

How and Why Our Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Course at Tangaza Was Different

On 17 March, 2016 we finished our nine-week course in the Eighth Semester of the School of Theology on “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today” (PTC418) at Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya. There are many reasons how and why our course was different. It was mainly taught online in a participatory, interactive way using the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website (<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>) so the students were encouraged (not discouraged!) to use their smartphones, tablets and laptops in class especially for voting in our online SCCs Poll and using the *Bible*.

We tried to develop a “SCC identity” as a class. We used the name *Mwanajumuiya* (“member of a SCC” in Swahili) rather than “student” in class. The 50 *Wanajumuiya* came from 22 religious congregations and missionary societies and included one diocesan priest and 15 deacons. We came from 15 countries.

The course involved a new way of teaching about SCCs and a new way of learning about SCCs. We experienced the SCC Model of Church by being a member of a SCC during the course. The class was divided into four SCCs and chose Patron/Patroness Saints with their specific feast days: St. Augustine (born and died in present day Algeria) – 28 August; St. Kizito (born and died in Uganda) – 3 June; St. Padre Pio (born and died in Italy) – 23 September; and St. Theresa of the Child Jesus (born and died in France) – 1 October.

The course was practical and pastoral and largely based on the students’ personal experience. Following the steps of an average SCC, we had a weekly “Touchdown” period with reports on the deacons’ homilies as well as the students’ visits to SCCs in the Nairobi area.

During the course we had practical experience of five different methods of *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection/*Bible*—Life Connections in our four SCCs. We mainly focused on the Gospel of the following Sunday.

We had visiting lecturers in five of our nine classes:

1. “Laity and Mission:” Mwanajumuiya Alphonse Omolo, a member of the Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team, and Mr. Felix Nzioka Ngao, CLM of the Catholic Lay Missionaries of Kenya (CLM).
2. “2016 Kenya Lenten Campaign and Justice and Peace:” Mrs. Beatrice Odera and Sister Mary Francis Wangare, LSSJ, representatives of the Kenya Episcopal Conference Catholic Justice and Peace Commission Office.
3. “LUMKO Way of Being Church:” Sister Ephigenia Gachiri, IBVM.
4. “Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs):” Peter Kyalo, Senior Software Engineer/Senior ICT Officer of the ICT Centre, University of Nairobi; and Alloys

Nyakundi, Amos Orina and Clementina Maloba of the YSCCs of Christ the Teacher Parish, Kenyatta University.

5. "Evaluation and the Way Forward:" Father Febian Pikiti, AMECEA Pastoral Coordinator.

The SCCs Course Paper covered:

1. "Part I -- SCC Practicum Write-up" on one's personal, practical pastoral experience of one of the 15 SCC Activities.
2. "Part II -- Reflection Paper.

The best papers will be posted on our SCCs Website under their respective countries.



Group Photo of the 2016 SCCs Class at Tangaza, Nairobi, Kenya

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