

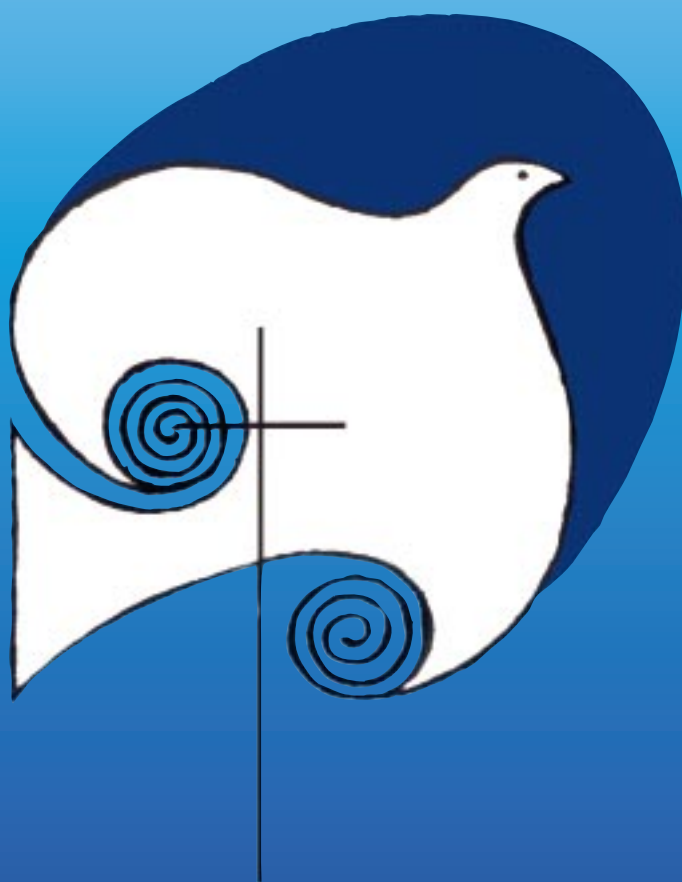
VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 2

JUNE 2000

cca news



Time for Fullness of Life for All



Special Issue: Eleventh General Assembly
Tomohon, North Sulawesi, Indonesia
31 May – 6 June 2000

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96, 2nd District, Pak Tin Village,
Mei Tin Road, Sha Tin, NT,
Hong Kong, China

Telephone + 852 2691 1068
Fax + 852 2692 4378
e-mail cca@pacific.net.hk
www.cca.org.hk

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Feliciano V. Cariño

EDITOR
Geoff Alves

EDITORIAL BOARD
Mathews George Chunakara
Henriette Hutabarat
Daniel Thiagarajah
Marina True

SPECIAL ISSUE

This special issue of *CCA News* highlights the preparations for the Eleventh General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia, which will be held in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. It begins with the reminiscences and views of the present General Secretary and previous holders of that office. It presents the speakers and the music that will be so much a part of the Assembly, and tells of the pre-Assembly meetings for the Asia Ecumenical Course and the People's, Women's and Youth Forums. The staff of CCA give an overview of CCA's current programs and we also take a pictorial look at Assemblies past.

Colombo to Tomohon, the quinquennial report of the CCA, 1995–2000, gives an exciting picture of the past, present and future of CCA. We hope you will take the opportunity to read in its pages what has been happening in the life of CCA in the past five years and to consider the future directions CCA might take.

TIME FOR FULLNESS OF LIFE FOR ALL

John 10:10

The Eleventh General Assembly
Christian Conference of Asia
Tomohon - Minahasa
North Sulawesi - INDONESIA
June 1 - 6, 2000

Christian Conference of Asia
96, 2nd District, Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin Road, Sha Tin, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2691 1068 Fax: (852) 2692 4378 Email: cca@pacific.net.hk

U Kyaw Than, who served as the General Secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) from 1968 to 1973, reminds us in his reminiscence of the excitement and great expectation that attended the founding Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia in Prapat and Medan, Indonesia, in March 1957.

It was attended by the highest leadership of the ecumenical movement worldwide and by the highest leadership of the new Republic of Indonesia, including its founding leader, President Soekarno.

It was referred to as 'the great new fact of our time'.

The 'common evangelistic task of the churches in Asia' was linked with the 'common task' of nation-building that beckoned the new nations to be a force in the building of a new order of society in a post-colonial world. Declared a 'Church Day', the Opening Worship was attended by thousands of people who travelled from different parts of the island of Sumatra and even from other parts of Indonesia.

Over forty years and ten assemblies later the General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia will gather again in Indonesia, this time in the city of Tomohon, in North Sulawesi.

Times have changed. After fifty years of ecumenical life and work, not many people would refer any more to the ecumenical movement as 'the great new fact of our time'.

The ecumenical movement in fact is undergoing many changes and a major transition that involves a reassessment of its standing and role in the life of the church and society.

The new nations of Asia too have undergone very difficult times, blunt-



Editorial

A Common Vision for Our Time

Feliciano V. Cariño



Over forty years and ten assemblies later the General Assembly of the CCA will gather again in Indonesia

ing their capacity to realise Soekarno's hope that they would form a 'new emerging force' that would propel a new international order.

Indeed as we gather in Tomohon, Indonesia and the rest of Asia are just getting over one of the worst economic and political periods in their recent history and continue to feel uncertain about their individual and collective futures.

Still there are similarities, if not common elements, between Prapat and Medan in 1957 and Tomohon in 2000. Like Prapat in 1957, the CCA will be received into the 'bosom' of the life of the churches in North Sulawesi and Indonesia.

Like Prapat, and Medan too in 1957, the opening worship will be a 'Church Day' where thousands of people are expected to attend from the congregations and communities of North Sulawesi and possibly beyond.

Like Prapat in 1957, our efforts will be at developing a common 'vision and structure' for the ecumenical movement in Asia that will be linked with the challenges of the new and 'unfinished tasks' of nation-building and the possibilities of a 'second wave' of Asian economic development that could propel our region into a major role in the emerging new world of the century.

The hopes and the expectations are great.

We know, however, that the challenges and realities that will confront us are great and difficult and uncompromising in the demands that they make upon us.

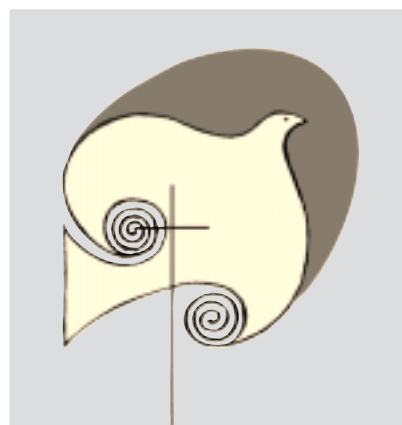
We urge everyone to pray and work for a fruitful Assembly in Tomohon.

Feliciano V. Cariño
General Secretary

It was March 1957. Weather in continental Southeast Asia could be humid and unpleasant, even for the locals. But at the city of Medan, on the huge island of Sumatra in Indonesia, a spacious open field became the venue for the opening gathering of the East Asia Christian Conference. The delegates, consultants and guests were lodged at the hotel in Prapat town on the banks of the beautiful Lake Toba. This was the region associated with Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, the famous Batak Church.

It was proclaimed 'Church Day', and the delegates lodged at Prapat, as well as thousands of Christians who had travelled from different parts of the island and even from other parts of Indonesia, were present for an auspicious occasion at Medan. President Soekarno, the founding leader of Indonesia and Christian cabinet members such as Dr J. Leimena, the Minister of Health who was later to become the first Deputy Premier, were there. Among the world Christian leaders was Dr Visser 't Hooft, the first General Secretary of the recently formed World Council of Churches, and Dr D.T. Niles of what was then Ceylon. The Ephorus, or leading Bishop, of the Batak church was our host. The theme of the East Asia Christian Conference Assembly was 'The Common Evangelistic Task of the Churches in Asia'.

President Soekarno's address was very relevant in that he was promoting what he termed *gotong royong*, a manner of governance and decision-making, which he explained as carrying a 'common task'. *Gotong royong* can be likened to people dwelling in an Asian village who join together in building a



Reminiscences

Prapat 1957

U Kyaw Than



U Kyaw Than from Myanmar was General Secretary from 1968 to 1973

house of a fellow villager with materials already collected. *Panca Sila*, or the five basic principles of the Indonesian State point to *Eka Sila*, or the one basic principle of *gotong royong*, joining together to fulfil one common task to realise the welfare of the nation. For the Christians gathered under the auspices of the World Council

of Churches (WCC) and the International Missionary Council (IMC) the common task was evangelism or the proclamation of Christ among all the peoples of the region of the world in which God had placed them.

When Dr Rajah Manikam, the first joint East Asian Secretary of the IMC-WCC, became the bishop of the historic Lutheran See of Tranquebar in South India, I had been given the responsibility to organise the Prapat conference. Some people referred to that as a Christian version of the Bandung conference that had preceded it by a couple of years. At the city of Bandung in western Indonesia, Asian and African nations had gathered to be trailblazers for their peoples in the post-war world. But we made it plain that the Prapat conference was not to be based on race or colour, as participants from the national Christian councils in New Zealand and Australia were also invited to be present.

The 'Prapat Plan' emerged. Since the World Missionary Conference held at Tambaram in 1938 spokespersons for Asian churches had looked forward to the time when they could directly get to know one another and compare notes about their Christian roles and situations, but not through their related churches in the West. Until then Christians in the Philippines knew more about their fellow Christians in the USA than about those who lived next door in Indonesia. In fact, there was a great deal of ignorance on the part of Christians in the Philippines about Indonesian Christians and vice versa. The same could be said about relations between Christians in Burma and the Indochinese nations, or those in India and China.

In a nutshell, the Prapat Plan provided for the setting up of an 'organ of continuing cooperation among the Churches and National Christian Councils in East Asia within the framework of the wider ecumenical movement'. It provided for cooperative evangelism in which all share with each other for the common good, and in which our unity was to be increasingly manifested. It was meant to stimulate cooperation and interchange among the churches, and serve as an instrument for helping the members to think through the basic issues of evangelistic policy and for the working out of a common strategy. There was to be mutual sharing of experience, information and personnel, and also work with the WCC/IMC to assist in interpreting and coordinating the program of ecumenical interchurch aid in the region. Allocation of funds was to be on



D.T. Niles from Sri Lanka, the first General Secretary

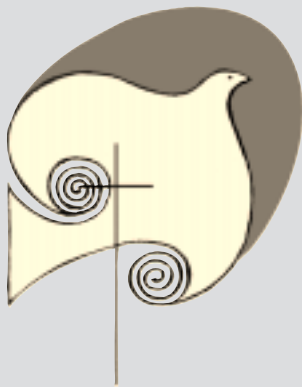
the basis of need and ecumenical relevance, rather than on the basis of the source from which the funds had come. At the Inaugural Assembly two

years later, Christian witness, not only in revolutionary Asia but also in the midst of an Asian renaissance, was recognised as a challenge that Asian churches must face.

As we, under God's providence, have now cooperated more than four decades in mission and service, let us dedicate ourselves anew as churches and councils and individuals privileged to pursue the vision the pioneers have seen. Prapat with tens of thousands of participants at the opening rally and with inspiring dreams will remain a blessed landmark in the history of the Christian Conference of Asia. May each succeeding generation not only live up to the original inspirations but even go beyond those dreams to proclaim our Incarnate Lord who came that we may have life and have it abundantly.

U Kyaw Than

CCA Presidium, 1995–2000



CCA Presidium:
Margaret Rodgers (Australia),
Yotaro Konaka (Japan),
Aye Mo Tin (Myanmar) and
Kenneth Fernando (Sri Lanka)



We need to emphasise once again the need for the CCA and its constituent bodies to enter into serious dialogue or engagement with Asia today.

There is also a focus on Asian cultures and traditions. Asian values are being promoted in order to protect the stability of Asian families and societies. There is acceptance of Western technology but its social values are largely rejected. The breakdown of the family and the community in Western societies is seen as a strong endorsement of the need to preserve Eastern values.

Samuel Huntington of Harvard University has recently advanced the thesis of the clash of civilisations, the clash of values between the East and the West, with the resurgence of Islam and Confucianism in Asia. What is the church's role in this situation? It is still identified with Western culture, and unless it engages in informed dialogue with Asian traditional religions it is likely to become even more marginalised than it is at present. This is an area where the CCA has a clear responsibility.

The relationship of the CCA to member churches and councils requires serious rethinking. Perhaps once again the CCA needs to relate more intentionally to the churches and intensify its efforts to create an ecumenical consciousness. In its work it must demonstrate that it is a fellowship of churches and councils and not just a fellowship of individuals and groups committed to their own understanding of the ecumenical task. The ecumenical agenda must, in the final analysis, be the agenda of the church.

The way ahead is to understand where the churches are at the present

The Way Ahead

Yap Kim Hao



Yap Kim Hao from Malaysia was General Secretary from 1973 to 1985

An excerpt from Yap Kim Hao's book, 'From Prapat to Tomohon: History of the Christian Conference of Asia', published by CCA

moment and reach out to them. Churches and their leaders are at different stages of theological development and different levels of ecumenical commitment. We cannot ignore the official leadership of the churches. They make decisions in the life of the churches and they determine the nature of their relationships with the CCA. With the present insistence on participation and balance, these leaders cannot come to CCA's meetings or influence its programs, and that makes it all the more important that those who do report back to them. The CCA should perhaps keep in close touch with them in other ways. We cannot give up the democratic structures we have evolved through the years. We cannot do without participation, but we must also be aware of its limits, and of the possibility of its manipulation. And if we do not take the churches with us, we may lose out ecumenically.

We must also guard against the temptation to impose an Asian or regional point of view on every national situation. It is difficult to arrive at a consensus on what the Asian view is. Asia is too complex a reality for that. We are becoming increasingly aware of the ethnic and racial factors about which we have to be sensitive to in a variety of Asian situations. There are commonalities in terms of history and culture that can determine the attitudes and approaches of countries. For instance, countries with strong Islamic populations will need a different approach on the issue of inter-faith dialogue.

The CCA programs can perhaps become more productive with a sub-regional orientation and thrust. It may even be necessary to deal with certain

questions at the national level, with some participation from outside the country. Instead of bringing national participants to a regional program, we may have to send regional representatives to national programs. This would mean working more closely with the national councils of churches (where the councils are indeed working!) and strengthening their ecumenical efforts.

The history of the CCA shows how it has related to the churches and responded to the world. In the years ahead the CCA should further develop its relationship with the churches and national councils, thus developing their ecumenical commitment. The life of the churches itself needs to be revitalised, and the CCA has a role in strengthening local congregations. The current trend is towards decentralisation, and the local churches are becoming important bases for mission and evangelism.

The work of the CCA must also have an impact on the local church and the local scene.

God has called the CCA into being. In faithfulness we seek to fulfil the purposes of God. In our life together as churches we receive insights on the life and mission of the church as a whole. In responding to the challenges in Asian societies and by sharing our responses within the fellowship we enrich our lives as churches and nations.

Living together in common obedience we can become much more than an 'an organ of continuing cooperation'. We can become a fellowship of churches and councils, and an unmistakable sign of hope in God in a changing Asia.

Yap Kim Hao

Times of Struggle

Park Sang Jung



Park Sang Jung from Korea was General Secretary from 1985 to 1990

The 1985 Assembly was shaken by the reaction of the Indonesian delegation, which practically walked out claiming that the secretariat had tacitly allowed the youth group to organise an informal gathering with an East Timorese activist who had taken refuge in Australia. It had been a testimonial meeting to raise consciousness of the youth regarding the political reality of East Timor, but it was anathema to raise questions about the role of the Indonesian military in East Timor.

Later the Indonesians suspended relations between their member churches and councils and the CCA, but the Indonesian delegation was fully present at the Manila Assembly of 1990. In the meantime I had to make many visits to member churches and councils in Indonesia. I don't think I

was really welcome there, but I had to use every opportunity to plead with the Indonesian church leaders to take steps to restore their relationship with CCA. After CCA was expelled from Singapore, the formerly Singapore-based CCA staff found it either difficult or impossible to enter Indonesia. On one of my visits, I and another colleague were prohibited entry and taken into custody. We were asked whether we would prefer to stay at the airport prison or the downtown prison. We chose to stay at the airport prison. We were put on the first plane out of Jakarta the following morning. I think my younger colleague, who was newly married and was thinking about his bride, spent a sleepless night.

Unhappy events can be mitigated by unanticipated acts of kindness. I am referring to a Buddhist auto mechanic in Singapore. When CCA was suddenly ousted from Singapore we realised we were practically friendless. The Singapore council withdrew from CCA and the Singaporean churches seemed to prefer to remain silent about the incident. The Singapore government froze CCA's assets, including its bank account, and we were left without cash. Even the pastor of the Korean congregation seemed afraid to visit us. The Korean Embassy was no help at all.

Two people called on us. One was Dr Yeow Choo Lak of ATESEA, who offered to help, and the other was our dear mechanic, Richard. After reading the news he thought I would need to sell my car so he offered to help. He let me use his Mercedes while he took my old car to sell. He brought me the money and took back his car on the evening before I left Singapore.

Park Sang Jung

I was elected General Secretary during the Manila Assembly (1990) when CCA was facing difficult times. The Singapore Government had banished the organisation, which had operated from Singapore since 1973. The staff was asked to leave the territory immediately. The funds were frozen and the staff took shelter in four places from where they started operations. The member churches and member councils, with the exception of few, did not even condemn the action of the Singapore Government. Singapore churches supported the government's action.

The morale of the staff was low. Suspicion and bickering among the staff was at an all time high. The Asian ecumenical movement faced a serious challenge. Because of the internal problem, donor churches and agencies were raising questions or showing us the cold shoulder.

There was an urgent need to bring the member churches and member councils aboard, and give them ownership of CCA. There was a need also to give attention to program coordination and to friendly working relations among the staff. This was a very big task and I did not feel that I had the qualifications for it.

I began the work having the assurance of help from some leaders in Asia and the support of the staff. I was fortunate to have some committed members of the General Committee. The very first thing we did was to bring age and gender balance into the General Committee. We selected a woman as Associate General Secretary in the person of Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang. This was the first time CCA had a woman as Associate General Secretary.

My Days in CCA

John V. Samuel



Bishop John V. Samuel from Pakistan was General Secretary from 1990 to 1995

We planned to bring the entire staff to Hong Kong. This was completed in about a year. We experienced financial problems both for program and administration but we were able to overcome this shortage of funds with special grants from some donors. We presented a plan to the General Committee to acquire property in Hong Kong for a CCA centre, which would house all our offices and also provide staff housing. The General Committee accepted this plan.

We immediately launched a fundraising campaign through our historic partners both in Asia and in the West.

Our meeting in Hanover with our Western partners was a memorable one. It was here that candid discussions took place and every one of the partners openly raised serious questions regarding our program and accountability. After a long discussion, I remember asking the group if it was right for them to demand from us what we were not responsible for.

This was a turning point in our discussion. The group agreed to support us and some appreciated our plan. We were to raise a certain percentage from Asia. The agencies and churches in the West contributed generously. I must also mention the generosity of Asian churches. On our appeal, the Mar Thoma Church, NCC Bangladesh and the Myanmar Council of Churches were the first ones to send their contributions.

I would like to mention an incident that happened during our fundraising efforts. Our friends in NCC Korea asked us to make a visit and meet some church leaders for fundraising for the centre. The Associate General Secretary for Finance, Rev. Tosh Arai, was with me and we were invited for dinner by a pastor of a large Presbyterian Church. The dinner was in an expensive restaurant. During our conversation the pastor kept telling us that he was very sorry he could not make a worthy contribution as he had already made commitments to other places. But he kept on saying that he would contribute. When we were about to finish the dinner he told us that he would give fifty thousand US dollars for the building. We could not believe our ears.

During our fundraising campaign we were time and again assured by

member churches and councils of their support. The staff, when travelling in the region for programs, was specially asked to take time to visit member councils and member churches. The way that leaders of the churches responded in giving money and analysing our work was a good sign. They had started feeling that CCA belonged to them.

The entire General Committee and staff team took interest in all our efforts, especially Dr Soritua Nababan, who travelled with us to have discussions with the donors in Hanover. I must mention our relationship with Roman Catholics through FABC. It was in Manila that a team was formed to have negotiations with FABC to find the way to have one ecumenical body representing all churches in Asia. We had a number of meetings together and decided to take first steps to cooperate and invited each other to our ongoing programs. This indicated the seriousness of our interest in creating such an ecumenical structure. Lots of work needs to be done to achieve this but I am glad that the beginning was made. I am sure this is a matter of satisfaction for all of us who participated in these efforts.

The centre that stands on the hill in Hong Kong is a symbol of our unity and our struggle together. We worked in unison and with the Holy Spirit for strengthening the churches in Asia and for building a New World for tomorrow.

John V. Samuel



The CCA Centre today



At the dedication of the CCA Centre: (centre left) Joseph Pattiasina, (centre right) Tosh Arai, (far right) Willandari Supardan, (back row right of Tosh Arai) Jennifer Dawson

Let me begin my article with a confession, namely that my direct involvement with CCA activities has been minimal. This is why I am writing this article without being entirely sure that I am really the right person to write something on the topic of the participation of the Indonesian churches in the life, struggle and development of the CCA.

I belong to a generation that was too young to fully participate when the EACC was founded forty-three years ago in Parapat, North Sumatra, in the western part of Indonesia. But I am already too old for CCA's Eleventh General Assembly now that it returns to this country. This time it will be held in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, in the eastern part of Indonesia.

From my limited observation, I dare to say that the relationship between the CCA and its member churches in Indonesia, like close relationships anywhere, has been characterised by ambivalence. It has had its ups and downs. I was physically present and directly involved during the Eighth CCA General Assembly in Seoul, when the Indonesian delegations made an unprecedented decision. It temporarily halted its active participation in all CCA structures, decision-making processes and activities. This was an attempt to give fair opportunities to both sides to reflect more seriously on their relationship. It is thus a great misunderstanding when people interpret the decision merely as a childish expression of dissatisfaction. We were disappointed, all right, but the 'explosion' was but a manifestation of a more profound mutual dissatisfaction from both sides. From the eyes of (most of) the Indonesian churches, CCA was seen as

Ups and Downs

Eka Darmaputera



Eka Darmaputera

having been led in the wrong direction. For these churches it had lost its most important identities: its 'churchliness' and its 'Asian-ness'. CCA had become more and more like a militant para-church political institution. On the other hand, from the perspectives of (most of the) CCA activists, the Indonesian churches were viewed as politically too conformist and theologically too conservative—too status-

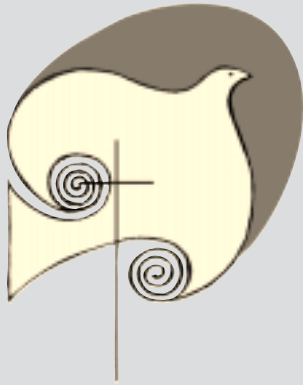
quo oriented. Despite all these issues, however, CCA has never disappeared from the hearts and minds of the Indonesian churches. When CCA was facing its most serious challenge and was expelled from Singapore in 1987, we did not keep our distance. And after some dialogue, the CCI agreed to host the Asia Mission Conference, which was held in Cipanas, West Java, Indonesia in 1989. It was meant to reflect on the mission and direction of the CCA in the future. Now we have two Indonesians serving as CCA Executive Staff. Interestingly enough, one of them is entrusted to manage the URM desk!

Now, although I am a veteran, I do not want to look only to the past. I also wish to express my hope for the future. I do hope that this Tomohon General Assembly will cause great momentum, be an inspiration for and a significant moral encouragement to the churches in Indonesia, particularly when they are in the midst of a still critical process of reformation and democratisation. I am convinced also that having Indonesia as the venue for this General Assembly will give CCA a chance to resharpen its churchliness and its Asian-ness.

Eka Darmaputera



The Asia Mission Conference held in Indonesia in 1989



CCA Assemblies



1st Assembly [of the East Asia Christian Conference]
 Theme The Common Evangelistic Task of the Churches in East Asia
 Date 17–26 March 1957
 Venue Prapat, Indonesia

2nd Assembly [the Inaugural Assembly]
 Theme Witnessing Together
 Date 14–26 May 1959
 Venue Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

3rd Assembly
 Theme The Christian Community within the Human Community
 Date 25 February – 5 March 1964
 Venue Bangkok, Thailand

4th Assembly
 Theme In Christ All Things Hold Together
 Date 30 January – 8 February 1968
 Venue Bangkok, Thailand

5th Assembly [of EACC—name is changed to CCA]
 Theme Christian Action in Asian Struggle
 Date 6–12 June 1973
 Venue Singapore

6th Assembly [of the Christian Conference of Asia]
 Theme Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope
 Date 31 May – June 1977
 Venue Penang, Malaysia

7th Assembly
 Theme Living in Christ with People
 Date 18–28 May 1981
 Venue Bangalore, India

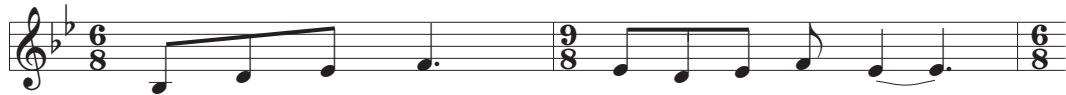
8th Assembly
 Theme Jesus Christ Sets Free to Serve
 Date 26–28 July 1985
 Venue Seoul, Korea

9th Assembly
 Theme Christ our Peace—Building a Just Society
 Date 4–12 June 1990
 Venue Quezon City, Manila, Philippines

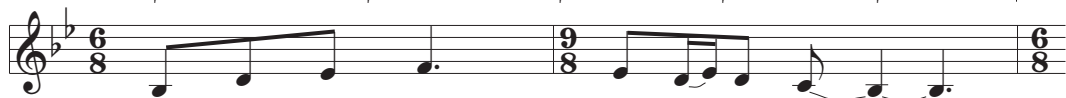
10th Assembly
 Theme Hope in God in a Changing Asia
 Date 8–14 June 1995
 Venue Colombo, Sri Lanka

11th Assembly
 Theme Time for Fullness of Life for All
 Date 1–6 June 2000
 Venue Tomohon, North Sulawesi, Indonesia

More Than We Know



1. More than we know, God works with - in us,
 2. He is God's eye, chang - ing our fo - cus,
 3. He is God's face, smile of the rain - bow,
 4. He is God's heart, tuned to our heart - beat,



more than we trust, mus - tard seeds grow,
 he is the light, flood - ing our mind,
 col - ours of peace, blend - ing us all,
 he is the air, lift - ing our wings,



more than we dream, God's pos - si - bi - li - ty,
 he is the fire, Spir - it and en - er - gy,
 he is the coin, God's new e - con - o - my,
 his are the arms stretched out to chal - lenge us,



this is the Gos - pel of love: for
 spark - ing our spir - it to shine,
 spend - ing to feed and to save,
 he is our cour - age to fly,

Refrain



Christ has come bring - ing us life, life in its full - ness and



joy for joy.

* (optional repeat of first verse if needed)

John 10: Life in All Its Fullness

Text: Shirley Murray

Music: Lu Chen Tiong. Based on Malay folk motives, Malaysia

25.03.2000

More Than We Know

Introduction

1. More than we know, God works with - in us, more than we trust,
2. He is God's eye, chang - ing our fo - cus, he is the light,
3. He is God's face, smile of the rain - bow, col - ours of peace,
4. He is God's heart, tuned to our heart - beat, he is the air,

- mus- tard seeds grow, more than we dream, God's pos- si- bi- li- ty,
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 lift- ing our wings, his are the arms stretched out to chal- lenge us,

- this is the Gos- pel of love: for Christ has come
 spark- ing our spir- it to shine,
 spend- ing to feed and to save,
 he is our cour- age to fly,

- bring- ing us life, life in its full- ness and joy. for joy.

Text: Shirley Murray. Based on John 10:10
 Music: Christian I. Tamaela, Indonesia. 2000

Opening Worship Speaker

Soritua Nababan



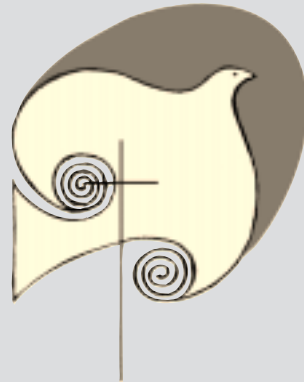
Dr Soritua Nababan will be the preacher at the Opening Worship Service of the CCA General Assembly.

One of Asia's most prominent ecumenical leaders, Dr Nababan has been associated with the CCA since its formation in 1957. He served as a steward at the Prapat Assembly of the EACC that year and later he became CCA Youth Secretary.

Dr Nababan was General Secretary of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and later he became its Moderator. In 1990 he became a President of CCA. He also served as Vice Moderator of the World Council of Churches from Canberra to Harare.

He was elected Ephoros of the biggest Protestant Church in Indonesia, the HKBP, and he continued in that position until 1998.

At present he serves as the President of United In Mission.



Assembly Speakers

Niles Lecturers

The Theme Presentations, which will also serve as the Niles Lectures for the 11th CCA General Assembly, will be delivered by three outstanding church leaders from Asia.

Wesley Ariarajah



Dr Wesley Ariarajah of Sri Lanka will give the main presentation on the theme of the Assembly, 'Time for Fullness of Life for All'. One of the outstanding theologians and ecumenical

leaders of Asia and known for his many writings and lectures in the field of religious plurality and interreligious dialogue, Dr Ariarajah is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka. He currently occupies the position of Professor of Ecumenical Theology at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, USA. Prior to his current position, he was Director of the Sub-Unit on Dialogue and later a Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches.

Wong Wai-Ching



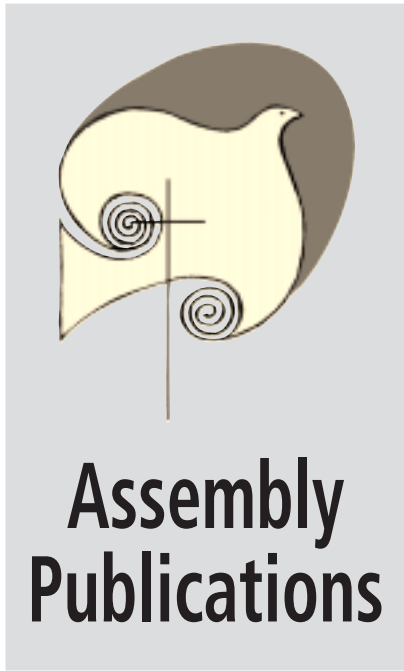
Dr Wong Wai-Ching of Hong Kong will give the presentation on the theme 'For Such a Time as This: Our Moment in God's Time'. A member of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (the Anglican Church of Hong Kong and Macau), Dr Wong currently occupies the position of Assistant Professor of Religion at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. One of the young and widely sought-after women theologians of Asia, Dr Wong earned her doctoral degree in Old Testament Studies and Feminist Theology from the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA. Prior to her present

position, she served as Secretary for Asia and the Pacific and later became Chairperson of the World Student Christian Federation.

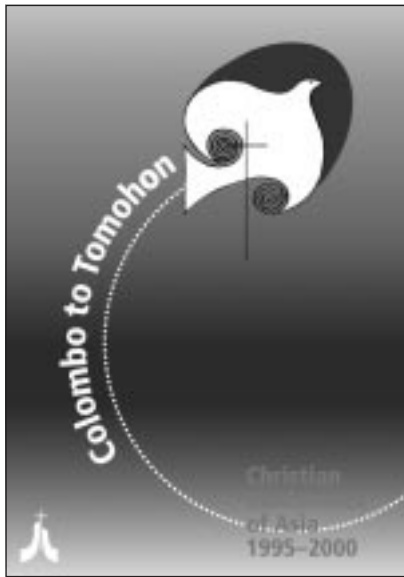
Leonor M. Briones



Professor Leonor M. Briones of the Philippines will give the presentation on 'New Communities for the New Millennium'. A member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Professor Briones currently occupies the very important position of National Treasurer of the Republic of the Philippines. In this position, she is among those few who are at the centre of economic policy formation for the Philippines at the crucial time in which the country emerges from the Asian economic crisis and faces the dilemmas and opportunities of economic globalisation. A trained economist and public administrator, Professor Briones teaches at the University of the Philippines. Prior to her present position, she served for many years as President of the Freedom from Debt Coalition, a non-governmental organisation in the Philippines that has been known the world over for its work on the issue of 'debt relief' of the countries of the Third World.



Colombo to Tomohon: Christian Conference of Asia 1995-2000



What has been going on in the life of the Christian Conference of Asia and what has it been doing since its Tenth General Assembly in Colombo? The reports and narratives in these pages attempt to answer these questions. What is recorded in these pages highlights the main issues in the agenda of the

CCA over these five years, the activities that have been undertaken to respond to them and the relationships that have been built to manifest its life. Hopefully it will give indication of life and work and a basis of discussion for the future.

Time for Fullness of Life for All: Biblical and Theological Reflections



Bible study has always been at the heart of the ecumenical movement, which emerged hand in hand with the 'rediscovery of the Bible' and the movement to encounter afresh the 'Word of God' amidst the many words we hear. It is for this reason that Bible study will again be one of the major components of the 11th General Assembly of the CCA.

We encourage you to meditate upon the Theme of the Assembly in a spirit of prayer and devotion. The churches and churches' councils are encouraged to have these materials translated for wider circulation and participation.

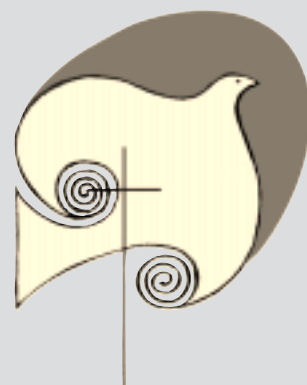
The trial edition of the Christian Conference of Asia hymnal, *Sound the Bamboo*, was launched at the 9th Assembly held in Manila in 1990. Since then it has been used extensively at many CCA events and in the worship gatherings of many groups in Asia and beyond. Now, after years of painstaking work and careful scholarship, the final and definitive version will be launched at the Tomohon Assembly.

Many people from different countries in Asia have contributed to this effort. Special mention should be made to the Editorial Committee: Dr I-to Loh of Taiwan (the General Editor), Dr Francisco F. Feliciano of the Philippines and Dr James Minchin of Australia. Dr Feliciano V. Cariño, General Secretary of the CCA, writes of them, 'The three pursued this task with a tenacity, devotion and skill that are hard to duplicate anywhere. We are grateful to them for this lasting and important contribution to the life of the churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia.'

Dr I-to Loh, an ethnomusicologist, is former professor of the Asia Institute for Liturgy and Music, and present President of Tainan Theological Seminary in Taiwan. He has been involved with previous CCA Assemblies, especially in worship leading and promoting songs. He has dedicated more than twenty years of his life to the development of authentic Asian hymns.

Our thanks and appreciation to:

- The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) for their financial support for the printing.
- The Taiwan Church Press for the printing.
- Vuluk Chao-tsai Lai for designing the book cover.
- All those who supported this revised version and worked hard for its publication.



Sound the Bamboo



I-to Loh

The General Editor of *Sound the Bamboo*, I-to Lo, writes:

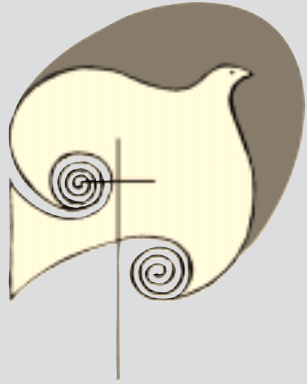
'After ten years of trial use, re-revisions and enlargement, *Sound the Bamboo: CCA Hymnal 1990* is finally reborn, at the beginning of the new millennium. This hymnal represents the significant step the churches in Asia have taken in worship, proclamation of the gospel, doing contextual theologies and the ministry of the people.

'Eleven hymns from the 1990 edition were removed, and forty-six new ones, mostly from countries that were previously under-represented, have been added. The new edition, contains 315 hymns in forty-one languages. Some hymns have been rewritten, paraphrased or recomposed, but apart from one exception, the original numbering system has been retained for familiarity and continuity's sake. The editorial committee has taken much care in improving all the translations, especially in regards to their fidelity to the original language, their singability and the use of gender-inclusive language and God talk. Many transliterations and spellings have been revised to conform to national practices, and new guidelines for pronunciation have also been added.

'This undoubtedly is the best collection of Asian hymns available. It not only provides excellent musical, hymnological and worship resources for Christians around the world, but also is aimed to stimulate students of church music and theology in Asia to create new hymns and compositions for the next generation.

'We hope that Asian Christians will sing these new songs to the Lord. Soli Deo gloria.'

I-to Loh



Retrospective

Assemblies Past



D.T. Niles



Bishop Enrique C. Sobrepeña of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines directs work on a report during the East Asia Christian Conference at Prapat, Indonesia, in March 1957



Above: Plenary Session of the 4th Assembly of EACC in Bangkok, Thailand, 1968

Right: A private conversation during a break at the 6th Assembly of CCA, Penang, Malaysia, in 1977 (with Dr Soritua Nababan at the left)

Below: Gathering for worship at the 8th Assembly of CCA in Seoul, Korea, 1985



Top right: Delegates at the 5th Assembly of EACC (CCA) in Singapore, 1973

Middle right: Bible Study group at the 7th Assembly of CCA, Bangalore, India, in 1981

Bottom right: Plenary session at the 8th Assembly





Her Excellency, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranatunga, President of Sri Lanka, at the 10th Assembly and CCA President Rev. Prakai Nontawasee of Thailand.

Left: Banners at the Opening Worship at the CCA 9th Assembly in Manila, Philippines, 1990 (Feliciano V. Cariño and Park Sang Jung to the left under the banner)



The Presidium at the 10th Assembly of CCA in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1995 (from left: Mr Sardar Feroze Khan, Dr Soritua Nababan, Rev. Prakai Nontawasee, Bishop John V. Samuel, Mr Chang Yoon Jae, Rev. Maejima Munetoshi)

Cluster 1

General Secretariat

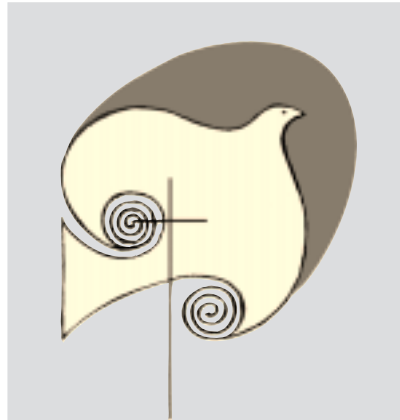
The General Secretariat has the major responsibility to coordinate the administration, the finance and the overall programs of CCA. In addition, the General Secretariat is in charge of fostering relationships with CCA member churches and councils and other ecumenical organisations and related bodies, including the World Council of Churches, regional ecumenical organisations and partner churches and agencies around the world.

The relationship between the CCA and the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) has improved significantly during the past five years. Joint activities include invitations to and participation in each others' meetings and programs and the organisation of joint programs, such as the seminars on Asian Movement for Christian Unity and Joint Ecumenical Formation.

This emphasis is meant to foster ecumenical relations at the national and local or parish levels that will make Christians of all churches realise the importance of 'making visible the unity in Christ that already exists'.

The CCA holds a joint working group with the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) Asia Pacific region that is intended to strengthen the churches' response to the ecumenical student ministry.

It also holds a joint working group with the World Council of Churches



CCA Programs: An Overview 1995–2000



Feliciano V. Cariño, General Secretary

that aims to work towards a common understanding of the ecumenical mission of CCA and WCC, develop guidelines for cooperation in responding to common concerns and form common policies and procedures for ecumenical resource development in Asia.

The staff of the General Secretariat also coordinates CCA Communications and the Program Unit for Theological Concerns.

Theological Concerns

Theological concerns are at the heart of the life of the CCA. A vigorous program must be maintained and developed, especially in light of the enormous changes that are happening in Asian churches and societies.

The work of the unit revolves around developing an Asian theological agenda, giving attention to emerging theological formations in Asia and probing their importance to the life and mission of the church, providing opportunities to share theological concerns and assisting the theological formation of a new generation of leaders in the Asian ecumenical movement. The Program Unit on Theological Concerns (PUTC) provided the main impetus for the organisation of the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), which was held in Suwon, Korea, in 1997. CATS II was held in Bangalore, India, in 1999 and CATS III is planned to be held in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, in 2001.

CATS is now considered one of the largest gatherings of theologians in the world.

Its purpose is to provide 'ecumenical space' and a continuing structure

for the sharing of theological work and for promoting cooperation in theological studies and reflection.

Noting that no significant event in 'Church and Society' had taken place in Asia since the 1960s, PUTC called for an Asian Conference on Church and Society to analyse critical issues emerging out of changing social, economic and political conditions towards the twenty-first century.

It also sought to help churches to understand these new conditions and determine their witness under these new realities.

It provided an occasion for revitalising Asian contributions to ecumenical social thought and it attempted to assist churches and organisations to continue to understand pertinent issues. The Conference was held in 1999 in Darwin, Australia.

Program Coordination



Henriette T. Hutabarat Lebang, Associate General Secretary for Program Coordination and staff in charge of CCA-FABC relations, MRIA concerns and other intercluster programs

Finance



Ahn Jae Woong, Associate General Secretary for Finance

After the Colombo Assembly in 1995 the CCA had accumulated deficits, but in 1998 all deficits were cleared. The day-to-day CCA financial operations of bookkeeping and transactions are running smoothly in a computerised accounting system. CCA is registered and incorporated in Hong Kong under the Company Ordinance and holds the Certificate of Incorporation issued on 23 July 1996 as Christian Conference of Asia, Ltd. The word 'Limited' was dropped from the registered name as of 14 March 1999 so that the original name of Christian Conference of Asia can be retained as a permanent entity.

There have been three people in charge of finance over the past five years. Rev. Dr Tosh Arai completed his term in September 1996 and was immediately succeeded by Christine Ledger. In January 1999, Ahn Jae Woong took over the post from Christine Ledger who returned to Australia during the same month.

Cluster 2

Mission, Unity and Ecumenical Formation

Mission and Evangelism



Daniel S. Thiagarajah, Executive Secretary for Mission and Evangelism

The work of the Program Unit on Mission and Evangelism since the last General Assembly has revolved around five major thrusts: Mission and Unity, Equipping Local Congregations for Mission, the Ecumenical Enablers' Program, Mission and Dialogue and a Theological Roundtable on Frontiers in Christian Mission.

The program on Equipping Local Congregations for Mission was conducted through 'Reading the Bible with New Eyes'.

The main purpose of this program is to understand mission as both local and collective activities of local churches in grappling with changing situations in a globalised world, as living with people in Christ, as bringing the good news of God's enabling presence in the midst of the poor and the oppressed and as transforming the church into an inclusive community that bears the good news of hope.

This goal was planned in three stages. First it was intended to create a human resource base at the regional and national levels.

Secondly, it sought to involve congregations as a whole in a program of study, reflection and action. Finally all programs were done seeking the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and the independent evangelical churches.

'The People of God among All God's Peoples: Frontiers in Christian Mission' was a theological roundtable conducted with the assistance of CWM in London. The purpose was to probe the frontiers of Christian mission in our time and to initiate a rigorous and sustained process of reflection on the critical missiological issues that we face in this new era. In so doing, we were able to articulate some of the challenges that we see for our churches, and which will need much further exploration in the years to come.

The M&E Desk continues to provide assistance to nurture solidarity among Asian churches in seeking and expressing unity and partnership in mission by way of short-term exchanges, visits and travel of resource persons as part of the Asian Missionary Support Program (AMSP).

Education



Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Executive Secretary for Education and for Women's Concerns

The changing situation in Asia, which has affected long-held traditional and Christian values and has had an impact on family and community lives, shows the necessity of strengthening Christian education in the local congregation.

We need liberation and empowerment to celebrate and affirm life and faith in the midst of crucial circumstances.

In order to implement our mandates within staff and financial limitations, the Education Desk worked in cooperation with other program units and with networks.

The following program thrusts were within the framework of the cluster of Mission, Unity and Ecumenical Formation: educating for mission, leadership development, addressing social issues and educating for inclusive community. Educating for mission was done in cooperation with the Program Unit

for Mission and Evangelism. The Education Desk provided educational methodology and leadership in liturgy for the Ecumenical Enablers' training. Leadership development continued to be implemented through the Asia Ecumenical Educational Exchange program and the Asia Ecumenical Course. Addressing migrant workers' issues was implemented through the special program on Migrant Workers, Refugees and Internally Displaced Communities in Asia (MRIA) through an organised writers workshop.

Educating for inclusive community was implemented through two simultaneously held workshops on curriculum of Christian education and worship.

Women's Concerns

Women in Asia continue to suffer from various forms of discrimination, oppression, subjugation and exploitation because of their gender. Despite the efforts and gains of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women and the Beijing World Conference on Women, centuries of women's suffering remain to challenge the church's obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ and accountability in addressing the injustices women are experiencing in church and society. Women's issues must remain a priority in the ecumenical movement.

The main program thrusts of the program unit have been women's leadership development, addressing women's issues, training on gender and development, women's spirituality, partnership among Asian women's organisations and networking.

The program unit organised workshops and consultations aimed not only at women but also at women and men concerning partnership in inclusive community.

It also arranged women-to-women visits in cooperation with the WCC.

It arranged for training of facilitators on gender and development, women's assemblies and, through networks, it arranged theological and non-theological education for women.

Activities also included meetings with networks for strengthening women's joint efforts for justice, peace and reconciliation.

Gender balance in the activities of different program units was always a major consideration in the choice of participants.

Youth



Cynthia Yuen, Executive Secretary for Youth

Inspired and mandated by the General Assembly in Colombo, the program of the CCA Youth in the

past five years has been geared towards the following priorities:

- consolidation of the ecumenical youth movement at local, national, regional and inter-regional levels,
- development of youth leaders with ecumenical vision who will work towards the transformation of church and ecumenical structures,
- networking between ecumenical youth movements, action groups and the wider movement.

To actualise these concerns, the programs are clustered around four focuses, namely: movement building, leadership and theological formation, faith contextualisation and social concerns.

Initiatives organised by local church youth, networking with NCC youth secretaries, organising leadership training programs, conducting regional workshops and consultations on various cutting-edge social issues and theological concerns are some of the actions taken to implement these focuses.

We have also installed an internship program, facilitated young people to attend various meetings and exposures and distributed worship materials on identified issues to our network.

CCA Youth also sees the importance of networking with the wider ecumenical youth movement.

In the past five years, we have put much effort into coorganising the Asia Student and Youth Gathering 2000 along with four regional youth organisations (WSCF-AP, Asia Alliance of YMCAs, IMCS-AP, IYCSAsia).

This has proved to be successful in fostering ecumenism among the different youth groups, not only at regional but also at national levels.

Cluster 3

Witness and Service

Development and Service



Prawate Khid-arn, Executive Secretary for Development and Service

The CCA Development and Service Program draws inspiration from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself opted to be poor, was born homeless and lived in exile. Jesus declared his ministry to be good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, setting free of the oppressed.

We affirm that development and service are means of redeeming the mission of Christ, our Lord, among the peoples in Asia as well as in other parts of the world, giving hope for a better quality of life for those who are poor, both spiritually and physically.

'Development education' is a basic thrust of the Development and Service Desk. It is meant to enable and strengthen the church's participation in human development and social justice. Development, in this context, is a conscious process leading to action for liberation of people and social transformation—returning life, human rights and power to the poor. It is a process of liberation in which justice, people's participation, self-reliance, quality of life and meeting of basic human needs are pursued.

To ensure this pattern, strategies and programs have been formulated including leadership and capability training, consultations and workshops, personnel exchanges, networking and local initiatives support.

International Affairs



Mathews George Chunakara, Executive Secretary and Coordinator for International Affairs and Indochina Concerns

Dramatic changes have been taking place in Asia's social, economic and political arena in the past five years. The new politi-

cal landscape in Asia has wider implications for international relations. The repressive authoritarian regime in Indonesia has fallen. The peoples' right to self-determination in East Timor has been recognised. Strategic security alliances have been redefined and have added more tensions.

Ethnic conflicts and communal violence have raised their ugly heads in many parts of Asia. Militarisation has been rampant and human rights violations have continued systematically. Religious fundamentalism has threatened the secular democratic fabrics and pillars of different Asian countries. Peace and security is threatened with an increasing arms race and arms trade. Globalisation has changed people's lives.

In the midst of these realities the International Affairs Unit has been monitoring the emerging issues in Asia. Peace and security in the Korean peninsula, the US–Japan security guidelines, the tension between China and Taiwan, tension over the Spratly Islands and the Visiting Forces Agreement of the US and the Philippines have been serious concerns for the Asian ecumenical movement. Ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka, political unrest and human rights violations in Nepal, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, East Timor, India–Pakistan tension, religious fundamentalism, militarisation of politics in Pakistan, the Asian economic crisis and its impact have also been of great concern.

Human rights advocacy and human rights education are the thrusts of International Affairs. Annual human rights training courses have been organised for church workers and pastors since 1997 at the Asian regional

level. National-level human rights training programs were initiated in countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and in Cambodia in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

Regarding the deteriorating situation of religious freedom and human rights, a study program has been initiated with the participation of church representatives and human rights activists from nineteen Asian countries. Two regional consultations were organised on Religious Freedom and Human Rights in 1999 and 2000. Within the context of ethnic conflicts and civil war, we tried to respond to the need for promoting peace and reconciliation. In addition to that the International Affairs desk has taken on the responsibility of refugees' concerns and human rights related issues of migrants and internally displaced peoples.

Consultations, seminars, workshops, training programs, studies and solidarity visits have also been organised in the past five years.

Indochina Concerns

The countries of Indochina have been undergoing tremendous change in the post–Cold War era. Although the old Cold War politics have vanished from the Indochina subregion and these countries have been transformed from closed-door socialist societies to market-oriented economies, the ruins of their past still hinder development and negatively affect people's lives.

The legacy of war and isolation still gives misery to millions of people. The people of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia are as a result among the world's

most exploited, needy, broken and hurt and in pain. The growth of fundamentalist groups has created deep divisions within and animosity between the small Christian communities.

The main program thrusts of the Indochina Desk of the CCA have been within the framework of ecumenical formation, leadership development in church and society, people-to-people exchange programs and addressing social issues like sex tourism, HIV/AIDS concerns, the campaign against landmines in Cambodia, Agent Orange defoliation in Vietnam, and unexploded ordnance in Laos. Its focus involves analysis and interpretation of the situations, advocacy and awareness building, developing good relations with governments and churches. In order to achieve these mandates, the Indochina desk organised programs such as leadership development training for church leaders and government officials, consultations and seminars, Bible study workshops, training for women and youth, workshops on human rights advocacy and training for church leaders on HIV/AIDS concerns. It also included visits of Indochina church members to other Asian countries, solidarity visits of church leaders from other Asian countries to Indochina, Asian church leaders visit to Vietnam and visits of Laotian church leaders and government officials visits to the People's Republic of China. It has arranged theological education in different Asian countries for students from Indochina, Indochina church leaders' meetings, Indochina Women's Consultations and Indochina Youth Consultations. The Indochina desk played a pivotal role in the formation of the Kampuchea Christian

Council (KCC) and the formation of the Cambodia Christian Women's Association and the Cambodia Christian Youth Association. All these efforts are meant as the Asian ecumenical movement's humble service to the people and churches in Indochina to bring them into mainstream Asian life and the Asian ecumenical movement.

Urban Rural Mission



Josef P. Widyatmadja, Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission

During the past five years, URM has tried to act out God's love by empowering people in their struggle for humanisation, especially in regards to social, economic and political transformation and cultural rights of marginalised people. In the past five years URM has carried out its program on the local, national and regional level in Asia through its network. There are several focus sectors that are carried out by URM:

- rural economic and social justice; impact of globalisation and foreign debt on farmers, migrants and industrial workers,

- self-determination for indigenous people and rights of minority groups,
- empowering grassroots women.

The implementation of this program is through training, exchange visits, solidarity and networking.

Inter-cluster Programs

Program on Migrant Workers, Refugees and Internally Displaced Communities in Asia (MRIA)

Migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced communities constitute painful expressions of the human condition in our time. It is a pressing problem all over the world. Amidst the glitter of economic progress in many Asian countries, the flow of cheap migrant labour and the forcible displacement of people are critical issues in the life and mission of the church. MRJA aims at tapping local churches, national councils, lay volunteers, interchurch and inter-council exchange for joint efforts in putting together modest but serious efforts at awareness building, education, advocacy and concrete actions dealing with concrete needs. MRJA has been organised as an inter-unit effort in CCA. It involves almost all units, but especially URM, Development and Service and International Affairs and is under the coordination of the Associate General Secretary for Program Coordination.

Asia Ecumenical Course 2000

16 May – 10 June 2000

One of CCA's priorities is to facilitate the development of leaders for the ecumenical movement in Asia. The Asia Ecumenical Course is a one-month training course aimed at equipping potential leaders with basic knowledge, attitudes and skills in ecumenical leadership. It allows participants to reflect on Asian realities, the history of the ecumenical movement at the national, regional and global levels, historical overviews of traditions of churches in the ecumenical movement, the spirituality of our neighbours, liturgy, music and current expressions of the ecumenical movement.

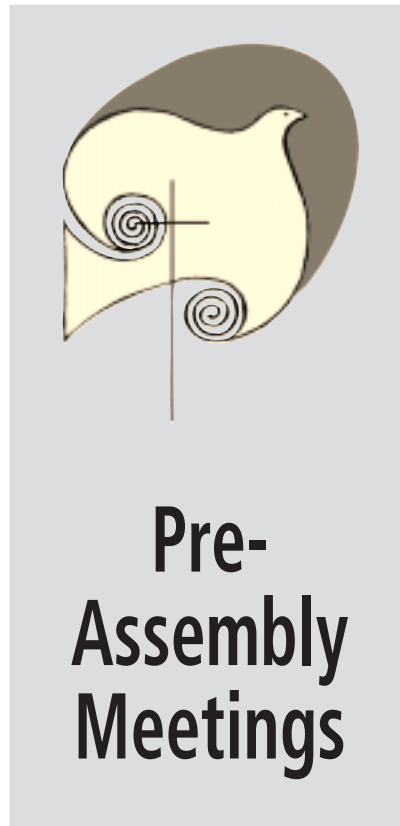
AEC seeks to inspire participants to carry on the ecumenical leadership of churches in Asia and to help them engage in community building and deepen their spirituality and experiential learning. AEC 2000 will be held at Wisma Samadi in Tomohon.

Corazon Tabang-Reyes

People's Forum

23–30 May 2000

The first People's Forum to be organised by CCA-URM was held in Singapore in 1973. Church workers, social activists and representatives of peasant and labour organisations attended the forum and shared the experiences of their struggles. The purpose of the forum was to build up and strengthen mutual understanding among these sectors and the churches in Asia. Since



the 1973 CCA Assembly, URM has organised People's Forum assemblies prior to CCA General Assemblies. This time People's Forum will be held in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

People's Forum 2000 will be focusing mainly on four issues:

- the ideology and theology of URM in the new millennium,
- globalisation and foreign debt and their impact on society,
- religion and violence,
- CCA-URM beyond 2000.

The People's Forum will facilitate a dialogue between those who are in church institutions and those who work amidst common people. The intention is to analyse the present social situation in Asia and to reflect on it from a theological point of view as to how the church can work amidst Asian people in the new century.

There will be eighty participants at the People's Forum and four speakers. Dr Kim Yong Bock will speak on 'Ideology and Theology', Dr Kavaljit Singh will speak about 'The Asian Crisis and the People's Struggle', Dr Anne Pattel Gray will speak about 'Biblical Reflection', and Dr J.B. Banawiratma will speak about 'Religion and Violence'.

Josef P. Widyatmadja

Women's Forum

27–30 May 2000

The Women's Forum is a pre-Assembly gathering of women delegates to the CCA Assembly, along with resource persons and guests. It aims to:

- creatively prepare women delegates for meaningful participation in the Assembly,
- reflect on the theme of the Assembly from women's perspectives as they consider biblical messages and prepare a statement that contributes to CCA's program direction,
- foster sister bonding among women ecumenical leaders.

This forum is meant to be an empowering gathering of women from different Asian countries and church traditions. Participants will engage in worship and community building, Bible studies, workshops on issues related to the theme of the Assembly, creative sharing, study of CCA's vision, structure and Assembly procedure, and celebration. It seeks to be a way of being church and of being a part of an inclusive community in pluralistic society. The local congregation in Kombi of the Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa (GMIM) will host the forum.

Corazon Tabang-Reyes

Youth Forum

27–31 May 2000

Just before the Assembly a group of young people from CCA member churches and councils will be participating as stewards and youth delegates in the Pre-Assembly Youth Forum. Following the General Assembly, the theme of the Youth Forum is 'The Stories of Our Struggle for Fullness of Life for All'. The issues for our exposure program will be: labour, the impact of tourism, religious conflicts and refugees, women and land rights. This is intended to help the participants to connect to the struggle for full humanity in their own respective countries. Biblical and theological reflections will be facilitated by Septemmy Lakawa, a young feminist theologian from Indonesia. Participants at the Youth Forum will have an opportunity to learn about the Assembly process and will give a critical proposal of their vision to CCA Youth and to the Assembly. This will serve as one of the inputs for the Assembly to plan our program direction for the next five years. The Youth Forum is hosted by one of the GMIM local churches. We are thankful to the church for organising the opening worship, providing a church for our activities and giving all the Youth Forum participants the opportunity to stay at people's homes.

As the GMIM General Secretary, Rev. Nico Gara, shared with us during our preparatory meeting in early February, 'It will be an Assembly of the people. By having this Assembly in Tomohon, participants will be staying with the local community and seeing the life as they see it.'

Cynthia Yuen

Amity Celebrates Fifteen Years of Service

The Amity Foundation, the social development program of the China Christian Council, celebrated its anniversary with an international ecumenical consultation on social development. The three-day consultation brought together more than eighty participants from twenty-two countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. There were representatives from churches, mission boards, regional ecumenical organisations, church-related development agencies and NGOs and the Christian Conference of Asia and the World Council of Churches.

At the welcome banquet, Bishop K.H. Ting, President of Amity's Board of Directors, recalled the origins of Amity, which was initiated by a group of Chinese Christians. The name means 'virtue of love'. According to Bishop Ting, one of Amity's aims is to 'awaken the social conscience of Chinese Christians' and to respond to the many social needs in Chinese society. Its existence also provides a means by which Christians abroad may relate to Christians in China.

The consultation and the exposure visits to Amity projects in three different provinces that preceded it provided participants with a better understanding of the broader context in which Amity functions. These visits brought participants to remote rural areas where Amity has a wide range of projects, including medical training

for village doctors, drinking water and irrigation projects, integrated rural development projects and micro-credit projects for women.

In his keynote address, Prof. Lu Xueyu of the Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, gave an overview of China's rapid transitions from a rural to an urban society and from a planned economy to a market-oriented one. He pointed out issues relating to the Chinese economy and the effects of reform efforts, including bankruptcies, unemployment and the rise in urban poverty. In calling for solutions he stressed the need to develop social safety nets in the midst of social and economic reforms.

In his closing remarks, Dr Han Wenzao, Amity's General Secretary, pointed out that Amity is now exploring domestic sources of funding and paying more attention to capacity building. There have been recent efforts to broaden Amity's links with both local Chinese and International NGOs. Dr Han said that more effort would be made in future to engage Chinese churches in development work. On behalf of Amity Foundation, he expressed heartfelt thanks to all of Amity's partners for their continued support. He said, 'Your support for Amity goes beyond poverty reduction—it helps develop civil society and nurture a culture in which people themselves can better and more fully assume their social responsibilities.'

From Laos to China

Historic Visit of Church Leaders and Government Officials of Lao People's Democratic Republic to People's Republic of China

Two church leaders and two high-ranking government officials from the Lao People's Democratic Republic visited the People's Republic of China 8–17 March on the invitation of the China Christian Council. The meeting was facilitated by the Indochina Desk of the CCA.

Mr Phou Ngeune Phoumivong, Director of the Division of Religions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Mr Singkham Keoviaynanh, Director of the Division for External Relations of the Communist Party of Laos in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rev. Khamphone Kounthapanya, General Secretary of the Lao Evangelical Church and Rev. Sengdao Somphounout, Senior Pastor, Vientiane Capital City Church, were members of the delegation.

Until recently the churches in Laos and China had never been in contact. The first visit of two Laotian church leaders was facilitated by the CCA Indochina Desk in 1998.

That visit paved the way for organising the second visit with the participation of the government officials of Laos. Laos, traditionally a Cold War ally of the Soviet Union, and China have become closer in the economic and political arena since the end of the Cold War.

Bishop K.H. Ting, Rev. Han Wen Zao and other officers of the China Christian Council welcomed the Laotian delegation. The members of the delegation visited Beijing, Nanjing and

Shanghai. In Beijing, the delegation was able to meet with the Deputy Director of the Religious Affairs Bureau and other officials of the RAB. The other important places the delegation visited included the Beijing Christian Council office, the Amity Foundation printing press, theological seminaries in Nanjing and Shanghai, churches and Religious Affairs Bureau offices in Nanjing and Shanghai. Rev. Khamphone was invited to preach at St Paul's Cathedral in Nanjing.

On completion of their visit, the members of the delegation reported that for people living and working in a closed-door society since 1975, this historic visit was an eye opener as they could understand many important matters on church–state relations in the People's Republic of China. As China and Laos still follow the same

political system, the government officials and the church leaders learned many things from the experiences of the Christians and the government officials in China.

Rev. Khamphone, the General Secretary of the Lao Evangelical Church said, 'We learned many things during our visit to China. The freedom enjoyed by our fellow Christians in China was impressive. We were moved by the fact that we heard that CCC has now a 16 million membership, 13,000 churches, 25,000 meeting points and eighteen seminaries and they have printed 25 million copies of the Bible. We considered this trip was successful and historical. Our visit to China will strengthen the relationship between the churches in these two countries in future.'

Mathews George Chunakara



Laotian delegation at China Christian Council Head Office with CCC leadership

WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser Visits the Philippines and Indonesia

Rising militarism, the extent of inter-church cooperation, and ongoing attempts to redefine the meaning of being church made a strong impression on Dr Konrad Raiser on his first official visit to the Philippines as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. Accompanying Dr Raiser on his 11–17 March visit to the Philippines was the incoming Asia Secretary of the WCC and current CCA Executive Secretary for International Affairs, Dr Mathews George Chunakara.

During his visit, Raiser met with leaders of WCC member churches, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, public officials, and women and peace groups in Manila. He also visited a Muslim community and leaders of a Muslim separatist movement in southern Philippines. Raiser said there had been ample opportunity for very frank talk with the public officials he met.

A wide range of issues, including militarisation and the death penalty, were taken up in meetings with Chief Justice Hilario Davide Sandiganbayan, Justice Raoul Victorino and former Senator Jovito Salonga. Raiser also met with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin. He said he perceived no easing in the military build-up on either side in the southern island of Mindanao, where military troops are fighting the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front. He expressed the hope that both sides would take the negotiation process seriously and scale down the military presence. Raiser cited the experiences of Central and Latin America and the Philippines in the recent past, and noted 'a trend towards resolving conflict through military means.

At meetings with the heads of churches, Raiser emphasised the importance of local congregations being at the frontline. 'As the smallest units

of the church, they are part of the people's lives. They are privileged with the knowledge of where the people are afraid, and what the churches should confront.'

Besides Manila, Raiser visited Midsayap Town and Cotabato City in Mindanao, where he spoke with the Ghazali Jaffar, vice chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the most serious contender for power in the South among the Muslim groups. Raiser also spoke at three public gatherings. The first was a Sunday worship service, where he delivered a sermon on the continuing need for churches to be in solidarity with women. The second was a forum with church leaders and seminary students, where Raiser spoke on the ecumenical challenges posed by 'Jubilee'. The third was at a festival of women.

During his visit to Indonesia, from 17 to 26 March, Dr Raiser met with Abdur Rahman Wahid, the President of Indonesia. His forty-five-minute conversation with the Indonesian President was extremely cordial, open and frank. He was able to express many of his concerns about the situation in Indonesia and, although no guarantees had been either sought or given, Raiser said the President had given him an attentive hearing.

Accompanying the WCC General Secretary on his official visit to the President's office were the General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, Dr Feliciano Cariño, and WCC



Konrad Raiser (centre) greets Cardinal Jaime Sin in Manila. Mathews George Chunakara on right

International Relations Executive Secretary, Mr Clement John. During a press conference after the meeting, Raiser reported that he had first expressed his appreciation for the President's religious and ethnic tolerance, and then raised the topic of anti-Christian violence in Indonesia. The WCC is as much concerned about Muslim victims as about burnings of churches, Raiser declared.

President Abdurahman Wahid, or Gus Dur as he is familiarly known, emphasised the magnitude of the problem, part of which is due to an 'imbalance' left by the preceding regime, and by the Dutch colonial administration before that. When two past presidents replaced thirty-eight Christian officials with Muslims, the Christians had protested. For the President, the first thing to do was to correct the imbalance. But he agreed with the WCC General Secretary that confrontation in some areas, like Aceh, had been fuelled by the armed forces' intervention.



Konrad Raiser (centre) and CCA General Secretary, Feliciano V. Cariño (right) meet Indonesian President, Abdurahman Wahid (Photo: Peter Williams/WCC)

Dr Raiser addressed a public meeting in Medan and also addressed the General Assembly of Communion of Churches in Indonesia in Palankaraya. In Jakarta, he met with church leaders from the conflict affected areas of Ambon, Halmahara and Aceh.

Mathews George Chunakara

Network of Theological Enquiry (NOTE)

A Consultation of the Network of Theological Enquiry (NOTE) was sponsored by the Council for World Mission and the Christianity in Asia Project at the Centre for Advanced Religious Studies of the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University, UK, on 26–31 March 2000. It was held on the theme 'The Role of Religion in the New Millennium: Prospects, Problems and Perspectives—Issues for Exploration'. The venue was New Hall, Cambridge.

NOTE brought together twenty-nine theologians from Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific for sharing theological concerns and projects and for exploring the role of religion in the new millennium. The first NOTE Consultation was held in 1997 at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, on the theme, 'The Asian Theo-

logical Scene: Concerns and Coalitions'. The second was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1998 on the theme 'Theology and Partnership in a Global World.' The following presentations were made:

- 'The Role of Religion in the New Millennium'—Fr Felix Wilfred (India) and Dr Julius Lipner (Cambridge, UK),
- 'Christian Contributions/Perspectives'—Dr David Ford (Cambridge, UK) and Dr John de Gruchy (South Africa),
- 'The Challenge of Postmodernism'—Dr Kang Nam Soon (Korea) and Prof. Beet Hoedemaker (The Netherlands),
- 'The Challenge of Religious and Cultural Plurality'—Dr Thomas Thangaraj (USA, and India) and Dr George Mulrain (West Indies).

A panel presentation on Biblical Theological Reflections was held on the final day.

Dr Archie Lee of Hong Kong, Dr Nestor Miguez of Argentina and Bailey Wells of Cambridge, UK, were on the panel.

The purpose of NOTE was to promote a conscious effort towards building networks and coalitions of theological concerns in an increasingly globalised world. This consultation follows very much the line of the Theological Roundtable on Frontiers in Christian Mission that was jointly organised by the Mission and Evangelism Desk of CCA and Council for World Mission (CWM).

Dr Daniel S. Thiagarajah, Executive Secretary for Mission and Evangelism, participated in this year's consultation.

Daniel S. Thiagarajah

Rev. Kyung-Chik Han



Rev. Kyung-Chik Han, pastor emeritus of Seoul's Youngnak Presbyterian Church and moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (1955–56), passed away on 19 April 2000. The funeral service was attended by church leaders from South Korea and abroad with thousands more attending than could be accommodated in the church sanctuary. Rev. Kyu-Ho Lee, present moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, presided at the funeral service, while former moderator Rev. Ji-Il Pang delivered the message.

Pastor Han is survived by his son, Rev. He-Won Han, his daughter Soon-Hee Han and by seven grandchildren. His wife, Chan Bin Kim, predeceased him. Born in 1902 in Gan-ri, Pyungannam-do, North Korea, Rev. Han graduated from Soongsil College, the College of Emporia and Princeton Theological Seminary. He received three honorary doctorates. He was ordained in 1933 and served as pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Shineuiju, North Korea.

After coming South as a refugee, Pastor Han founded Seoul's Youngnak Presbyterian Church in 1945. It soon

became the largest congregation in South Korea. Rev. Han was a leader in founding Daekwang Junior and Senior High Schools, Seoul Women's University and Youngnak Women's Theological Seminary as well as being reorganiser for Bosung Girl's Junior and Senior High Schools and Soongsil College.

Pastor Han founded an orphanage, a widows' home and a home for the elderly related to Youngnak Church. He was a board chairperson of World Vision Korea and Holt Children's Services. He was President of the National Council of Churches of Korea, the Honorary Chairperson for the National Evangelism Movement and the Chair of the Korean Protestant Churches Anniversary Committee. He was also a delegate to the Inaugural Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia and supported the ecumenical movement in many ways.

Pastor Han's contributions were recognised when he received South Korea's highest civilian award in 1970, the Rose of Sharon Award. His significant life and ministry were held up for world attention when he received the Templeton Prize in Religion in 1992.

'The Secular City' Named 'Most Decisive Book'

The Evangelical (Protestant) Theological Faculty of Marburg University in Germany has selected Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* as one of the two most 'decisive books' in Protestant theology in the twentieth century. The other is Karl Barth's *Epistle to the Romans*.

Cox, who is Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity at Harvard University, was informed of the choice in a letter from Dr Michael Haspel of Marburg and invited to a celebration that took place in February.

The celebration included a program featuring the music favoured by the two theologians. For Barth it was, of course, Mozart.

For Cox it was American jazz. Cox, a lifelong tenor saxophone player, recently appeared as guest soloist with the jazz orchestra Aardvark at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion.

Harvard Divinity School

Second Consultation on Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Asia

Freedom of religion is given a central place as a fundamental right in the constitutions of most Asian countries. It also has a prominent place in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Despite this, religious intolerance and religious persecution are on the increase in several Asian countries.

Too often religion is used as an instrument for gaining political power and promoting the exclusive claims of one group at the expense of others. Religious intolerance is often shown against other religions and against people of other faiths and beliefs. Several countries in Asia do not seem to be adhering to the provisions on religious freedom and rights as provided for in their constitutions and laws.

The Christian Conference of Asia International Affairs Unit has studied the situation of religious freedom and human rights in Asia. As part of this process, two consultations were organised. The Second Consultation, focusing on nine countries in Asia, was held in Hong Kong, 14–17 February 2000. Sixteen participants attended.

Several common issues were identified such as constitutional guarantees that are violated in most Asian countries. In a number of situations there is no separation of religion and state and in other situations there is a state religion. Religious fundamentalism undermines religious freedom in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangla-



Participants of the Second Consultation on Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Asia held in Hong Kong in February

desh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia. Discrimination against tribal and indigenous peoples, and religious minorities exists in several countries. Instability in inter-faith relations caused by foreign missionaries prevails in such countries as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia. The use of religion for political advancement is increasing in such countries as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar.

In countries whose populations are composed of a majority religion, laws prevent minorities from assuming positions in the government. Proselytisation creates tensions and conflicts that have affected communal

harmony in several Asian countries. The guarantee of religious freedom is misused by fundamentalist groups who use their freedom to violate other's freedom.

Apart from outright persecution, there is also widespread, serious discrimination and oppressive legal control. The countries in which communal violence is manifested are often ones in which there is systematic discrimination. Examples of this can be found in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

In this situation, the study proposes that the question of religious freedom and human rights should be dealt with by using universal human rights standards. There should be public pronouncements on widespread and

mounting violations of freedom of religion and religious persecutions, whether it has resulted from official policy or from unchecked communal or fundamentalist activity. If Christianity in Asia is seen as a corrupting influence in some ways, it should also be seen as a liberating force. There is a need to develop a new strategy to fulfill the mission of the churches that may be aimed at the liberation of the whole of humanity.

*Mathews George
Chunakara*



A Message of Solidarity and a Call for Peace in Sri Lanka

Statement of the Regional Consultation on Mission and Dialogue

We come from the different countries of Asia gathered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, for the Regional Consultation on Mission and Dialogue, 23–29 February 2000.

We have heard the cry and hope of the children, men and women in Sri Lanka and we reach out to them in their longing for peace.

We view with concern the long, drawnout war that has killed civilians, maimed others, broken families, destroyed properties, disrupted economic activity and continues to bring suffering to our brothers and sisters of all faiths in this nation. We hope and pray that peace will one day soon dwell upon this land.

We, therefore, join all men and women of peace in Sri Lanka in urging all warring forces to cease fighting and go to the negotiating table. We urge both parties to adopt common points of agreement that will address

the roots of this conflict so that peace may reign in this land of diversity and beauty. We recognize and commend initial attempts of other groups to facilitate such a dialogue.

We urge the Christian Conference of Asia, the national councils of churches and other peace-loving organizations in the region to facilitate the peace process in partnership with the people of Sri Lanka. We realise that the way to peace is difficult. Yet, we also believe that the first step is the cessation of armed confrontation in order to create an atmosphere favourable for dialogue. We will continue to be interested partners in this process and commit to do what we can, each and severally to pray for and support such a peace initiative.

Ratified in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 28 February 2000.

(Adopted by forty-two delegates representing fourteen countries in Asia.)

Asia Conference of Theological Students

The CCA Program Committee on Theological Concerns decided to call a Conference of Theological Students in Asia as one its main programs during the current term. The intention is to involve theological students in its work and that of CCA. The following purposes and objectives have been drawn up:

- It will provide occasion for theological students from different countries and institutions in Asia to share reflections on their theological training and formation within the regional ecumenical context.
- It will provide occasion for discussion and understanding of issues in the ecumenical movement and consideration of commitment to ecumenical life and thought as being vital to 'being church in Asia' in the twenty-first century.

- It will be an effort toward ecumenical formation and leadership development.

Participants will include up to sixty students plus leaders and resource people. Care has been taken to assure balances of subregional and national representation, disciplines, gender and confessional background. It is hoped that there will be a representation of Catholic students through the offices of the FABC.

Feliciano V. Cariño

Community-based Savings and Micro Credit Workshop

Since 1997, in cooperation with the EZE, the Christian Conference of Asia Development and Service Desk (CCA-D&S) has initiated the people's managed community-based savings and micro-credit (CbSMC) program as a tool to advo-

cate and promote people's participation, self-help and sustainable development at the village level.

Development and Service wants to sum up experiences and evaluate the project in order to find strategies to improve the program in the future.

The program will be held 19–25 June 2000 in Manila, Philippines. About twenty participants from Asian churches are invited. The discussion will cover biblical perspectives on resource sharing in the context of stewardship, mission and development, CbSMC and sustainable development, the church and the CbSMC—strategies and approaches, possibilities and threats, socioeconomic and cultural realities of participating countries and in Asia today, CbSMC values and practices in Asian contexts, learning from ongoing projects, visits to self-help groups, cooperative projects and development institutions, and comments and recommendations for the future.

Prawate Khid-arn

Poster Competition

It is important that we continue to affirm our solidarity with those living with HIV/AIDS, their families and caregivers, and renew our commitment to be involved with welfare and awareness/prevention programs. From the beginning, the church has been called to be a healing community, to console, to reconcile, to love and to minister. This competition is being organised by the Development and Service Desk of the Christian Conference of Asia to encourage churches and their members to express their concern and compassion for the people living with AIDS and their families.

Theme: Being a Caring Community

Requirements

1. Painting or drawing that depicts the church in solidarity and caring for the people living with HIV/AIDS.
2. Paper size: 16 x 23 inches (approx. 405 x 585 mm).
3. Multi-colour.
4. Include the words 'BEING A CARING COMMUNITY' in the poster.
5. All posters entered in the competition will belong to the CCA-D&S.

Prizes

First prize	US\$300
Second prize	US\$200
Third prize	US\$100
Plus 10 Consolation Prizes	

Deadline: 31 July 2000

For further information please contact

Dr Prawate Khid-arn, Executive Secretary for Development and Service, Christian Conference of Asia, 96, Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin Road, Shatin, NT, Hong Kong SAR, China
Tel: + 852 2691 1068
Fax: + 852 26923805
E-mail: prawate@cca.org.hk

Tomohon Ready for the Assembly



The view from Bukit Inspirasi (Inspiration Hill)

Below: Assembly Preparatory Committee meets



On top of Bukit Inspirasi



Inside view of the Assembly Hall