

CTC BULLETIN

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Editorial

This edition of *CTC Bulletin* covers a wide range of topics from a wide range of programs organized by or involving the Christian Conference of Asia.

Three lectures were delivered by Korean feminist theologian and Bible scholar Hyunju Bae at the CCA-McGilvary Ecumenical Lecture Series at the McGilvary Faculty of Theology of Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in January 2006. Given the overall title, "Journey of Faith in the Empire," this lecture series reflects one of the current discourses in Asian theologizing – i.e. making sense of our faith in the face of the uncertainties and threats posed by life-threatening designs of today's empire. The fact that a number of theological institutions continue to request CCA for ecumenical lecturers is indicative that the CCA Ecumenical Lecture Series does meet some needs of our theological institutions.

Following the 12th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia, the General Committee members of CCA met in September 2005 and were led in a process of serious reflection on their roles and functions as new officers and on the challenges of the ecumenical movement. Taiwanese theologian Huang Po Ho led a theological reflection on "Uniting People of Asia through a Christian Movement" and a Bible study on "Rebuilding the Household of God in Asia." Pamela Tankersley, a minister from Aotearoa New Zealand, led a participatory Bible study, "Seek the *Shalom* of the City," which relates to the theme of the CCA General Assembly, "Building Communities of Peace for All."

In March 2006, the elected members of the Joint Program Area Committees met in Taiwan to review and plan the activities of their respective program areas. During the meeting, Kwok Nai Wang who is CCA honorary consultant on ministry with local congregations gave an input, "Enhancing Ecumenism and the Ecumenical Movement at the Local Level", challenging participants to own and promote the ecumenical movement right at the local level.

CCA member churches and councils occasionally call upon staff of CCA to present inputs at their respective assemblies. Hope S. Antone, joint executive secretary for Faith, Mission and Unity, led a biblico-theological reflection at the 8th General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines on the theme, "Living Together in the Household of God". Such occasions are opportunities for CCA-FMU staff to encourage the CCA constituency to broaden their understanding of ecumenism – e.g. that the household of God is much bigger than our respective households of faith.

Mathews George Chunakara, former CCA staff and now Asia Desk secretary of the World Council of Churches, offers a paper that he presented at the recent NCC General Secretaries

and Church Leaders' Consultation in Cambodia. "A Survey of the Ecumenical Scenario in Asia: Prospects and Challenges" contains his own reflection on what he deems to be the "decline" of ecumenism at all levels – i.e. global, regional and national – and some practical suggestions for churches and ecumenical bodies in Asia.

Edmund Chia, a Malaysian Catholic theologian who for some time served the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, shares his own insider's reflections on "CCA-FABC Relations: Challenges to the Catholic Side". The article provides interesting insights into the less talked about dynamics of the Protestant (CCA) and Catholic (FABC) bodies' efforts at witnessing ecumenically and journeying together into Christian unity.

As *CTC Bulletin* continues to be an important resource for libraries in the universities and theological institutions of Asia and beyond, a paper by Filipino theologian Melanio L. Aoanan on "The Role of Universities and Theological Centers in Facilitating Interfaith Dialogue for Peace Building" makes a timely contribution. It offers concrete examples of attempts at interfaith dialogue of living initiated by a Christian institution in a multi-religious context of Mindanao.

What these contributions signify is that there is so much theologizing going on in Asia today. There are so many diverse voices speaking out and contributing to the discourses going on. Indeed there is not a dearth of theological thinking, reflecting and envisioning. I hope that this edition of *CTC Bulletin* has helped to "capture" some of those voices – from Bible scholars, professional and lay theologians, church workers, women, youth, educators, etc. – not for the purpose of taking them captive in a publication but hopefully for the mutual building up of pilgrims in our common ecumenical journey.

What I am hearing from many of these voices is not so much that ecumenism today is in decline; but that ecumenism is, in fact, taking more challenging grounds – beyond the movement towards Christian unity towards the unity of peoples and creation, i.e. *living together in the household of God*.

Hope S. Antone
Editor