusing on other people's faults while being blind to one's own.

Although we have moved from the thick fog, the country still remains in the woods trying to find her bearing and pride. It is now more than ever that we must be peacemakers as well as salt and light in our political space.

Besides the shame of our national politics and the challenges facing the electoral process, the universities have experienced riots and lecturers' strike that have significantly contributed to disruption of many university calendars. Consequently, the Christian Unions' programs have been affected and students,

majority of whom being "hustlers" have had to contend with more difficult economic times and anxiety. However, we are grateful to God for Christian students who stood up against the negative ethnicity driven by political interests. It is the evident working of God among Christian students that reignites hope for the desired value-based leadership for the Church and the nation. There was a significant preparation of students towards the issues around Kenyan politics. For example, in the run-up to the elections FOCUS Kenya ran the Campaign for National Cohesion and Peaceful Elections (CANCOPE), since September 2016. More than 20,000 Christian Union members engaged the challenge of negative ethnicity in many fora, including studying the bible study guide on *Ethnicity: A Christian Response*. They also engaged the public by conducting peace walks on campuses and several towns in the country. FOCUS leadership through other platforms engaged in national stabilization agenda during the electioneering period. Furthermore, in the two election cycles in 2017, FOCUS Kenya as a registered observer group, had more than 100 Christian Union members and Associates observe elections in more than 25 counties.

Reflecting on the prevailing circumstances ought to challenge us to our individual responsibilities in being the light and salt of the nation. In this season of political contention, the National student leaders (NASEC and R-SEC), together with FOCUS Staff, have met in several fora of debrief and held discussions on cohesion and nationhood. Debrief sessions and national integration continue to be addressed through the CU programs. National Student Executive committee has put in place a special Digital Team, which is working on positive messaging for social media platforms in order to reach as many students as possible, advocating for peace, love, and justice. Associates, through Hesabika, Christian Professional Organizations, and various platforms must remain fully aware of what the Lord would call us to stand up for. Relevant to our times, and in summary, Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world (Mat 5:13-14 NRSV)." May the Lord of hope help us to be agents of reconciliation, healing, and justice for our nation. Also let us pray with regard to the ongoing lecturers' strike, which still poses a challenge to the Universities' academic calendar, students' economic well-being, the running of CU programs, and mobilization efforts for Commission 2017 conference.

HOPE FOR THE NATION

In the past two months, over 300 CU Chairpersons and Secretaries have met in their respective regions in what we call Regional Students Executive Committee (RSEC), and 30 in National Students Executive Committee (NASEC). Through

these meetings, besides evaluating ministry progress in the CUs across the country, the students have challenged each other to rise and shine within and among themselves, in the university, and in the Nation. They have grappled with the question of CU



Leaders and members glowing in the light of the glory of God that the campus and the Nation may see and come to Him.

Great hope can be seen in the upcoming leaders in our Christian Unions when we consider their level of commitment, responsibility and passion in planning, implementing, and evaluating the FOCUS Strategic Plan 2016-2020. RSEC and NASEC have provided an opportunity for accountability among the CU leaders, a virtue which as a Movement, we are committed to enhance in preparing our students for leadership positions in our Nation. FOCUS Staff and associates continue to invest in mentoring these leaders.

Students in FOCUS have had opportunities to mingle and sharpen each other through such opportunities as RSEC, NASEC, FOCUS Sundays, Regional Prayer meetings among others. Such fora create opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas that help in developing competent leaders. Pray for smooth leadership transition expected in various CUs in the next one month.

HOPE AS FRESH MEN AND WOMEN JOIN CAMPUSES

Each year our colleges and universities admit many fresh students. This year 20, 414 students joined different Christian Unions in FOCUS. Through robust and diverse ways, the first years have

received a warm welcome in the CUs. Most of the CUs are now embarking on a comprehensive induction program known as Anza fyt. The program has been quite instrumental in helping the first years maneuver through the challenging realities of campus life by providing spiritual nurture, support, and guidance for the students as they engage the new life on campus.

Other CUs took the opportunity to evangelize to the first years. A significant number of first years received Christ in their first week in Campus. "What mess could happen if I missed this fellowship!" Thomas, one of the 7 first year students who gave their life to Jesus on their first day in campus, exclaimed. Thomas is among many first years who will meaningfully face campus life having given their lives to Jesus and zealously walking the narrow path.

CU MEMBERS COLLABORATE WITH UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

At Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Main Campus, the Christian Union students offered themselves to the university administration as ushers during the registration week. The CU had already printed brochures with the Campus map to guide the first years locate key university installations as well as information about the CU and activities

they had planned to usher the freshers in their Campus. Some parents could not hide their joy seeing their daughters and sons received by loving and caring colleagues.

Our prayer is that these first years will benefit from the discipleship programs available in the CU such as Sunday and Mid-Week fellowships, Brothers and Sisters fellowship, Prayer meetings, Bible Study, BEST-P and Evangelistic Team Fellowships.

DEVELOPING LEADERS, TRANSFORMING NATIONS THROUGH STEM

On 29th July, 2017, at the FOCUS Students Centre, it was all joy as expressed through a dance, a song, a poem, and a skit during the Convocation for the outgoing team of 37 STEM Staff in Students Ministry and 2 in STEM Community Development working as teachers in Dadaab Refugee Camp.

Subsequently, another set of 40 STEM Staff have already settled in different stations across our campuses, Dadaab, and in Kakuma Refugee Camps after taking over the baton from the previous team. Also, we sent two of the immediate former STEM Staff to Norway for an exchange program referred to as NKSS: Issa Gachanja and Carlyne Kimani have settled well in Hald and are undergoing training to help them effectively minister.





Three participants from Norway joined FOCUS on 4th October, 2017. Anne Janssen (Kendi); Ingelin Johansen (Naserian) and Nora Bakke (Nekesa Mueni) will be working in the slums in their first quarter and later be stationed in different CUs. Pray for staff to find joy and fulfillment in their service.

TOWARDS A GROWING PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHURCH

FOCUS Kenya's mission envisions Christian Students and Christian Graduates Impacting Institutions of Higher Learning, the Church and Society. With the increase in Student population, especially those who do not reside within campus, opportunities for partnership with churches in student ministry are glaring. In June 2017, FOCUS organized a consultation in which 41 key Church leaders, representing 31 churches, and 13 Student leaders attended. The theme was, *Building Synergistic Partnership for Better Students Ministry in Kenya*. Consequently, some churches have embraced the support of FOCUS through the new STEM-Church arrangement. FOCUS seeks to reach out to students wherever they are – on campus, in the estates, and in the churches. Many more churches have started using FOCUS Bible study materials, offering venues for students to meet, and supported FOCUS financially. We are grateful for several collaborative events going on. Out of this consultation, one of the pastors confesses that their church has conceived the idea of building houses near a university in order to improve students' accommodation facilities, and act as an outreach strategy.

This year, many churches are not only supporting FOCUS financially for the Missions Conference (Commission 2017), a significant number are sponsoring their

own youth to Commission in order to experience God's calling in their lives.

VISION FOR STUDENT CENTERS IN THE REGIONS

Over the years the FOCUS Student Centre in Kasarani has served FOCUS training and retreat needs. However, the facility is now overstretched besides being far from the rest of the 5 Regions. The vision to have each region having a student center has been embraced by all stakeholders. Associates and Students are making every effort to raise funds to buy pieces of land for this purpose. Pwani region, Central Rift region, and Mt Kenya region have set pace for this initiative and have held fund-drives. We are grateful to Associates who are giving to this project, including land donations to see this dream actualized.

DIASPORA ASSOCIATES

The Diaspora Associates have their ears on the ground, supporting FOCUS in various ways. They are a constant reminder that FOCUS has exported missionaries who serve him in diverse ways. They inspire the FOCUS ministry to keep on investing faithfully in the lives of students, some of whom the Lord will send to the ends of the earth.

CHRISTIAN FACULTY MEMBERS ENGAGING THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

The Christian scholars need to flourish and influence people, ideas and structures in the institutions higher of learning through Discipleship and mentorship of students. It is Terence C. Halliday in his article *Engaging the Whole University for Christ*, who describes the mission to the university as undergraduate students, associates, faculty, administrators and the research staff being involved in "everything that the university does: its research and teaching, training in critical thinking, search for truth, as well as its approach to the most difficult and vexing issues in thought and practice, in academic life and in national life."

It is by this realization that FOCUS initiated the National University Faculty Engagement Consultations (NUFECs) and consequently, the Regional University Faculty Engagement Consultations (RUFECs) as a platform for the Christian Faculty, Chaplains, and CU patrons to meet and deliberate on the issues affecting the College and the University. This is an opportunity for Faculty members, in particular, to more than ever recognize their unique mission opportunities on campus and in the





academia. So far, 156 Faculty members have been involved in evangelistic activities in different campuses.

This year, 126 members in RUFECs met in their different regions (34 in Central Rift, 19 in Pwani, 26 in Northern Nairobi, 17 in North Rift, 17 in Mt. Kenya, and 13 in Western Region in the past two months). The call is clear: *to be the salt and light in the academia*. According to Rev. Calisto Odede, who facilitated a session in the Northern Nairobi RUFEC meeting on 9th September 2017 at Kenyatta University, Main Campus, the Faculty should make a difference in the university by showing genuine concern for the students, ensuring that all the students graduate on time and showing fairness to all Students.

In order to achieve the maximum impact, the delegates in these fora have committed to proactively reach out to the students, fellow faculty members, and the entire Campus community as a mission. Our prayer is to get all the Christian Faculty on board and actively engage the whole University for Jesus. Christian Faculty can find international links for this vision on

<https://www.ifesworld.org/en/engaging-university>.

Through the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), Faculty members will grapple with the social, cultural and political challenges they face in their national contexts throughout the world.

FOCUS CONNECT

We invite all our Fresh Graduates to be on check for the upcoming Connect in their region but also for other FOCUS Associates activities. The dates are as follows:

Region	Date
Mt. Kenya	18 th November, 2017
Pwani	4 th November, 2017
Western	2 nd December, 2017
North Rift	25 th November, 2017

FOCUS ASSOCIATES EASTER RETREAT 2018

We invite you to our annual FOCUS Associates Easter Retreat where we fellowship, have fun and engage the current issues facing us. The retreat shall be held from **Friday, 30th March to Monday, 2nd April, 2018**. Plan early and organize to attend this great event.

COMMISSION 2017 COUNTDOWN

The DEADLINE for COMMISSION 2017 REGISTRATION is fast approaching. Hurry up and register if you haven't already and if you have, invite friends and family to this life changing missions networking and mobilization conference.

Let us meet at Kabarak University, Nakuru from Wednesday, 27th December, 2017 to Monday, 1st January, 2018 and be challenged and inspired together. With the theme, *His Power, His Witnesses. Transforming the world*, the conference aims to consolidate a critical mass of like-minded people who by His power will be effectively equipped for God's mission.

For more info and registration, please visit any FOCUS office or contact CU officials and FOCUS staff or visit our website: www.commission.focuskenya.org

COMMISSION 2017 MEGA BOOKSALE

FOCUS Bookstall invites you to a mega booksale during the Commission 2017 Conference at Kabarak University, Nakuru. Come prepared to buy great books that cut across a whole range of disciplines from apologetics to homiletics to missions and discipleship. As is our trademark, the books will be highly subsidized with prices starting as low as 50 bob.

We have a special offer for *The African Study Bible* which will be available for each delegate present. You can't afford to miss this offer!

For any enquiries, please contact the bookstall through: +254 724 253 530

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

1. Praying for FOCUS ministry.
2. Donating gifts in kind.
3. Offering professional services.
4. Giving financial Support.

SENDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Write a cheque in favour of:
Fellowship of Christian Unions
MPesa Paybill:
Business Number: 412 412
Account Name: Support

Deposit directly to our bank accounts:
Barclays Bank:
Market Branch,
Account No. 0948207400

Standard Chartered Bank:
Harambee Avenue Branch,
Account No. 0102073083700

Co-operative Bank:
Zimmerman Branch,
A/c No. 01128098633500.

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