



Christian Conference of Asia

cca news



Ecumenical
initiatives

Overcoming
violence

Building peace

Helping
uprooted people

Human rights
training

Christmas
presence

Volume 39 • Number 4 • December 2004

Ecumenical initiatives



Cover: 'Nativity', by Le Van Dai, originally from Vietnam. (From 'The Bible through Asian Eyes', courtesy Asian Christian Art Association.)

The ecumenical movement has a prophetic role to play in our lives. It has always been in the forefront showing the signs of times when the majority of people live with a deep sense of hopelessness and helplessness. In this age of war on terrorism and negative effects of globalisation, it has become all the more important for the ecumenical movement to reclaim its prophetic heritage.

The story of the 20th anniversary of the Tozanso process, which is featured in this issue, was a path-breaking ecumenical initiative on a sensitive issue—the unification discussion on the Korean peninsula. The Tozanso process has provided an opportunity for healthy encounters between the North and South Korean Christians since the country's division in 1945. Several meetings, exchange visits and humanitarian aid and assistance have taken place between the two Koreas and the ecumenical communities at large in the last several years since the Tozanso process began.

One can cite many examples of such ecumenical initiatives that have taken place at national, regional and global levels. These kinds of ecumenical prophetic heritages should not only be reclaimed, but also preserved and passed on to posterity.

As we are awaiting Christmas, it is appropriate for us to think about God's love, God's peace, God's justice and God's glory in our life. As angels say: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth, peace among them whom he favours!' (Luke 2:14)

People are experiencing wars, conflicts, killings, kidnappings and pandemics. They are crying out in pain, suffering, frustration and humiliation. At Christmas, let us remember with gratitude God's love that is demonstrated through Jesus Christ who came to the world in order to save God's people. As long as we love each other, care for each other, share each other's joys and sorrows, and work with each other for building communities of peace for all in our day-to-day life, Christmas will be a joyful occasion for all God's people longing for God's grace.

This last issue of CCA News of 2004 has been filled with a feast of reading materials for you to enjoy at Christmas.

—Abn Jae Woong

*May your Christmas and New Year be filled
with peace and happiness.*

Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2005!



Overcoming violence 4



CCA roundtable 9

CCA in focus	
German Delegation visits CCA	10
Ecumenical cooperation in theological education	12
Human rights training	14
Asia scene	
Women's voices on alternative globalisation	15
Koreans in Australia	16
Tozanso revisited	17
Global currents	
Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People	18

Asian NCC general secretaries' meeting 6



Invisible children 14



Letter to Kofi Annan	20
World Tourism Day	21
Reflections	
Christmas presence	22
A woman takes the lead	26
Books	27
People	28
CCA Assembly theme song	32

Overcoming violence against women and children

An agenda for ecumenical women in Asia

‘Violence against women and children has been a stark reality in church and society. Yet many Christians do not think of it as a theological issue.’ So says Dr Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, a Filipino feminist theologian.

Speaking at an 11–17 September gathering of Asian ecumenical women in Quezon City, Philippines, around the theme, ‘Overcoming Violence against Women and Children: An Agenda for Ecumenical Women in Asia’, Dr Orevillo-Montenegro said that women can find inspiration from biblical women ancestors and stories of women in the secular world, including from families.

The event was the beginning of the Asian participation in the ‘On the Wings of a Dove’, a worldwide church campaign on 25 November – 10 December initiated by the World Council of Churches to overcome violence against women and children within the framework of the Decade to Overcome Violence.

There were 32 ecumenical women, from the Asian Church Women’s Conference (ACWC), the Asian Women’s Resource Centre for Culture and Theology (AWRC), EATWOT-Asia Women’s Commission, the World Student Christian Federation Asia Pacific (WSCF-AP) Women’s Program, the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, YWCA-Nepal, the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), the General the Board of Global Ministries Asia regional mission, the Christian Conference of Asia, national councils and national church women’s departments. They came from 16 countries—India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The Women’s Committee of the

host, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines came in as observers.

The consultation started with a public forum at Bahay Kalinaw (House of Peace) at the University of the Philippines, Quezon City. Two hundred ecumenical women, youth and some men participated in exploring the issue of violence against women and children and responses that churches and ecumenical organisations can do.

Dr Aruna Gnanadason, WCC Justice, Peace and Creation Team Coordinator, spoke on women’s experience of violence in the home, the violence of HIV/AIDS and its impact on women, violence against women in the church, and women traded and abused in the tourism industry. In the memory of women who are nameless, who are silenced, who are punished if they dare to speak out,

Aruna engaged the audience in:

- tying a red yarn around each other’s wrists in memory of nameless and named woman and child victims of different forms of violence in the home, in the church, in society and by the state,
- asking, ‘Take the other piece of red thread home with you and keep it as a sign of commitment to ensure that you will continue to work for overcoming violence against women and children.’

Drawing from the bonding between Mary and Elizabeth, Aruna further said, ‘Women have begun a search for a new paradigm for life that will be more caring of humanity and of all creation. Let us celebrate this hope, conscious that the tears of women shed and still to be shed are indeed a sign of the baptismal waters that could baptise the church



BATIS women exploring forms of violence against women



Yong Ting Jin and Alicia Ruth Simfendorfer



Darlene Caranzara anointing Manju Baroi with tears

into becoming a courageous forerunner in the struggle for justice, for peace and violence-free world.'

The consultation took place at the Oblate Missionary Centre, a come-away, peaceful place surrounded by trees. In the morning worship, Rev. Jennifer Mary Dawson reflected on Luke 10:29–30. 'Imagine how different this story would be if it was all about women. Imagine the scene.' Reflecting on this story as 'The Story of the Wounded One', where both the victim and the Samaritan were 'wounded', she invited participants to be 'wounded healers' as they do the following tasks identified in the campaign 'On the Wings of a Dove':

- Provide safe places for the telling of stories of suffering, survival and resistance.
- Link across groups and movements, international barriers and generations in order to overcome violence against women and children.
- Expose theologies and church practices that collude with the abuse of power and lead to violence.
- Seek practical responses towards justice and healing.

Indeed, the consultation provided a safe place for sharing stories behind names, stories of pain and faith struggle, ways of coping and overcoming and healing related to vio-

lence against women and children, whether at home, in the church or in society. In synthesis, women have learned that:

- sharing their stories of victimisation allows them to come out of silence of victimhood,
- telling their stories in community allows them to claim our common humanity with other victims,
- acknowledging the truth of their personal story relates them to the communal history of women,
- weaving their stories together make them find strength, support and hope,
- when society takes heed of women's stories, society begins to change.

Whether the violence against women and children is verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, economic, military, political or religious, whether it is in the home, in the church, in society or the state, whether it is at a personal, interpersonal or structural level, violence is about power and its abuse. Violence implicates everyone. Violence is life threatening.

The women shared strategies, methodologies and approaches that are already being done in their own countries and at a regional level by respective ecumenical organisations to address violence against women and children in the family, in the

church and in society. They are as varied as the Asian countries and churches are. From raising awareness through education and re-reading the Bible to peace campaigns, from surveying and documenting cases to having policy guidelines and proposing new laws, from dialogue with church leaders to having shelters and projects, from counselling to prayer rallies and peace marches, from exchange study programs to networking, all are important manifestations that women will no longer remain silent. Someone said about this consultation, 'It was undoubtedly an event symbolising the fact that, no matter what the hurdles, we are moving a step ahead.'

Experience-analysis-biblical and theological reflection-alternative action—this is the ecumenical and women's framework. Thus in commitment the participants said, 'Together we own "On the Wings of a Dove" as our campaign in Asia. On 25 November – 10 December 2004 and up to 8 March 2005, "Violence against Women in the Church" will be the focus.' A brochure is coming out in time for the Asia-wide campaign. We call on ecumenical women in Asia and all who pray and work for overcoming violence against women and children in the church to symbolically tie a purple thread or yarn around the wrist.

Call to reclaim prophetic heritage

NCC general secretaries meet in Chiang Mai

A meeting of ecumenical leaders held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, called on Asian Christians to resist violence, poverty and marginalisation, and to 'reclaim our prophetic heritage and calling as a response to the emerging issues of our time'.

The meeting of the general secretaries of national councils of churches and Christian councils (NCCs) in Asia called on Christians to affirm local Christian communities as communities of justice and peace, and said,

'Christians can be equipped as peacemakers in their societies.'

The 21–23 September meeting, organised by CCA, also affirmed and encouraged the use of the resources of the Decade to Overcome Violence and its focus on Asia in 2005 for peacebuilding initiatives. The 27 participants at the meeting were the general secretaries from 15 out of 18 Asian member countries, together with resource persons from India, Switzerland and Thailand and CCA staff.

The three-day meeting began with an opening worship. Rev. Salvador Martinez from Payap University in Chiang Mai delivered a sermon. Two Bible reflections by Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto and Rev. Ipe Joseph were highlights in the two following morning worship sessions.

'We are now witnessing widening gaps between societies and within societies. Individuals and communities are marginalised, and success seems to be measured by the ability to squander resources in unsustain-



Participants at the NCC general secretaries' meeting

Christians urged to develop an Asiatic ecumenical movement

Christians must not only confess faith in a context where their neighbours follow other faiths or no faith, but they must also live 'the Christian way of life', CCA general secretary Dr Ahn Jae Woong told the gathering of NCC general secretaries in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 21 September.

Ahn Jae Woong posed the question, 'How does a Christian differ from others in the workplace, in social life and in public life in this continent that we live in?'

'In every moment of our life, whether it is the struggle for life or death, Christians are called to take sides with the poor, oppressed, marginalised, victimised, powerless and weaker sections of the societies.'

Quoting Miguez Bomino, the CCA general secretary said that 'there is no socially and politically neutral theology. In the struggle for life and death, theology must take sides.'

He said that Christian life is relevant for achieving people's aspirations and added, 'The ecumenical movement has a special role to play in liberating people's captivities of thinking, writing, speaking and performing core values.'

'The ecumenical movement should offer new ways of theological framework for fullness of life for all God's people and building communities of peace for all.'

He urged Asian Christians to develop an Asiatic ecumenical movement with the following characteristics:

- Christocentric in nature, where the God-Christ event needs to be highlighted.

- Ecclesiocentric in character, where God-church needs to be understood.
- Anthropocentric in manifestation, where God-people-world needs to be interrelated.

Ahn felt that the Asiatic ecumenical movement should focus on the whole idea of bona fide, undertaken in good faith as the basis for its values. 'Bona fide will help in overcoming any fear of confronting multifaiths and multicultural realities in Asia.'

According to the CCA general secretary, the Asiatic ecumenical movement should deal with:

- crossing national boundaries in order to achieve the ideals of *oikoumene*,
- overcoming theological and ecclesiological barriers in order to be faithful to God,
- confessing Christian beliefs in order to propagate biblical messages,
- witnessing Christian values in order to be good neighbours.

Ahn listed as the problems we have in Asia as the war on terrorism, crime and violence, discrimination and exclusion, poverty and hunger, the negative impact of globalisation, religious fundamentalism, militarisation and nuclearisation, HIV and AIDS and new kinds of pandemic, the plight of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, environmental degradation, women and children, unemployment, poverty, differently abled persons, church and society related issues, Asian spirituality and the missionary vocation of the churches.

able ways,' a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting said.

It acknowledged that Christians are also responsible for perpetuating violence in this world and expressed the need for Christians to repent of their part in creating division and separation in society. The leaders urged the Christian community to identify all structures that legitimate and perpetuate violence and injustice within the churches, such as discrimination based on age, caste, disability, ethnicity, gender, economic disadvantage and abuse based on inequality of



WCC's DOV coordinator, Hansulrich Gerber (fourth from left) with CCA staff

power sharing. They confessed there is a 'growing ecumenical amnesia and lethargy,' which means that 'we are not living up to the demands and challenges of our time. The strength of ecumenism is in its involvement with the "grassroots, a strength that the institutions we create must serve".' In the violent world we live, 'peace remains a quality of life that is more often expressed by its absence than by its presence', the communiqué noted.

The participants recommitted themselves

to actively involve in peacemaking by cooperating with peoples of other faiths and no faith.

They recalled the efforts of people around the world, including many Christians, in creating peace in their societies, and added that 'now it is up to the generations who follow those pioneers to make sure these advances are not lost'.

Major presentations were made at the meeting by Ninan Koshy, on 'New Trends in Geopolitics in Asia', Ahn Jae Woong, on

'CCA's Program Directions and Priorities', Clement John, on 'New Trends in the Ecumenical Movement', and Hansulrich Gerber, on 'DOV Focus on Asia in 2005'.

The NCC general secretaries also focused on the political and ecumenical scene of their respective countries.

The CCA general assembly preparations also came under scrutiny in one of the sessions, which was assisted by members of the local planning committee.

—Philip Mathew

Clement John says ecumenism has lost its 'togetherness and humility'



Clement John has added his voice to the concerns expressed by others regarding the future of the ecumenical movement. Speaking at the NCC general secretaries' meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 22 September, Clement John, an executive secretary of the World Council of Churches, said that ecumenism is facing the greatest challenges in its history, adding, 'It is under attack from forces that were always opposed to it on the grounds that unity at the expense of compromising the truth is a betrayal of Christian faith.'

He also mentioned 'an increase in denominationalism' as another threat ecumenism is facing today. Clement John told the meeting that the spirit of 'togetherness and humility', an Asian contribution to the wider ecumenical community has been lost. 'The ecumenical movement is in crisis today because we have lost this spirit. The basic element of being together, a cardinal principle of our faith, is presently missing in our encounter and dealings with each other. One has to be present at the round table meetings of ecumenical partners to really grasp how much has changed from the earlier days. There is change in the nature

and tone of discourse, not to speak of an attitude that is totally alien to Christian values. The principles of witness and sharing for common vision that were so painstakingly developed by the pioneers of the ecumenical movement from North, South, East and West through numerous ecumenical conferences beginning with the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910 through to the the world convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation held in Seoul, Korea, in 1990 are being totally ignored. There is a radical change in ecumenical relationships. In addition, there is an increase in a trend towards a lack of commitment and understanding of the social justice agenda of the churches of the South.'

Clement stressed the urgent need for dialogue between churches of the North and the South and to engage churches in the North in Europe and North America to be seriously committed to justice on global issues.

He paid tribute to CCA for being committed to the social justice agenda despite difficulties and opposition. 'It is this commitment of CCA that has endured it not only amongst the churches of the region but amongst the NGO and civil society circles as well,' he remarked.

He urged the general secretaries and other ecumenical leaders to assert their rights in setting the ecumenical agenda for Asia and to ensure that the partnership is based on theological lines and 'not about resources and/or accountability. The resources, the people who have it and the people for whose benefits these are used, all belong to God.'

On the subject of interreligious cooperation, Clement underlined the need for Christians in Asia to highlight the importance of dialogue with people of other religious traditions. 'The aim of such religious ecumenism should be to create "unity of conscience" among those who have committed themselves to collaborate towards a common effort to solve our common problems.'

CCA roundtable

Asian churches urged to become instruments for building communities based on peace and justice

Thirty-two participants attended a roundtable meeting on 8–9 November organised by the CCA in Hong Kong. Roundtable meetings are organised to share the programs and concerns of CCA to partner agencies. It is also an occasion for agencies to make their long-term commitment to and support for CCA and its various programs and activities.

Bishop Dr Joseph Mar Ireneus, a CCA president, welcomed the participants to the gathering.

Presenting a report at the roundtable meeting, Ahn Jae Woong, general secretary of CCA, stressed the need for 'revitalising' Asian spirituality at a time when traditional cultures are on the verge of extinction due to Western influences. He said that a spirituality that promotes a culture of peace and rejects violence needs to be built into the lives of Asians to enhance human dignity. 'The mindset of people is formed by the way they show love and compassion towards their neighbour and to the wider community.'

Speaking on Asian churches, Ahn Jae Woong noted that many churches have lost their missionary vocation and focus their energy, time and resources on buildings and infrastructures, and in indulging in the numbers game by increasing membership.



CCA sharing programs and concerns

He urged Asian churches to become instruments for building peace and justice in societies and to reach out in creating networks with people of other faiths and no faith and civil society groups to build communities based on justice and peace.

Making a presentation on 'Current Trends in Geopolitics in Asia', Dr Ninan Koshy told the meeting that religion has become an important factor in geopolitics. 'With religion returning to centre stage in civil and political life in the post–Cold War period, there in an unprecedented increase in the incidence of religious discrimination, intolerance and violence,' he said. He called on the ecumenical movement to understand the reality of a

new world order and the reality of an empire. 'How does the ecumenical movement deal with an empire?' he asked. He felt that it was important to have an 'ecumenical response' to the 'War on Terror' waged by the USA and its allies.

Dr Prawate Khid-arn, associate general secretary for finance, presented a report on the CCA finance and budget proposals.

The two-day meeting began with morning worship led by CCA staff Dr Hope Antone and Dr Lee Hong Jung.

Participants and partner agencies represented at the meeting were Charlie Ocampo (Christian World Service, Australia), Andrea Mann (Anglican Church of Canada), David M. Weaver (Church World Service, USA), Kjell Helge Godfredsen (Norwegian Church Aid), Ad Mook (Uniting Churches in the Netherlands), Rev. Johan Hasselgren (Church of Sweden), Chris Eliot Hall (Methodist Church, UK), Hannelore Mall (Bread for the World, Germany), Heiner Knauss (EED Germany), Olaf Rehren (EMW Germany), Rachel Parry (USPG, London), Marcia L. Florkey (GBGM of the United Methodist Church in the USA), Andrew Clayton (Christian Aid, UK), Leo Bashyam (Christian Aid, UK) and Rev. Insik Kim (Presbyterian Church USA).



Ahn Jae Woong addresses the roundtable meeting

Peace building and interreligious dialogue

Delegation from Germany visits CCA

Dr Wolfgang Huber, a noted theologian and bishop of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, told a meeting organised by CCA that interreligious dialogue is a major task of our time. 'Building peace based on justice and initiating dialogues between religions are important tasks for Christians all over the world,' he said. Bishop Huber, who was leading a 14-member delegation of the Council of Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany, or EKD) to China, told the meeting, 'We have many tasks to do together, like exchanging, encouraging and seeking God's blessing for our common ministry.'

The German delegation visited the CCA centre during a stopover in Hong Kong and met with the CCA General Secretary Ahn Jae Woong and the staff of CCA, Documentation for Action Groups in Asia (DAGA) and the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT). Bishop Huber, who is the chairman of the council of EKD, said that the delegation's visit was mainly to broaden their perspectives and to see how Christians in this part of the world cooperate with each other in dealing with many common issues and concerns.

Earlier, welcoming the delegation, Ahn Jae Woong noted that Christians, who are religious minorities in Asia, 'have to live our lives based on the biblical teaching of loving

our neighbour as ourselves. Rediscovering the Christian identity and ecumenical commitment and re-engaging and networking with people are ecumenical tasks at this point of time in history,' he said. The general secretary thanked the German churches for their 'unstinted support and encouragement for the ecumenical movements in these trying times. Your continued support, solidarity and prayers are one of the great sources of strength to our ecumenical ministry in Asia,' he added.

The delegation heard brief presentations of the work of the CCA, DAGA and ECOT made by Prawate Khid-arn, Chang Beng Seng and Ranjan Solomon respectively.

Among the members of the delegation were Dr Konrad von Bonin, executive director of the Church Development Agency (EED), Bishop Rolf Koppe, head of the department of Ecumenical Affairs and Ministries Abroad in the Church Office of the EKD, Ms Margit Fleckenstein, president of the Synod of the EKD, Mr Herman Grohe, member of parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, Rev. Maren von der Heyde, executive secretary for Asia and Middle East and associate general secretary of the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW), Rev. Paul Oppenheim, executive regional secretary for Asia, Australia and Pacific in the Church Office of the EKD, Ms Kara Huber-Kaldrack, Dr Frauke Hansen-Dix, Dr Alexander Dix, Ms Gabi Hettler, Dr Michael Lackner and Dr Monika Gaenssbauer.

—Philip Matbew



EED delegation with CCA staff

Invisible children

Southeast Asia consultation on undocumented families

There are various estimates of the number of undocumented migrant workers in the world. The International Labour Organisation says that out of the 130 million migrant workers in the world, 10 to 15 million are undocumented. The UN Human Rights Commission says that up to 40 per cent of migrant workers are undocumented. Although the actual numbers vary, it cannot be denied that a significant section of migrant workers are undocumented. Due to a lack of employment opportunities in their home countries many are forced to remain where they are, despite unfavourable conditions. These undocumented migrants, who have been living and working in their host country for many years, subsequently establish families and have children. These undocumented children are often deprived of their rights to education, medical and health care and legal protection. They experience the same—and sometimes worse—situations and conditions as their undocumented parents. Thus, most undocumented children are not only

stateless, but their existence is unknown, in both the home countries of their parents and the host countries. They live in the shadows of their adopted society and remain invisible. In responding to the issue of undocumented children in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand and Malaysia, WCC/CCA-URM organised a consultation on 'Affirming Fullness of Life of Undocumented Children: Border Crossing Issues' in Kuala Lumpur on 1–4 September 2004. Twenty-eight participants, including 18 women from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia, attended. The object of the meeting was to come up with a common understanding of and approach to undocumented children and to advocate for their recognition, protection and wellbeing.

During the meeting people from each of the countries represented presented their country's situation on undocumented children and the responses of churches and NGOs to address the issue. Ramon Bultron from the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Workers, Angle Fernandez from Tenaganita

Malaysia and Alice Nah from the National Human Rights Society (HAKAM) were the resource persons. Through the presentations and sharing, participants realised the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need for churches and NGOs to work together to address the issue of caring for and protecting these children. Josef Widyatmadja gave the sermon during the closing meeting. He focused on Luke 5:17–26, how people worked together to bring a paralysed man to meet Jesus. On the issue of undocumented children, churches and NGOs need to learn from these friends of the paralysed man. Compassion, faith, working together and seeking alternative solutions are imperative.

The meeting ended with a communiqué and an action plan for the next three years. A recommendation was made to form a fact-finding mission on the situation of migrants and undocumented children in Sabah Malaysia. The meeting also set up a Southeast Asia Christian Network on Children's Dignity Working Group.

—Josef Widyatmadja



Group discussion

Ecumenical cooperation in theological education

Changing contexts: hopes, challenge and priorities

The importance of a meeting of secretaries/directors of theological associations in Asia and the Pacific, with representatives from their governing bodies and ecumenical partners who are involved in theological education in the region was under discussion when ETE-WCC/CCA brought together twelve leaders in Manila, Philippines, during 10–14 August 2004.

The participants were Dr Sientje Merentek-Abram, executive director of the Association of Theological Associations in South East Asia (ATESEA), Dr Zenaida Lumba, honorary treasurer of ATESEA, Dr John S. Sadananda, secretary of the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTSSC), Rev. Tevita N. Banivanua, general secretary of the South Pacific Theological School (SPATS), Dr Kafoa A. Solomone, chairperson of the SPATS Accreditation Commission, Fr Brian J. Jackson, Regional Theological Seminary, Suva, Fiji, Rev. Luna L. Dingayan, member of the ETE-WCC Working Committee, Dr Hope S. Antone, executive secretary of Faith, Mission and Unity, Christian Conference of Asia, and secretary of the Program for Theologies and Cultures in Asia (PTCA), Dr Ad Mook, head of the Asia-Pacific Desk, Global Ministries, Protestant Churches in the Netherlands, Dr Marvin D. Hoff, executive secretary of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (USA), and Dr David Kwang-sun Suh, executive director, Asian Christian Higher Education Institute of the United Board of Christian Higher Education in Asia.

This was the first meeting of its kind, bringing together leaders of theological associations and partners to discuss matters of common concern and specific issues related to theological education and ecumenical for-

mation in Asia and the Pacific. We appreciate very much the active participation of our partners in mission in all the deliberations and their continued support in our journey.

The theme of the consultation was 'Ecumenical Theological Education in Changing Contexts: Hopes, Challenge and Priorities'. Leaders from different contexts presented papers on that theme highlighting their hopes, challenges and priorities.

We listened to each other's stories of success, problems and challenges in training future ecumenical leaders. We also explored together ways and means of strengthening institutional accreditation, ecumenical exchange programs and better support systems and mechanisms among theological associations and also with other theological movements and networks such as the Program for Theologies and Cultures in Asia (PTCA), the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT), the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) etc. We also discussed how various programs could be collaborated and coordinated among theological associations to avoid misunderstanding and duplication and thereby develop a healthier relationship among theological accrediting bodies. The meeting not only gave us an opportunity to know each other better, but also brought us closer to one another as associations of theological education in Asia and the Pacific. One participant commented that, 'We felt that we were eager to learn from one another, and to come closer in order to find ways and means of working together, to explore better support system mechanisms for an effective functioning.' We also learnt how ETE-WCC/CCA networks with various regional theologi-

cal associations and colleges in strengthening ecumenical movement and ministerial formation through theological education. The participants appreciated and endorsed such ongoing new initiatives as the Institute of Theology Teachers, Theological Librarians' Training on Archive Management, the Ecumenical Exchange Program, Theological Education Curriculum and Emerging Issues etc. undertaken by ETE.

The question of 'ecumenism' was discussed elaborately, keeping in mind the tensions and dissensions at various levels while encouraging the diversity of different theological positions/traditions for the wellbeing of the churches. We were once again challenged to renew our commitment to work together ecumenically. It is not mere coexistence, but cooperation; not mere holiness, but wholeness that is required in our ecumenical relationships.

Theological education is not merely a task of few individuals, colleges and associations. We are an instrument of the church in order to equip and motivate the whole congregation/church for mission. There is a need to integrate theological education to the mission of the church so that the church can 'own' theological education. It is the necessary task of the church to help theological institutions by providing needed assistance and at the same time the agenda for a relevant ministry.

While being made aware of our global vision and its importance for our ministry and mission, we were conscious of our identities as Asian/Pacific Christians living in particular contexts. Global ecumenism and contextual/Asian or Pacific ecumenism should go together in order to be relevant to the context. We once again felt the need to come together

to identify our resources and to think about ways and means of sharing these together.

We were encouraged by the presence of overseas partners in God's mission. We recognised their presence as a sign of mutual belonging and sharing. We did not consider them as a mere funding agency, but partners and co-workers in God's mission. We shared the common vision that ecumenical theological education should be strengthened—keeping in mind the bias towards weaker ones with real involvement in integrating what is going on there as well as networking with others in strengthening the existing programs. To believe in self-sufficiency is a sin. We belong to one another and we need one another in order to grow. Many times we feel that we are at the receiving end. But we are encouraged by the fact that we are enriching one another, sharing what we have with our neighbours, thus making the 'fullness of life' a reality at least to a certain extent. We are thankful to God for 'friends' as well as 'funds'.

We have leaders with vision and commitment. We have also resources of our own. This meeting was another challenge for us to take steps to be ecumenical by working or networking with other associations, and thus share resources. Such challenges make us more and more aware that we are not alone in our quest for ecumenism. We have our strength in our working together, recognising others, listening to others, learning from others and at the same time challenging one another to move forward.

Life is a gift from God. We will gain it only by sharing in it. We have been challenged to be open to discover the signs of the time and act together for wholeness, at the same time surrendering to the directionality of the Holy Spirit to venture into the unknown.

Concerns and recommendations

- One of the most outstanding concerns that were quite clearly stated over and over again is the lack of financial resources in ecumenical theological institutions. There is a need for us to take certain initiatives in securing funds or obtaining needed educational tools from our own well. We need to rid ourselves of the 'de-

pendency mentality' by becoming more and more self-supporting in this regard. We acknowledged that because of our 'dependency mentality', we have failed to educate our churches to invest money for theological education. There is a need for cooperation between the churches and theological institutions so that theological education and institutions are a servant of the mission of the church, i.e. that the church and institution 'own' each other and that they have mutual support of each other. There is hope for future, if proper strategies and mechanism are taken and implemented between us.

- Cooperation and resources sharing was another great need expressed. Sharing of information, human and material resources, keeping contact with one another and to be informed and be informing were some of the ways in which cooperation can be done. We noted that there is much cooperation and there are many exchange programs taking place between Asia and Pacific seminaries and North American and other Western seminaries in terms of human and resource sharing. However, there is hardly any such interaction taking place among Asia/Pacific seminaries and scholars. We are still ignorant of one another. We are happy that some initiatives have been taken by ETE in regard to library resource sharing. We urge ETE to explore and encourage short-term teaching programs, sabbatical opportunities, faculty exchanges and student exchange programs within the region. This will encourage and promote better relationships, wider ecumenism and mutual theological learning.
- Keeping in mind that our theological degrees need to have a global credibility and acceptability, there is a need to work on the equivalency of theological awards and degrees. Hence the relevant institutions or bodies need to work out practical solutions. ETE is requested to create a space for deliberation on this matter.
- Related to this is the need for curriculum reviews so that they are rooted in contextual realities. Theological curriculums must be relevant in a given context. Traditional courses should be revised so

that new, relevant and contextual courses be put in place and some traditional ones dropped. Contemporary issues such as HIV/AIDS, women studies, ecology, globalisation, peace and justice must have a greater place in the theological curriculum. Also, there is a real need for more integrated, interdisciplinary papers or courses. We have noted that, in coordination with theological associations, ETE has already taken some initiatives in this area. We will continue our efforts to make theological education relevant.

- It was clear from the discussions that there is an urgent need for leadership and management skills among theological institutions' leaders. These leaders are usually trained theologians with little management skill when they take up leadership responsibilities in colleges/seminaries. We are happy to note that one of the priorities of the United Board of Christian Higher Education in Asia is leadership training for new university trustees, new presidents/principals, academic deans, deans of students, campus ministers and university administrative staff. We urge ETE and UBCHEA to explore the possibilities of leadership and training programs for new principals/presidents, both at regional and national levels.
- Related to the need for leadership and management skills is the need for teacher training for qualified theologians in theological education. The majority of our theologians are not trained teachers but the largest part of their work is teaching. Because of a lack of teaching skills and tools they fail to communicate the message well.
- Contextual research must be promoted. Time and opportunity should be made available for contextual research. Without it, we deal superficially with the issues concerned. The in-depth study of relevant, important issues is a must.
- There is a need for us to give stronger support to our weaker, smaller member schools. The weaker a member is the more it needs the support of the bigger and more vibrant members.
- We also urge ecumenical partners to ex-

tend support for doctoral programs in Myanmar and Fiji, and leadership and ecumenical formation in Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

- Theological associations in Asia find the rationale/reason for the existence of PTCA laudable—as that of helping to reorient ‘younger’ theologians in Asia to do theology with Asian resources in research, teaching, writing and ongoing

reflection. Knowing that theological education in Asia is still predominantly reliant on Western resources, this is something worth pursuing. Concern was raised however about the style of issuing calls for papers and presentations—which then limits the participation of new/younger/struggling theologians. It can easily make a PTCA meeting more a gathering of already known theologians, older theologians who are used to writing

and publishing. A request was made from the SPATS representatives if they could also be given spaces in PTCA. They are struggling to be linked with the rest of the world and to overcome their isolation they are looking for a forum or an avenue to do that. Would PTCA welcome them? The participants felt that this concern should be communicated to PTCA for consideration.

—Wati Longchar

Church and human rights

A letter from the participants of CCA’s 8th annual human rights training

The 30 participants from 18 countries who attended the eighth human rights training program organised by the CCA in Jakarta, Indonesia, have issued the following letter to the churches in Asia.

We learnt that enjoyment of human rights is firmly grounded in our biblical and theological tradition. We learnt that the church is a sanctuary for all. And we heard God’s call to all churches to be responsive to the gospel in bringing the Good News to all those who suffer human rights abuses and for us to be a peacemaker. We also noted that all countries experience some form of human rights violations or another.

We therefore respectfully request your consideration of the following points:

- The church is a sanctuary for all.
- The church is to lead by example—to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world that Christ has called us to be.
- The church is a vehicle to encourage sound theological human rights education from the pulpit, in Christian education and Sunday schools.
- A copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 should be put on church bulletin boards.
- Human rights include socioeconomic rights and redistributive justice.



Human rights training in progress

- The church should take care of and help the victims of human rights abuses, and recognise that those who have gone through fairly traumatic experiences and/or prolonged abuse will have some psychological barriers to break before they can really get back into life.
- Churches must stand united for human rights and take action against human rights violations.
- The church should promote interfaith dialogue and relationships.
- The church should promote human rights to the community as a whole and give human rights education to other faith believers as well.
- The church should establish a trust fund for human rights.
- Churches should lobby governments to abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948.
- Churches should network internationally to promote human rights and increase support for the work of the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia in organizing human rights trainings.

Jakarta, 14 August 2004

Women's voices

Women from the South call for alternative globalisation

We are not afraid to say that we live in a time of empire.' Thus said a group of church women, feminist economists and women activists from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Eastern Europe gathered in Antipolo City, Philippines, on 27–29 August.

Meeting as Women's Voices on Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and Earth (WV-AGAPE), the group analysed the signs of the times and issued a call to transformative reflection and action to counter the negative globalisation that is dominating the world today. This empire-building means the 'coherence of economic, cultural, political and military powers that constitute a global system of domination directed by powerful nations and organisations'.

It follows a neo-liberal economic model that has made the market into an absolute, and is leading the world towards systemic crises, increased vulnerability, globalisation of inequality and continuous ecological destruction. It has also been accompanied by heightened repression, militarisation and massive human rights violations—for where



An evening with other women's groups

there are profits to be made, these are quickly secured by military might. All these, the women said, have impacted on the peoples of the South, especially poor women.

'We believe that the present neo-liberal globalisation is completely against God's vision of *oikoumene*, the household of God that is founded on a theology of caring for all life, that promotes justice, compassion and solidarity with the impoverished, the vulner-

able and the excluded,' they said.

Instead, they affirmed an alternative vision—of a just, sustainable and caring economy that supports and upholds the sacred nature of all life and creation. They called for a move from the so-called free trade (which is only free for the powerful nations and multinational corporations) to a just, sustainable and caring global trade that, among other things, respects and protects biodiversity, local and collective wisdoms and cultural identities.

'Just, sustainable and caring global trade and finance ensure that the movement and utilisation of goods, services and funds best serve the interests of all peoples. Therefore, decision-making structures and processes on trade and financial agreements and policies must be genuinely democratised to involve and represent women and the diversity of society,' they stated.

The consultation was sponsored by the World Council of Churches through the office of Athena Peralta, consultant on women and economy of the Justice, Peace and Creation Team. The Christian Conference of Asia was a participant.

—Hope S. Antone



Closing worship and celebration

Koreans in Australia

Sydney gives thanks to Korean churches

Korean churches in Sydney, Australia, had much to celebrate in August and September. On 15 August the New South Wales Synod of the Uniting Church officially opened its Korean Commission—a special council to administer the affairs of Korean congregations—and on 12 September the Sydney Korean Uniting Church, the first Korean church in Sydney, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary and three decades of Korean migration to Australia.

The moderator and general secretary of the Uniting Church opened the Korean Commission at Lakemba Uniting Church. This followed nearly ten years of debate about whether the Uniting Church would give permission to Korean churches to form a presbytery.

Since the establishment of the Council of Korean Churches in the Uniting Church in Australia in 1988, Korean churches have been growing in number as well as in their ministry. The new Korean Commission has representatives from member churches, lay and ordained, men and women, old and young, plus representatives from six presbyteries and the synod. Meetings are conducted bilingually in English and Korean.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Sydney Korean Uniting Church at Strathfield was described by its minister, Rev. Dr Moon Chan Moon, as a wonderful occasion. Celebrations included a historical photograph exhibition, an anniversary service, a variety concert and an anniversary dinner.

National director of the Uniting Church's Multicultural Ministry, Rev. Helen Richmond, told Dr Moon, 'I give thanks to God for you and the way you are enriching the life of the Uniting Church and passing on faith and cultural heritage to your children, grandchildren and the wider Australian community.'

The Rev. Dr John Brown detailed the birth and early development of Korean churches in Australia. He said the first Korean congrega-

tion to be established in Australia was the Melbourne Korean Church, which met in the Burwood Presbyterian Church in 1973.

The second church to be established was the Sydney Korean Church, originally known as the Sydney Korean Christian Fellowship. It met on the initiative of three families. With Dr Brown they invited Koreans they knew to be living in Sydney to join them for worship in a former Congregational church building in Redfern.

At that time there were about 70 Koreans living in Melbourne and perhaps 100 in Sydney, Dr Brown said.

Some were immigrants, some were representatives of Korean government organisations or businesses, some were academics and some were students.

'Many of these people had been church attenders or members in Korea, but because of language and cultural barriers had found it very difficult to break into an Australian congregation. The two congregations were commenced in order to provide an opportunity for Korean-speaking Australian residents to worship regularly in their first language. There was a second purpose. It was to provide an opportunity for fellowship among homesick Koreans, struggling in the midst of an Australian community, which was itself struggling to emancipate itself from a fairly exclusive ethos formed under the recently abandoned White Australia Policy. It was to provide an opportunity to be free from the oppression of English, a time to share Korean food, to hear news of Korea, of job opportunities and to share views on what was happening around them.'

When the Uniting Church was formed in 1977—merging Methodist, Congregational and many Presbyterian churches—the Korean congregation voted overwhelmingly to enter the Uniting Church. Tensions between people with different political allegiances in Korea also led to divisions in Korean con-

gregations in Australia, Dr Brown said. 'The Galilee Church in Sydney and the Hanbit Church in Melbourne were originally formed largely of the supporters of the human rights struggle in Korea, while such churches as Young Nak in Sydney were formed partly by former army officers and others who had been brought up in the atmosphere of Young Nak Church in Seoul.'

Other tensions regarding equality of membership in the church community and leadership styles led to the formation of the Cheil Church in Sydney.

The Sydney Korean Church developed mission strategies to provide ministry for the growing population in Sydney and to accommodate ministers arriving as immigrants, those sent as missionaries by churches in Korea or students who wanted to stay on when they had completed their studies.

The Tong San Church was established in Parramatta for Koreans who were settling in the Western suburbs, Galilee Church was established in Bondi Junction to minister to people in the Eastern Suburbs, and a church in Chatswood provided ministry for people in the Northern Suburbs. The Somang Church in Lakemba was also established.

Contacts from Sydney led to the formation of Korean congregations around Australia—in Perth, Adelaide, Canberra, the Gold Coast and in Cairns.

Dr Brown said Korean ministers played a key role in enabling the Uniting Church's state synod and national assembly to understand the issues faced by other non-English-speaking congregations. He said actions taken to produce information in Korean, Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Indonesian and other languages, and the translation of the Basis of Union, Constitution and Regulations into Korean, were the result of discussions commenced in the 1980s in the Sydney Korean Uniting Church.

—Stephen Webb

Tozanso revisited

Korean peninsula is still a flashpoint in northeast Asia

Fifty-five church leaders and consultants from nine countries of Asia, Europe and North America met under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) at the Tozanso YMCA conference centre in Japan on 17–21 October 2004 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of a historical ecumenical consultation that initiated lines of communication between Christians of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK).

In 1984, a consultation on the theme 'Peace and Justice in North East Asia—Prospects for Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts' launched a series of first-time events that included face-to-face meetings between Korean delegations from North and South, visits by churches and ecumenical agencies to both the DPRK and the ROK, as well as visits by delegations of the Korean Christians Federation (KCF) to churches in Asia, North America, Europe and other parts of the world. Collectively, these initiatives have come to

be known as the 'Tozanso Process', widely regarded as the precursor of rapprochement on the Korean peninsula.

In addition to reviewing the historical events that shaped the period following the original Tozanso consultation, participants heard a series of presentations on current trends shaping inter-Korean and global relations related to peace and security in the region. During the worship service that opened the consultation, Dr Philip Potter, who as WCC general secretary 20 years earlier strongly supported the struggles of the Korean people for democratisation and reunification, led a Bible study on prophetic witness for peace and justice.

Dr Ninan Koshy, former director of the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, presented a paper on major geopolitical trends in Asia. Referring to the 'second nuclear age' that followed the Cold War nuclear confrontation, Koshy warned that 'the newer nuclear states are dealing with enemies close at hand—minutes away by missiles—in conflicts that could unfold

quickly'. New military doctrines by the USA call for technology that, according to Koshy, will make it possible to use nuclear weapons for pre-emptive strikes as part of available military responses.

Recalling the recent history of US–DPRK relations, Dr James Laney, president emeritus of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and former US ambassador to the Republic of Korea, said that the urgency of the Korean situation requires immediate action. Calling himself a 'Christian realist', Laney said it is important to acknowledge that all people everywhere are created in the image of God, and therefore have a basic right to a decent respect. His 'modest proposal' is that the USA should engage with the DPRK, give security assurances, stop the isolation and stop exploiting the fears of people.

A former professor at Korea University, Dr Hahn Bae Ho, reviewed the history of inter-Korean bilateral relations. He said that the two Koreas have not yet agreed on a 'roadmap' leading to a 'confederal' stage of unification, a prospect that would be greatly

enhanced if the two Koreas were 'earnestly committed to undertaking internal changes in political, economic and other areas'. However, the Sunshine Policy of engagement and the North-South Joint Declaration of June 2000 created new opportunities for bilateral relations giving new reasons for hope. Celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Tozanso Consultation as a significant historical event, the Rev. Kang Yong Sop, chairman of the Korean



The participants who gathered for the Tozanso meeting in Japan

Christians Federation of the DPRK, thanked 'colleague brothers and sisters of church organisations and staff members of the WCC and CCA' for their contributions to strengthening ecumenical solidarity in support of Korean peace and reunification. He called on churches 'in this time of crisis' to continue their vigilance in helping to remove US hostile moves toward the DPRK and supporting the implementation of the 15 June 2000 North-South Joint Declaration.

Rev. Paik Do-woong, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) said that he believes peaceful coexistence has become a current that cannot be reversed. Nonetheless, he pointed to increasing opposition by conservative groups—including many Christian churches—that are against the 'Sunshine' policy and the abolition of the National Security Law. Paik said that the NCCCK would continue to seek the ecumenical community's commitment to human rights, democracy, peace and the reunification of Korea.

Dr David Kwang-sun Suh, professor emeritus of theology at Ewha Womans University and a chief drafter of the 1988 NCCCK Declaration of Korean Churches on National Reunification and Peace, reflected on this document in his Bible study. The participants

discussed the content of the declaration in groups and urged the NCCCK to further articulate its meaning in light of the current situation. They joined in the confession of sins of hatred and demonising of adversaries.

Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji, director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Partnership at Osaka University of Economics and Law, presented an analytical framework for understanding the Korean dynamic. He criticised Japan for manipulating diplomatic negotiations rather than confronting its negative past, and promoted a greater role for United Nations agencies in the resolution of the Korean conflict.

Representatives of ecumenical partners in Japan, USA, Canada and Germany presented a review of their activities in the framework of the Tozanso Process. The consultation formulated a process for future ecumenical activities toward peace on the Korean peninsula, including the following recommendations:

- Normalisation of relations between the DPRK and the USA and the adoption of a nonaggression pact would provide a solid foundation for ending the armistice and replacing it with a peace treaty. Reconciliation between the US and the DPRK remains the key to diffusing tension in the region.

- A more independent regional policy and role by Japan is essential to create a climate for peace, security and regional stability. The implementation of the Japan–DPRK Pyongyang Declaration of 17 September 2002 would further this process.
- Humanitarian support for food, medicine, and other inputs should be continued by Japan, USA and other countries without conditions attached. Humanitarian assistance should not be abused for political ends. In order to address the fundamental economic conditions, donor countries should consider other forms of assistance such as the provision of energy and development aid.
- Lifting of economic sanctions of the DPRK will lead to better living standards and progress in different sectors of society. The US and Japan should refrain from using sanctions as a political leverage in their policy of confrontation and isolation.
- The participants encourage the WCC and the CCA to convene a working group to build an ecumenical network of churches, individuals and organisations interested in promoting peace and the reunification of Korea.

Uprooted to reintegrated

Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People meets in Geneva

A meeting of the Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People was held at the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Centre on 25–27 September 2004 to discuss the plight of the millions of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the world. Twenty network members, including Dr Lee Hong Jung, joint executive secretary for the Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service program area of CCA, and Lesley G. Capus of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines attended the meeting. The WCC

Diakonia and Solidarity Team, led by its coordinator Beth Ferris, organised and facilitated the meeting.

Global trends

Sydia Nduna, WCC consultant for the Africa Uprooted Program, provided a comprehensive global overview of refugee and migration trends. Sydia observed that 'the movement of people continues to take place at different levels of society. It is happening at a national level with rural to urban migrations, at a regional level and at a continental level. There

is a movement of people from Eastern Europe to Western Europe, from Asia to Africa and the Middle East, from Asia and Africa to Europe and North America and from South and North America to Europe, Africa and Asia.'

She noted the following trends:

- The impact of terrorism and organised crime on migration.
- Migration and asylum policies being regarded as a tool in the fight against organised crime and terrorism
- The 'third country strategy'.

- With the enforcement of barriers and restrictions (i.e. the third country strategy) refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants are increasingly being mixed up with illegal immigrants and organized crime.
- Human trafficking and smuggling continues to offer an alternative to legal means of migration—even though it is dangerous it may be more accessible.
- The feminization of poverty—women and children are the most vulnerable in trafficking and in the export and trade of cheap labour.
- The concept of remittance—governments, both sending and hosting, receive billions of dollars in annual remittances sent by migrants and refugees thereby extracting lucrative profits in the midst of the suffering of the uprooted people.
- The negative portrayal of asylum seekers and immigrants by the media, i.e. confusing refugees with people migrating for economic reasons and linking them to incidents that threaten national security.
- The fear of invasion—the fear of a massive influx of migrants from underdeveloped nations to developed countries when there are not sufficient jobs available.
- Asylum and resettlement as a durable solution—UNHCR figures show a decrease in asylum seekers in the European Union and a significant reduction in the numbers of those being resettled, including in the USA, Canada, and Australia.

Sydia also noted the voluntary repatriation movements in countries such as Angola, Afghanistan, Burundi and Iraq (despite the fighting), Southern Sudan, Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslav republics, as well as the continuing and forgotten conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan Darfur region, Liberia and Ivory Coast, Uganda, Palestine (the largest single group of refugees in the world), Chechnya, India and Kashmir.

Sexual and gender-based violence

Sydia Nduna also provided the input on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). SGBV can be a weapon of war when it is perpetuated against a civilian population targeting women and children. Most populations of

uprooted people include survivors of SGBV. Further, she said, ‘SGBV continues to be one of the most condoned crimes by families, communities, organisations, governments and UN bodies.’ Sexual assaults committed against uprooted people also occur because of a breakdown of traditional values.

Churches, development service agencies and NGOs could help combat SGBV with pastoral and peer counselling, sanctuary, enactment of laws against sex and gender violence against uprooted people and the development and training of more case workers with added skills in handling traumatic cases. Churches could pay special attention to address the spirituality of victims experiencing deep pain and anguish.

There are an estimated 500,000 to 700,000 women and children trafficked globally by criminal networks, especially in Eastern Europe and Asia, for the purpose of forced prostitution or sexual exploitation. In most situations such crime remains unpunished because many countries where trafficking has become a lucrative business have no existing law against it, i.e. in Australia. SGBV has also been identified as a contributing factor to HIV/AIDS infection among women.

Regional sharing

Representatives from the various regions presented their reports on the trends and challenges taking place in their respective areas.

Five key items were identified in the regional reports: the adverse effects of globalisation on migration, the impact of 9/11 and the U.S. led ‘War on Terror’ on the movement of people, resettlement quotas and procedure, interfaith issues and the need for further dialogue, increasing racism and spirituality.

Challenges for CCA and Asian churches

The meeting identified the need to:

- come up with a comprehensive update and analysis on the situation of internally displaced communities and uprooted people in Asia. Except for the Mekong region, and some south Asian countries, there is not enough information on the

current state of IDP and uprooted people in Asia. It was surprising to find that even the UNHCR does not have up-to-date information on the plight of Filipino and Indonesian refugees in Malaysia, particularly in Sabah, and in southeast Asia in general. This includes information on the present policies of Asian governments related to IDP and regarding migration, refugees trafficking and asylum seekers,

- review and evaluate the response, capacity and experience of our member churches, councils and their development agencies as to how they address the issue of the IDPs, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers,
- highlight the issue of foreign intervention, internal conflicts, militarisation, increasing human rights violations and environmentally destructive development and economic programs as attributing factors that cause the massive displacement of people and communities in the region,
- establish an Asian ecumenical network for uprooted people,
- strengthen partnerships with WCC and other international agencies in dealing with specific issues regarding the Mekong region, the threat of massive deportation of migrants and refugees, human rights violations, trafficking of women and children, in relation with HIV/AIDS.
- strengthen bilateral links with European, North American, Middle Eastern and Australian counterparts, the main destinations of uprooted people, UNHCR and UNRWA, and larger independent refugee and relief agencies,
- train and develop our churches’ and church workers’ capacity in dealing with uprooted people.

Conclusion

The issue of internally displaced people and uprooted communities is a protracted struggle. It can only be solved when the tenets, structures and forces that perpetuate and insinuate violence, injustice and inequality are eradicated.

Our prayer should be that of the prophet Amos for God’s people, ‘that they shall not be uprooted anymore’.

—Lesley G. Capus and Lee Hong Jung

State of the world

A letter from regional ecumenical organizations to Kofi Annan

We write to you from Nairobi, Kenya, where we are meeting as representatives of the Christian ecumenical bodies of eight continents and regions of the world—Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America, the Pacific—and of the World Council of Churches. We are meeting during a time of appalling and continuing instances of conflict and violence, from nearby Sudan to North Ossetia in Russia and in the Middle East, but we greet you in the name of him who said, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’

In May this year several of us were privileged to meet with you in your office in New York. On 17 May Dr Sam Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, met with you and on 24 May you received a delegation of church representatives from the USA, Canada and Europe. We recall those meetings with deep gratitude and appreciation. We were moved by your readiness to find time in your schedule to receive us and by the evident seriousness with which you listened to us and attended to our concerns. We further appreciated your sincere recognition of the positive role which faith and religious commitment can and do play in working for reconciliation in a world of conflict and violence. We left much encouraged by a real sense of commonality of interest and purpose between yourself and ecumenical Christianity. Among the fruits of Dr Kobia’s conversation with you has been the call to churches throughout the world to observe 21 September as a day of prayer for peace, to be shared with people of all faiths, and for

this we are deeply thankful. All of us meeting here in Nairobi wish to take this opportunity of reaffirming the deep desire of our organizations and member churches to support the United Nations, and you personally, at this critical time on the world scene. We believe that the UN remains the indispensable instrument of the nations of the world if they are to remove the scourge of war from the earth and to establish the conditions for peace, notably: observance of human rights, a just sharing of the earth’s resources, eliminating poverty and all forms of discrimination. In face of all tendencies either to disregard it or exploit it for particular national ends, we believe that the unique status of the UN in the eyes of all its member states must be restored, accompanied by a renewed respect for international law and the desire to solve conflicts by a truly multilateral approach. We are committing ourselves to promoting this view of the UN in our respective church constituencies.

Soon the UN will be marking the 60th anniversary of its founding. We share the hopes of many that this will present an opportunity for a just appraisal of the role which the UN has played since the Second World War, and at the same time an examination of how it can be adapted to fulfil more effectively its role in a world which has changed so much in sixty years. Coming as we do from all regions of the world, we are very conscious that to many peoples and nations, especially outside Europe and North America, the inherited structures of governance of the UN do not adequately reflect the present realities and needs of the world as a whole. We look forward to sharing in and contributing to the coming debate on these issues, for we believe in the UN and in its future.

Returning to a more personal level, we especially wish you to know the deep respect and trust in which you are held among us and those whom we represent. It is difficult for us to conceive the pressures you must experience day by day, but we hope that on your part you can imagine the spiritual support with which you are surrounded. Be assured that every discouraging sign which you encounter, whether of indifference to or hostility towards the UN and your work, is being countered by the hopes and prayers of countless people of faith and goodwill around the world. We will always be ready to offer signs of this support in further meetings with you, and to hear your own expectations and hopes of the churches in facing the current challenges for peace and justice. Indeed we would welcome the opportunity of such a meeting before the end of this year and one of our colleagues will be in contact with your office about this possibility.

Attached to this sentiment we would like to offer a specific suggestion. We believe it would be very appropriate if, in addition to your statements on particular problems, crises and conflicts, and your reports to the governing bodies of the UN, you felt able from time to time to deliver what would amount to a ‘State of the World’ message, addressing global issues and placing particular problems in a world perspective—and also pointing to wherever you see signs of hope. This, we believe, would not only serve to enhance the profile of the UN in the eyes of people at large, but also would help to generate and spread the sense that we are indeed living in one interdependent world where there can be no real peace and security for any if there is not peace and security for all.

These thoughts, wishes and hopes, which we convey for your kind attention, come with our heartfelt prayers that you may be given all needed strength and wisdom and find blessing as you seek to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to you. —4 September 2004

On behalf of our respective independent regional ecumenical organisations and the World Council of Churches: Rev. Dr H. Mvume Dandala (General Secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches), Dr Ahn Jae Woong (General Secretary, Christian Conference of Asia), Rev. Dr Kingsley Lewis (Member Continuation Committee, Caribbean Conference of Churches), Rev. Keith Clements (General Secretary, Conference of European Churches), Rev. Israel Batista (General Secretary, Latin American Council of Churches), Mr Guirguis I. Saleh (General Secretary, Middle East Council of Churches), Rev. Dr Karen Hamilton (General Secretary, Canadian Council of Churches), Rev. Dr Bob Edgar (General Secretary, National Council of Churches USA), Rev. Dr Sam Kobia (General Secretary, World Council of Churches)

Benefit or havoc?

ECOT looks at World Tourism Day, 2004

People around the world the world observed 'World Tourism Day' on 27 September. The theme assigned for this year by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO-OMT) is 'Sport and Tourism—Two Living Forces for Mutual Understanding, Culture and the Development of Societies'. The two, when practised in their most idealistic forms, have similar facets and potentials—coexistence, interdependence, understanding, fairness and friendship.

Tourism is a remarkable phenomenon. By 2010, it is expected that some 900 million people will be travelling. Even today, close to \$600 billion exchanges hands in the tourism arena each year.

For ECOT, and the wide-ranging network of church bodies, NGOs, and civil society groups that it relates with, World Tourism Day must serve both as a time of celebration and of introspection. Tourism may have reaped benefits for many but it has brought havoc to the lives of many more.

Not many months have lapsed since the momentous Olympics in Athens, Greece, when athletes met at the birthplace of the modern Olympic movement. Through the scandals of corrupt practices there were moments when the best ideals of humanity were overshadowed. Friendships were built through encounters. Athletes and spectators often discovered that, after all, there is such a thing as a 'common humanity', rooted in the spirit of common interests, unimpeded by artificial walls of race, religion, class or other defining beliefs.

Not too far away, battles raged, and left TV viewers with stark choices: to watch the record-breaking feats of the athletes, or the killings in Iraq and Palestine or the massacres in Darfur, Sudan. Just prior to the Olympics, respectable aid agencies called on people to sign up to protest the use of slave and child labour in the industries that manufacture sports equipment.

There is a dilemma for those of us who have chosen to be activists in the arena of tourism that seeks responsibility, ethics, justice and sustainability. This is a world where 900 million people will cross borders to see places and to experience new facets of life. They will engage in luxuries and enjoyments unparalleled, while at the same time some one billion people will earn less than or the equivalent of US\$2 a day, and half of the world's children will go to bed hungry. These children will hardly have seen their next village!

Tourism, which is an avenue for encounters between people, will not, in itself, be the pathway to understanding and friendships. The latter calls for a lot more. Tourism will need to assume a sustained transformative function—one that advances the cause of justice. It must take on various forms and utilise methods that are rooted and centred in communities. It must presuppose the participation of peoples in the host communities and must, in the final analysis, affect the hearts and minds of the traveller and the visited. In other words, tourism must reflect the aspirations of humanity as a whole, not just those who are affluent and who then use tourism as way of meeting exclusively self-gratifying pleasures.

World Tourism Day might be an occasion to consider how tourism could be a vehicle of true encounter. Tourism certainly can be rest, leisure and entertainment or social and cultural interaction, but tourists should also begin to examine the other side of the tourism equation.

For those of us who believe that a new tourism is possible, there is the challenge to be advocates and activists for justice in tourism. That, in turn, can be achieved when those who are visited:

- can affirm and uphold their rights to be respected, and are benefited in a just way,

- are able to preserve and protect their cultural integrity,
- are among the poor and vulnerable in the visited communities, notably women and children, are not exploited by tourism patterns in which their circumstances are exploited for the gain and immediate pleasures of the tourist,
- can be sure that when they are displaced or uprooted or when their environments are violated by unjust policies, practices or mechanisms receive just and fair compensation and/or restored,
- have the right to be equitable partners in the design of the tourism plan in all aspects.

We might also want to create new and alternative ways of promoting the human encounter. A sports encounter is one such way, especially if it can transcend the goal of winning, and be an opportunity when participants share each other's realities. Largely because sports bring together young minds—minds that are still fresh and able to be moulded—it can grow into a form of tourism and encounter that is transformative. But it must be borne in mind too, that it is often the privilege of a select minority and the impact can only be relative. Furthermore, the overt commercialisation of sport itself has made it all too similar to the current consumptive pattern of tourism—self-centred and potentially exploitative.

If tourism is to be the vehicle of building a global community embedded in justice and understanding, there must be people in large numbers driven and motivated by the intent to seek true encounters of people-to-people for an understanding of reality and a yearning of lasting justice. This is a gift and responsibility to succeeding generations. As the great Chinese saying goes: 'One generation opens the road upon which another travels.'

—ECOT: *Abm Jae Woong, chair*
Ranjan Solomon, executive secretary

Christmas presence

'Don't tell me, show me'

Advent approaches. Christmas is nigh. And our churches are bracing for their annual battle with rampant paganism, otherwise known as the festive season.

A few years back, the 25 December programs of a leading Australian television channel featured a comedy, 'The Nanny Christmas Special'. Not to be missed, said the TV guide. 'Fran [the leading character] travels to the North Pole. She flirts with Santa, sings with elves, battles an evil princess and'—wait for it—'teaches everyone the true meaning of Christmas.'

Forgive me, Channel Ten, but I gave it a miss and was left pondering the significance of Christ's birth unenlightened by Fran's polar pilgrimage, her flirtations with Santa, her elfin singing and her brawl with an ethically challenged royal.

Australia isn't alone. Hong Kong too will be crawling with Santas, littered with phoney snow, seduced by shopping mall Muzak. The distortion has gone global.

No wonder one of my friends says the church's seasonal prayer should be 'Forgive us our Christmases, as we forgive those who



Christmas against us.'

Such tinselled triviality distorts beyond recognition what this celebration supposedly is all about. Grace gets swamped by schmaltz. Joy is reduced to partying. Christmas becomes a cliché.

Contrast the heart-stopping, history-bending claim of the Christian faith: that the impenetrable silence that surrounds us, the vast mystery that embraces us, is love beyond anything mortals could create or imagine, love we have glimpsed in the child of Bethlehem, love that goes to a cross and

beyond for the likes of you and me. If only we could find the words to say it. So many young people run for cover from religion and all its works. Yet they continue to yearn for light in the darkness, love in the loneliness, grace in the emptiness, meaning in the madness. Our churches, meanwhile, remain the improbable trustees of a vast treasure trove of faith and wisdom, of meaning and sanctity, of light and love.

But then, maybe it's not words that young Asia needs right now. 'Don't tell me—show me!' warbled a song that was on the charts a few years back. Good advice for Christians. The Word, after all, became flesh, not words. Incarnation is the name of the game.

The churches, together, seeking to embody more credibly their gospel of amazing grace. It is a compelling vision, as well as a profoundly evangelical one. And it is why we look to the 2005 assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia for inspiration and guidance along the way.

Certainly our people deserve better than the tinselled travesty that at this time of the year masquerades as Christianity.

—David Gill

Is no-one listening?

If you walk down the main street of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, it is easy to imagine that it is Hong Kong or Singapore. Signs in shop windows are likely to be in Chinese, Korean or Japanese, and the smell of Asian cooking is pervasive. In just a short time, the Asian population in Aotearoa New Zealand has increased from a few thousand to 300,000 and is set to double to 600,000 by the year 2021. Add to this 80,000 international students in New Zealand each year (mostly in Auckland), together with more than half a million Asian tourists. White faces are a minority.

Most of the Asian presence is seen in the

central city. But if you go from there to South Auckland you are more likely to think you are in Fiji or Samoa. The markets are full of taro and coconut, dresses are more colourful, and there is happy music everywhere. The thousands of brown faces will remind you that Auckland now has the largest Polynesian population of any city in the world.

Like others in my city I experience this at first hand. One Saturday there was a cultural festival in my small suburb in Auckland. More than 20 different countries presented their culture in dance and song and for lunch you could choose from one of 30 different forms of cooking. On Sunday I go to church

in another suburb. There is an English-language service, which includes a number of worshippers from Samoa, Niue and the islands of Pukapuka in the Cook Islands. Often we sing their hymns in our service and later each of these language groups worships in their own language, which makes our church a rather chaotic miniature version of the Tower of Babel.

To a greater or lesser extent I suspect this kind of development is taking place in many other cities around the world. The massive movement of populations has changed the way many of us perceive society and is one of the irreversible consequences of the glo-

balisation process. What does it say to the ecumenical movement?

My first experience of ecumenism in Asia was more than 40 years ago. The little old aeroplane which took me to Asia had to make three stops on the way but when we finally arrived I encountered cultures, languages, food, music and customs that were as alien as if they were from another planet. And that was a large part of the magic of ecumenism in those days. We pioneered the cultural encounters. Those who attended the early meetings between Christians from many different Asian cultures were excited and stimulated by sharing what was then an exotic and little understood encounter.

We made simple discoveries. We found there was a universality of humanity that existed even in the midst of diversity. We learned that other cultures could be just as enriching and just as authentic as our own. We found (to our astonishment) that we could sometimes identify much more closely with persons of another race and culture than we did with our own people. In the shared experiences of those years friendships and commitments were sealed that have stood the test of time. We believed that if all people in the world could experience this encounter between cultures, the world would be a better place.

Alas for our hopes—recent global developments have not made the world a safer, more humane or more peaceful place in which to live. After 50 years there are more poor than ever, wars continue to be brutal and unforgiving and trust between some faith communities has been badly eroded.

In the past we were separated by the fear of the unknown and uncertainty about persons and cultures different from our own. As the unknown has become known and the differences become understood new separations have developed. The fears that had fuelled our prejudice were even deeper than we had imagined. With little change in the overall picture there must be a temptation for people working in the ecumenical movement to despair. But despair is not in the Christian lexicon. There is a story about this:

In ancient times there was once a wise person who ran through the streets shouting, 'Power, greed and corruption!'

In the beginning, people stopped to wonder at this odd behaviour. But they soon went away and resumed their everyday business. One day a child took pity on the wise person and asked, 'Don't you realise that no-one is listening to you?'

The wise one responded, 'Of course I do, child.'

'Then why do you keep shouting? If no-one is changing, your efforts are useless.'

'Oh no they aren't,' the wise one said, 'You see, I do not shout only in order to change them. I shout so that they cannot change me.'

It is a good story and mirrors one of the parables of Jesus about the need for persistence (Luke 18). But the message of the wise one also has a lesson for us: 'Power, greed and corruption!'

These three words might bring us back to the heart of the issues facing a divided humanity.

Over many decades ecumenical agencies working for justice, service and development have been the central driving force of our programs. When CCA was founded at Prapat in 1957 one of the first appointments was a secretary for interchurch aid, the forerunner of hundreds of later programs working for development and justice.

In the 50 years since Prapat churches have invested millions of dollars into activities that sought to make our societies more just, peaceful and equitable. They have had some notable successes and significant achievements. In terms of the larger picture they may appear insignificant but they have been hugely important for those individuals and communities who have been helped.

Working to help the poor and the dispossessed has been central to our understanding of mission. That is understandable. There can be no question about the evil of poverty. In its extreme form it dehumanises the victims and destroys entire communities. Nor is there any question about the solution. There is more than enough wealth and excess food in the world to meet the needs of every person on the planet.

So why have we not been able to change the world? Why does poverty and injustice continue? The wise one in the ancient story offers one answer. Perhaps our best endeav-

ours have been sabotaged by human actions. Perhaps we need to spend less time concentrating on structures and start looking at power, greed and corruption.

It seems self-evident to argue that people die from starvation, disease and the consequences of poverty because those who have more than they need are too greedy to share what they have with those who have not. In this situation some of the main offenders are those rich nations, churches and individuals who have been unwilling to see their own wealth diminish by sharing their excess with others. But our experience over the years has shown that greed and corruption is not the exclusive domain of rich countries but is evident in even the poorest nations. Nor is it only very rich people who are greedy—it is found at every level of society. Even in the slums there are the greedy individuals willing to exploit their neighbours for personal gain. Without external or inner restraints it seems there are always corrupt individuals willing to make themselves rich or powerful by exploiting others.

As we come to Christmas in 2004, it is a good time to remind ourselves of those basic spiritual attitudes that underlie so much of the stupidity of modern society.

The quiet simplicity of the birth of a little child born in a manger might be the antidote we need to overcome power, greed and corruption.

In this child we find a living symbol of the all-powerful God who gave up power and adopted the form of the servant. Rejecting riches he became the poor man of Galilee who had no place to lay his head. Offered all the kingdoms of the world by the corrupt tempter he chose instead to follow the way, and to be the truth and the life. To follow Jesus is to follow his way of humility and servanthood and this has been the motivating force for those thousands who have been supporters of ecumenical programs.

In today's increasingly confused and confusing world the ecumenical movement must continue to be a constant reminder of the inherent unity of humankind and of all creation—a unity that will only be known and expressed as we reject the temptations of power, of greed and of corruption.

—Ron O'Grady

Zacchaeus: signs of salvation and fullness of life for all

Toshi Yamamoto reflects on Luke 19:1–10

A man from England told me this story a long time ago. You might have heard it too.

A dear friend in Manchester, England, went to a teashop and ordered herself some tea and packet of cookies (or 'biscuits', as they call them). She sat down and began to drink her tea and look at her magazine. Soon she realised that there was a man sitting across from her, who had suddenly appeared. He opened the packet of cookies in the centre of the table, took one out and started to eat it. She was a little surprised but the man looked like he was from the West Indies since he was quite dark skinned and she didn't know what to say (she probably thought he might not know English), but she reached out and pulled the cookies towards her to make sure he knew whose cookies they were. She took a cookie and ate it while going back to her magazine. But she was not really reading her magazine, she was looking around to see what would happen next. And sure enough, the man reached all the way across the table and took a second cookie from the packet. By now she was beginning to get annoyed, but didn't know what to do. So she took a second cookie and ate it. Now as there had been five cookies in the packet there was now only one cookie left. And sure enough, the gentleman reached all the way across the table again and took the last cookie. Then he broke it and gave her half. By now she was so angry she didn't know what to do. The man finished his tea and politely greeted her with, 'Have a good day,' and left. Her day was ruined. She gulped down her tea and folded her magazine. But as she started to put her magazine into her purse, she stopped, for there in her bag was her packet of cookies. The cookies they had

been eating were not hers, they were his cookies.

Perhaps many of you had a cup of coffee this morning. Perhaps many of you have some clothing made in China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. Most of the coffee we drink comes from Colombia or Brazil. Also, the clothing that we wear comes from the hardship of women factory workers in Asia. We live in an interrelated global community, yet there is a sense of separation and brokenness between us. Every day we could be eating cookies we think are ours but that really belong to other people. Martin Luther King Jr said, 'Before you finish eating breakfast this morning, you're dependent on more than half the world.' 'Fullness of life for all' is not a reality for everyone in Asia nor in many places in the rest of the world. An interrelated world is not necessarily an interdependent world. There is political oppression, economic exploitation and gender discrimination in Asia that make it difficult for all of us to realise fullness of life. 'Fullness of life for all' in Asia, in short, is salvation, liberation and emancipation from all forms of violence and oppression.

Luke 19:1–10 tells us that Zacchaeus climbed a tree in order to see Jesus, because he was a little man. Zacchaeus is just about the only person in the New Testament who is singled out for comment on the basis of his physical appearance. From this passage, some scholars have argued that Jesus also must have been short, because Zacchaeus needed to climb a tree in order to see him! If so, it seems Zacchaeus, Jesus and I all have something in common—we all are short. I can identify with shortness. Many people in Asia are relatively short. I also assume that Zacchaeus must have had a very good reason

to climb up a tree to see Jesus, because it is quite dangerous to climb up high in a tree. But maybe it was more dangerous for Zacchaeus to be in the crowd, since he was a chief tax collector who was hated by devout Jews as both a cheat and a traitor. They hated tax collectors for at least two good reasons: first, tax collectors were usually customs agents who set inflated values and taxed by the fixed rate and so were considered dishonest plunderers of their own people, and, second, they were collaborators with the occupying government of Rome, so were seen as traitors in the minds of those who longed for Israel's independence. At a time when zealot movements were springing up to oppose Roman rule through guerrilla warfare, tax collectors were not a welcome part of society. Since he was working for the Roman emperor, Zacchaeus was rich but miserable. He probably did not have any real fulfilment in his life.

But something strange happened to Zacchaeus. When Jesus came to that particular tree, he looked up and said to him, 'Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay at your house today.' Isn't this a peculiar thing for Jesus to say? Do you notice something strange here? Suppose you planned to stay at someone's home, would you say, 'I must stay at your house today'? It is not the Asian way at all. You might probably say that if you owned the house. But even among good friends, we usually say something like, 'Could I stay at your house today?' or, 'May I come and stay at your house?' Jesus said, however, to Zacchaeus, 'I must stay at your house today.' This is not a request of Jesus, but a decision and a declaration to Zacchaeus. For Zacchaeus, this was the moment of God's fulfilling of a promise, fullness of life. In that

moment God invaded Zacchaeus' life and he would never again be the same. Through Jesus, God walked squarely into Zacchaeus's life. We often speak about our searching for God. The biblical truth is that God comes looking for us. Since the days of Adam and Eve it has always been so. When Moses encountered the burning bush, God became involved personally in effecting the exodus of the Hebrews from the slavery of Egypt. God said, 'I have seen the afflictions of my people ... I have seen their sufferings. I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.'

When salvation comes into our lives, this is how it happens. Jesus does not ask our permission. He does not say, 'May I come into your lives?' or, 'Is it OK for me to come into your soul?' This is so especially when we are lost and separated from God. Just as you would not ask permission from anybody to help look for your lost child in a crowd, or ask your child drowning in a river, 'Can I come and save you?' salvation sometimes requires a sense of urgency. Jesus seeks us and comes into our soul and our lives.

John Wesley, the 'founder' of the Methodist church, believed in what he called 'prevenient grace', which means, 'God seeks us before we seek God.' This is what happened to Zacchaeus. Methodists believe in infant baptism on the basis of this teaching. Although a baby can not rationally recognise the meaning of baptism, Methodists celebrate God's prevenient grace for a baby together with the surrounding community of faith. Fullness of life is not only for the individual but also for the community.

As we look at the scripture, we see another strange thing that happened to Zacchaeus after he had welcomed Jesus to his house and had eaten with him. Zacchaeus, all of a sudden stood up and said to Jesus, 'Listen sir, I will give half of my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him or her back four times as much.' This is an amazing statement. Zacchaeus was a man who collected taxes and held on to much more than he needed. Zacchaeus was a man who had a 'cash flow problem'. Unlike my cash flow problem, the Thai baht, Japanese yen or US dollar simply stopped with Zacchaeus. He didn't share his posses-



sions with other people. But now, he stood up and promised to contribute to the poor and restore fourfold to those he had wrongfully cheated. Zacchaeus didn't give 10 per cent, he gave 50 per cent. It is interesting to note here that Zacchaeus's repentance is the consequence, not the cause, of Jesus' approach. In other words, when Jesus came into his life, Zacchaeus could not help but stand up and declare that he would give half of his belongings to the poor.

Salvation, fullness of life, also brings a sense of sharing with one another. It has been widely said that the sense of sharing and communal harmony is a very important part of traditional cultures in Asia. As the US-centred economic globalisation and culture of violence rapidly spreads all over the world, we need to reaffirm and revitalise our own Asian traditional culture of sharing and a sense of communal life together, especially when our community is getting more diverse. Behind all the rhetoric of democracy and global communities, there is a deep sense of greed and arrogance on the part of people in power. Mother Teresa shared a story about when she visited a poor family in India and brought a handful of rice with her. When Mother Teresa gave the rice to the grandmother of the family, the grandmother took half the rice to her neighbours next door and gave it them. Mother Teresa observed that poor people share more than rich people do.

Some time ago, a pastor from South Korea told me that, for many Koreans, donating money to the church is very important. He

said a person's monetary offering was 'like a deposit to God in heaven', therefore over one-third of his congregation were tithing. He also said that he firmly believed that our repentance would not be complete, unless 'our wallet also repents'. That is exactly what happened to Zacchaeus. His personal repentance led to his financial repentance. There was no separation between the salvation of Zacchaeus's soul and his following social action. The basic meaning of repentance is turning around from sin and walking back towards God. Repentance, therefore, is to urge us to turn away from inhumanity and oppression and to exercise compassion for those in need—the poor, the stranger and the hungry. To repent is not only to repent our own wrongdoing and to accept Jesus emotionally, but also to live out our faith and act accordingly.

It is our biblical heritage as well as CCA's tradition that faith and good works belong together. Our personal salvation always leads to involvement in Christian mission in our community as well as in the world. We believe that the strength of the church lies in how much we could give of ourselves to the community, not how much we can gain from the community. Dr Gustafson, who teaches at Emory University in the US, defines sin as a 'contraction' and salvation as an 'enlargement'.

Sin is an attitude, according to him, whereby you tend to alienate yourself from the world and stick to your self-centeredness, whereas salvation is the process in which you expand your relationships and share with others in terms of giving of yourself.

It is interesting and important to note that Jesus blessed Zacchaeus, right after he promised to give half of his possessions, by saying, 'Today, salvation has come to this house.' Jesus did not say that salvation, fullness of life, had come to Zacchaeus as a person. Rather, Jesus celebrated the nature of the salvation that went beyond Zacchaeus' soul. The salvation had come to the house, the community and to the world. Zacchaeus's change is a sign of hope for the fullness of life for all in Asia.

Toshi Yamamoto is the general secretary of the National Christian Council in Japan

A woman takes the lead

The story of a woman general secretary

I wish to tell you a story about a person who was elected as the first lay woman general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). For forty years, this ecumenical fellowship of ten mainline Protestant and non-Roman Catholic churches and ten service-oriented organisations had been led by men—two reverend doctors, a Methodist bishop, a Protestant theologian and a bishop of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. As you would expect, leadership at the council was patriarchal: an emphasis on the scholarly and professional, a decision-making process that emanated from the top echelons of power and hierarchical and bureaucratic patterns of relationship with importance given to seniority. Specialisation was the order of the day. There were program units and desks for almost all aspects of the ministry: urban rural mission, human rights, health, family ministries, internal refugees, relief and rehabilitation, women, youth and students, indigenous people, ecology, media, international affairs, peace, education etc. etc. And each one worked within the confines of his or her program unit or desk. The general secretary was a figure who wielded power. Oh yes, one or two of them endeared themselves to the staff and the constituents, but, just the same, they were placed on a pedestal somewhat isolated from the ordinary people. The general secretary was the boss and the manager. He often called the shots.

In the year 2000, the NCCP general convention elected a lay woman as its general secretary. Whether they were aware of it or not, the council was making an important political statement by electing her. It was a testimony to its belief in Galatians 3:28: 'So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free persons; between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.' It was a recognition that academic degrees (PhD) or ecclesi-

astical titles (reverend, bishop) were not necessary to lead an ecumenical institution. After all, women are not weak nor inferior, women have the capacity to take on such an awesome responsibility.

Naturally, the council (churches, church leaders, officers, and staff) were not used to having someone in a dress inside the office of the general secretary. The staff had a hard time adjusting to someone they could not call 'Bishop' or 'Dr' or 'Reverend'. It was even more difficult calling her by her first name. They settled for 'Madam', which she did not like because it was like 'Madame Imelda Marcos'.

The first thing this woman general secretary did was to turn the office around. She moved out the desk of the general secretary from an inner corner that hid it from public view to a spot that faced the door (which she kept open all the time except when she had deadlines to beat). For her, the person and the position must be accessible. She must be in a place where she can be reached any time. But she was taking a risk by so doing for then accessibility made her vulnerable. Without a protective covering, so to speak, she could be hurt. She opened herself to attack. She told everyone that she could be criticised any time. And when the criticisms came, they were painful, but she tried so hard to accept them without being defensive because she believed that there was no need to defend herself. If the criticisms were true, she had to take them graciously and rectify her mistakes. If the criticisms were not true, she had no reason to be upset.

In order to brace herself, she said, 'People throw stones at a fruit-bearing tree. No-one will pay attention to a tree without fruits.' This woman general secretary was not afraid to let out her feelings. She shed tears in front of the staff. She told them she was lonely or hurt or uncertain or very tired or didn't know. She did not feel she had to project a

strong image just because she was the general secretary. She struggled very hard with policies and rules and laws. If she could only throw them out, she would. However, she was aware that an institution had to have legal foundations. But she infused the policies with compassion for her standpoint was biased for those who were on the underside.

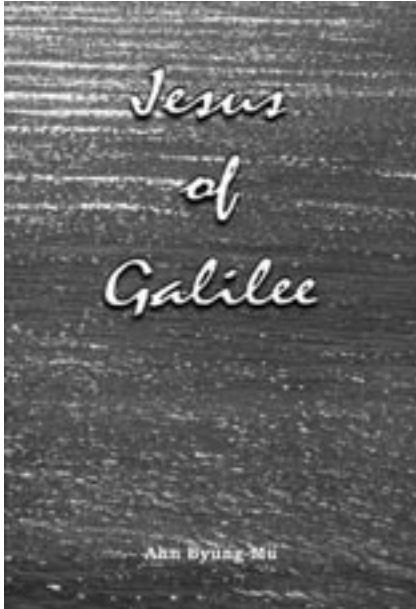
For this woman general secretary, the little things were the big things. No task was too menial for her ... including putting away the dishes after a meal or picking up cigarette butts around the building or collating documents for a convention. She did not categorise duties into official and unofficial. Listening to a distraught staff person was as important as making a report at the executive committee meeting. She delegated tasks to people but did not command from a 'war room' at a distance. She was engaged in a 'hands on' manner, working alongside everyone else. She tried to veer away from a personality-oriented leadership style. Whether in decision-making or in doing tasks, it was always done collectively ... communally, in the spirit of sharing. She did not care if she was not recognised at a public gathering.

More than anything else, she was constantly looking for new ways of doing and thinking, whether in worship or in the format of the general secretary's report or in facilitating a staff meeting.

It was not all smooth sailing for this woman general secretary. Many did not understand her. Some did not appreciate her style. Others were threatened by her way of relating. Still others gave her token listening because they did not quite know what to do about her 'weird' ideas. This first lay woman general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines survived a four-year term (2000–2003). The last time I looked, she was starting a second four-year term. She was still struggling.

—Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes

Jesus of Galilee
by Ahn Byung-Mu
US\$10



These books are available from the CCA office. See page 3 for contact details

The late Dr Ahn Byung-Mu, the author of this book, was one of the leading minjung theologians who fought against the Park military dictatorship during the 1970s and 1980s. He had been forced to resign from his professorship at Hanshin University in 1975 because of his participation in the democratic movement through his writings and lectures as well as action. A year later, he was put in prison for participating in the pronouncement of the “Declaration for the Restoration of Democracy”.

The death of a factory tailor named Jeon Taeil in November 1970 turned Dr Ahn’s life to a new direction. Jeon Taeil, a junior high school graduate, studied labour law by himself and rallied his co-workers, who agreed to fight for the improvement of their poor working conditions with him. Because he was not successful he burned himself to death in the Pyunghwa market. His death was shocking news to many intellectuals, especially to Dr Ahn, who interpreted the death as a self-transcending action.

Dr Ahn had gone to Germany for his study of the historical Jesus. In his quest he de-

voured as many books as he could, but he did not find the historical Jesus in European New Testament scholarship. On his return, he taught New Testament studies at Hanshin University, applying the Biblical methods that he had studied in Germany.

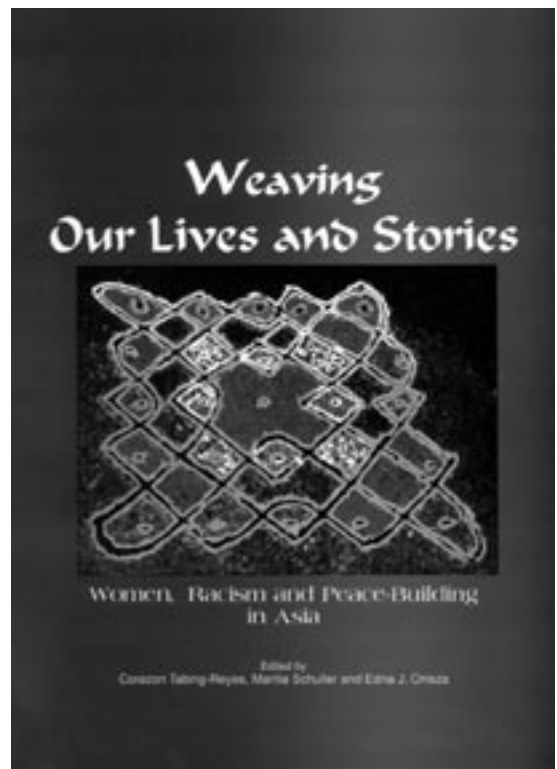
Finally after experiencing the self-transcending action of minjung such as Jeon Taeil and his own imprisonment, Dr Ahn began to live for and with minjung. As he recognized the power of minjung as the subject of history, despite their poverty and oppression, Dr Ahn turned his theological point of view on Jesus. For him, Jesus was no longer seen as a person but as an event. He took the position to believe not in “In the beginning ... there was a word” but “In the beginning ... there was an event’. He also claimed that one could not study the Gospel of Mark without noticing ‘Ochlos’ who were always surrounding Jesus and concluded that they are the subjects of history and its bearer. Minjung became the core of his study. With his new theological view, he began to read the gospels, especially Mark, again and thus wrote the present book, *Jesus in Galilee*, as the fruit of his studies.

Weaving Our Lives and Stories: Women, Racism and Peace-building in Asia
edited by Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Marilia Schuller and Edna J. Orteza

US\$10

The Christian Conference of Asia, along with the World Council of Churches has long been involved with peace issues. Its current theme, ‘Building Communities of Peace for All’, articulates a vision that is shared by each member of the ecumenical community. Within this are efforts and initiatives towards peace-building and conflict transformation as a way of overcoming the violence that is sweeping all across Asia.

This resource book is the result of two workshops jointly facilitated by CCA and the WCC, ‘The Role of Church Women in Overcoming Racial/Ethnic/Minority/Religious Discrimination in Asia’, held in Hsinchu City, Taiwan, in September 2000, and ‘Asian Indigenous/Dalit/Aboriginal Women Overcoming Violence’, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in September 2003. It represents the personal thoughts and feelings, struggles and pain, analysis and reflection, hopes and aspirations of individual women, which in the process became common issues and concerns that needed common action. Through rituals of praise and healing, poetry and song, creative expressions and dramatic presentations, the whole experience brought a sense of spirituality that went beyond all the human borders of racism, sexism and class. Hence what is presented here is a woven piece, the one story of women’s experiences of violence and discrimination.



Youth interns



Erdian Sembiring

Sembiring and **Sunila Azmat** have joined CCA as youth interns. They began a nine-month internship from mid-October.

Erdian, 30, Ian for friends, comes from Medan in Indonesia and is a member of the Gereja Batak Karo Protestan—GBKP (Karo Batak Protestant Church). He studied commerce in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta. During his student days, he was active in the campus ministry, JOY Fellowship Indonesia. He was also actively involved in the youth fellowship of his church. Sunila, 22, is from Lahore in Pakistan. She is a member of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. A school teacher by profession, Sunila has attended seminars and meetings organised by the churches and



Sunila Azmat

the Student Christian Movement. She has a master's degree in economics.

Volunteer



Nurdiana Sari Wijaya

Nurdiana Sari Wijaya is a part-time volunteer at the CCA office. A trained librarian from Jakarta, Indonesia, she helps in reorganising the CCA library. Currently she is doing an MTh program at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong.

Korea

Rev. **Seong Gi Cho** assumed responsibility as the general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Korea from 14 September 2004. He was formally installed on 4 October.

Rev. Cho succeeds Rev. Dr Sang Hak Kim. Rev. Seong Gi Cho has two masters, in Divinity and in Theology from the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Korea. He has also done a master's program in Theology at the Melbourne College of Divinity, majoring in Church History. He is a former executive committee member of the National Council of Churches in Korea. Currently, he serves as president of the Association of PCK pastors for the Life Pastoral Ministry and board



member of the Alumni Association of the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary. He is also a president of *Kidokongbo*, the weekly Christian newspaper of PCK.

Rev. **Kil-Soo Yoon**

has been elected the new general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) for a four-year term in September. Rev. Yoon has



been on several committees of the National Council of Churches in Korea, including its reunification committee. He has also a member of the board of the Christian Broadcasting System. The new general secretary is a former chaplain of the Korean navy from 1976 to 1979. He has served as a senior pastor at the Songeum Church in Seoul and Anyang Joongang Church in Anyang City in Korea. He has a ThM degree in New Testament from Hanshin University in Korea and a diploma from the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham in the United Kingdom.

Sri Lanka

Rev. Dr **Jayasiri Thidas Peiris** has been elected the new general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka. He will assume office on 1 January 2005. An Anglican clergy person, Jayasiri has been associated with NCC Sri Lanka for some time. He was the chair of the Youth Committee and the Theological Committee. He has studied in Sri Lanka, India and the United Kingdom. He is married to Geethamali and they have one son.

FIM

Manuel Quintero has been elected the new director of Frontier Internship in Mission (FIM). Quintero is currently the director of Communications for the Latin American Council of Churches, based in Quito, Ecuador. He is a former co-secretary general of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in Geneva. FIM is an ecumenical three-year internship program.

Bread for the World

Hannelore Moll has taken over as head of the department on Projects and Programs (international program director) of the Stuttgart-based Bread for the World, from November 2004. She was the head of the Asia-Pacific Group of the agency before assuming the new position.

Dr **Barbara Ramsperger** is the new head of the Asia Pacific Group of Bread for the World. Barbara has worked with the Projects and Program department of the partner agency for a couple of years. Last year, she worked as the program officer for the Middle East.

Christian Aid

Leo Bashyam, head of Asia team of Christian Aid will leave the organisation on 31 December 2004 after being on the staff for 19 years. Leo was the first overseas staff to join Christian Aid in 1986. 'Due to the merger of Asia and Middle East/Central Asia teams into one division from April 2005 I felt that the best course of action for me was to tender my resignation,' Leo, an Indian, said in a letter to his friends and colleagues.

Passed away

Rev. Dr **Joseph Pattiasina**, former general secretary of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) and a former CCA General Committee member, passed away on 7 November 2004.

Rev. Dr **Park Chung Shik**, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and senior minister of Soonchun Presbyterian Church in Korea, passed away on 9 November 2004.

Rev. **M Zaw Yaw**, former president of Myanmar Council of Churches (1994–2000) passed away on 7 November 2004. He was a member of the WCC Central Committee (1991–1998).

Rev. **Cho Yong Sul**, former president of the National Council of Churches in Korea and a former moderator of the Korean Evangelical Church, passed away on 15 November 2004.

CCA General Assembly speakers

A number of excellent speakers have been invited to speak at the Christian Conference of Asia's Twelfth General Assembly, which is to be held next year, from 31 March to 6 April, in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Samuel Kobia

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia took over as the sixth general secretary of the World Council of Churches in January 2004. Dr Kobia has had wide ecumenical experience. He served as the WCC executive secretary for Urban Rural Mission and as WCC special representative for Africa. He is a former general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Kenya. He helped organise the Zimbabwe Christian Council after independence and chaired peace talks for Sudan in 1991. In 1992, he chaired Kenya's National Election Monitoring Unit. A year later he joined the WCC as director of the Justice, Peace and Creation unit. Kobia, born in 1947, is a Kenyan national. He is an ordained minister in the Methodist Church in Kenya and earned his degrees and diplomas from institutions in Kenya and the USA. He has a wife, Ruth, two daughters and two sons. Among his books are *The Courage to Hope: The Roots for a New Vision* and the *Calling of the Church in Africa*.

James Haire

Rev. Professor James Haire is the executive director of the Canberra-based Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and a professor of theology at Charles Sturt University. He is also the president of the National Council of Churches in Australia. He was formerly professor of theology at Griffith University and professor of New Testament studies at Trinity College, Brisbane. He is a former president of the Uniting Church in Australia. He is on the board of four international theological journals. Born in Northern Ireland, James Haire spent many years in Indonesia. A graduate and a postgraduate of the University of Oxford, he gained his PhD in theology from the University of Birmingham.

ham. He has two honorary doctorates, from Belfast University and Griffith University in Brisbane. He became a knight of St John in 2000 and a Rotary Honorary Peace Ambassador in 2001.

Christine Loh

Christine Loh Kung-wai is a well known personality on public policy in Hong Kong. She is one of the founders and the chief executive of the Civic Exchange, which is an independent Hong Kong-based think tank established in 2000 to promote civic education. Christine has wide experience in law, politics and the media. She has law degrees from the University of Hull in England and the City University of Hong Kong. She received her Doctorate of Law from the University of Hull. She was awarded the Outstanding Young Person's Award 1988, Communicator of the Year 1994, Stars of Asia, Businessweek 1998 and 2000 and Entrepreneur of the Year 2003. She is a former member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, being appointed in 1992 by the then Hong Kong government and ran for direct election in 1995. She re-entered in 1998 when the first elections were held under the Chinese rule. *The Economist* described her as 'perhaps LegCo's most gifted member'. She stepped down in 2000. Prior to entering politics, Christine had a 14-year career in the corporate sector. She has written numerous papers and articles in a wide range of local and international publications. In an interview with Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, she said that a historical figure she liked to identify with was Mahatma Gandhi for the role he played in getting the British out of India. Her motto is 'Take life as it comes.'

Bhikkhuni Dhammananda (Dr Chatsumarn Kabilsingh)

Ven Dhammananda is the first Thai woman to receive a doctorate in Buddhism. Born in 1944, she received her education in India and Canada. She taught philosophy and Buddhism for 30 years in Canada and later at the Thammasat University in Bangkok. Ven. Dhammananda renounced all worldly interests and became a female monastic at a young age. With her strong academic background, she is totally committed to reclaim the bhikk-

huni lineage, a heritage given by the Buddha. She teaches the Buddhist community to have a better understanding of Buddhism. She has been publishing *Yasodhara*, a newsletter on Buddhist women's activities, for the past 20 years. She regularly offers training programs for local and international groups, including international bhikkhunis and laywomen. She has some 50 books to her credit. She is the cofounder of Sakyadhita, an international Buddhist Women's Association. Currently, she is a peace councillor to an international peace organisation in the USA and a vice-chair of the selection committee for Niwano Peace Award in Japan.

Asghar Ali Engineer

Dr Asghar Ali Engineer, 64, is the founding chairman of the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism and a convener of the Asian Muslim Action Network. He is also the director of the Institute of Islamic Studies in Mumbai, India. He has written more than 40 books on Islam, the problems of Muslims, the rights of Muslim women and communal and ethnic problems in India and South Asia. He has also published several articles on current affairs in leading national dailies in India. He is the editor of a quarterly journal, *Indian Journal of Secularism*. Calcutta University conferred on him an honorary doctorate in 1993 for his publications and work on communal harmony and interreligious understanding. He was selected for this year's Right Livelihood Award in recognition of 'unceasing work for social and communal harmony'. He is a recipient of the government of India's National Communal Harmony Award for his individual efforts for Communal Harmony. He has lectured in universities in the USA, Canada, the UK, Switzerland, Germany, France, Sweden, Austria, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Yemen, Egypt and Hong Kong.

Swami Agnivesh

Swami Agnivesh is a well-known social activist and founder of the Bandua Mukti Morcha (Bonded Liberation Front) in India. He was jointly selected with Asghar Ali Engineer for the prestigious Right Livelihood Award, which he said would give him an opportunity to rededicate himself to the work for communal

harmony and to build bridges of friendship between the peoples and countries of South Asia. In 1994, the Foundation for Freedom and Human Rights of Berne, Switzerland, awarded him a human rights prize. Swami Agnivesh was born Vepa Shyam Rao in 1940 in a Telugu-speaking family in a village that is now a part of the eastern Indian state of Orissa. He joined the Arya Samaj at the age of 17. He did his master's degree in law and business management. After a brief stint as a lawyer, he became a lecturer at St Xavier's College in Calcutta. In 1968 he resigned his position and plunged into full-time social and political work. After becoming a renouncer, Rao became Swami Agnivesh. He, with the help of a colleague, founded a political party called the Arya Sabha to realise the dream of a political order founded on Arya Samaj principles. In 1975, when the then prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, declared an emergency and cracked down on opposition parties, Swami Agnivesh was arrested along with his colleagues and put behind bars for 14 months. He is a former member of the Legislative Assembly of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, where he has also served as minister of education.

The people behind the CCA General Assembly theme song

The theme song for CCA's twelfth General Assembly to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 31 March to 6 April 2005, is included in this issue on the back cover.

Rev. Dr Salvador Martinez, who has written the theme song, is a Filipino theologian and a former staff member of CCA, dealing with theological concerns. Currently, Dr Martinez teaches at the McGilvary Faculty of Theology, Payap University, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He is also an artist and a poet.

Garret Inthorn, who scored the music for the theme song, is a Myanmarese musician. He also teaches at the McGilvary Faculty of Theology, Payap University, in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The hospitality model of mission

'**E**cumenical Movement in Asia: Challenges in the Twenty-first Century' was the central theme for discussions in the recently concluded meeting of the Asia Regional Group (ARG) of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The meeting was held at the Shanthigiri Ashram, near Alwaye, Kerala, from 11 to 15 November, and participants from 20 countries in Asia attended. The ARG meeting was inaugurated by the Suffragan Metropolitan Zacharias Mar Theophilus, executive committee member of the WCC.

Rev. Dr K.M. George, principal of the Orthodox Seminary and WCC program committee moderator, addressed the participants on the theme.

In his speech, Dr George appealed to Asian churches 'to affirm resolutely that we have our own model of mission and that we renounce definitively the mission paradigm of the West'. He added, 'Hospitality in its profound theological, cultural and spiritual sense—not in its superficial meaning—is the hallmark of the locus and the local church. It is the major element that creates the quality of catholicity, or the *samagra bhava* between local communities. The churches and ecumenical movement in Asia should aspire to this *samagrata* or holistic character through genuine hospitality.'

Western-looking churches in Asia believe that 'Go and make disciples (i.e. slaves/converts) of all nations' is the only model before them. The major difficulty for these churches is that the dominant model of mission taught to them is precisely that of the global empire. These churches still struggle with it, unwilling or unable to go beneath the 'sacrosanct veneer of the global empire to uncover its hidden powers'.

Christians conveniently forget and ignore that the gospels give them another model of mission. That model is, 'Preach the Good News and heal the sick. Say *shalom* to the city or house you enter. If they receive you, stay as their guest, if not return immediately.' This is the Asian model of hospitality—mis-

sion—experimented and perfected, long before Christianity, by the Buddha and his disciples.

Dr K.M. George reminded the delegates that, in India, Emperor Asoka had laid down his arms and withdrew from all wars and conquests to faithfully follow the teachings of Buddha. He propagated Buddhism through the 'hospitality model'. On the contrary, Emperor Constantine and his successors and the Western imperial church took up arms and conquered and plundered nations as they went about preaching the Good News of the Prince of Peace! 'No-one can possibly celebrate any Christian triumphalism in the West today.' The crisis of the global ecumenical movement, according to Dr George, is closely related to the decline of Christianity that had once held sway over the mighty Western civilization.

Dr George said, 'Globalisation as the contemporary political-economic-cultural counterpart of the old imperial *oikoumene* is a major threat to ecumenism in Asia and elsewhere.' According to him ecumenism in its present global format can be used in subtle ways by the forces of globalisation with their political ecclesiology. Any power that undermines the spirit of the *locus* (particular place, context) is suspicious. Within the church itself the patriarchal ecclesiology has always collaborated with the imperial-political powers and attempted to strike at the root of the local in the guise of being universal or global.

'In fact, the contemporary concept of globalisation and its neo-imperialistic strategies have been borrowed from the theology of the imperial church.'

Dr George called on Asian Christianity to recover its local and holistic character in all 'its depth and quality' as the only alternative to the political-imperial designs of globalisation. 'Asian societies always depended on their own, age-old wisdom of being local. The church can therefore draw on this really indigenous resource to learn how to develop local ecumenism and nourish the unity of the humankind in the rich diversity of our cultures.'

Dr Mathews George Chunakara, Asia secretary of the WCC, in a presentation on the ecumenical scene in various Asian countries

Vacancy

General Secretary Christian Conference of Asia

A vacancy exists for the position of General Secretary of CCA.

The criteria for the election of the General Secretary of CCA and the job description are available on the CCA website (www.cca.org.hk) or from the moderator of the search committee (address below). Nominees or applicants for this position should have excellent academic qualifications, proven ecumenical standing in national and regional contexts, ecumenical vision, commitment to the ecumenical cause, relevant experience to work within the Asian ecumenical movement, and experience in dealing and working with regional and international ecumenical and ecclesiastical bodies as well as ecumenical partners and agencies.

Applications for the position of General Secretary must include the following:

- A formal letter of application addressed to the moderator of the search committee.
 - A complete curriculum vitae (CV) of the candidate and copies of academic qualifications and other certificates.
- Letters of recommendation from the applicant's parent church and the national council of churches, if any, to which his/her church belongs.
 - The names of two referees to whom the CCA may write directly.
 - A medical certificate of good health.

Correspondence on this matter, applications and nominations should be sent directly to:
Mr Anthony Row, 114, Jalan Dato Sulaiman 6, Taman Tun, Dr. Ismail 60000,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Applications must reach the moderator by the closing date, 31 December 2004.

commented that Asian churches need to 'assert their Asian-ness' instead of depending too much of their old mission boards in the Western countries for financial support.

Prof. M.V. Nadkarni, former vice chancellor of Gulbarga University, spoke on the theme, 'Religion in the Twenty-first Century: An Asian Perspective of Hope'.

While reviewing and prioritising WCC programs in Asia, ARG called on WCC to continue to be involved in advocacy on HIV, the dignity of children and capacity development

of new ecumenical leaders and councils in Asia. An ecumenical reception and public meeting organised in honour of the ARG delegates was inaugurated by the Mar Thoma Metropolitan Dr Philipose Mar Chrisostem and CCA president Dr Joseph Mar Iranaeus Suffragan Metropolitan, who presided over the meeting, in which Bishop Duleep De Chikara, Anglican Church in Sri Lanka, and WCC central committee member Dr Freida Manosong, from Indonesia, also spoke.

—P.N. Benjamin



Mar Thoma Metropolitan Dr Philipose Mar Chrisostem addresses the meeting

God of Asia, God of All

CCA Twelfth General Assembly, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Lyrics by Salvador T. Martinez (Philippines)

Music by Garrett Intorn (Thailand)

G D Bm Em

1 God of A - sia, God of all; From ma - ny na - tions we come, To bring praise and wor - ship you For our
 2 God of A - sia, God of all; We are peo - ple di - vi - ded, Our lands are de - vas - ta - ted, For all
 3 God of A - sia, God of all; Our peo - ple are suf - fer - ing, Vi - o - lence is in - creas - ing, Save

Bm *rit* Em G C G

peo - ple and our wars and our ne - us from hope - less - lands, We come to thank you. mer - ci - ful.
 neglect, Lord be O, grant us your peace. God of A - sia, God of all;

D G B C

Turn our doubts in - to faith, And our fears in - to hope, Let love rule in our

G A⁷ D G C

hearts, Let jus - tice rule in our lands. God of A - sia, God of

G D G B C

all; O give us strength to serve, And love to per - se - vere, Till true peace with

G C G/D D⁷ G C G

jus - tice, Reign in our com - mu - ni - ties. A - men.