

# **PROGRAM REPORT**

July to December 2009



**CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA**  
Chiang Mai, Thailand

## CONTENTS

Foreword .....	4
Program and Activities Schedule .....	5
General Secretariat .....	9
Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU) .....	17
Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID) .....	29
SPECIAL PROGRAMS .....	49
HIV and AIDS Concerns .....	49
Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program .....	51

## FOREWORD

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

This report comes to you as we draw near the 13<sup>th</sup> CCA General Assembly on April 14 to 21, 2010. In view of the coming assembly, we hope that this report will help inspire you to actively participate and support the life and work of CCA. This report gives you a sufficient view of what CCA did in the past six months as it approaches another landmark in the ecumenical movement in Asia.

The 13<sup>th</sup> CCA General Assembly will be decisive in shaping the next five years of our life and work together in the ecumenical movement in Asia. Hopefully, this will be an opportunity for CCA member churches and councils and ecumenical partners to seriously reckon with the times bearing in mind and heart our faith mandate which is to prophesy, reconcile and heal.

The ecumenical movement in Asia is God's project. And together, we are partners with God. In this light, we humbly present to you the Program Report for July to December 2009 of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA).

DR. PRAWATE KHID-ARN  
General Secretary

# PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Christian Conference of Asia  
July to December 2009

Date	Activity	Venue	Program Area
<b>JULY</b>			
June 30 to July 3	Ecumenical Officers Meeting	Cipayong, INDONESIA	GS
1 - 5	ATESEA General Assembly	Malang, INDONESIA	FMU
5 -8	South Asia Solidarity Fund for Theological Education Meeting	Bangkok, THAILAND	FMU
9 - 10	CCA Round Table Meeting with Ecumenical Partners	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	GS
13 – 14	ICP Committee Meeting	Hong Kong SAR, CHINA	GS
19 - 24	Ecumenical Lectures at Persetia Summer School for Graduate Students	Permatang Siantar, INDONESIA	FMU
27 – 31	Sub-regional Theological Workshop (South Asia)	Chennai, INDIA	FMU
<b>AUGUST</b>			
2-4	Ecumenical Youth Leadership Program	Kottayam, INDIA	EGY, FMU
6 - 7	Writeshop on the CCA HIV and AIDS Policy	Bali, INDONESIA	HIV&AIDS
8 – 9	Pre-ICAAP Inter-faith Conference and Skills Building Workshop	Bali, INDONESIA	HIV&AIDS
10 - 13	HIV and AIDS Awareness Seminar	Dili, TIMOR LESTE	HIV&AIDS
10 – 13	WEAVE Evaluation	Dili, TIMOR LESTE	EGY
16-21	Sub-Regional Theological Workshop (South-East Asia)	Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA	FMU
20 - 21	Final planning meeting for the Tozanso 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Consultation	WCC, Geneva, Switzerland	JID
27 - 31	Ecumenical Lectures	Dumaguete City, PHILIPPINES	FMU
31 Aug to 04 Sept	Sub-regional Theological Workshop (South-East Asia, Mekong Region)	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	FMU/MEPP

<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
31 Aug to 04 Sept	Sub-regional Theological Workshop (South-East Asia)	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	FMU/MEPP
14 – 16	Consultation on “The Gulf Church, Migrant Workers, and Muslim Society”	BAHRAIN	JID
10 - 11	Review of HR and Peace Building Courses (Meetings with PGI and Tony Waworuntu)	Jakarta, INDONESIA	JID
12 – 16	Review of HR and Peace Building Courses	Manila, PHILIPPINES	JID
9 – 13	Sub-regional Theological Workshop (North East Asia)	Taipei, TAIWAN	FMU
14 - 24	Asian School of Ecumenical Formation for Gender Justice	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	EGY/MEPP
Sept 28 - Oct 2	CCA General Committee Meeting	Bangkok, THAILAND	GS
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
3 – 4	Pre-assembly Preparatory Meeting (Women and Youth)	Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA	EGY
5 – 8	Meeting of the HIV Strategy Group, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance	Geneva, SWITZERLAND	HIV&AIDS
5 – 9	Ecumenical Lectures, at Judson Research Center, MIT	MYANMAR	GS/FMU
7 – 9	Evaluation of Nargis Rehabilitation Project with MCC	MYANMAR	JID
9 – 14	Networking with International HIV organizations	Geneva, SWITZERLAND	HIV&AIDS
15 – 24	ICFLC Meeting	KENYA	EGY
18 – 30	Asian Ecumenical Course 2009	Kolkata, INDIA	FMU
20 – 24	Tozanso 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting	Hong Kong SAR, CHINA	JID
27 - 30	Asian Methodist Youth Network Meeting (keynote address)	Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA	JID
31 Oct – 7 Nov	Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	EGY/JID
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
3 – 7	GA Worship Committee Preparatory Meeting	Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA	FMU
9 - 14	Consultation on Asian Churches Responses to Climate Change	Java, INDONESIA	JID
13 – 16	United Church of Canada General Council Executive Meeting	Toronto, CANADA	JID

12	Meeting with UNAIDS Regional Office	Bangkok, THAILAND	HIV&AIDS
13 - 15	Updating Meeting on HIV & AIDS and Sharing of CCA HIV & AIDS Policy to the Kampuchean Christian Council	Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA	HIV&AIDS/ MEPP
16 – 21	Interfaith Consultation on HIV & AIDS and visit to HIV & AIDS Program of Faith-Based Organizations	Rangoon, MYANMAR	HIV&AIDS/ MEPP
25 - 28	Consultative Visit in Vietnam	VIETNAM	MEPP/FMU
22 – 23	Planning Meeting, South Asia Working Group	Colombo, SRI LANKA	JID
25 - 28	Consultative Visit in Vietnam	VIETNAM	MEPP/FMU
18 – 19	Inter-faith Cooperation Forum (School of Peace) Working Group Meeting	Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA	GS
DECEMBER			
1 – 3	Article 9 Second Conference Meeting	Seoul, KOREA	JID
4 – 6	Korean Ecumenical Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament	Hwacheon, KOREA	JID
1- 6	World AIDS Day Events	Chiang Mai, THAILAND (and other places in Asia)	HIV & AIDS
4 – 8	JustPeace Consultation and Hosting, WCC and REOs Networking Meeting	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	EGY
9 – 11	Consultation on Positive Masculinity and Spirituality of Resilience	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	EGY



## 13<sup>TH</sup> CCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14 - 21 April 2010

Hotel Grand Seasons, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The General Assembly is the supreme policy-making body of CCA. It meets once in five years to celebrate God's blessings, to share on God's mission in the life of member churches and councils, to envisage a new vision and direction in the midst of new challenges, and to elect its new leaders.

**Theme: *Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal***

Logo: The orange figure with outstretched and embracing arms symbolizes the act of reaching out to heal and to reconcile. The grey wave at the bottom is the breath of God symbolizing God's call to prophecy. Taken together, the logo presents the assembly's theme: *Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal*.

**Venue:** Hotel Grand Seasons, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Events:

- ❖ **April –10 - 13** - Pre-assemblies (Women, Youth, People's Forum and People Living with HIV and Aids.)
- Note: The 2010 Asia Ecumenical Course (AEC) will be on April 9 to 22. AEC participants will assist in animating Worship and Bible Study sessions at the assembly.)
- ❖ **April 13 – 14** – CCA General Committee Meeting
- ❖ **April 14 – 21** - General Assembly

Program features:

- ❖ Worship and Bible Studies
- ❖ D.T. Niles Memorial Lectures
- ❖ Forums on emerging issues and challenges
- ❖ Program Review
- ❖ Program Directions Setting
- ❖ Election (officers and Program Area Committee members)

Guest speakers and resource persons:

- ❖ Archbishop Roger Herft, Archbishop of Perth
- ❖ Dr. Ruth Manorama, President, National Alliance for Women (India)
- ❖ Dr. Daniel Preman Niles, former General Secretary, Council for World Mission
- ❖ Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary, World Council of Churches

# GENERAL SECRETARIAT

*Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary*  
*Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, Associate General Secretary*  
*Dr. Liza Lamis, Communications Consultant*

## **A. Round Table Meeting with Ecumenical Organizations**

Venue: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Dates: 9 – 10 July 2009

The 2009 CCA Round Table Meeting with ecumenical partners from Europe and North America held at the Paradornparp International House, Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand was the second meeting after the one in 2006. This year, ten ecumenical representatives from nine organizations - the Bread for the World (BfW), ICCO-Kerk in Actie (ICCO-KA), Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), British Methodist Church (BMC), Church of Scotland (CoS), Church World Service (CWS), United Church in Canada (UCC) and Global Ministries-United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ (GM-UCC & DOC) were represented in the meeting.

Rev. Dr Khamphone Kounthapanya, one of the four CCA Presidents, and Bishop Thomas Soo, Honorary Treasurer, were present in the meeting. After the opening worship led by Rev. Dr Sung Kook Park, Rev. Dr Kounthapanya welcomed the participants. He expressed gratitude to partners for their continuing support and accompaniment with CCA in the midst of the global economic recession.

Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, CCA General Secretary, then presented an overview of the ecumenical challenges in Asia, highlighting poverty, peace and sustainable communities. He emphasized that “the problems that we are facing now is not only socio-economic and political in nature. It has also some implications for our faith, moral and spiritual state of being. Thus, we desperately need a spiritual transformation, a rethinking of critical Asian spiritualities and Christian theologies that can guide and strengthen our churches historically. Re-visiting our roots and traditions can help us to understand the history and envision a new future.”

The General Secretary then highlighted the programs and planned activities for 2010. His presentation focused on three major areas: Strengthening Asian theologies and spiritualities; human resources development and sustainability of life; and, intra and inter-religious cooperation. The presentation was supplemented in details by the Executive Secretaries of the three Program Areas, namely: FMU, EGY and JID.

The ecumenical partners were also given an update report on the CCA Review and Evaluation (1957-2007) by Mr Leo Bashyam and Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang,

both members of the review team. The review report is a draft, and additional feedbacks from various respondents including the executive staff will be considered. The General Committee received the report in its September 2009 meeting and will present it to the General Assembly in April 2010.

The ecumenical partners expressed their ecumenical support and commitment to journey with CCA. They kept their financial support for 2010 at the same level as the current year. They did not decide for the year 2011 and beyond, as CCA is going to have its General Assembly in April 2010, when new officers and committees will be elected and new mandates given. However, a meeting of the Round Table Core Group will be convened after the General Assembly. The next Round Table Meeting will be in 2011.

## **B. CCA General Committee Meeting**

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Dates: 29 September – 02 October 2009

The CCA General Committee met at the Bangkok Christian Guest House, Bangkok, Thailand. We profusely thank the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) for the hospitality provided throughout the meeting, and for footing the bill for participants' board and lodging. CCT's generous gesture affirms the CCA Member Churches' strong sense of ownership of the ecumenical work in Asia.

Prior to the meeting, members of the General Committee and staff took part in the 75<sup>th</sup> CCT anniversary celebration held at the Bangkok Christian College. Around 2,000 church members, elders, deacons, deaconesses, clergies, lay people, women and youth praised God for blessings, challenges as well as successes of the CCT.

The CCA General Committee Meeting, this time, was another crucial one. It was the second to the last meeting before it hands over leadership to the new General Committee in April 2010. A number of decisions were thoughtfully made and clarified for mutual understanding and unity.

During the meeting, we also warmly welcomed special guests such as Archbishop Anders Wejryd, Rev. Dr. Johan Hesselgren, Rev. Dr. Ann-Cathrin Jarl and Ms. Ewa Rollgard of the Church of Sweden.

Let me share with you some important decisions made at the meeting which include:

### ***Declaration of Vacancy and Advertisement of the Search for a new General Secretary:***

Information was circulated and posted at the CCA website [www.cca.org.hk](http://www.cca.org.hk)

**CCA Review:** The Committee thankfully received the report, **CCA Review: Fifty Years in God's mission (1957-2007)**, presented by Mr. Leo Bashyam and team members. It was handed over to the General Committee to be presented to the General Assembly in April 2010.

***New Church Members:*** It was agreed to propose to the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to receive the following new members: The Synod of the Oikoumene Christian Church in Indonesia (GKO); The Prelate of the Armenians of Diocese of Tehran; The Lutheran Church in Philippines; and the National Council of Churches in Bhutan. The General Committee authorized me (General Secretary) to further communicate with the new members for some clarification.

***13<sup>th</sup> CCA General Assembly:*** There will be no Extra-ordinary Assembly as originally announced. The Assembly dates will be from April 14 (arrival date) to April 21 (departure date), 2010.

Simultaneously with the CCA General Committee Meeting, the UN-Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also met in Bangkok. The CCA General Committee issued an appeal letter to the UNFCCC for all parties, all stakeholders to reduce global warming and climate change. To quote:

*“ It is our hope that you as world leaders will commit to address the root of these problems – cut down carbon emissions, prioritize afforestation and limit commercial logging, develop renewable and clean energy sources, promote sustainable life that will help mitigate the negative impact of these ecological issues on populations and communities worldwide.”*

### **C. Consultation on the Role of Religious Leaders in Conflict Transformation and Peace Building**

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Dates: 28 – 29 October 2009

In times of war or peace and at different stages of conflict from prevention to post conflict reconciliation and reconstruction, religious leaders and their communities play a critical role.

The World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP/Religions for Peace), the world’s largest multi-religious organization accredited by the United Nations, in conjunction with the Peace Study Center of Mahidol University, CCA, and the Inter-religious Council (IRC) Thailand, jointly organized the meeting in Bangkok.

Over 100 senior religious leaders representing Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and other traditions from Sri Lanka and Thailand attended the meeting to present their unique initiatives in building an inter-religious instrument to undertake high-level advocacy and action to resolve conflict and to advance peace.

The IRC, led by senior representatives of religious communities in Thailand serves as the multi-religious voice of the country, offers the possibility of mediation, rejects extremist tendencies, and educates the public on the positive, socially transformative power of religions and their cooperation.

## ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

July 13 -14

*Meeting with regional NGOs in Hong Kong*

The CCA General Secretary met eighteen representatives of regional NGOs based in Hong Kong, including the Asian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC), Asia Centre for People's Progress (ACPP), the Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY), Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (HKCIC), the World Student Christian Federation – Asia/Pacific, Asian Students Association (ASA), and the Asian Migrant Centre (AMC).

Hosted by Mr. Kohei Yamada, APAY General Secretary, the meeting emphasized the need for strengthening coordination and collaboration among regional organizations that can support platforms espousing the rights of migrant workers, better sharing and utilization of information, effective campaigning, and the training of second line NGO leadership.

The CCA General Secretary shared about the on-going programs linking Christians and other faiths in promoting peace, reconciliation and healing, and invited the NGO leaders to actively contribute to pre-assembly activities of the CCA General Assembly on April 14-21, 2010.

Prior to the meeting with NGOs, the CCA team composed of Dr Prawate Khid-arn, Charlie Ocampo, and Beng Seng Chan (DAGA), met with Max Ediger and Paddy Noble of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), and Mr. Kohei Yamada, General Secretary, Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY) on developments and plans for the **School of Peace** and the handing over of project holdership to APAY.

August 4 -7

*HIV and AIDS Consultation and Visit to the Church of Bali*

Prior to the 9th International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP IX) held at the Bali Convention Center on August 9-13, 2009, the General Secretary attended the Pre-ICAAP Interfaith Conference and Skills Building Workshop, jointly sponsored by CCA and AINA (Asian Interfaith Network on HIV and Aids) on August 6-9, in Dhyana Pura, Bali. About fifty participants from Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu communities from Asian countries were present.

Using the “CCA Pastoral Guidelines on HIV and AIDS” presented to the CCA General Committee in 2008, the workshop completed a “Proposed CCA Policy document on HIV

and AIDS for Churches". The policy was finally approved by the CCA General Committee in its September 2009 meeting.

The General Secretary, while in Bali, also visited the office of the Church of Bali and the Tourism College to explore closer cooperation in the ecumenical movement.

### August 8

#### *Visit to NCC Singapore*

The General Secretary stopped over in Singapore on his way from Bali for a courtesy visit to the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Singapore. They discussed the churches' mission in Asia and ways to strengthen relationships between CCA and the churches in Singapore.

### August 11 - 15

#### *FABC Plenary Assembly, Manila, Philippines*

The General Secretary participated in the 9th FABC Plenary Assembly. He also took the opportunity to meet with leaders of CCA's member churches in Manila, Philippines.

He challenged the role of the church in equipping priests, pastors, church leaders and workers and ordinary members - women and men, young and old, clergy and laity - in the face of life-threatening circumstances in many Asian communities.

CCA and FABC have a history of long history of cooperative relationships. Since 1996, the special committee on Asian Movement for Christian Unity or AMCU has been formed to strengthen this cooperation.

Under the guidance of AMCU various programs were done such as a joint Asian Ecumenical Course (AEC), a joint Executive Staff meeting, and a personnel exchange.

### August 22 – September 04

#### *Ecumenical Meetings*

The General Secretary attended a series of meetings in Geneva, on the following: Assembly of the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism /ECOT (August 23); WCC-REOs General Secretaries Meeting; and the WCC Central Committee Meeting (August 26 –to September 04).

September 21 - 25

*ECHO Asia Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand*

The General Secretary gave the welcome greetings to the 2nd ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization) Asia Agriculture held at the Empress Hotel in Chiang Mai. Around 100 participants who are working on sustainable agriculture and rural community development attended the conference.

ECHO is a Church-based and a non-profit organization for agricultural and rural community development that provides education and training, problem-solving and networking skills, and is based in the U.S.A.

October 17-20

*Visit to churches in North Korea*

Prior to the *International Consultation on Peace, Reconciliation and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Towards an Ecumenical Vision Beyond the Tozanso Process* in Hong Kong SAR, the General Secretary joined the World Council of Churches (WCC) delegation that visited churches in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on October 17 to 20, 2009 on invitation of the Korean Church Federation (KCF). The team, led by Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, WCC General Secretary, included Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, Ms. Christine Papazoglou, Mr. Mark Beach and Mr. Peter Williams, all of WCC. The visit aimed to share experiences and to search for further ecumenical cooperation and support.

On Sunday, October 18, the team visited the Bongsu and Chilgo Churches; and the Sanam House Church. Rev. Dr. Kobia preached at Bongsu Church on the theme, "One Body of Christ" where around 200 people worshipped.

Another significant event was the conversation about the mission and the work of the KCF. Rev. Kang Yon Sop, together with Rev. Ri Jong Ro who is the Director of the International Affairs Department of the Central Committee of KCF, expressed their strong concerns on many important issues especially related to the reunification of the Korea.

October 21-24

*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Tozanso Process and International Conference on Peace in the Korean Peninsula, Hong Kong*

The General Secretary led the CCA contingent to the *International Consultation and celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Tozanso Process*. In his brief greetings, he said:

*"...building unity and peace in Korea is a daunting and protracted task. We may not live to see the unification and fullness of life for all flourishing in Korea, but we dare to hope and to continue the struggle. We owe it to our generation and for the next to come. We dare to hope and to struggle in obedience to our God who is just, a lover of Life and*

*wants that the Body of Christ - the people – is not torn asunder. Let us continue to work and pray for our vision of wholeness and unification. Let it be, that we may all be ONE.”*

Around 120 participants from over 30 countries participated in the Conference and issued the Tsuen Wan Communique that strongly called on the ecumenical movement to support new steps towards the reunification of Korea.

## November 2-10

### *Visit to churches and ecumenical organizations in Aotearoa New Zealand*

On the invitation of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, the General Secretary together with a delegation from the World Council of Churches (WCC) visited member churches in Aotearoa NZ. Visited were the member churches in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

The ecumenical visit activities started with a meeting with the Anglican Church leaders at the General Synod Office at St. John’s College. Rev. Ron O’Grady of the Associated Churches of Christ also joined. A dinner-discussion was held focusing on “The challenge of ecumenism into the future: at world, regional and national levels”. There were 28 church leaders from various denominations including the Catholic Church that took part in discussion.

Also, a sharing on experiences in the ecumenical movement in New Zealand and the world took place, with former General Secretary of the Baptist Church, Rev. Agnus Macleod. The delegation also visited the Friendship House, a local ecumenical diakonia agency.

Ecumenism and the ecumenical movement in New Zealand is currently in a challenging situation, while church leaders expressed worry about the future of the ecumenical movement in New Zealand.

The dissolution of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand signaled the decline of the ecumenical movement in this country. And the lack of communication between the WCC as well as the CCA with member churches in New Zealand has aggravated the situation.

Ecumenical leaders such as Rev. John Roberts, Rev. Bob Scott, Rev. Pamela Tankersley and others are working hard to revitalize the ecumenical movement. They hope that a new ecumenical network will be formed.

CCA has four member churches in New Zealand including the Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand; the Methodist Church of New Zealand; the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand; and the Religious Society of Friends.

November 13

*International Ecumenical Organizations Meeting*

CCA invited representatives of international ecumenical organizations based in Chiang Mai for an informal gathering at Payap University. It was a first of its kind aimed to strengthen relationships, search for closer cooperation and support each other in the ecumenical journey.

Each organization had the opportunity to share about their organizational profile, vision, mission, programs and challenges they face. Participants identified common issues, themes, programs and possible areas of cooperation. All affirmed that “we are religious-based though not missionary, whose actions are faith motivated”.

All participating organizations, excluded *Habitat for Humanity*, are mainly facilitating, coordinating and supporting bodies serving between the ‘back donors’ and the ‘local recipients’. The shared difficulty faced most times is how to meet the expectation of the back donors with the real needs and situation of local recipients.

Some possible areas of future cooperation include: a) joint organized programs; b) interpreting local priorities and sentiments from the ground, and back donors’ goal, c) information sharing, and d) long term human resource development.

It was agreed that a regular meeting be held to focus on a particular topic of common interest, to be decided later.

## Faith, Mission and Unity

*Dr. Hope S. Antone, Joint Executive Secretary*  
*Rev. Dr. Sung Kook Park, Joint Executive Secretary*

### **A. Networking: ATESEA General Assembly**

Venue: Malang, Indonesia

Dates: 1 - 5 July 2009

As part of the responsibility of the CCA-WCC Joint Consultant for Ecumenical Theological Education, Hope S. Antone attended the General Assembly of the Association of Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) hosted by the Asian Biblical Seminary in Malang, Indonesia. The assembly was a time for celebration as well as envisioning as ATESEA decided on a new structure and elected a new set of officers, led by the Rev. Dr. Wu Fu Ya, president of Tainan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan, as chairperson.

Other officers were: Rev. Dr. Ngoei Foong Nghian (president of Trinity Theological Seminary in Singapore), vice-chairperson; Dr. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro (dean of the Silliman University Divinity School in the Philippines), secretary; Rev. Dr. Ezra Kok Hon Seng (principal of the Seminari Teologi Malaysia), treasurer. New members-at-large of the executive committee are: Dr. Joyce J. Abugan (Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary); Rev. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang (Jakarta Theological Seminary, Indonesia); Rev. Dr. John Titaley (Theology Faculty of the Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia) and Rev. Dr. San Myat Shwe (Holy Cross Theological College, Myanmar).

The assembly also elected the Rev. Dr. Limuel Equina, former dean of the College of Theology of Central Philippine University, as interim executive director for one year.

### **B. Networking: Regional Committee Meeting of the SASEFTE**

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Dates: 5 - 8 July 2009

Objectives:

- 1) To discuss the continuation of cooperation in theological education in the countries concerned;
- 2) To review reports of the national committees on theological education in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal;
- 3) To share master plans for theological education of these countries;

- 4) To look into the disbursement processes and future functioning of the South Asia Solidarity Plan for theological education.

CCA-FMU hosted the meeting of the *Regional Committee of the South Asia Solidarity Endowment Fund for Theological Education (SASEFTE)* on 5-8 July in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by representatives of churches and theological education institutions of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. This time a representative from Bhutan was invited, as per decision of the last meeting of the committee. The regional committee heard reports on the activities and budgets of the various national committees. SASEFTE is supervised by the WCC-ETE. CCA-WCC joint consultant for ETE sits on the regional committee and was appointed by the group as recording secretary.

The meeting included sharing of narrative and financial reports from the national committees of SASEFTE of the 5 countries of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and India – on their programs and activities, use of the solidarity fund, situations and challenges of theological education in their respective countries; update on the financial situation of the fund and disbursement processes from the WCC-ETE global coordinator; and tasking on the priorities for the future. As recommended in the last year's meeting, we made effort to invite a representative from the Bhutan Bible School, who also happens to be the General Secretary of the National Christian Council of Bhutan.

Present were: Keerthi Fernando, Sri Lanka; James Massey, India; Arthur James, Pakistan; Victor Azariah, Pakistan; Ganesh Tamang, Nepal; K B Rokaya, Nepal; Subodh Adhikary, Bangladesh; Nibarun Das, Bangladesh; Lhatru Wangchu, Bhutan; Dietrich Werner, WCC-ETE; and Hope S. Antone, CCA and ETE Asia.

### **C. Ecumenical Lectures (Indonesia)**

Venue: Sekolah Tinggi Teologi of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (STT HKBP),  
Pematang Siantar, Indonesia

Dates: 13 - 24 July 2009

Objectives (of PERSETIA):

- 1) To provide graduate students an opportunity to gain international experience in their course work by bringing Christian scholars from abroad to teach.
- 2) To provide graduate students an opportunity to fellowship and develop an ecumenical spirit as future leaders of churches.
- 3) To provide graduate students an opportunity for in-depth discussions on issues facing the church and society they are serving.
- 4) (from the perspective of CCA-FMU) To make use of an existing program in Indonesia for sharing the wider ecumenical vision and the Asian feminist theologizing.

Close to ninety (90) MTh students from all over Indonesia attended the Persetia Summer School for Graduate Students held at the STT HKBP in July 2009. Invited as one of three resource persons was Dr. Hope S. Antone from CCA-FMU whose inputs were on "Wider Ecumenism" and "Asian Feminist Theologizing". Topics on wider ecumenism

included “Revisiting the concept, vision and brief history of ecumenism”, “biblical and theological foundations of wider ecumenism” and “new paradigm concepts of mission” while topics on Asian feminist theologizing included “the what and why of Asian feminist theologizing” and “the spiral of Asian feminist theologizing.”

Participants worked in small groups to do the feminist spiral of theologizing, which turned out to be an eye-opening experience as various groups raised very patriarchal practices among certain Indonesian ethnic groups – e.g. polygamy, polyandry, dowry and caste systems.

Through this activity, CCA-FMU utilized an existing program to reach out to a large group of graduate students throughout Indonesia. The summer school program is a yearly program required of graduate studies in Persetia member schools. Students come from different denominations (Evangelical and mainstream), ethnic backgrounds, and also religions (one Muslim man was from Tomohon, which has been a site of ethnic and religious violence).

The decision to incorporate wider ecumenism and Asian feminist theologizing in the graduate students’ summer school came about after the PERSETIA chairperson (Rev. Dr. Daniel Nuhamara) served as dean of the Asian Ecumenical Course 2008 and participated in the consultation of “churches and seminaries: appraising our ecumenical vision in today’s world” in 2008. In the CCA programs it was clearly pointed out that many Asian seminaries have not mainstreamed ecumenical formation with the wider ecumenical vision. It is important for CCA-FMU to continuously engage the seminaries so they will come to embrace the wider ecumenical vision and Asian feminist theologizing. Utilizing existing programs of different theological associations, both at national and sub-regional levels, is a good way of encouraging more ownership of programs, sharing limited resources, while reaching out to a large number of people, enriching the content of the programs, and also making the presence of CCA felt at local and national levels.

#### **D. Ecumenical Lectures (Philippines)**

Venue: Dumaguete City, Philippines

Dates: 28 - 31 August 2009

Objectives:

- 1) To forge a genuine partnership between the Divinity School and the church in providing quality theological education and formation program.
- 2) To strengthen the churches through quality continuing theological education. Church officers, Christian education leaders and teachers, and persons who wish to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith will discover a rich opportunity through this program.
- 3) To equip ordained and lay leaders to effectively address emerging and current issues in ministry and mission.
- 4) To serve as centers for theological discourse, reflection, research and publication for the benefit of the wider church during changing times

CCA-FMU executive staff Hope S. Antone gave two Bible study lectures on the theme “Theological Education in the Midst of Crisis: Prospects and Challenges,” at the 48<sup>th</sup> Church Workers Convocation of Silliman University Divinity School in Dumaguete City, Philippines on 28-30 August 2009. She pointed out that aside from the socio-economic-political crises besetting everyone, theological education is often times faced with a crisis in theology and vision. She led a re-reading of Luke 4:16-30 and affirmed that Jesus’ engagement in theological education was biblically rooted, contextually grounded, oriented to the “year of the Lord’s favor” [or the reign of God] and was meant for all people. The crisis in theology and vision in theological education is due to our limited or preferred understanding of God’s will and purpose, which may be self-serving and self-centered. The second Bible study lecture focused on Jonah whose limited understanding of God’s salvation led to his disobedience to God and on the feeding of the 5,000 with its lessons on dealing with crisis.

Bishop Eliezer Pascua, general secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, gave the keynote address. Using 2 Peter 1:5-10, he spoke of theological education as ministerial faith formation in the virtues of goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, mutual affection and love. He said seminarians should be “students not only with brains but also with hearts; not only with minds but also with souls.”

In his theme exposition, the Rev. Dr. A. Wati Longchar, dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program of the Serampore College in India, emphasized that the role of theological education is to form or equip people in the local congregation for faith, witness and service. Hence, theological education ought to take place “together with people” and based on a critical solidarity with the victims. This calls for inclusive curriculum in theology that promotes plurality and the common good.

### **E. Ecumenical Lectures (Myanmar)**

Venue: Yangon, Myanmar

Dates: 5 - 9 October 2009

Objective:

To promote the spirit of unity and solidarity among young Christian leaders but also to enable them to be instrumental to socio-political transformation, culture change, peace building, ecological awareness, and interfaith interactions.

The Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, Associate General Secretary for Finance and Relationships, was CCA’s ecumenical lecturer at the Judson Research Center of Myanmar Institute of Theology in Yangon, Myanmar. The lecture was part of the ecumenical training for young church leaders and theological students on the theme, “Christian Solidarity for Life, Justice and Witness.”

Around 40 participants attended coming from different denominational backgrounds, representing not only the mainline Protestant theological institutions but also the non-MCC member churches and institutions.

## **F. Sub-Regional Theological Workshops on “Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal” (CCA General Assembly Theme 2010)**

<b>South Asia</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Church of South India Centre,</b> 5, Whites Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600014 India
<b>Date</b>	26-30 July 2009

<b>South East Asia</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Council of Churches in Malaysia</b> 26 Jalan Universiti, 46200 Petaling Jaya Selangor Draul Ehsan, Malaysia
<b>Date</b>	16-20 August 2009

<b>South East Asia (Mekong Countries)</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	<b>International Hotel Chiang Mai YMCA</b> Sermasuk Road Chiang Mai, Chang Phuak, Chiang Mai 50300 Thailand
<b>Date</b>	30 August - 3 September 2009

<b>North East Asia</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Ta Shee Resort</b> No. 166, Rixin Rd., Daxi Township, Taoyuan County 335 Taiwan
<b>Date</b>	9-14 September 2009

### **Objectives:**

- 1) To provide space and opportunity for theological discussion on the General Assembly theme 2010, “Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal”
- 2) To provide a venue for discussion on emerging theological issues in the sub-regions
- 3) To identify contributors and authors for the CCA publication on the assembly theme
- 4) To Provide a venue for discussion on comments and suggestions for the next five years of CCA, according to the General Assembly theme

### **Executive Program Report**

In the year 2009, one year before the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Christian Conference of Asia, a series of Theological Workshops were organized. To provide a platform for sharing common concerns related to the theme, four workshops were organized in different sub-regions (South Asia, South East Asia, South East Asia Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program Region, and North East Asia). The purpose of holding the workshops in different sub-regions were multiple: (1) To enable a wider participation and discover emerging and young theologians; (2) To provide a platform of sharing commonly shared concerns in each respective sub-region; (3) To organize the workshops in a most cost-effective way.

While every program area committed themselves to contribute towards the General Assembly, FMU-Theological Concerns decided to organized a series of theological workshops to produce theological reflections on the assembly theme for later publication. The publication project was initiated by Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, and went through collective comments and reflections. Countless and invaluable comments and reflections enabled the project process to come to a final stage. All papers in this publication can be claimed to be owned by CCA and all who belong to it. This publication can be proudly presented to all Asian churches, since we all were involved in the work.

The first workshop was held in Chennai, India at the CSI (Church of South India) Centre. The great significance of this meeting is that it was the first workshop of this series and is directly linked to other activities in order to promote CCA's presence in India. Selected participants from this workshop were invited to a youth leadership program on Mission jointly organized by CCA-FMU and CCA-EGY and Vichara, as resource persons.

During this program in Kottayam, the CCA delegation had the opportunity to visit member churches in this area (Syrian Orthodox Church, etc.). After the program, which was held at the Orthodox Seminary in Kottayam, the CCA delegation proceeded to the Diocese of East Kerala, where the delegation was invited to each preach in eight Churches of the Diocese. Bishop K.G. Daniel, Bishop of the Diocese of East Kerala graciously hosted a reception at the Bishop's residence together with all the executive committee members of the diocese.

The second workshop was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, generously hosted by CCM (Council of Churches in Malaysia). In the third workshop held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the CCA General Secretary, Dr. Prawate Khid-arn delivered the keynote address where all CCA staff were present.

The fourth workshop held in Taiwan was generously hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT). Right before the workshop the southern part of Taiwan was hit by a flood, like many other regions in Asia, due to climate change. All participants at the workshop felt that we should express our solidarity with the suffering people in the southern part of Taiwan and issued a pastoral letter duly signed and was handed by the CCA Associate General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera to the vice moderator of PCT at a CCA hosted reception.

The discussions in each sub-region showed that there are commonly shared concerns regarding the assembly theme. FMU received positive and encouraging comments to move forward with the same method. Each sub-region shared their specific and common concerns. The 'MEPP workshop', - the theological workshop held in South East Asia, for the five Mekong countries such as: Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, in partnership with the Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program (MEPP) - shared common issues like sex- tourism, human trafficking and poverty. Special attention was given to the situation of the Churches in this region, where many suffer from a big lack of trained and qualified theological leaders and ministers. Due to the close border lines, one of the MEPP region's main concerns is about refugees and migrant labor.

Both South Asia and North East Asia shared their deep concern about nuclear issues that reflect the geopolitical situation and affect people's security in each respective sub-region. Issues like poverty, violence and fundamentalism were raised during the workshop in Kuala Lumpur, participated by representatives from Indonesia, Philippines, and Malaysia.

For each workshop two or more representatives from other sub-regions were invited to provide inbound and outbound channel to outside the sub-region. For these cases invitees for the next workshop in another sub-region were mostly invited to carry forth the experiences and results of the discussions to their own sub-region.

### **G. Church Visit and “CCA-Sunday” in the Diocese of East Kerala**

Venue: Kottayam, India; Diocese of East Kerala, India

Dates: 1 and 2 August 2009

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) To promote visibility of CCA in India
- 2) To deepen ecumenical relations and mutual understanding between CCA and member churches.

#### **Executive Program Report**

While in India, Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera and Rev. Dr. Sung Kook Park took the opportunity to visit member churches in the region. Three CCA member churches were visited, and were warmly received by the heads of churches in their headquarters. The three churches that granted the CCA delegation an audience are the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

After the visits, the group proceeded to the diocese of East Kerala, where they were invited to preach in 8 churches for the Sunday Worship service. Along with the CCA staff, participants and resource persons from the theological workshop and the youth leadership program, a CCA team was formed and became preachers in 8 churches on that Sunday.

The CCA staff and delegates visits in these churches were well appreciated, where all shared the Word and food with the grassroots and members of the congregation.

### **H. Follow-up Meeting of Sub-Regional Theological Workshop in Kottayam, India, and Ecumenical Youth Leadership Program:**

*“Redefinition of Mission and Reformulation of Agenda in a Globalized World”*

Venue: Sophia Centre, Kottayam, India

Dates: 31 August - 3 September 2009

#### **Executive Program Report**

This Program was jointly organized by Vichara, CCA-EGY and CCA-FMU. The Youth as target group and Mission as the topic led to a program jointly facilitated by EGY represented by Mr. Adam Anand Row, and FMU, represented by Rev. Dr. Sung Kook

Park, together the Vichara in India represented by Prof. Mammen Varkey. This program helped promote ecumenical formation and build the awareness about CCA's future programs among the future generation of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

The main keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, CCA Associate General Secretary. A great part of the participants to the sub-regional theological workshop in Chennai were invited as resource persons, which helped to manage the program very cost-effectively.

Before and after the program, public gatherings were organized to promote the program, as well as CCA. The CCA staff were invited and welcomed as special guests and given the honor as main speakers at these public gatherings.

FMU Program Area Committee Member Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe from Sri Lanka was actively involved until the end and contributed greatly to all the activities.

## **I. Study Process at CCA Library**

### **“History of CCA's commitment and ecumenism in Asia”**

Venue: CCA library

Dates: 30 August - 7 September 2009

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) To provide an opportunity for ecumenical leaders to research on ecumenism
- 2) To promote the CCA Library
- 3) To collect inputs and constructive critique and reflection on the 2010 CCA General Assembly theme, “Called to Prophesy, Reconcile and Heal”, and on the following five years of Life and Work of CCA after the General Assembly 2010.

#### **Executive Program Report**

Bishop Bartholomew Joseph Lawrence was invited to be the first person to do a research on the ecumenical movement after the official opening of CCA Library. As Bishop Lawrence mentioned in his evaluation/reflection, he was sent as a Missionary to the Cayman Islands. After sixteen years of missionary work he returned to India and became Bishop of the Diocese of Nandyal.

He has been actively involved in CCA-URM work, but lost his connection to ecumenism while working as a missionary. After his return, he tried to re-connect with the ecumenical movement in Asia. Luckily it was recommended that he be invited to a CCA meeting in Chennai, since he was actively involved in URM work before and he showed great interest in getting re-connected to the ecumenical movement. Bishop Lawrence's research and study proceeded with care and great interest that he was able to write two articles for CCA. Bishop Lawrence appreciated very much the opportunity to study CCA's commitment and engagement in ecumenism, as well as the chance to re-connect with the CCA family and the ecumenical movement.

## **J. Asian Ecumenical Course (India)**

Venue: SCEPTRE, Shrachi Center, Kolkata, India

Dates: 18 - 30 October 2009

### **Objective:**

To equip younger generation of leaders with a wider ecumenical perspective so that they can be empowered to pass this on to their respective communities, help create a more conscientized constituency that is fully grounded in their own faith but committed to work for the wider unity of people and with the rest of creation.

A total of 23 participants (10 women) completed the Asian Ecumenical Course 2009. They came from Australia, Bangladesh, China/HK, India, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. They included theology graduate students, teachers (in seminaries, evangelist training center, and secular education), pastors, and workers with NGOs and ecumenical organizations. A few came from more Evangelical background – e.g. Pentecostal, Baptist, Missionary Alliance churches. Participants from Pakistan, Indonesia, Myanmar and Bhutan could not make it due to various reasons.

Except for Hope Antone, CCA executive staff who comes from the Philippines, all resource persons came from India representing various denominations and theological perspectives. A Wati Longchar served as dean, facilitated the sharing on Indian realities and gave the Tribal perspective of ecumenism; K C Abraham gave the keynote address; Somen Das gave the biblical foundations of ecumenism; Robert Gladstone shared the history of the ecumenical movement. Hope Antone facilitated the community building exercises, analysis of Asian realities, CCA perspective on wider ecumenism, and sharing and critique of action plans.

Other resource persons presented various perspectives of the ecumenical vision according to their denominational traditions – e.g. from union churches – Isaac Devadoss; Orthodox Church – Nina K. George, Roman Catholic – Fr. John Romus, NCCI – Christopher Raj; Dalit – Philip Peacock; feminist – Limatula Longkumer; student movement – Abenla Ozukum; ecology – VJ John; interfaith – M T Cherian; social activist – K Hency; church and pastoral perspective – Nigel Pope. Richard Howell of the Evangelical Fellowship in India was invited to share the Evangelical Church's perspective but he could not come due to their own program at the time.

AEC consists of the following components: (a) community building, (b) Asian reality, (c) ecumenical vision and (d) leadership training. Community building activities were to foster self-disclosure through sharing of faith journey, exercises in mixing and analysis of participant' responses, and leadership in small groups for the daily worship and Bible studies.

Immersion in Indian realities included visits to: Mother Teresa House and a home for abandoned children; two Hindu temples – Ram Krishna Mission and the temple of the goddess Kali; Science City; and Sona Gachi, a red light district in Kolkata. On Sunday the group worshipped with local churches in Kolkata, which included CNI and Armenian Catholic Orthodox Church, and visited the Serampore College.

Analysis of Asian realities followed a feminist critique of the domination systems – e.g. Global Capitalism and Terrorism; Sexism and Gender Injustice; Racism, Ethnocentrism, Casteism; Religious Chauvinism; and Ecological Injustice and Ecocide.

Towards the close of the AEC, participants worked on their respective action plans – describing what they intended to do with their learning when they went home. The program culminated with a closing worship, with Bishop Ashok Biswas of the CNI Kolkata Diocese giving the inspirational message and giving the certificates of attendance.

Many participants have continued to be in touch after the program and some of them have mentioned what they have done so far to share what they learned from AEC – e.g. through the chapel service at the seminary; with their classmates and colleagues, etc.

Some resource persons commented that many CCA programs have been in the South and involving mostly people from the South. They were happy to see the AEC being done in Kolkata. Holding AEC in Kolkata enabled us to tap the resources from Bishop's College and Serampore College, two reputable seminaries in India.

Signs of ownership of AEC came in the following: (a) NCC Australia and Hong Kong CC covered the airfares of their two participants; (b) two participants from Sri Lanka had their domestic transport expenses covered by the Theological College of Lanka; (c) BTE-SSC SCEPTRE gave us a discount amounting to about USD500 for the use of their center; (d) indigenous bags and pens made from bamboo were donated by the Ao Women's Association in North East India.

## **K. Liturgical Workshop for the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Dates: 2 - 7 November 2009

### **Objective**

To meet as the worship planning team of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, visit the assembly venue, share, improve and finalize drafts of the daily worship.

Hope S. Antone, coordinator for worship and Bible studies at the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the CCA, organized a liturgical workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 2-7 November. The group consists of Aileen Khoo and Dennis Raj (Malaysia), Arlene McShane (Sri Lanka), Rommel Linatoc (Philippines), Christina Mandang (Indonesia) and Hope Antone (CCA). Vuluk from Taiwan could not make it to the meeting. The group includes musical and visual artists, drama artist and those engaged in creative liturgies in CCA member churches. During the workshop the flow of the worship was carefully considered, building up on each day, and enriched with the use of symbols and rituals.

The Rev. Dr. Hermen Shastri, General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Malaysia, welcomed the group and shared some worship tips and experiences from previous ecumenical gatherings in Malaysia. He and Mr. Anthony Row, CCA General Committee

and Executive Committee member from Malaysia, took the group to the assembly venue and also to another possible venue for the pre-assembly forums.

## **L. Visit to Churches in Vietnam (together with MEPP)**

**Venue:** Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

**Dates:** 25 - 28 November 2009

### **Objectives**

- 1) To renew contacts with theological alumni who have been related to CCA;
- 2) To meet with leaders of some churches and Bible schools in Vietnam to learn about their ministries and to find ways of cooperation in the future.

As part of its Ecumenical Theological Education work, CCA-FMU conducts theological training program of educators and pastors in countries with young CCA member churches and councils or with potential members. While we have done a series of 4 trainings in Cambodia and one in Nepal, it was not possible for us to do something for Laos and Vietnam. Hence, a visit was made to Vietnam by Janejinda Pawadee, coordinator of MEPP, and Hope S. Antone of CCA-FMU to meet with key persons and to know and understand the situation. Pastor Le Ngoc Trai, a graduate of McGilvary College of Divinity, arranged the visits with various key persons of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South).

Visited were the following:

(1) Pastor Peter Son (Nguyen Kim Son), a graduate of McGilvary College of Divinity in Payap University and from a Bible School in Singapore; he pastors a free house church in HCMC; conducts pastors' training and teaches at the Presbyterian Seminary; (2) MCD Alumni including Thien Lan, Dan Tam, Sam Ngoc Ngyuyen, Lanh Nguyen Tuong, Quang Long Tran, Le Ngoc Trai, Timothy Phuc who shared about their ministries, vision and challenges in Vietnam; (3) Pastor Phuc-Tram Lam, graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, now working as assistant pastor at the biggest CMA church in HCMC, taking care of youth ministry and the outreach program; (4) Rev. Quy Cao Le, General Secretary, Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South), who informed us that the CMA in Vietnam would celebrate its centennial anniversary in 2011. He shared a short history of the church in the South and North Vietnam especially following the division of the country in 1954. The ECV Bible School opened again in 2003 – with 2 batches having graduated; (5) Pastor Hieu Nguyen of Canaan Church, secretary of the Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship, and Rev. Ho Tan Khoa, chairman of the VEF, who shared about their work. VEF is now 10 years old, with 27 denominations and they regularly meet for fellowship; they have a team for social activities, which include the Samaritan Purse, Operation Christmas, trauma and healing of women victims of violence, Campus Crusade for Christ program which extends from the universities to young adults who are already working; (6) Two Christian women who are doing special ministries – one is Dr. Hang, an obstetrician/gynecologist who has expanded her clinic to taking care of single mothers and their often abandoned children; the other is Ms. Vu Thi Thu Thao, principal of a kindergarten which also serves as a day care center for children.

There is a new openness on the part of the government to Christianity but because of the Vietnamese Christians' experience of persecution in the past, they are very cautious and careful about their ministry – not only for possible “persecution” but also for possible rejection by other Christian groups.

# JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

*Mr Carlos Ocampo, Joint Executive Secretary  
Rev. Freddy de Alwis, Joint Executive Secretary*

## **A. Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum/World Council of Churches Collaborative Advocacy Meeting**

Venue: Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, West Bank

Date: 12 - 15 June 2009

The goal of the Meeting is to share current advocacy strategies and plans, aiming at designing and implementing a common global ecumenical advocacy plan, thus creating new synergies and identifying new possibilities for cooperation and common action ecumenically.

### **Objectives:**

- 1) To advance the work on global ecumenical advocacy, as outlined in the Amman Call and the strategic plan of action, by convening a meeting of ecumenical “practitioners” in government, intergovernmental and UN advocacy on Israel Palestine.
- 2) To coordinate and where possible join efforts in advocacy work on all levels (national governmental, inter-governmental, regional and international levels).
- 3) To find a coordinated mechanism within PIEF to integrate already existing and involve new churches and ecumenical organizations in advocacy actions toward a just peace in the Middle East.
- 4) To design a “Common Ecumenical Global Advocacy Plan”.

### **Anticipated outcomes:**

- 1) A review of the different advocacy inputs, plans and strategies from the WCC partners, which are related to Israel Palestine;
- 2) A common plan of actions is elaborated in agreement with the PIEF core group members present in the meeting, and tasks are divided among participants;
- 3) The plan of actions is presented to the PIEF general meeting in Amman in September 2009 and the platform of participants is expanding.

### **Participants invited**

Close to forty participants invited include the PIEF Core Group members, Christian-related organizations, APRODEV, churches’ specialized ministries, advocacy officers of regional ecumenical organizations, the Carter Centre, Kairos Project USA and WCC staff.

Participants broke up into three work groups tasked with contributing to the Common Plan of Action: 1) ending government support; 2) ending public support; 3) ending theological and church support for the Israeli settlements.

### **Significant agreement on issues**

Significant issues discussed by the Forum include a campaign to stop buying products produced in the Israeli settlements, the impact of settlements in East Jerusalem, theological and biblical reflections on a Kairos process and land, the setting up of an ethical tourism network, and a live-link service “Hands across Jerusalem”.

His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, immediate past Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Bishop Mounib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land welcomed the members of the Forum and led biblical reflections.

Bishop Munib Younan led the first biblical reflection on Luke 16 on the rich man and Lazarus. There is injustice in the world between rich and poor. The Israeli army decides which foods and how many calories the residents of Gaza should receive. Occupation is a continuation of colonization; the rich world has an agenda to keep the poor in the world poor. The work for justice should begin now; Jesus does not want us to wait for justice in the afterlife. Obama’s speech gives us optimism, but we need to press forward in our work, to create new facts on the ground. Advocacy is needed, but should be directed towards political leaders who continue to justify occupation. Occupation has reduced the Christian population of the land to less than one percent. The church in Palestine has been accused of being involved in politics. But to live fully spiritually as a Christian means to address issues of human rights and justice. The Triune God loves justice, and calls Christians to work for justice.

The second bible study was led by Latin Patriarch Archbishop Michel Sabbah on Luke 19:41, Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem were refusing to listen to the word of God. Jesus wept over the coming destruction of the city. Jerusalem should be a city that brings peace to the world. Today there is no peace emanating from this land. It is up to the Israelis to make Jerusalem a source of universal peace and salvation. For Jews to receive the promise of God, they must fulfill the commandments of God. The land was given to create a space for worship. God sees and allows all the current suffering. We believe that God is good, and his goodness will prevail in this land. It is our duty to try to bring truth and peace to this land. We patiently hope in God.

### **Update on the situation in Palestine**

Whilst the Palestinian leadership is feeling positive following election of Obama and his speech in Cairo, the internal divisive situation of Palestinians is a concern. The situation on the ground, especially in Jerusalem, grows increasingly dire. Israel controls 40 percent of the West Bank. A total freeze of all settlement building is needed. The fight today is over Jerusalem, with 50 percent of all Israeli settlers in the Jerusalem area. Only 12,000 (or less) Palestinian Christians remain in East Jerusalem. International advocacy needs to be joined with practical actions that will assist Palestinian Christians to remain in their homes.

Obama spoke of the need to freeze settlements, without addressing the legality of the settlements or the root causes of the conflict. The split between Hamas and Fatah is identified as a barrier to peace in the region, but the Gaza Strip and West Bank have always been under different leaderships. The only long term solution is two states for the Palestinians. Our advocacy work should involve educating others about the root causes of the conflict. Palestinians also need to prepare ourselves for the long term struggle, including non-violent resistance.

Representatives from the Forum also met with former US President Jimmy Carter, who emphasized the role of churches in advancing the peace process and formulated the three basic premises of the two-state proposal:

1. Israel's right to exist and to live in peace must be recognized by Palestinian and all other neighbors;
2. The killing of innocent people by suicide bombs or other acts of violence cannot be condoned; and
3. Palestinians must live in peace and dignity, and permanent Israeli settlements on their land are a major obstacle to this goal.

The participants in the PIEF gathering made the following commitments:

- 1) We agree to support the WCC's call for PIEF participants to work collaboratively towards the aim of ending economic complicity with settlement activity in Palestinian occupied territories including East Jerusalem, as part of the overall goal of ending the occupation.
- 2) We agree to take specific actions, in line with our own organizational priorities, towards the realization of this aim, and to communicate and collaborate in action with other PIEF participants to the fullest extent possible in order to strengthen the impact of our work.

CCA has expressed its support to the PIEF by committing the following:

- Circulate all advocacy/campaign materials to CCA member churches and Councils in Asia;
- Actively promote and recruit EAPPI accompaniers from Asian churches;
- CCA representation in PIEF and other ecumenical initiatives in the Middle East;
- Promote and collaborate on theology of land and theological reflections on the occupation of Palestine, through the Middle East Council of Churches and the Sabeel Centre for Liberation Theology.
- Support boycott of settlement products;

The Advocacy Meeting in Beit Jala was hosted by the Jerusalem Inter-Church Committee's Mr. Yousef Daher, along with Mr. Michel Nseir, and the Rev. Jonathan Frerichs from the WCC. His Beatitude, Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Lutheran Bishop Munib Younan both led biblical reflections on the occupation of Palestine. The Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, the newly elected WCC General Secretary chaired the plenary sessions.

The Meeting included a visit to Hebron, where the participants went through an Israeli checkpoint, a mosque, and witnessed the negative impact of the continuing occupation on the Palestinian population.

Charlie Ocampo, Executive Secretary for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service represented CCA and the Asian churches in the meeting.

## **B. Meeting and Hand-Over of the Inter-Faith Cooperation Forum (ICF)**

Venue: Kowloon, Hong Kong

Dates: 13 – 14 July 2009

A meeting was held in Hong Kong, hosted by the Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs to discuss the plans and programs of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) and to hand-over project holder role from CCA to APAY, represented by Mr. Kohei Yamada.

In particular, the discussion centred on the developments with the School of Peace and the responsibilities of the project holder, including reporting, signing agreements, bookkeeping, communication and audit between ICF and EED.

The CCA contingent composed of Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, Charlie Ocampo and Beng Seng Chan also met with Hong Kong-based regional NGOs on collaboration on common issues and programs. One particular matter discussed is the continued detention of Mr. Santha Fernando in Sri Lanka.

## **C. Final Planning Meeting on the Tozanso 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Consultation**

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Dates: 20 - 21 August 2009

The Organizing Secretariat for the Tozanso 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Consultation composed of Matthews George Chunakara and Patricia Bruschweiler, WCC, and Charlie Ocampo and Rosanna Chan, CCA met at the WCC in Geneva on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> August to finalize the Program and identify presenters and bible study leaders, and moderators for the Consultation. Dr. Joesoop Keum, WCC Secretary on Mission and Evangelism joined the team.

Technical details including budget, documentation and accommodation of participants from North and South Korea and international ecumenical partners were also finalized.

## **D. Review of Human Rights and Peace Courses**

Venue: Jakarta, Indonesia and Manila, Philippines

Date: 11 - 18 September 2009

The main purpose of the visit is to review and impact on trainees of the Human Rights and Peace Building curricula to assist in planning for the Courses in 2010.

The first stop was Jakarta, Indonesia, where a meeting with PGI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia), in particular, the Rev. Dr. Yewangoe, Moderator. The meeting with Dr. Yewangoe was an update on CCA and its programs as well as getting informed about PGI mission priority areas, particularly in the area of human rights, international affairs, and development.

A meeting with Mr. Tony Waworuntu, immediate past Executive Secretary for JID was held focused on the Human Rights and Peace Courses, lessons learned, contact with resource persons and the sub-regional approach to the Courses.

The meeting in the Philippines was organized by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) in the form of a focus group discussion on the impact and insights from both the Human Rights and Peace Courses, in an attempt to evaluate the curricula and introduce necessary changes. There were 15 former trainees in attendance. A report on the Course Evaluation is being finalized, which will guide the future Courses.

Charlie Ocampo also met with the Rev. Fr. Rex Reyes, NCCP General Secretary, Ms Carmencita Karagdag, *Peace for Life* Coordinator on matters related to CCA programs and in preparation for the next CCA Assembly in Kuala Lumpur in April 2010. There were also meetings with Bishop Eliezer Pascua, UCCP General Secretary regarding the member church participation in CCA.

## **E. The Gulf Church, Migrant Workers, and Muslim Society: A Conference of Gulf Leaders**

Venue: Bahrain

Date: 14 - 16 September 2009

### **Background**

The consultation addressed two central questions. First, if we need to work together to effect change in the ministry, what is our shared sense of mission as churches in the Gulf region (GCC or Gulf Council of Churches)? Second, with all that needs to be done to help low-income expatriates in the GCC, what are our top priorities for our work together?

It is important to note several items about GCC's shared sense of mission. Though it is a 'shared sense' of mission, it is not intended to represent the entire mission of the Church. Further, we discussed mission in relation to the Gulf context. More specifically, we asked the question, how would we express our shared mission to local society? GCC believes

that it will not have a voice in society unless mission is expressed in ways that are sensitive to the context and can be understood by both Christians and Muslims.

However, GCC recognizes that unless it develops a shared voice and common commitment to cooperation, GCC will not be able to be faithful to the mission to which we have all been called. Therefore the way forward will require an intentional effort to build relations of trust and a network of people who have a shared sense of mission.

**Objectives:**

- 1) To serve the spiritual and social needs of the Christian community in the GCC, which includes the shared vocations of pastoral care, chaplaincy, education, and meeting the physical needs of the community;
- 2) To build relationships amongst Christians and to make better the understanding of what it means to be Christians in a Muslim society;
- 3) To better the understanding between Christians and Muslims so that we can work together for the good of society;
- 4) To support local efforts to uphold the human dignity of all people; and
- 5) To respond to human needs in loving service.

In order to accomplish the objectives the following code of conduct was proposed to accomplish GCC's mission:

- To conduct ourselves in transparency (no hidden agenda)
- To understand and respect our cultural and religious differences
- To conduct ourselves with integrity in all our relationships, within our faith and between faiths.
- To work together for the interests of the Christian community and the common good of all.

**Reflection**

Apart from the representatives from WCC, CCA and Asian Migrant Forum (AMF), all other participants were from Churches in the Gulf region, who are mainly expatriate communities who believe the needs of migrant workers are a primary concern. Individual crisis are usually addressed through local congregations on a case-by-case basis with little or no attention given to the larger issues surrounding the problems or rights of these workers. Further, there is little ecumenical and no interfaith collaboration to address their needs or the rights of the migrants.

According to the participants from the Gulf region, spiritual needs come first. Some of them were pastoring without proper legal status, may be the reason that they are not ecumenical and are in fear to get involve with human rights issues of the migrants. They just confine themselves to spiritual concerns and evangelization. One Roman Catholic Bishop raised his concern over some of our evangelical friends proselytizing Christians from Catholic and other mainline churches.

## **F. Consultation on Mission and Development: In Search of Theological Interpretations of Disaster Situations**

Venue: Yangon, Myanmar

Dates: 7 – 8 October 2009

### **Background**

On May 2, 2008 Cyclone Nargis struck the coast of Myanmar with devastating effects for the Irrawaddy and Yangon Divisions. Of the 7.3 Million people living in affected townships it is estimated that 2.4 million people were severely affected by the Cyclone. It caused devastating loss of life with an estimated 140,000 people killed or missing. The lives and livelihood of survivors were also severely disrupted with up to 800,000 people displaced, 450,000 houses destroyed and substantial losses of food stocks, equipment, infrastructure and paddy.

In an area like Myanmar where poverty is high and daily survival is a major task for many people, and where people are traumatized daily, the question of an appropriate understanding of Mission and Mission strategy is quite obvious. How do we, as Christians react to a situation like this and how could be the Church become the good news?

The evaluation workshop brought together pastors, field workers, to share their experiences on how they reacted as Christians during and after the disaster. The outcome of this evaluation workshop will be published as part of the “Nargis Forum Publications” as a contribution and an educational resource for theological reflections in difficult situations.

## **G. Tozanso 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Consultation**

Venue: Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong

Date: 21 - 23 October 2009

One hundred thirty-seven church leaders, academics, and activists participated in an International Consultation on Peace, Reconciliation and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, which was held in Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong on 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 on the theme, “Towards an Ecumenical Vision Beyond Tozanso”.

### **Objectives of the Consultation:**

- 1) To contribute to the reflections on “moving forward” with an ecumenical agenda for peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula beyond the Tozanso Process;
- 2) To explore the ways to increase networking and partnership between Korean churches and international ecumenical actors in efforts at envisioning peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula;
- 3) To analyze the present geopolitical trends and developments in the Korean Peninsula;

- 4) To find ways to engage, equip and strengthen churches in North and South Korea to share in the mutual exchange of ideas and in the promotion of confidence building measures;
- 5) To consider ways and means of coordinating global advocacy that could lead to an easing of tensions in Northeast Asia;
- 6) To encourage and support member churches of the WCC, CCA in consultation with churches in Korea, to reflect together on peace, to engage in common prayer and to thereby reinforce their advocacy efforts to establish a just and lasting peace;
- 7) To find ways and means to encourage and support greater cultural and economic cooperation between Northern Korea and other countries;
- 8) To work for advocacy towards the lifting of actions against North Korea; and
- 9) To deliberate on the de-nuclearisation on the peninsula and to address the security concerns of the countries in the region.

Speakers, facilitators and staff of the Consultation include:

Opening Address –	Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, WCC General Secretary
Main Presentation	Rev. Dr. Ninan Koshy, India
Resource Persons:	Prof. Choi Young Sil, South Korea Dr. Shulong Chu, People’s Republic of China Ms Maaïke Okano-Heijmans, Netherlands Prof. Alexandr N. Fedorokvsky, Russia Prof. Peter VanNess Dr. Leonid Petrov, Australia
Bible Study Leaders	Prof. Choi Young Sil, South Korea Dr. Wai Ching Wong, HongKong
Staff	Matthews George Chunakara, WCC Charlie Ocampo, CCA Liza Lamis, CCA

### **Reflections**

Most significant insight from participants is the priority focus of reunification being the two Koreas, the North and the South. The subject of reunification is the Korean people.

Internationally and between North and South need to be more sensitive to name-calling.

The 6-party talk is a legacy of colonialism in the Korean Peninsula, with some countries needing to address their guilt of colonization.

North Korean proposals: 1) need to put in practice June 15 and October 4 communiqués; 2) to withdraw all hostile US policies on North Korea; 3) Unification should be realized without foreign intervention and to help strengthen North and South solidarity; 4) Confederation preferred over federation; 5) North Korea will keep nuclear weapons as long as the US continues its aggressive military policy on North Korea.

The Consultation is an attempt to move forward beyond the Tozanso ecumenical process and to understand the geopolitics involved in the reunification process, particularly the

role of the US, the nature and prospects of the 6-party talks, and the perspectives of both North and South Korea.

The Consultation also brought together ecumenical leaders past and present and emphasized the need for stronger youth and women participation in the reunification process to make it more participatory.

The ecumenical agenda on reunification need to be informed by developments in North and South Korea, the US foreign policy, and the global implications of reunification in the Korean Peninsula.

A statement of commitment and action was passed by the Consultation entitled: “The Tsuen Wan Declaration”, which is available at the CCA web site – [www.cca.org.hk](http://www.cca.org.hk)

## **H. Asian Ecumenical Consultation on Climate Change: Church’ Adaptation on Climate Change**

### **“Reinvigorating Climate Justice, Building Church”**

Venue: Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia

Dates: 09 – 13 November 2009

#### **Executive Summary**

A four-day second international conference on Ecology, Economy and Accountability was held in Salatiga, Indonesia on November 09 - 13, 2009 with the participation of ecumenical Church leaders, partners and NGO workers. Twenty-seven delegates came from thirteen Asian countries and stimulated the interactions, Bible studies, workshops, country presentations, exposure visits, and drafted an Action Plan.

#### **Objectives**

The conference gathered leaders from churches, national councils and communities, ecologists and environmental activists to explore and decide on the course of action to build up local campaigns and a coalition for Asian churches. The campaign plan and coalition will help pressure participants’ respective governments and authorities to conduct awareness building and advocacy programs at national and regional levels, and also to form a work group to cooperate with JID.

#### **Outcomes**

The conference evaluation revealed a generally high level of satisfaction among participants, although the benefits of some sessions were reduced by the limited time allocation. Maximum benefits from the conference will only be attained through the commitment of participants to refine and implement the Action Plans drawn up on the final day. CCA’s JID would assist in this process.

## **I. Coalition Building and Empowering Migrant Workers' Support Groups in Sri Lanka**

Venue: Colombo

Date: 20 - 21 November 2009

### **Background**

Sri Lanka is a migrant workers sending country with nearly ten percent of its population serving in various receiving countries in the world. These migrant workers consist of documented as well as undocumented workers. The statistics are not confirmed as the Sri Lankan bureau for foreign employment collects data only from government agencies while many are using unofficial channels to work abroad.

Migrants from Sri Lanka consist of skilled, unskilled, professionals, and undocumented workers. The smallest are the professional workers and the largest are the unskilled workers. Unskilled workers experience large scale harassment and bear poor working conditions. A large number of undocumented workers go through numerous hardships due to the illegal nature of their recruitment.

Every year there are at least 150 persons being sent back home and in many cases they don't get due compensation. The state doesn't give support enough to get workers' dead bodies back home while making as much effort to avoid responsibility. Recruitment agencies often escape without any responsibility. Migrant workers and their families are on their own and if the state helps it is a bonus. The state agency charges a minimum of Rs.5000 from each migrant worker that goes insurance agencies in billions that the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (**SLFEB**) contracted. The insurance is limited and does not clearly state why they charge Rs.5000 while compensation is in bare minimum.

Migrant workers and their families face many issues and rights violations which need urgent remedies. Majority of migrant workers are women working under very poor working conditions and suffer abuses. Many reported cases are unattended due to poor attention given by the state and weak involvement of civil society.

The government recently developed a National Labour Migration Policy, which intends to protect human rights of female migrant workers but without any legal teeth. The state mechanism is more interested in taxes and in regulating recruitment agencies instead of safe-guarding migrants' rights and welfare.

There are organization working with migrant workers but many of them are looking into the welfare of migrant workers, with poor attention to rights and advocacy. Therefore there is a great need to empower those who work with migrant workers through rights-based approach ministry. Further, there is also a need for coalition-building among migrant workers and their advocates in different sectors like the faith, NGO and media communities.

### **Objectives**

The consultation aimed to introduce human rights-based approach to doing migrant advocacy work; to build coalitions for information sharing and networking among

likeminded groups; and to link Sri Lankan migrant workers organizations with international groups. There was also sharing of feedback from the Global Gathering of GFMD (Global Forum on Migration and Development), and analysis of the updated trends in Sri Lankan migration work situation.

Workshop themes included Migrants Rights are Human Rights, positive developments in other countries in Asia on Migrants Rights and Reintegration, using human rights-based approach in Migrant Development, Sri Lankan migration trends, and recruiting agents' perspectives.

### **Outcomes**

A Migrants Rights Coalition by Interfaith Partners, a Migrant Rights Coalition by Media, and a Migrant Workers Trade Union were formed as a result of the consultation.

### **Some issues arising at the consultation**

Whenever a person leaves for foreign employment the government removes that person from its social welfare system known as Samurdiya, and will not reinstate him/her after return to the country.

The SLBFE offers financial grants for scholarship support to children of migrant workers. However, this scheme is not popularized and properly facilitated, thus serving only as government propaganda.

## **J. Global Ecumenical Network on Migration and European Churches' Response to Migration Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe**

Venue: Budapest, Hungary

Date: 24 – 28 November 2009

### **Background**

Migration is not merely a reality today but a challenge to the whole world. Research indicates that billions of people are crossing borders today for many reasons. People are forced to migrate because of economic, social and political reasons, while there are others who voluntarily migrate in search of better prospects. In life and the countries they move into accept them as they are professionals. It is in this light that Asian, African and Latin American ecumenical Councils need to reflect together with the European Churches on the challenge and opportunity which migration poses doing mission which is not divorced from the ministries of justice, peace and compassion. The national, regional and global factors integral to the whole issue of migration or movement of people either voluntarily or forced should also be considered.

### **Some theological reflections**

Rev. Freddy de Alwis, representing CCA-JID was just happy to be there and to hear about the ministry of the churches in Europe to those who have come to their countries looking for shelter, security, employment and better living conditions for them as well as

for their children. Some fled violent situations and wars to save their lives. It is these vulnerable people we lump together into the category of migrants. More than 75% percent of these people fall into the category of forced migrants.

Voluntary migration is nothing new in the history of humankind and we could see such movements of people right through history. To such people borders of rich and powerful nations are not closed but open and they feel welcomed. Concern is for those who flee their countries to escape hunger, malnutrition, and death, effects of climate change, violence, war, sexual exploitation and human rights violations. They leave their families, friends and their own countries not because they are eager to leave but because conditions prevailing in their countries force them to. To such people borders in affluent and countries where there is security and protection are often closed. Even if they manage to cross the borders and enter these countries, they end up either spending long years in prison or refugee camps where living conditions are inhuman and horrible. The cries of these people who languish in camps are almost the cries of the psalmist who lamented, "How long, O Lord? Wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide any face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my soul,.." (Psalm 13:1; 35:17).

One has to acknowledge and commend the ministry of the European churches to migrants at their borders. It is a caring, sharing, healing and a ministry of being a Good Samaritan. These churches are also driven by their own Christian conviction informed by the words of Jesus who said "I was hungry, naked imprisoned..." Mt. 25:31f). While the caring ministry of the churches in Europe is appreciated, it is also important to engage these churches in a deeper dialogue by raising some critical questions such as: Why are there migrants and why do they leave their countries and who should take responsibility for their forced migration?

The dominant view which prevails in many of the receiving countries is that migrants want to come to their countries because they want to enjoy the privileges of affluent countries. The saying is that they are looking for "greener pastures". Because of this pre-conceived notion there is so much prejudice and resentment against the stranger at the boarder. Often, the migrant is also a person of different colour, culture and class. Therefore, the discrimination and rejection of the migrants are also rooted on issues of race, colour and class prejudice combined with fear. Although we are well versed with the saying of Paul which says, " There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28), we find it difficult to live this out in our daily lives. The stranger and the other, who is a person of colour is always a problem to deal with for many of us, and hard to live by as a Christian spirituality. When it comes to the issue of migration we see these deep seated prejudices and how the Church identifies itself with the dominant cultures which go against the spirit and the mind of Christ.

If the churches in receiving countries are to comprehend the issue of migration at its depth, then they will have to listen and dialogue with critical voices, especially the voices which are raised within churches and civil society groups in sending countries. The sending countries must accompany the churches in receiving countries by telling their

story of suffering and crucifixion. In other words, to listen to the critical voices from sending countries is to listen to migrant stories of suffering, pain and crucifixion.

The story of most of the sending countries is a story of colonization, divide-and-rule conquests, plunder and rape of their cultures, religion, wealth and resources for more than 500 hundred years. Furthermore, with neo-colonialism and the rise of globalization, collaboration has taken place between the rich and powerful minorities within receiving countries with the rich and powerful within colonizing and powerful nations. Those who oppose these alliances are branded as enemies of the state, communists or terrorists. Such branding gives powers-that-be the license to kill, imprison or banish who question or oppose the status quo. They end up at the borders of other countries and become migrants themselves.

Those in affluent countries should realize that they are affluent not because God is biased towards them but because over the centuries they have raped and reaped the resources of the sending countries. They have become rich by making others poor. The time has come for these countries to repent and say and live the words of Zacchaeus “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold” (Luke 9: 8). Repentance can come only when the rich and the powerful realize that for the world to be just and fair, they must go beyond charity and practice justice. Those who are at the borders are not beggars seeking pity and mercy but are crying for justice and reparation. They are asking them to return all what was stolen from.

Some churches and groups in receiving countries see migrants in their midst as an opportunity to evangelize or to proselytize, which is a wrong understanding of mission and evangelism. Rather than trying to evangelize the other in one’s midst, is it incumbent to recognize the broken and wounded Christ amongst migrants. Then the response becomes not evangelism or conversion but witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a community that accompanies victims and advocates in their just cause. In that accompaniment they will be able to see the face of Jesus as the disciples saw the face of Jesus when he accompanied them on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13f). Can the Jesus community in these affluent nations be like the one who accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus? It is this kind of doing mission and evangelism which is needed today.

One should not think that the one at the door has come only to take away things, but also to share many gifts and cultures. Without them one’s culture will be dull and economics stagnant. The migrant is not merely a recipient but also a giver. It is acknowledged that in 2008 alone Australia managed to earn almost 4 billion Australian dollars from the migrants who are in their midst. Therefore, the churches in all nations have a golden opportunity to prophecy to the nations to look at the issue of migration with new insights and humane spirit for the healing and reconciling of individuals, communities and nations.

## **K. Christians Responding to Globalization: Asian Methodist Youth Network Assembly**

Venue: Siem Reap, Cambodia

Date: 29 November 2009

On invitation by the organizers of the Asian Methodist Youth Network, Charlie Ocampo presented a biblical/theological reflection on the impact of globalization on Christian young people in Asia. The Meeting was attended by more than 50 Methodist youth leaders in the Asia region and met in Siem Reap to provide active support to the Methodist youth in Cambodia.

The presentation identified the negative impact of globalization in the economic, political and social aspects in the lives of Asian young people.

The biblical reflection focused on the Parable of Workers in the Vineyard found in Matthew 20:1-16. In this parable the workers all received the same amount of pay, even though some of them worked much longer than the others. Do we think this was fair? What do we suppose Jesus wanted us to understand about the kingdom of heaven from this parable?

In today's industrial context, more particularly before the current global recession, workers in many developed countries would receive more protection against what seemed like a violation of work rights, including getting equal pay for equal work. This labor practice rewards workers for the amount and nature of work done and the amount of time spent in getting the work done.

For many workers, getting remunerated in compensation for the nature of the job accomplished and the amount of time spent in doing the job spells out the basic law governing the workplace. In fact when jobs are hard to find and there are fewer places for people who need to join the workforce, this labor practice rewards those who are luckier than others. Otherwise, those who are underpaid and shortchanged would normally cry foul of labor exploitation.

To the grumblers in the parable, the landlord said: "Don't I have the right to do what I want with my money? Or are you envious because I am generous?" The landowner reminds us that we are living and operating under God's grace.

The youth leaders spent time talking to Cambodians who are struggling to survive the current economic crisis, particularly the unemployed, the HIV positive and the street dwellers, which helped them to understand the context of poverty in Cambodia.

## **L. AGAPE Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Asia and the Pacific**

Venue: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Date: 1 - 6 November 2009

This regional church consultation is a continuation of the Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE) process which began at the WCC General Assembly held in Harare in 1998, culminating in the AGAPE Call presented at the General Assembly in Porto Alegre in 2006. From Harare to Porto Alegre, it remains clear that the world has hardly addressed the issue of socio-economic justice in any meaningful manner. Poverty and inequality have intensified, especially in the current global economic and financial downturn, with destructive consequences for peace and for the environment.

Following a day of exposure, 1<sup>st</sup> November, to the reality of poverty and its impact in Thailand, three sectional hearings – by Women, Youth and Leaders of Indigenous Communities were held simultaneously on 2-4<sup>th</sup> November, with each Hearing issuing a Statement on the theme.

A plenary discussion by panelists, the Rev. Dr. Park Seong Won, Ms Edna Orteza, and Dr. Gabriele Dietrich was made on the theme, highlighting the negative impact of wealth creation and accumulation on the lives of the poor in many countries in Asia. A panel from banking sector and the social development department of the Chiang Mai Government made their case in terms of efforts to alleviate poverty through social development and access to financial institutions. Also presented before plenary were the outcomes of a Study on Poverty, Wealth Creation and Ecology conducted in the Philippines, Bangladesh and Cambodia by IBON Foundation in the Philippines, introducing among others the concept of the greed line.

### **The Chiang Mai Declaration**

Because Asia's system of wealth creation is centered on the global economy, our region has been heavily battered by the current global financial and economic crisis caused by heightened "financialisation" (or the de-linking of finance from the real economy). Factory workers in export processing zones have been retrenched in large numbers. The monies sent home by our migrant workers are dwindling. Many of our governments are too indebted and cash-strapped to respond with even the barest of social protection.

In the pursuit of super-profits, the neoliberal system of wealth creation and accumulation in Asia has not only produced poverty, it has generated tremendous social and ecological debts – debts owed to Mother Earth; to the impoverished, Indigenous Peoples and women who bear a disproportionate burden of adjustment to drastic changes in the climate and the rest of ecology; and to young people and forthcoming generations whose very futures are endangered by dominant production and consumption patterns that fail to respect the regenerative limits of our planet. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: forced ecological migrants as sea waters rise and threaten to inundate Oceania islands and archipelagic nations like Bangladesh; Indigenous Peoples dispossessed of their ancestral lands by mining corporations and mega-dam projects, resulting in the ethnocide of

indigenous communities and cultures; villages facing famine and water shortages across the region...

In Asia and Oceania as in elsewhere, violence has often been used by the economically and politically-powerful in securing the planet's "natural resources". Imperialist terror and greed desecrate both Mother Earth and women's bodies. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: church people gunned down in the Philippines for defending ecology and farmers' and workers' rights; communities dying from toxic pollutants in military bases; intensified violence against women in their own homes in times of economic hardship and in militarized zones.

### **We draw on our faith values**

Genuine faith and spirituality entail action. We assert that the multiple crises we confront today urgently demand radical and collective responses, not only from Asia and Oceania, but also from the worldwide faith community. United in God's love, *we can and must* begin to construct flourishing and harmonious economies where:

- all participate and have a voice in the decisions that impact on their lives;
- people's basic needs are provided for through just livelihoods;
- social reproduction and the care work done predominantly by women are supported and valued; and
- air, water, land and energy sources that are necessary to sustain life are protected and preserved.

In short, we can and must shape Economies of Life and Economies for Life.

As Christians, we are committed to accompany member churches of the WCC and PCC in Oceania in:

1. Developing local, national, sub-regional, regional and international plans to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of forced climate migrants;
2. Promoting research on prospective resettlement plans and on instruments such as ecological audits to ascertain the costs of resettlement; and
3. Developing the framework for a new Convention or Protocol on Resettlement to cater for forced ecological migrants; and
4. Commissioning studies on the links between poverty, wealth and ecology in the Oceania region with a view to presenting the findings in the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches in 2012
  - a. Allocate more resources to WCC's programmes on ecological debt, climate change, and water in order to address the incredibly pressing challenges in these areas;
  - b. Empower women, Indigenous Peoples and youth – who bring a wealth of wisdom and energy – to participate fully in policy – and decision-making in church processes, especially in the urgent work on economic and ecological justice;
  - c. Conduct ecological debt and gender audits to account for the social and ecological costs of church initiatives and activities;
  - d. Strengthen and provide a platform for Indigenous Peoples with adequate financing and resourcing of the existing Indigenous Peoples' desk at the

- WCC and immediately convene a working group to develop the terms of reference and scope for an Indigenous Peoples' Christian Action Forum;
- e. Participate in alternative lifestyle cultures that reject consumerist corporate cultures through regenerating common public spaces of dissent and creation, and engaging in public awareness and education especially among young people; and
  - f. Organize a dialogue on poverty, wealth and ecology with multi-faith communities to bring meaningful solidarity.

## **M. Meeting of the United Church of Canada General Council Executive**

Venue: Toronto, Canada

Date: 13 - 16 November 2009

On the invitation by the United Church of Canada, Charlie Ocampo joined the UCC General Council Executive, representing the global partners. He joined 65 other GCE members for the first meeting of the 2009 to 2012 triennium.

Charlie Ocampo addressed the second session on 13<sup>th</sup> November, presenting the vision and programs of the Christian Conference of Asia and identified possible areas of ecumenical cooperation and partnership.

The role of the GCE is to review and follow up actions by the UCC General Council, which met in assembly last August 2009 in Kelowna, British Columbia. The agenda of the Meeting include – accountability reports from the Moderator, Ms. Mardi Tindal and the General Secretary, Ms Nora Sanders, a briefing on responsibilities of GCE members, workflow priorities, report of the Finance Commission, strengthening mission relationships, alternative church court structures, candidacy pathway report, employment insurance and a report on the millennium development goals (MDGs).

The Meeting also issued a statement expressing pastoral concerns around the holding of the 2012 Vancouver Olympics.

## **N. South Asia Working Group Meeting**

Venue: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Date: 22 - 23 November 2009

Twenty church leaders in South Asia met at the Pegasus Hotel in Colombo to follow up on the recommendations coming from a South Asian Conference of Peace, Security and Development (Bangalore, India) held last April 2009.

The Group adopted the name, "South Asia Ecumenical Forum on Peace and Security". A Terms of Reference will be prepared covering 2010 to 2012 on memberships, participation, information sharing, and a thematic focus for every meeting. The YMCA, YWCA, WSCF and global ecumenical partners will be invited to join the Forum.

Themes for action responses by the Forum will include: 1) religious extremism; 2) militarization and the arms race; 3) justice and poverty; 4) human rights and the rule of law.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Mr. Santha Fernando, recently released from detention, joined the meeting and reflected on his experiences in detention.

Matthews George Chunakara, WCC International Affairs Director; and Charlie Ocampo, CCA Executive Secretary for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service are Co-Conveners of the Forum.

## **O. Second Article 9 Conference**

Venue: Seoul, South Korea

Date: 1 - 3 December 2009

Eighty Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim faith leaders met from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> December at the Academy House near Seoul, to reaffirm a commitment to a world without wars and free of military activities. The meeting focused on Article 9, a Peace Clause in the Japanese Constitution and listened to voices of the victims, recalled scriptures and cited movements for peace in every religion.

The Conference participants vowed to broaden their perspective of peace, undertake a more vigorous peace education among women, children and youth, expand peace constituencies and networks, work for nuclear disarmament, and promote interfaith dialogues on peace.

During this Second Conference attended by more than 80 religious leaders representing Buddhist, Christian and Muslim faith communities, reports on developments in Japan and the rest of East Asia, stories from communities affected by the presence and actions by military forces were shared. Our deliberations and reflections brought many insights to light, including the following:

- Supporting Article 9 has changed the interactions between religion and politics. In a sense, it has helped the communities re-learn what it means to be living their faith in an area of public concern;
- The issue of Article 9 is the first time that communities of faith as a group has taken a faith-based stand in public on peace;
- Supporting Article 9 has created solidarity among different religions;
- Shared concern for Article 9 has created new bonds between religious and other peace advocates;
- Many have been moved to reclaim Article 9 as part of the people's agenda;;
- Countries that have made war on their neighbors have to make right with their neighbors in order to find a lasting peace. Article 9 is a reminder that truth and reconciliation after past conflicts is necessary;

- Japan must move beyond its 'One Nation Peace Identity' to the joint building of regional peace with its neighbors;

The Conference resolved to actively pursue the following to advance the spirit of Article 9:

- 1) To broaden our perspective that peace is not just the absence of war but that which is based on justice and human dignity;
- 2) To undertake more vigorous cross-generational peace education (i.e., children, youth and adults), to include exposure programs, inter-religious dialogues and the training of peace education facilitators and advocates, the use of creative media. And people need to be more vigilant in making their governments more accountable;
- 3) To support the Japanese people in their efforts to interpret in their own terms the spirit and application of Article 9;
- 4) To expand the peace network in countries experiencing conflict and violence, including the Philippines, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia and other countries;
- 5) To study the link between US foreign domination and peace building in Asia;
- 6) To espouse the abolition of nuclear weapons among powerful countries and in any part of the world;
- 7) To actively oppose the presence of US bases and self-defense forces, which are contradictory to Article 9;
- 8) To take inter-religious dialogues at the level of communities, where the impact of conflict and militarization is felt more intensely;
- 9) To recommend the inclusion of the Article 9 campaign in the Ecumenical Advocacy Day (Washington DC, March 2010) and the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (Jamaica, 2011);
- 10) To support all efforts at reunification in the Korean Peninsula.

The Conference also issued a letter of condemnation and concern to Philippine President Gloria Arroyo, in the aftermath of the Massacre in Maguindanao which claimed 57 lives.

### **O. Korean Meeting for World Peace without Nuclear Weapons**

Venue: Hwacheon, South Korea

Date: 4 - 6 December 2009

A group of ecumenical people from Fiji, Pakistan, Canada, Norway, U.S.A. the Philippines and Korea who are committed to World Peace without Nuclear Weapons gathered together from 4 to 6 December 2009 in Hwacheon, Korea for reinvigorating ecumenical commitment to Nuclear Weapons Free World. The conference was organized jointly by Asia Pacific Graduate School and the Korean YMCA with support of the National Council of Churches in Korea, Presbyterian Church in Korea, Conference of Christians in Asia and World Council of Churches and was hosted by Hwacheon County located in near DMZ area of the Korean peninsula.

**Objectives of the Meeting**

- 1) To reflect on a Nuclear-Free Korean Peninsula and its implications for North East Asia and for the global perspective of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World,
- 2) To understand the current state of affairs on the nuclear regime as well as a new challenges from the ecumenical perspective;
- 3) To explore an ecumenical strategy that can form the basis for ecumenical actions to promote a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Agenda of the Meeting include:**

- 1) A report on the current state of nuclear weapons/arsenals;
- 2) Voices of the victims of the atom bomb from Hiroshima to present;
- 3) Voices of victims from the Pacific;
- 4) The violence in South Asia and the Middle East;
- 5) The global nuclear weapons regime and the nuclear disarmament agenda;
- 6) Ideology and new doctrine of war;
- 7) Human dimension of nuclear impact;
- 8) Women's rights and nuclear patriarchy;
- 9) Ecological impact;
- 10) Nuclear technocracy;
- 11) Economy of a nuclear regime;
- 12) Building a circle of shared human security = true security;
- 13) Convergent vision of life;
- 14) Theological and faith responses;
- 15) Local initiative and global response;
- 16) Building interfaith networks on the nuclear issue.

The participants in the Meeting spent an afternoon at the Bell Peace Park, at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), close to the border with North Korea.

# SPECIAL PROGRAMS

## HIV AND AIDS CONCERNS

*Dr Erlinda Senturias, Consultant*

### **Component 1: Development of Educational Resource Materials for Capacity Building and Building HIV Competent Faith Based Communities**

Three publications were completed during this period:

**A. A Handbook on HIV and AIDS: Guidelines for an Interfaith Response.** This is a publication of the Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA) supported by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the member organizations of AINA. This handbook is the result of the collaborative effort of faith communities responding to HIV and AIDS conceptualized in 2006 but the writing part of the content was only started in November 2008 and completed in May 2009. It also contains drawings of children living with HIV and AIDS, which are part of the collection of The Church of Christ in Thailand AIDS Ministry (CAM). The book was first distributed to members of the CCA Round Table Meeting of Ecumenical Partners on 9 July 2009 and launched in Bali on August 8, 2009.

The interfaith handbook aims and objectives are:

1. to give information, education and communication skills in HIV and AIDS and raise awareness on issues of stigma and discrimination, human rights, prevention, capacity building program, management, monitoring and evaluation;
2. to enhance the spirit of love, compassion, mutual support and solidarity among people of different faiths that will lead to the cessation of suffering of the people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, and give an authentic witness of collective and common endeavor; and
3. To facilitate learning experience through trainings geared towards a holistic response to the HIV and AIDS crisis, in accordance with faith beliefs, sacred scriptures and religious traditions.

## **B. 2009 World AIDS Day Liturgy Guide**

### **Live the Promise on HIV and AIDS: Universal Access and Human Rights**

This publication is sent electronically and as a hard copy to the member churches and councils of CCA. The main liturgy was produced by Rev. Terry MacArthur and commissioned by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, of which CCA is a member organization. It also contains some suggestions for World AIDS Day celebration from contributors in the Asia region. The booklet contains the CCA HIV and AIDS Policy.

**C. Policy on HIV and AIDS for Churches: Equipping Churches in Asia to be ‘HIV and AIDS competent’.** This brochure is for dissemination to member churches and councils to encourage them to develop their own policy or to adopt the policy formulated during a writeshop (Bali, 4-6 August) commissioned by the CCA General Committee in Dhaka in September 2008 and approved by the CCA General Committee in Bangkok on 1 October 2009.

## **Component 2: Interfaith Networking**

### **A. Pre International Congress on Asia and the Pacific Interfaith Conference and Skills Building Session**

Venue: Bali, Indonesia

Dates: 7 - 8 August 2009

The Interfaith Conference produced a statement that was disseminated worldwide through the participating organizations.

## **Component 3: National HIV Awareness Workshop and Capacity Building**

In 2009, four HIV Awareness Workshops were held:

- A. Accompanying one of the Kasapulan (convention) meetings on HIV and AIDS Awareness by the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches held in Odiongan, Romblon on July 17-18. There is an outstanding request to gather all the ten Kasapulan for sharing of experiences following the awareness building seminars.
- B. East Timor in cooperation with the woman's group of the Protestant Churches in East Timor (IPTL), August 10-13. Dr. Liza Lamis, Ms. Dominica Faurillo and Dr. Erlinda Senturias echoed the skills building sessions during the Bali meeting: eliminating stigma and discrimination, building HIV Competent Faith Communities, and advocacy, networking and collaboration. Dr. Lamis provided the Biblico-theological Reflection on the hemorrhaging women and this was reflected in the output presented by the women through a letter to the churches, which will be published in CCA News.

- C. The Kampuchean Christian Council (KCC) gathered those who received the training on HIV Awareness in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai in 2006 for sharing of experiences in the church of the President of KCC, Rev. Oum Sovy on 14 November 2009. The Executive Committee of the KCC suggested three seminars for 2010.
- D. The Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) organized the interfaith consultation. Various faith based groups shared their experience in working with people living with HIV, many of whom are organized into self help groups. This meeting gave birth to the Myanmar Interfaith Network on AIDS (MINA). Dr. Senturias and Ms. Pawadee met with Rev. Dr. U Arthur Ko Lay, senior pastor of Judson Church and Ms. Naw She Wah who is a Baptist and now working with the Myanmar Positive Group. They are invited to speak in Kuala Lumpur Pre assembly on HIV and AIDS.

#### **The 2009 World AIDS Day Celebration**

An important component to raising awareness on HIV and AIDS is through supporting World AIDS Day program of churches. In Chiang Mai, many activities were participated by The Church of Christ in Thailand AIDS Ministry (CCT CAM). CCA provided support to the big gathering in the McGilvary College of Divinity on 3 December 2009. On the same day, the Judson Church was the venue of the World AIDS Day celebration of the MCC HIV Prevention and Care Program.

#### **Component 4: Mission Trips to AIDS Programs and UN Agencies**

The visit of the consultant on various HIV and AIDS program and UN Agencies in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Yangon, Myanmar and Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Thailand resulted in better appreciation of the needs of the various areas and where collaboration and networking are possible.

## **MEKONG ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

*Ms. Janejinda Pawadee, Program Coordinator*  
*Rev. Huh Chun Jung, Consultant*

### **A. Training on Migrant Workers Issues**

Venue: Chiang Rai, Thailand

Dates: 10-11 August 2009

MEPP co-organized a training with Social Development and Service Unit of the Church of Christ in Thailand (SDSU-CCT) and with a local church along the Thai-Burma border on Thai laws and regulations on migrant labor on August 10-11, 2009. The training aimed to educate church and community members who hold different legal status in Thailand and to encourage churches to involve in migrant issues, and especially to help them overcome prejudice and discrimination against migrant workers and people with non-legal status.

Forty-two ethnic minorities and migrant workers from Burma who are working and living in border communities attended the training. Most participants were undocumented and hold no legal status which is risky to arrests and deportation by the Thai police. One's legal status and citizenship issues are seriously discussed in Thailand. The government has announced that deportation will be made immediately if an undocumented person is arrested. Such situation is threatening for someone who is illegal in Thailand. Hence the church has to provide a place and facilitate trainings for immigrants to gain better understanding of Thai laws and regulations.

Participants shared their struggles while living in Thailand as migrant workers and/or as undocumented persons. Hearing their pains and struggles will help the church understand their problems and struggles.

A lawyer and staff from MAP (Migrant Assistance Program) Foundation introduced participants to MAP, which was established in 1996 to provide assistance to migrant workers. Their areas of work included labor, women and child rights, and the right to access health services. The lawyer further explained about Thai laws related to migrant workers such as the Labor Protection Act, Work of Alien (migrant) Act, Citizenship Act, Compensation Fund Act and Cabinet's Resolution on Migrant Workers from Lao, Cambodia and Burma.

The participants shared their difficulties related to the right to live and work in Thailand, unfair wages, their children's education (not allowed to study in Thai schools), bribery by village headmen and government officers, and lack of clear information and good advice from government officers.

## **B. Consultation on Migrant workers**

Venue: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Dates: 7 October 2009

MEPP together with SDSU-CCT organized a one-day Consultation on migrant workers held at First Church of Chiang Mai to educate churches in Chiangmai to understand the situation of migrant workers and issues confronting them. In 2008 and 2009 MEPP and SDSU-CCT organized two consultations in the Thai border towns Maesod and Maesai. This time MEPP wanted to help city churches become aware of the situation of migrant workers and understand better their situation and related issues. Pastors and leaders from difference city churches in Chiangmai came together to hear the voices of migrant workers and to understand the church's ministry with so-called "illegal" workers.

Chiangmai is a place where many migrant workers from Burma are hired to work in difference sectors. Many workers worship in churches in the city of Chiangmai.

The voices of migrant workers challenged participants to review their church ministries. Many pastors and church leaders reflected that they have learnt more about the situation and difficulties of workers including prejudice and discrimination against them. But the churches need more education, accurate information and skills to work on migrant workers and related issues. City churches can also provide services to migrant workers according to their ministries and resources.

MEPP together with the SDSU-CCT will conduct follow up activities and work closely with churches in Chiangmai City in 2010.

## **C. Personnel Exchange Program for Women**

Venue: Chiangmai, Thailand

Dates: 24 – 28 August 2009

MEPP was asked by the Mother's Union of the Methodist Church in Burma to organize the Personnel Exchange Program for Women (Burma) on Aug 24-28, 2009, in collaboration with the Micro Credit Foundation, a Christian NGO in Chiangmai.

Participants were women leaders who came from different divisions in Burma. Most of them traveled abroad for the first time and expressed that they have learnt a real experience of 'Freedom of movement' which never happened before in Burma. They were able to visit and learn about micro credit programs which they can apply in their country. MEPP also shared with them about the situation and difficulties of migrant workers from Burma in Thailand.

#### **D. South East Asia Theological Workshop (with CCA-FMU)**

Venue: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Dates: 30 August – 3 September 2009

MEPP collaborated with CCA's Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU) in organizing the Theological Roundtable (Workshop) on Emerging Issues for the Mekong region. The workshop provided a space for theological discussions on the CCA 13th General Assembly theme, "Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal". Participants from Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and representatives from other sub-regions shared on emerging issues in their respective countries.

MEPP observed that there was only one woman participant (excluding the MEPP Coordinator). Lack of gender balance consciousness still prevails both within CCA and church partners in the Mekong countries.

#### **E. Asian School on Gender Justice (with CCA-EGY)**

Venue: Chiangmai, Thailand

Dates: 14 – 24 September 2009

MEPP worked with CCA's EGY to prepare, coordinate and organize the Asian School of Ecumenical Formation for Gender Justice held in Chiangmai, Thailand on September 14-24, 2009. Aimed for the capacity enhancement of men and women, youth and young adult for the church to promote gender justice, participants were given the knowledge and equipped with skills to campaign and implement gender justice activities to alleviate gender-based violence.

MEPP particularly facilitated the two-day exposure trip to the Thai-Burma-Laos borders (Golden Triangle) for participants to learn about cross-border and trafficking issues. The participants also visited government offices and NGOs working on trafficking issues in the borders.

#### **F. Mission Trips to Mekong churches (with CCA-HIV and AIDS)**

Venue: Cambodia and Burma

Dates: 13 – 21 November 2009

The MEPP Coordinator together with the CCA Consultant on HIV and AIDS, Dr. Erlinda Senturias, visited Cambodia and Burma/Myanmar on November 13-21, 2009. The objectives of the visits were:

- 1) To disseminate and discuss with church partners and other agencies the Christian Conference of Asia's HIV and AIDS Policy approved by the CCA General Committee in Bangkok on October 1, 2009;
- 2) To get an update on the situation of HIV and the responses of the church and other organizations in Mekong region;
- 3) To meet with key affected populations and to learn from their programs;

- 4) To prepare for the Pre Assembly Forum on HIV and AIDS in Kuala Lumpur on April 11-13, 2010.
- 5) To further develop the project on “Building HIV-Competent Churches and Faith-Based Organization

**Cambodia (November 13-15):** We met with difference groups in Cambodia organized by the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) and with former participants of MEPP’s HIV and AIDS training in Thailand in 2006. We were able to learn from them how they are involved in HIV and AIDS work. We also met with the Executive Committee of KCC to share our concern with them. KCC is interested to initiate HIV and AIDS trainings in Cambodia to educate their member churches. A plan for trainings were discussed seriously and it is hoped that KCC will be able to organize a training in 2010.

**Burma (November 16-21):** We met with different groups in Burma including UNFPA, WHO, INGOs, FBOs and PLWHA groups. The meetings were organized by the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC)’s HIV and AIDS Program which is very active in Burma.

We attended a one-day interfaith seminar and learned from different faiths about their work on HIV and AIDS issues. We were impressed with the collaborative work done by interfaith networks and witnessed the birth of MINA or the Myanmar Interfaith Network on HIV and AIDS during our visit.

### **G. Visit to Vietnam (with CCA-FMU)**

Venue: Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam

Dates: 24 – 27 November 2009

The MEPP Coordinator together with an Executive Secretary of CCA’s Faith, Mission and Unity (CCA-FMU), Dr. Hope Antone, visited Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on November 24-27,2009. The purpose of the visit was to learn on the situation of churches in Vietnam and to establish contacts for future collaborative work on theological issues.

The itinerary was organized by Pastor Phuc Trai, a former student at McGilvary College of Divinity of Payap University in Chiangmai. We learned on the Vietnamese church situation through a group of McGilvary Alumni who shared about their ministries to us. Some of them are helping or working with their own home churches, a common occurrence in Vietnam since religious freedom is limited

We also had a chance to meet with a leader of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (ECVN). One thing we have learned from him is that there is an increasing number of Christians and underground churches. ECVN also tried to unite Christian and churches in North and South to bring unity to the witness of God’s presence in Vietnam.