

# SARASEHAN

Jakarta, 21 May 2015

@ccaassembly  
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LIVING TOGETHER  
IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD



## CCA 14th Assembly Opens Space for Ecumenical Dialogue

By: Ismael Fisco, Bruce Van  
Voorhis & Irma Riana

Some 437 participants representing the member churches and partners of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) coming from 28 countries gathered today for the 14th General Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia.

With the theme “Living Together in the Household of God,” the six-day assembly will review the work of CCA, determine program directions, amend its constitution and elect new members of the assembly committees. It will also be a venue for “Sarasehan”, an Indonesian word for dialogue, in order to engage the participants in discussions on emerging Asian issues that are relevant to the witness of the church.

In an interview with the general secretary of CCA, the Rev. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang noted that the theme reflects the thrusts in the life of the churches in Asia. “The challenge, however, is how to weave life together, live together and respect others in societies where violence is becoming more and more endemic in a part of the world with such diverse identities”, she said.

Hutabarat added that the assembly is a reflection of the churches working together: “This is a hope for the future. We just need to find strategies. The churches are willing to help. CCA just needs to give them an opportunity.”

The Local Host Committee from Indonesia led by its Chairman, Sukur Nababan, welcomed the participants: “we welcome you warmly and try to give our best in facilitating you in the course of the meeting.” He also thanked the committee members who worked hard together in the long course of the preparation.

Jakarta, with a population of 9.9 million, is known as a 488-year old city and the capital town of Indonesia that serves as center of various formal and informal activities including economic, political and cultural events of the international community.

Participants are hosted by the Local Arrangement Committee at the Mercure Hotel near the bay area. The Rev. Dr. Binsar Jonathan Pakpahan, secretary of the committee, noted the assistance of the churches in Jakarta who arranged transportation, worship with local churches and the exhibits at Sarahehan. “We hope that the foreign delegates will be able to appreciate the diversity of Indonesia,” he said.

The 14th general assembly is comprised by diverse participants including bishops, ministers, lay members, women and youth, and some observers from the partner organizations of CCA. Forty young people also serve as stewards in order to assist the delegates with their needs and to help in the daily activities of the assembly.

# Youth Calls for United Action

Markus Saragih



Reflecting on the CCA assembly theme, “Living Together in the Household of God”, the Pre-Assembly for Youth called for young people to organize themselves and engage in united actions on what needs to be done for the household of God beyond just thinking about themselves.

In his address, Retno Ngapon Niman, SSI, Presidium CCA for Youth, challenged the youth delegates: “Young people today like to take “selfie” photo all the time. But in the household of God, youth are encouraged to be actively engaged. Whatever interests, roles, and work you may have, remember that you are very much part of the household of God.”

Niman also stressed out two important purpose of the pre-assembly: First, is for the youth of the church from various countries to foster togetherness and prepare them to be leaders in the future. Second, is for the young people to participate in the leadership of churches in Asia, and to take part in the decision-making.

“This forum is also a special session to introduce CCA constitution and leadership to the youth. It was aimed at bringing CCA closer to the member churches and countries, and to reaffirm our solidarity,” Retno said.

Mathew George from the World Council of Churches also shared stories about churches in various countries experiencing conflict, noting that the young people have to understand their role in the geopolitical arena: “We see a lot of conflict in some countries, some because of religion. We want to give a broader picture to the youth regarding this issue, so that they become more critical, have broader thinking and do appropriate action.

The Youth Pre-Assembly was held on May 17-20 and was attended by young people from 35 countries such as Pakistan, Iran, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, India, Indonesia, and Nepal. It also included participants from Indonesian youth organizations called the GMKI (Student Christian Movement-Indonesia) and PERSETIA (Association for Christian Theologians) and young people from local churches in Kampung Sawah, Pondok Melati and Jati Rangoon areas.

The youth participants stayed in the houses of members from local congregations where they got immersed in Indonesia culture and way of life.



# Women Affirm Gender Justice

Surya Samudera



Localhost Committee of Women Forum Pre-Assembly in Bandung welcome the delegates.

*Chuzafah, Rev. Krise Gosal and Merry Kolimon during the panel discussion.*



Representing a notable number of delegates, women have gathered together at a Women's Forum in preparation for the 14th general assembly of CCA. With the theme "Partnership between Women and Men: Towards Gender Justice", the pre-assembly event was held on May 17 at Wisma Shalom, Lembang, West Java.

In the opening program, the Rev. Merry Kolimon addressed the role of women in the household of God in line with the theme of the assembly. She encouraged participants to understand the concept of "household" not in the passive sense, but in an active context: "We should understand that women are also the members of the household of God. Therefore women should have an active contribution as men."

The program also included panel discussions on the current situation of women in Asia led by Dr. Kyung In Kim and Ms. Yuniyanti Chuzafah that enabled participants to engage in discussions. The Rev. Krise Eche Gosal served as the moderator.

In her sharing, Dr. Kyung In Kim emphasized the struggles of women such as discrimination on salary systems for women workers, human trafficking, child marriage and the participation of women on public issues. She said that "we cannot close our eyes to the

issues of women in the churches. There are still many forms of discrimination against women (that exist)."

Ms. Chuzafah cited the case of Mary Jane Veloso, a 30-year old Filipina domestic helper who became victim of human trafficking, as an example of issues being faced by women in the society due to extreme poverty. Chusaifa also mentioned that a lot of women experience sexual harassment and abuse: "The people who say that a woman can be raped because of the way she dresses up, or because of coming home late at night, should understand that women workers have too much burdens to provide the needs of their family."

She also underlined the importance of women's role in working hand-in-hand across boundaries of nations in affirming justice. She said, "Today, Indonesian women shout to parliament to consider decisions from the insight of the victims and the powerless." She said that the Christian community have to teach the people to not just see problems from above but from the perspective of the victims.

The Rev. Welmintje Naomi and Rev. Erni Stientje Sendow spearheaded the event. Women delegates hope that these issues will be addressed further at the general assembly.



# Images on the floor



# Reflections of the General Secretary “Joys and Challenges”



Bruce Van Voorhis

In reflecting on the past five years as the general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the Rev. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang said, “It’s been a time of joy, but it’s also been a time of challenges.”

Among the joys she has witnessed, she noted the “encouragement of the churches coming together and working together at the grassroots level, the national level, the regional level.”

This joy, she added, is related to an important and central question for Christians: how to be the church?

For her, this question has been answered time and time again during her five-year term as general secretary, but the reply has often come during times of chaos and confusion and suffering, she said, when the Church has been challenged to figure out in difficult circumstances how to be the church in the midst of disaster. She cited the response of churches to the earthquake that devastated Christchurch in New Zealand in 2011 and the solidarity and unity expressed by Christians when churches in Pakistan have been targets of intolerance.

“What is life?” she asked. “It is all people coming together. These are the signs of hope.”

The General Assembly theme of “Living Together in the Household of God” reflects this thrust in the life of the churches in Asia, Hutabarat noted.

The challenge, however, is how to weave life together, live together and respect others in societies where

violence is becoming more and more endemic in a part of the world with such diverse identities.

“Asians are very communal people,” Hutabarat explained, “but that sense of community is eroding. People only look out for themselves or their group.”

This phenomenon is not the only issue now confronting churches, however.

“Resources are gifts from God,” Hutabarat added, “but these resources today are becoming scarce and more concentrated in the hands of a few people. Churches need to respond to this.”

Institutionally, the major challenge that CCA has faced in the past five years, she said, was the painful decision to reduce staff.

“We have been dependent on our overseas partners for years,” she said. “We forgot to build our own resources.”

Thus, having a limited staff with limited funds has been a major challenge for CCA and its work and ministry since the last assembly.

Being optimistic, however, Dr. Hutabarat said that “this is a time of grace. How can we do things differently?”

“This assembly,” she said, “is a reflection of the churches working together. This is a hope for the future. We just need to find strategies. The churches are willing to help. CCA just needs to give them an opportunity.”

# CCA 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Theme Song Hidup Bersama dalam Rumah Tangga Allah

Pdt. J. A. U. Doloksaribu, 2015  
English para. Andrew Donaldson, 2015

Pdt. J. A. U. Doloksaribu, 2015



1. Hi - dup ber - sa - ma da - lam ru - mah tang - ga Al - lah un - tuk me - nyak - si - kan ka - sih  
 2. Hi - dup ber - sa - ma da - lam ru - mah tang - ga Al - lah, tu - nai - kan - lah tu - gas ke - na -  
 1. Doors o - pen wide in wel - come in God's lov - ing house - hold, in - to God's com - mu - ni - ty of  
 2. Arms o - pen wide in wel - come in God's lov - ing house - hold, in - to God's com - mu - ni - ty of



a - nu - g'rah - Nya. Di da - lam du - nia yang di - lan - da ke - ben - ci - an,  
 bi - an - mu; me - la - wan ke - ja - hat - an dan ke - mu - na - fik - an,  
 joy and peace. In fear - ful times, when strife and cri - sis dog our foot - steps,  
 joy and peace. In trou - bled times, when truth is sac - ri - ficed for po - wer,



ba - wa - lah da - mai ba - gi se - mu - a. De - ngan ikh - las am - pun - i - lah.  
 i - tu - lah ke - hen - dak - Nya di du - nia. Ke - a - dil - an te - gak - kan - lah.  
 let us stand fast in jus - tice, joy, and peace. Serve with pa - tience; for - give those who wrong;  
 let us stand fast in jus - tice, joy, and peace. Faith - ful, fear - less, speak truth in love;



Per - be - da - an hor - mat - i - lah. De - ngan tu - lus, la -  
 Pe - nin - das - an ha - pus - kan - lah. Ke - ke - ras - an, ka -  
 love sin - cere - ly, as Christ first loved us. When we dif - fer, res -  
 strong, pro - phet - ic, be Christ - mind - ed, wise; fight op - pres - sion with



yan - i - lah. Sam - pai ak - hir, se - ti - a - lah.  
 lah - kan - lah. Ke - mis - kin - an, a - tas - i - lah.  
 pect and grace be the watch - words of God's house - hold of peace.  
 acts of peace; be the pres - ence of God's re - claim - ing grace.

3. Hidup bersama dalam rumah tangga Allah,  
 memulihkan keutuhan ciptaan-Nya.  
 Kita ciptakan hidup harmoni di dunia,  
 ciptaan Allah lestarianlah.  
 Kerakusan padamkanlah.  
 Hutan kita s'lamatkanlah.  
 Pencemaran hentikanlah.  
 Alam raya, bersoraklah.

3. Hearts open wide in welcome  
 in God's loving household,  
 into God's community of joy and peace.  
 In desperate times, when earth is crying out for healing,  
 let us stand fast in justice, joy and peace.  
 Bring to wholeness the earth God has made;  
 Greed and power control us no more.  
 May the whole world, redeemed by grace,  
 live rejoicing, as God's household of peace.



**Lizette Tapia-Raquel**

May 19 at 6:23pm

Truly a fine day with women and men allies at the Pre-assembly of Women in connection with the Christian Conference of Asia General Assembly. I presented my paper "Beyond Israel" on David and Jonathan, heard presentations on human trafficking, violence against women and children, and gender justice. Met some Muslim women, too. — with Sunila Ammar and Anna Marsiana.

**LOUD THOUGHTS:**

What do people think about the assembly?

Use hashtag #CCAassembly to share your Facebook and Twitter posts.

# Behind the Scenes

Bruce Van Voorhis

As 437 delegates arrived in Jakarta on Wednesday from 28 countries for the Christian Conference of Asia's (CCA) 14th General Assembly, it is sometimes easy to forget all of the preparations that have been made to arrange for people to be met at the airport, to register them and to organize their room assignments.

These tasks have been the work of the 30 members of the local arrangement committee led by its secretary, the Rev. Dr. Binsar Jonathan Pakpahan, and 40 stewards.

In addition to the local arrangement committee and the stewards, Pakpahan said that they have been greatly assisted by the churches in Jakarta which have arranged for additional transportation from the airport and to the Asia Sunday service on Pentecost to worship with their congregations. They have also provided support for the assembly's cultural exhibits and choral ministry.

While the assembly lasts from May 20 to 27, the local arrangement committee was formed a year ago and has been working intensely for the past five months. Moreover, when the delegates return home, the committee still must write reports and finalize the financial statements.

It is hoped, said Pakpahan, that the foreign delegates will leave Jakarta appreciating the diversity of Indonesia. His only other expectation for the assembly, he said, is to meet people, show them Indonesian hospitality and try to serve everyone with a smile!



## Meet The Media Team



### SARASEHAN

is the official newsletter of the 14th General Assembly of CCA.

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