

VOLUME 33 • NUMBER 1

MAY 1998

# CCA NEWS



BAGONG KUSSUDIARDJA: THE ASCENSION (COURTESY: 'THE BIBLE THROUGH ASIAN EYES')

## Uprooted People: Concern Translated into Action

The Church in China • Globalisation • Iraq • Mission and Unity

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Asia Scene

- The Church in China 3  
Church–Mission Consultation in India 7

### Global Currents

- Uprooted People 9  
Campaign on Rights Convention 11  
Iraq: Review Sanctions 12

### CCA in Focus

- CCA–WCC Mutual Cooperation 14  
Asia Ecumenical Committee Meeting 15  
Asian Movement for Christian Unity 16  
Ecumenical and Evangelical Together 18  
CCA Cluster Meetings:  
    Program Cluster I 21  
    Program Cluster II 23  
    Program Cluster III 25  
Theological Roundtable 28  
Globalisation Consultation 29  
CCA–UN/ESCAP Program 30  
Youth of North East Asia 31  
CCA in Action 32  
Youth Visit Refugee Camps 34  
Synod of Bishops for Asia Assembly 36  
Congress of Asian Theologians 37

### In Memoriam

- Bishop Paulose Mar Paulose 38

### Books

40

## CCA NEWS

VOLUME 33 • NUMBER 1

MAY 1998

Official publication of the  
Christian Conference of Asia

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

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Feliciano V. Cariño

EDITOR  
Geoff Alves

EDITORIAL BOARD  
Mathews George Chunakara  
Glynthea Finger  
Henriette Hutabarat

## EDITORIAL

Three events took place at the end of 1997 that are important for the life of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) in the years ahead. The CCA Roundtable met 8–9 December and made commitments for substantial basic support for the CCA for the next three years. We were also assured that the financial condition of the CCA has become quite viable, and that there may even be new resources available for selected new program activities. We can breathe a sigh of relief that the path to recovery that we initiated over a year ago seems to be working, and that, at least for the next three years, we can devote more of our attention towards matters other than finance.

Immediately after the Roundtable, a CCA delegation of six, led by two members of the Presidium, made an official visit to Vietnam in order to strengthen relationships with the Vietnamese churches and to seek greater space for ecumenical work to take place within the new conditions of life there. We were received very warmly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, not only by the churches but also by high officials of the Vietnamese government, including those from the Religious Affairs Bureau, and were assured that there is a good basis for us to continue and even increase work we have been undertaking. Noting that Vietnam not too long ago was the arena of one of the most brutal wars of the cold war period and continues to carry the scars and the bitter consequences of the sufferings of that conflict, the positive reception that was given to us indicates possibilities and challenges of 'new ecumenical beginnings' in a part of Asia that is clearly making 'new beginnings' in its economic, social and political life.

The Joint Working Group of the CCA and the World Council of Churches (WCC) also met in December last year shortly before the Christmas break. Besides undergirding the Memorandum of Understanding that had been agreed upon earlier by the two bodies, the Working Group laid down plans for a series of very important events that will be held in New Delhi in September this year. These events will help in celebrating the 'jubilee'—the fiftieth anniversary—of the founding of the WCC (see the report of the CCA–WCC Joint Working Group meeting in this issue of *CCA News*). The events, which will be co-sponsored by the CCA, the WCC, the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), are bound to give added impetus to ecumenical life in the region and beyond.

The propitious and promising ending of 1997 spilled over into the start of 1998, the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese calendar. The Asia Ecumenical Committee (AEC) and the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU), the two organisational vehicles for relationships and joint work with the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), met in Bali in mid-January and consolidated and expanded areas of common engagement. Reports of these meetings are included in this issue of *CCA News* also. Of great importance is the fact that as a result of this strengthening of relationships with the FABC, four representatives from CCA were invited as fraternal delegates to the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia, which was convoked by Pope John Paul II for 19 April–14 May.

*(Continued on page 6)*

# The Church in China

There is much interest in Asian churches about the life of the church in China but at the same time much ignorance and false information. Bishop Kenneth Fernando visited China to see for himself

**A**fter the Chinese Revolution in 1949, the work of the church in China was brought to a virtual standstill. Almost all the missionaries left the country and many Christian clergy and lay people found refuge in other countries. At this time, Bishop K.H. Ting, who was serving the World Student Christian Federation in Geneva, decided that he was needed by his church and by his country and returned to his homeland.

Under the Communist regime the church was barely tolerated. Church buildings were taken over for secular purposes by the state, but small groups of Christian people, mainly the elderly, met for worship and in most instances the government permitted this to go on. There was an acute shortage of Bibles and other Christian material and for many years the world outside did not know how the church in China was faring.

The situation got very much worse from 1965 to 1975 during the period of the Cultural Revolution. During these terrible days, Christians were actively persecuted and clergy were compelled to go out and engage in manual labour in the countryside. Worship was virtually nonexistent. As Christians had to meet surreptitiously for worship and the sacraments very few did. All theological colleges were closed down and no clergy were trained.

Mercifully, in 1975 the situation began to get better gradually but progressively. I have been extremely interested in the church in China all these many years and have tried

to gather information and to pray for them. The various Christian denominations were urged by the State to 'unify' in 1954. The Vatican broke off relations with the People's Republic of China after 1949 and ordered all Chinese Catholics not to cooperate with the Chinese socialist government. However although the Roman Catholic Church under the authority of the Pope has been banned, Roman Catholics do exist in a clandestine way. Further, those who are willing to accept the authority of the communist government function under the name and title of the 'Three Self Patriotic

Association'. All other denominations have ceased to exist formally merging under the name of the 'China Christian Council'. They call this the 'post denominational church'. Bishop K.H. Ting has continued to provide leadership to the church in China and to the China Christian Council all these years. He is now 82 years old and continues to advise church



Meeting with Bishop K.H. Ting, China's only bishop

leaders. He retired from the Presidency of the China Christian Council last year and was succeeded by Dr Han Wen Zao. It was my great privilege to receive an invitation from the China Christian Council to come and visit them during January 1998 in my capacity as the Bishop of Colombo and at the same time one of the Presidents of the Christian Conference of Asia. I was accompanied by one of the Associate General Secretaries of the Christian Conference of Asia, Dr Henriette Hutabarat. We visited Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing. In Nanjing we were able to see church leaders, in-

## Impressions of the Church in China

'The church in China is bound to grow very rapidly'

### Culture Christians

We learnt that there are a large number of intellectual Chinese who take an interest in the philosophy, intellectual content and the cultural manifestations of Christianity, and some have written books on Christianity, but who do not wish to become members of the church by baptism. We think this is a very interesting phenomenon that calls for closer investigation and study.

### The Bible

Since the Bible is now freely available to church worshippers, it is evident that they value it very greatly. It was moving to see old people reading the Bible with great difficulty with the aid of magnifying glasses. People brought their Bibles to the church and participated in the worship with enthusiasm following the lections in their own Bibles.

### Church Growth

It is clear to us that the church in China is bound to grow very rapidly in the years to come. The present membership is estimated to be between 10 and 75 million—it is impossible to say how large it is in the absence of reliable statistics. There is an acute shortage of clergy

and the existing theological colleges and programs of theological education by extension will not be able to meet the need. However, trained lay persons are doing their best in their various congregations to fill the void.

### Autonomy

The church in China appears to be extremely eager to safeguard its independence. Although receptive to ideas from abroad Christians in China insist that they be left free to take decisions regarding their own church. This is understandable and should be encouraged since the church in China is eager to ensure that it is a totally Chinese church in theology, worship, administration and church order. We noticed on a wall of the Tongshan Church in the Nanjing area that the congregation had developed their own guidelines and order for their ministry, emerging from their concrete need as a congregation. Lay participation in the life of the church was significant and notable.

### No Infant Baptism

The practice of infant baptism has faded away and now only believers' baptism is practised—whether by immersion or effusion.

cluding Dr Han Wen Zao, and Rev. Bao Jiayuan, one of the Associate General Secretaries of the China Christian Council. We saw the Nanjing Theological Seminary, which is a large national institution providing both degree and postgraduate courses. In Nanjing we also visited the Amity Foundation, which organises an imaginative secular program in education, health, rural development and social welfare. In addition to this work, the Amity Foundation has a very large, modern printing press producing 20,000 copies of the Bible each day. These Bibles are quickly snapped up by church people. Last year they celebrated the printing of the 15-millionth copy of the Bible. The printing press also produces other Christian and secular literature in English and Chinese for the use of the churches.

Bishop K.H. Ting received us most graciously, though he was in hospital. He expressed his confidence in the present leadership of the Christian Conference of Asia but regretted that at this moment churches in China cannot become members of CCA. He explained that neither the China Christian Council nor the Christian Conference of Asia was responsible for the political problem that this creates for the China Christian Council.

The theological seminary in Nanjing provides theological education by extension to a large number (approximately 3000) who are preparing themselves by correspondence to become lay leaders in the church.

At present there is an acute shortage of clergy. We visited a rural church outside Nanjing in a village called Tongshan. It has 3000 members but has services of holy communion only



Bishop Fernando with the leadership of CCC and TSPM in Shanghai

twice a year because of the lack of clergy. We also had opportunity to meet the leadership of a regional council, the Jiangsu Council of Churches, in their office in Nanjing.

In Shanghai we met the leaders of the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), including Rev. Luo Guanzong (General Secretary, TSPM), Mr Shen Derong (Vice Chairman, TSPM), Rev. Ms Cao Shengjie (Vice President, CCC), Mr Su Deci (General Secretary, CCC), Mr Shen Chengen (Associate General Secretary, CCC) and Mr Wong, Jianguo (Acting Dean, Eastern China Seminary, Shanghai). They explained to us that in addition to the church's effort to stand on its own feet, they were emphasising the importance of unity among themselves, better organisation and patriotism.

Also in Shanghai we visited the Eastern China Seminary and the Mu En Church. This has a well-to-do, thriving and large congregation. Other Christian groups, the 'Little Flock', Seventh Day Adventists and the Salvation Army are permitted to use the same building.

In Beijing ( $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$  at the time) I was invited to preach in the large Chong Wen Men Church to a congregation of 2000 people. There are about fifty churches in Beijing and all of them are well attended. Here, too, church leaders of the Beijing Christian Council (another regional council) met and entertained us. We visited Yan Jing Seminary, a regional seminary for the north-east part of China. This was a smaller institution that had recently moved into a factory building that the state did not want any longer that was much larger than their previous cam-

pus. The students had a basic living quarters but they were looking forward to building up the seminary. We were informed that now there are more than ten local seminaries functioning in China.

The Chinese people have their own traditional religions such as Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, but they are all looking for a living faith that will provide them with the necessary motivation and ideology for modern living.

I believe that Christianity will be greatly appreciated by the Chinese people in the years to come and that they will be able to fill the vacuum. However, it will have to be an imaginative Christianity interpreted by the Chinese for themselves in terms of their own needs. Any attempt to go back to the religion of the missionaries of pre-revolutionary days will not be successful.

Churches and Christians throughout the world, and especially in Asia, should continue to cooperate with the church in China with sensitivity, understanding and respect.

(Kenneth M.J. Fernando)



Sunday worship in Chong Wen Hen Church in Beijing

## Philippines NCC Convention

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines 18th Biennial Convention held 25–28 November 1997 elected the Rt Rev. Dr Daniel C. Arichea, Jr, the Bishop of the Baguio Episcopal Area of the United Methodist Church (UMC), as chairperson for the biennium 1998–99.

Bishop Daniel Arichea, Jr, succeeds Bishop Hilario Gomez, United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Before his election to the UMC episcopacy in 1994, Bishop Arichea served as translation consultant (1968–87) and regional translation coordinator (1987–94) of the United Bible Societies Asia Pacific Office in Hong Kong.

The convention also elected three vice chairpersons, Mr Mike Enabe (Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches), Rev. Kenneth Aguilera (Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal), and Ms Liza

Lei Garcia (United Church of Christ in the Philippines).

The convention voted to receive the Apostolic Catholic Church (ACC) as a full member. This is the first time in twelve years a new church has been received. The last was the Christ Centred Church in 1985. The acceptance of the ACC brings to eleven the member churches of the Council: Christ Centred Church, Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal, Lutheran Church of the Philippines, the Salvation Army, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, United Methodist Church and Apostolic Catholic Church.

(NCC Philippines)

## Senior Friends

Twelve WSCF-AP senior friends met at the CCA in Hong Kong in March, sharing opinions on the student Christian movement and giving advice to the current generation:

- The current generation should develop their understanding of the Christian identity and theological perspective on the movement. SCM should respond and contribute to the whole ecumenical movement with its own vision.
- SCM should be more active in dialogue with churches on the 'Churches and SCM Mission to the University'.
- The Asia–Pacific region should focus its programs on leadership formation.
- The 'History of the WSCF-AP' should be written with the Asian perspective. (Shin Seung Min)

## EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 2)

Bishop Kenneth Fernando of Sri Lanka, the Rev. David Gill of Australia, the Rev. Agustina Lumentut of Indonesia, and Fr Dr K.M. George of India went to the Vatican City to participate in the synod.

All of the program committees, meeting in the clusters approved by the General Committee in May last year, and the working groups and task forces have now met. Throughout February and up to the first week of March, the program meetings took place in different countries, sometimes in conjunction with ongoing program activities. The meetings involved up to 200 people, and pooled together those

who have been designated by the General Assembly as the main program resources of CCA. The 'program profiles' of all the clusters and program units for the next few years, moving towards the General Assembly, have become more definite. The directions, assignments of work, and assessment of program capability have also become much clearer.

Finally, we welcomed at the beginning of this year two very generous friends who have offered to give voluntary assistance to the work of CCA. Geoff Alves, a former assistant editor of *The Australian Christian*, offered

his voluntary services to edit *CCA News*, and travelled to Hong Kong at his expense to finalise arrangements. This issue of *CCA News* is a product of his editorial work. Louise Scott of New Zealand, who now resides with her husband in Hong Kong, also offered voluntary services for two days a week and began work in March to assist us with the classification and cataloguing of our publications, including possible work in our library. We are greatly encouraged by these 'new beginnings' and the very generous offers of assistance and support we have received.

(Feliciano V. Cariño, General Secretary)

## Church–Mission Consultation in India

*The Consultation on Church–Missions Relationship was held 20–22 January 1998 at the Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC), Whitefield, Bangalore, convened jointly by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Indian Missionary Association (IMA) and CCA. This consultation was the second milestone after the 1994 Consultation held in Nagpur*

**F**orty-seven people participated in the consultation, including six bishops, representing different churches and IMA member mission bodies. The deliberation created a general mood of interest and concern for the future with a commitment to ongoing dialogue for closer relationship between church and mission bodies in India.

### Recommendations

After three days of intensive discussions, the following recommendations were made for consideration by the churches and mission organisations:

- We recognise the need for a closer and healthy partnership between the churches and mission bodies.
- In the context of a proliferation of a variety of organisations with undefined structures and credibility, it is advisable that churches relate to missions that are members of IMA and that are accountable to IMA.
- Proselytisation from one church to the other should not be encouraged either by the mission bodies or by the churches.
- Churches shall remain sensitive to the pastoral needs of emerging congregations in the mission fields, i.e. ordination for missionaries and local church leaders, creating an order of worship for new converts

relevant to their local culture, and other pastoral needs arising out of such a context.

- There shall be mutual sharing of resources, expertise and facilities between churches and mission bodies.
- Financial transparency shall be maintained.
- As many regional church–mission consultations as possible should be arranged to foster closer partnership.
- The prospective pastors of our churches need adequate mission field exposure before they are ordained so as to facilitate mission awareness to our churches and church leaders.
- NCCI and IMA are to provide a national forum of all Christians to voice all issues concerning minority and human rights violations affecting Christians and all people. This forum also will involve an effective mechanism for dissemination of information.
- A core committee may be formed to carry forward these and other related proposals.

The delegates hoped for an effective partnership between churches and mission bodies to communicate the Gospel in India and face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

(NCC India)

### Indonesian Catholic and Protestant Churches Joint Easter Message

**L**eaders of the Indonesian Catholic and Protestant churches issued a joint Easter message calling on Christians nationwide to renew their commitment to unity among Christian communities as well as with compatriots of other faiths.

‘May the resurrection of Christ encourage us to develop exemplary attitudes, willingness to sacrifice and respect for human dignity and to maintain hope amidst changes and challenges facing us,’ the church leaders wrote.

They also reminded Christians of the economic crisis facing the nation, and called on them ‘to renew our Christian commitment to bearing witness in the world’ that is approaching the end of the second millennium.

The message was signed by Reverends Sularso Sopater and Joseph M. Pattiasina, Chairman and Secretary General respectively of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, and Sacred Heart Bishop Josephus Suwatan of Manado and Bishop Johannes Hadiwikarta of Surabaya, Chairman and Secretary General respectively of the Indonesian Bishops’ Conference.

(UCAN)

# A Letter from North India

From Bishop Anand Chandu Lal, Bishop of Amritsar Diocese, Church of North India

Dear friends,

We are constantly reminded that we live in a period of 'globalisation'.

Apart from the popular understanding of globalisation in terms of a world market (multinational/transnational corporations) globalisation means different things to different people. One fact that emerges clearly is that globalisation is a distinct phenomenon of the post-modern era of the human civilisation, in which the 'global village' is becoming a reality. Because of this, the traditional political boundaries and social structures based on inherited ideologies and even theologies appear to be disappearing.

In such a dynamic period in human history one thing that we cannot afford is the worship of tribal gods. There has always been a temptation to identify God as a Christian god, Church of North India god, Roman Catholic god, Hindu god, Muslim god or even perhaps as a white god, dalit god or black god. Any such religion is too dangerous for all of God's creation, both living and non-living.

The Lambeth Council of the Anglican Communion meets 18 July–9 August 1998 in the campus of the University of Kent in England. Bishops from all over the world belonging to different autonomous provinces of the Anglican Communion and those churches in full communion with the Anglicans will be deliberating on important theological, social and mission issues. We must pray that the participants will rise above all tribal, national, regional and denominational ideas of God and his mission in the emerging reality of the world. While the Church of North India boldly affirms its ecumenical and uniting history we must ask ourselves whether in fact our various agendas and programs give expression to such an affirmation.

We have a right as bishops of the Church of North India to hope that we represent our people with a truly

new vision of the coming great church that transcends all human boundaries.

The psalmist who wrote Psalm 67:1–3 probably did not find it easy to rise out of the narrow Jewish nationalism of his time when he wrote, 'May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee!' And yet in and through that exclusive Jewish belief he gave expression to a profound truth that God transcends narrow sectarian boundaries.

Let us pray that the Diocese of Amritsar in particular and the Church of North India in general are able to come out of their preoccupation with concerns directed purely to streamlining our traditional structures and programs. May we also join with our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion as we prepare for the Lambeth Conference Meeting at this crucial moment in human history, when the nations of the world are in search for the meaning of life beyond purely territorial and ethnic terms.

All the major problems of our time are global. The world is one world in fact, if not yet in spirit. But the deeper problems of the world cannot be solved until a compelling sense of a world community is born in the hearts and minds of all people around the world. This is what our independence—so obvious in the economic and political spheres—is saying to us in the moral sphere. May the Church of North India truly discover such a vision.

With my prayerful wishes for a New Year full of God's challenges.

Your friend and bishop,  
Rt Rev. Dr Anand Chandu Lal  
Bishop of Amritsar Diocese, CNI

(Newsletter, Amritsar Diocese, CNI)



# Uprooted People

*Increasingly, concern is being translated into action*

## Global Ecumenical Response

Issues relating to uprooted people—refugees, migrant workers and internally displaced people—were discussed at the Global Ecumenical Network meeting at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva 9–11 March 1998.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Regional Ecumenical Organisations (REOs), global partners (Lutheran World Federation, World Alliance of Reformed Church, Young Women's Christian Association, Caritas Internationales, International Catholic Migration Commission, Jesuit Refugee Service), some international organisations (International Organisation for Migration, International Migrants Right Watch Committee), partner agencies and WCC staff.

Opportunity was given to each region to share one achievement or impact of the 1997 Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People and one emerging priority in the region for the future.

The Refugees and Migration Service (RMS) of WCC presented the trends, changes, development and evaluations outcome of the work of RMS for the past seven years. The meeting also discussed the place of RMS in the coming new structure of

WCC and concern was expressed regarding the visibility of RMS work in this new structure. There is an increasing number of concerns and problems related to uprooted people today and a need to follow up and strengthen the initiatives that have begun to take place in the life of the churches, especially as the result of the 1997 ecumenical campaign on churches' solidarity with uprooted people.

The meeting supported the international campaign to promote the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of the Family. All regional networks committed themselves to actively participate in this campaign. Information will be sent by the WCC to all member churches and REOs regarding this campaign.

The rights of children, particularly regarding child labour and the children of refugees, migrant workers and internally displaced people, were highlighted, in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child. The WCC Executive Committee's decision to promote the raising of the minimum age for military recruitment to 18 was also supported.

## The Response of Asian Churches

More and more churches in Asia are beginning to realise the urgency of the issues relating to migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced communities in Asia (MRIA).

This includes churches in areas where refugees and internally displaced people are located, churches in the countries where the migrant workers came from and churches in host countries.

The response of churches varies, from providing space and humanitarian aid for migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced communities, to pastoral care and advocacy for the dignity and well-being of migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced communities in different places in Asia. One of the priorities of CCA programs is to continue to build this awareness of Asian churches and to strengthen their responses. The CCA Working Group on MRIA has put a priority on strengthening the churches in their advocacy role for MRIA and on continuing the discussions with the Association of Theological Schools in Asia to incorporate MRIA concerns in the curriculum of theological education. (Henriette Hutabarat)

## Uprooted People: Action around the World

### Europe

A national campaign committee is being formed in Italy.

### North America

The USA National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, a coalition of local and national church, immigrant, trade union and other groups, has launched a national campaign and has a convention ratification page on its web site. A coalition of national groups in Canada has initiated similar efforts.

### Latin America

Regional organisations including ARMIF (Central American regional NGO network on forced migration) and the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights have made advocacy for the convention a top priority.

### Africa

The International Commission of Jurists has agreed to highlight the convention in their conferences and training workshops held throughout the region, and in advocacy work with the Organisation for African Unity (OAU).

### Asia

Trade union, church, human rights and migrant organisations in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and Malaysia have made advocacy for the convention a high priority.

Such efforts led to ratification by the Philippines and Sri Lanka, and have given visibility to the convention in APEC meetings. (WCC)

### Aotearoa New Zealand

Helene Moussa, Executive Secretary for the Refugee and Migrant Service for Unit IV of the WCC, visited Aotearoa New Zealand in November 1997. Several meetings were held throughout the country and contact made with government officials and local non-government organisations. As a result of her visit Helene had several observations for CCANZ to think about.

- Because of the interest expressed in ministry to uprooted peoples, the 1997 Ecumenical Year of Solidarity with Uprooted Peoples could be extended. The excellent kit prepared by the CCANZ International Affairs Program could be reprinted with a focused agenda to share with other CCANZ programs.
- Awareness should be raised about the different status of 'refugees' and 'immigrants' and also the different categories of immigrants. For example the Egyptian community in Christchurch had come to Aotearoa New Zealand for a better life (and several of them have refugee-like stories as well) but they certainly cannot be equated with the entrepreneurial immigrants.
- There needs to be a strategy to counter the growing racism against 'foreigners' of different social backgrounds. Helene suspected that sometimes there was a trend towards a double racism—towards Maori and foreigners and against each other. She suggested a strategy of 'good/positive stories' about refugees, immigrants and relationships with Maori.

- There needs to be an advocacy strategy to address the root causes of forced displacement.
- There is a growing interest about once again starting up church sponsorship of refugees—but could new models be developed? What about a befriending program, for example pairing a refugee who is a medical doctor with an established doctor. Speaking the same professional language could bring newcomers into a more familiar milieu in the host country. A befriending program could be a mutually enriching relationship. Helene sensed a very generous tendency to 'give' but often not to 'receive' from the newcomers—a befriending or sponsorship program needs to show how the host community could be enriched as well. (Jan Cormack, CCANZ)

### Inter-regional Cooperation

CCA has established a closer cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches, particularly regarding the presence and ministry with Asian migrant workers in Middle Eastern countries. Last year three people from MECC visited India, the Philippines and Hong Kong to understand better the root cause of the Asian migration to the Middle East. This year, CCA will send delegates to countries in the Gulf, where many Asian migrant workers are working. The aim is to understand better the realities of migrant workers there and to explore possible CCA–MECC joint programs to address this concern. (Henriette Hutabarat)

# Global Campaign on Rights Convention

After eight years only nine countries have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. While abuse and hostility towards migrants mount, this international convention, which sets out their basic human rights, lacks formal approval. As yet, too few states have ratified it for it to enter into force

**T**o organise the campaign to bring the convention into force, the International Migrants Rights Watch Committee (IMRWC), an independent expert body promoting migrants' human rights, has convened a steering committee reflecting the breadth of concern surrounding this issue. Participating organisations include Human Rights Watch, the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Migrants Forum in Asia, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the World Council of Churches.

## Why is a global campaign for ratification necessary?

The international convention was approved in December 1990 by the UN General Assembly. Twenty UN member states must ratify it for it to 'enter into force'. So far only nine states have ratified or acceded to the convention—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Morocco, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

The decision of the UN General Assembly to draft and adopt the convention was a strong statement of international consensus on the need for

greater protection of the human rights of migrants. However, no organised effort to promote ratification of this treaty has been made ... until now.

As with other conventions, governments need to be convinced that ratification is necessary.

This will only be achieved by building awareness and exercising political persuasion with government officials, diplomats, politicians, NGOs and the public at large—nationally and internationally.

## How is the global campaign organised and carried out?

Coordinated activities at international and national levels to build awareness about the convention have already begun. The campaign will primarily be conducted through the efforts of human rights bodies, religious groups, trade unions, women's organisations, migrant groups and others working together at national levels.

The campaign steering committee generates basic campaign strategies and materials, but the success of the campaign is grounded in its purpose being adopted and promoted by hundreds of organisations and people who may or may not be formally affiliated to the campaign.

Such a model has already proven immensely successful with the international campaign to ban anti-personnel land mines.

## What is already being done?

Most major international church organisations, including the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Conference of European churches (CEC), the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), and the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) have officially declared their support for the ratification of the 1990 international convention on migrant rights. The Roman Catholic Church and many of its national conferences of bishops have made similar pronouncements. Some bishops' conferences, such as in Central America, have been actively pressing governments to ratify.

International trade union bodies, notably the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and Public Services International (PSI) have declared support, and are urging national affiliates to do so. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and many of its national sections have become active in advocating ratification. Members of IMRWC were directly involved in the national efforts in four of the nine countries that have now ratified or acceded to the convention. For example, members set up the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch Committee, which sensitised parliamentarians, the press and public opinion, leading to ratification.

(WCC)

# Iraq: Review Sanctions

A World Council of Churches delegation has warned against renewed military intervention in Iraq and has called for a thorough review of the present UN sanctions

In a report submitted to WCC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser, the delegation strongly recommended that churches around the world make representations to their respective governments to oppose threats of military action to force Iraq to comply with UN Security Council demands.

Voicing the concerns of Iraqi Christians, the report said that to pursue such a course would only intensify the

sufferings of the powerless Iraqi people caught up in the middle of this conflict. The delegation reports that the churches of Iraq are calling on Christians around the world to join them in prayers for a non-violent resolution of the crisis.

The report went on to say that the present sanctions seriously violate the human rights of large sectors of the Iraqi population by denying them the rights to adequate food, clothing,

housing, medical care, social services and employment.

The seven-member ecumenical team visit to the churches of Iraq and others affected by the application of sanctions took place 18–25 January in response to the WCC Central Committee's request last September that a study be undertaken on the situation in Iraq in the light of the WCC's 1995 policy guidelines on the application of sanctions.

## How Sanctions Affect the People of Iraq

### Health and sanitation are in a critical state

There has been a dramatic increase in mortality, morbidity and malnutrition, especially among children and other vulnerable groups.

The application of sanctions has prevented repairs of basic infrastructure destroyed during the 1991 Gulf War. It has also made it impossible for the state to adequately maintain water, sanitation and electric power systems essential to public health.

This, together with the degradation of schools, hospitals and other medical facilities, arable land, human resources and the general economy, combines to create a grim scenario.

### The major cause of these problems is the seven-year long application of UN sanctions

The sanctions' negative effects have not been substantially altered by the 'Oil for Food' concession of the Security Council.

### Ordinary people are suffering

Lacking clarity of purpose, defined and agreed goals, and consistent application, the sanctions have accomplished little else but suffering for ordinary people. Rather than undermine popular support for the present regime, sanctions have galvanised the population against foreign intervention and forged stronger bonds among various ethnic and religious communities.

### Sanctions have a negative impact on Christians

The small, minority Christian community's witness and ministry has been substantially impaired. Christians' capacity to sustain themselves financially has suffered badly, and their numbers have been significantly reduced through accelerated emigration of Christians fleeing economic hardship. Churches have a sense of abandonment by and isolation from the broader Christian fellowship because of restrictions on travel to and from Iraq and on other forms of communication.

## Christians in Iraq

**T**he Christian population of Iraq is mostly descended from the original Christian population present in the land before the Arab invasions of the seventh century.

Present estimates of the Christian presence in Iraq range from 2.5 to 5 per cent of the total population, highly concentrated in the cities and immediate surrounding areas of Baghdad (52 per cent of Iraqi Christians), Mosul (30 per cent), and Basrah (18 per cent).

The concentration in Baghdad is due to urban migration, especially from the north, where there was a large Christian population before 1947.

In recent times, the number of Iraqi Christians has substantially decreased, many having emigrated to Lebanon and the West. Chaldean Catholics number more than 65 per cent of the Christian population. They are organised in eight dioceses and their Pontifical Seminary in Mosul is the only major Chaldean theological institution in the Middle East.

Catholics in Iraq as a whole represent nearly 89 per cent of Christians, including the Chaldeans, Armenians,

Assyrian, Latin-rite, Melkite and Syrian Catholics.

The Latin-rite Catholics in Iraq concentrate on scholarly research and administrating schools for primary and intermediate-aged students.

Armenian, Greek, Syrian and some Coptic Orthodox Christians comprise the second largest group (10 per cent of Iraqi Christians).

The Armenian Orthodox Church has five parishes in Baghdad.

The Syrian Orthodox Church, which has existed in the area since the early centuries of Christianity, also has most of its members concentrated in Baghdad, as a result of steady migration from Mosul in the north.

Protestant churches, which comprise fewer than 1 per cent of Iraqi Christians, include Reformed and Anglican churches.

Arab Reformed congregations exist in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basrah.

There are also a few congregants of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

(WCC)

## WCC Delegation Urges Churches to Play a Role in Iraq

**T**he delegation was not surprised at the impact of sanctions on the people of Iraq, having been well informed ahead of the visit by ecumenical partners and through the reports of UN and other humanitarian agencies. The WCC team was nevertheless alarmed by the worsening of the situation and the widespread human suffering they encountered.

During their visit, delegation members travelled extensively within the country, interviewing church representatives, health and social service providers, and ordinary citizens, es-

pecially young people and children. The team's observations were tested and repeatedly confirmed in interviews with UN agency staff and representatives of private international humanitarian organisations working in the country. They were also consistent with views expressed by Iraqi government officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, with whom the delegation held extensive meetings.

The group urged that the churches' attention be drawn once again to the 'Guidelines and Criteria for the Application of Sanctions' adopted by the

WCC Central Committee in 1995. That document pointed out that 'sanctions are by definition coercive and ... often inflict additional suffering on affected populations, particularly the most innocent, for example, children.' The guidelines indicate that 'churches may play a role not only as advocates for ironic government policies, but as direct actors in offering inquiry, mediation or conciliation. Where possible, positive incentives or inducements should be offered as a preferable means of avoiding the escalation of conflicts.'

# CCA–WCC Mutual Cooperation

The first joint working group of the Christian Conference of Asia and the World Council of Churches was held at the Baptist University in Hong Kong on 10–11 December 1997. The meeting was attended by representatives of the governing bodies and staff of CCA and WCC, including: Ms Margaret Rodgers (CCA President), Bishop Kenneth Fernando (CCA President), Dr Feliciano Cariño (CCA General Secretary), Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat (CCA Associate General Secretary for Program Coordination), Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo (member of the WCC Executive Committee), Dr Park, Kyung-Seo (WCC Asia Secretary) and Mr Hubert Van Beek (WCC Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Relations). This meeting was the fruit of the Memorandum of Agreement jointly produced by the WCC and CCA staff in their joint discussions which took place in Hong Kong 31 January–2 February 1997. At the core of the agreement was the proposal to set up a small joint working group—approved by the governing bodies of the two organisations—with the following tasks:

- To ensure an ongoing dialogue on the common understanding of the ecumenical mission of CCA and WCC and propose guidelines for cooperation.
- To propose ways of interlinking the processes whereby priorities and programs are formulated and decided upon by the two organisations.
- To identify specific areas of concern and programs where cooperation can be implemented and suggest appropriate methods and mechanisms.
- To develop common policies and procedure for ecumenical resource development in the Asian region.

This effort has been part of an ongoing consultative process to strengthen the cooperation between the WCC with Regional Ecumenical Organisations (REOs). More specifically, in the spirit of ‘Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC (CUV)’, the need to develop a much more integrated approach, rather than the ad-hoc cooperation that has existed until now, was strongly felt.

The group realised the increasing complexity of relationships within the ecumenical movement as experienced by both CCA and WCC, and the need to affirm that relationships and cooperation should be based on equal partnership, irrespective of differences in size and resources between the two organisations.

The group shared and reviewed the existing cooperation between CCA and WCC and discussed some possible new areas of cooperation. Further, the new styles of cooperation between WCC and CCA at the level of decision making, setting of priorities, governing bodies etc. in the framework of CUV and CCA’s vision of the future, was also discussed.

## Joint Program

One of the major joint programs to be held in 1998 is the Asian celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the World Council of Churches, which will be followed by a preparatory consultation leading toward the Harare Assembly, with participation of some Pacific friends. The event will take place in Delhi, the site of the WCC General Assembly in 1963, 20–24 September 1998. The focus of the consultation will be on ‘Globalisation: Lessons and Perspectives from Asian Societies’. Prior to this meeting, the meeting of the General Secretaries of the National Council of Churches in Asia will be held 18–19 September, also in Delhi. Selected participants for the Harare Assembly will also have a preparatory session on its agenda and mechanism. These people are expected to coordinate the preparation for the rest of the Harare delegates from their country. These events will be jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia and the National Council of Churches in India.

(Henriette Hutabarat)

# Asia Ecumenical Committee Meeting

The Asia Ecumenical Committee (AEC), a joint committee of CCA and the FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences), held its second meeting in Tegaljaya, Bali, Indonesia, on 7–8 January 1998. The committee reviewed the implementation of the programs laid down last year and discussed future programs.

The committee agreed to strengthen the ecumenical formation at the national and regional levels and to explore possibilities of a joint effort of the constituencies of both bodies to address this matter. For the coming Asia Ecumenical Course, which is a regular program of CCA, the FABC will send five participants.

The FABC sent five delegates to attend the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) in Korea last year. At present there are two Roman Catholic theologians on the CATS Continuation Committee. The FABC Office of Theological Concerns has expressed its interest to become a sponsor member of CATS.

The committee initiates joint publications, whenever possible. The first joint publication came out last year on the First Seminar on Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU I). The result of AMCU II will be jointly published this year. Occasional AMCU News will continue to be published. An AEC homepage is being opened (see below). The plan for a publication of an Asian Ecumenical Worship Booklet is expected to be completed by next year.

The committee discussed at length the various plans of the churches in

different parts of the world to celebrate the year 2000. The committee expressed its concern that the jubilee year celebrations could easily become an exclusivist expression of the triumphant church and emphasised that care must be taken to avoid this. Further, it was underscored that the activities undertaken to mark the year 2000 should be aimed at ecclesial and personal renewal. It is a time for 'new beginning'. Being sensitive to the pluralistic context of Asia, the committee suggested that the natural suspicions of people of other faiths must be overcome. One way to address this concern is to have an interreligious character to the celebration. At the same time, the theology of hope with a positive vision of the future must be developed to counter tendencies among Christians to regard the year 2000 as the moment of eschatological crisis. The social justice dimension of the jubilee year is finding expression in the movement for the forgiveness of international debts. Measures taken to

meet the economic crisis in Asia have given new relevance to this issue. The committee noted that some churches are already active in studying and conscientising about the issue. The Asian celebration of the WCC fiftieth anniversary in Delhi in September 1998 will focus on the question of globalisation, and the Asian Synod 1998 in the Vatican will raise the question of international debt.

Concern about the growing phenomenon of religious fundamentalism was also discussed. The theme was considered suitable for the discussion of the AMCU III meeting scheduled for the late part of 1999. The committee also discussed a possibility of organising a joint program on interreligious seminar next year, hopefully with an active involvement of friends of other faiths beginning in the planning process.

The AEC (CCA-FABC Joint Program) website address is <http://www.rc.net/malaysia/kualalumpur/aec/index.htm>.

(Henriette Hutabarat)



Participants at the Asia Ecumenical Committee Meeting held in Tegaljaya, Bali, Indonesia

# Asian Movement for Christian Unity Meets in Bali

**E**cumenical Formation as Churches of Asia Move towards the Next Millennium was the theme of the second meeting of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU II), held at Rumah Khalwat, Tegaljaya, Bali, Indonesia on 9–14 January 1998. A joint program of the Asia Ecumenical Committee (AEC) of CCA and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), AMCU II brought together forty-seven participants drawn nearly equally from the various constituencies of the two sponsoring bodies. Participants came from fourteen countries in Asia, including one from Mongolia, and included bishops, clergy and religious, heads of a number of member churches of the CCA, Christian educators, theologians and staff of ecumenical organisations and councils. The attendance of the participant from Mongolia is the first in recent CCA activities.



Organised by CCA and the FABC as a vehicle for promoting Christian unity and for the discussion of critical issues in ecumenical life and the relationship between the two bodies, AMCU II provided occasion for the discussion of several themes that are important in current ecumenical conversations:

- Two presentations on 'The Church in the Twenty-first Century', the first

on 'An Ecumenical Vision of the Church in Asia in the Twenty-first Century' by Bishop Julio X. Labayen of the Philippines, and the second on 'An Ecumenical Perspective on the Colloquium on "The Church in Asia in the Twenty-first Century"', by Dr. Feliciano V. Cariño, General Secretary of CCA.

- Two presentations on the Congress of Asian Theologians, the first on 'Christian Theological Concerns in Asia for the Twenty-first Century', by Rev. Dr M.J. Joseph of India, and the second on 'The Congress of Asian Theologians: Some Reflections from an FABC Participant', by Bishop Deogracias Iniguez of the Philippines.
- Two papers on interreligious dialogue, the first on 'Christian Life in Religious Pluralism: Ecumenical Concerns in Interreligious Dialogue', by J.B. Banawiratma, SJ, of Indonesia, and the second on 'The Wider Ecumenism: Ecumenical Concerns in Inter-religious Dialogue' by Rev. Dr Hermen Shastri of Malaysia.



Worshipping with a local parish in Bali



- Two papers on 'Women and Theology in Asia,' the first on 'Toward a Household of Unity in Christian Faith from a Feminist Perspective', by Dr Hisako Kinukawa of Japan, and the second on 'Women and Theology in Asia: A Catholic Perspective', by Sr Pauline Chakkalakal of India.
- Two presentations on 'Ecumenical Formation,' the first on 'The Vision of the Ecumenical Church', by Fr Kuncheria Pathil of India, and the second on 'Ecumenical Formation in the CCA' by Rev. Glynthea Finger, Executive Secretary for Education of CCA.
- A discussion of the themes and the agenda items of the Special Assem-

bly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia convoked by Pope John Paul II held in Rome 19 April–14 May 1998, by Archbishop Armando Trindade of Pakistan, of the FABC, and Bishop Kenneth Fernando of Sri Lanka, of the CCA.

The workshops focused on the development of ecumenical formation programs that would make 'ecumenical' not a matter of 'doing ecumenical activities' but of 'being ecumenical' in the life and work of churches and local congregations and part of 'being church' in each and all places. The ingredients of a possible 'common curriculum' for ecumenical formation were put together at the end that hopefully would be used in the ecumenical

formation programs of both bodies. It is hoped that as a result of this meeting, participants and some faculty from the FABC will participate in the next session of the Asia Ecumenical Course of CCA, which is due to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in October.

Participants were welcomed by the Diocese of Bali of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Christian Church in Bali. Sunday worship, so expressive of the enculturation of the Balinese church, was at a local parish of the Diocese of Bali. A closing agape meal was celebrated and offered by the Protestant Christian Church in Bali, presided over by its Bishop, the Rev. Dr Wayan Mastra.

(Feliciano Cariño)

## Time Apart for CCA Staff in Xiamen



Despite the cold and rain of winter, the Christian Conference of Asia executive staff travelled to Xiamen for their retreat 21–23 January. The staff had expressed the desire to 'be apart' for a few days for a time of spiritual refreshment and renewal before the schedules and programs for the new year were under way. The

meeting centre was located on Gulangyu Island in Fujian Province. Xiamen advertises itself as China's most beautiful city and such a tag is difficult to disagree with. Both city and island—divided by a short ferry ride—are clean and green. The beauty of the island, with its parks, beaches, potted flowering plants and narrow,

winding streets, lent itself to two days of discussion, sharing and Bible study. The staff appreciated the care and hospitality shown by Prof. Liao from Xiamen University, both in the planning and during their time on the island. The retreat was led by Fr Luke Tsui from the Catholic Institute of Justice and Peace, who has been involved with faith formation and retreat leading for many years and has had a long involvement with Christians and schools in China. Using Christian scripture, teachings of Confucius and life experience, the marks of community such as trust, integrity, respect, obedience and submission were the focus of exploration and discussion. The CCA staff were warmed by their meeting with Pastor Cheng and his staff at Trinity Church, particularly when Phe shared his testimony. Staff have marked their 1999 diaries in readiness for their next retreat!

(Glynthea Finger)

# Ecumenical and Evangelical Together

The search for a common witness—a dialogue on mission and unity

For three days (17–19 January 1998), a body of ecumenical and evangelical theologians and mission leaders were brought together in Bangalore, India. The purpose was two-fold. It was designed, on the one hand, to focus upon the nature of the Christian presence and witness in an Asian world of multiple religions, and on the other it strove to address some areas of hurts and misunderstandings between these two distinct ethos within the Christian faith. It was recognised that these differences are part of the legacy of Western mission.

The intention was to construct an open agenda. It was hoped that the following principles would be observed:

- The creation of an environment of trust.
- A desire to celebrate the ‘otherness’ in the other.
- A commitment to mutuality.

In the event the spirit of the meeting was characterised by a relative openness, the asking of some hard questions, some plain speaking with respect to hurts and wounds, and some humour. There was a sense in which the commitment to mutuality was realised in a working together and a search for relationality.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the meeting was a quest for clarity, for a seeking to counter misconceptions, a desire ‘to learn more’. There was a desire to move beyond

caricature and regard the best exposition of the other’s position. The sharing of personal stories, acknowledging ‘from where we are coming’, facilitated this process and encouraged participants to find the ‘human in the person’ with whom there might otherwise be disagreement.

It was evident from the discussion that there was some ambivalence with respect to the labels, ‘ecumenical’ and ‘evangelical’, being employed. This should not be taken to mean that participants were not sure of their commitments to particular perspectives, rather it reflected the manner in which some members could identify nuances of opinion and ethos within themselves. Whether the particular frame of reference used on this occasion is the most helpful one is, at least, a point worth considering. It might also prove helpful to pay closer attention to the rhetoric that is employed in the construction of a point of view and ask what kind of work our choice of words is doing in such a dialogue.

The principal means by which the consultation occurred was via the presentation and discussion of papers in three areas:

- The uniqueness and universality of salvation in Christ/pluralism and the particularity of salvation in Christ.
- The respective roles of Bible and culture in shaping Asian theology.
- Mission imperatives.

It was evident from the dialogue that there were a number of deeply shared concerns. These included a commitment to scripture, to revelation, to the incarnation of Christ, to the reign/kingdom of God, to kingdom values, to mission, to a passion for cultural transformation, and to the need for affirming and developing Asian categories of experience and understanding.

A dilemma then occurs when these deep concerns are interpreted and acted out in different ways. The issue at stake may be seen partly as an hermeneutical one; it may also be seen as going beyond that to include a consideration of substantive theological presuppositions.

It was also evident that participants shared the global concern for identity and its composite nature. This could be understood in this setting in terms of the formation of Christian identity, the relationship of that identity to cultural identity and how one might respond to the integrity of a different faith.

It should be observed that the dialogue was limited in some respects by the nature of its composition. There were few women and there were more theologians than biblical scholars. It was clearly a large agenda and it necessarily encompassed the difficulties of intercultural hermeneutics. Participants spoke out of their particular cultural and mission context.

## Mission and Unity Report

The report itself is a response to the discussion that arose out of the papers presented. What follows is an attempt to convey both the spirit and the pivotal points of the debates. Given the constraints of time and the general direction of particular papers, members were well aware that there were a whole range of related ideas and doctrines that were either not explicitly mentioned or adequately discussed.

### The Uniqueness/Particularity of Christ

We seem to agree on the incarnation. We likewise all shared a language of uniqueness. It was evident that there was some debate as to where the language of uniqueness should best be located.

Should it be tied to Christology or theology, e.g. where a doctrine of the Holy Spirit might fit in. What might be the relationship between the language of uniqueness and salvation?

It was evident from subsequent discussion that there was some concern as to whether the language of uniqueness was sufficient, whether it would be more helpful to think in terms of the absoluteness, finality or particularity of Christ.

It did seem helpful to consider how the language of uniqueness might be tied to the conviction of conversion and the experience of the Christian life. The importance of that commitment involves a cost and a deep reorientation of life on the basis of a recognised unique claim made on oneself.

The question then becomes how we translate the personal experience of uniqueness onto the mission field. This must raise questions concerning how we relate the language of uniqueness to the validity of salvation in and through Christ. It might be important to explore more fully the tension between the need for a more explicit faith and a preparedness to live with an implicit faith, variously conceived.

There would also appear to be two different ways of understanding uniqueness. Both would want to commend the normative pattern of Jesus' life and work. Some may feel that this matter should then be tied more rigorously to ontological considerations (that is, who Jesus is as well as what he did), others may either presuppose that step and not draw such explicit attention to it, or concern themselves more with a more 'functional' Christology.

One might ask whether a framework of exclusivism/inclusivism is the only option for discussing these issues.

### Bible

We seem to agree that we have a selective reading of the biblical text. We have a tendency to create canons within the canon. The dilemmas then become (a) to what extent, in principle and practice, can we be open to a larger textual horizon and (b) how do we establish some criteria by which we evaluate the different readings of Scripture, given both the diversity of responses and how biblical texts have sometimes been used to legitimate oppression?

It would seem as if there was a commitment to extend the reference of sin. Sin should be understood both hori-

zontally and vertically. It is not a case of either-or but both-and. The difference may well reside in one of weighting. It might be useful to explore the dialectic between personal and cultural/structural sin. There was a need to view sin also in relation to the demonic realm.

It was evident that both perspectives share a biblical concern for the poor.

### Mission Imperatives

The language of resistance and rage was felt to be insufficiently comprehensive for understanding our mission imperatives. It must be supplemented with the language of grace and forgiveness. However, it was clarified by saying that rage was not against the persons but systems and sins, that in fact grace and forgiveness must be extended to the oppressor who is also the product of a system. Grace and rage are not mutually exclusive just as God's love and wrath are not mutually exclusive.

Along with resistance we need to take account of the imperative of obedience to authority and obedience to God.

The role of Pentecostals in South America was cited as an example of another constructive response by the poor to structural evil.

We need, therefore, to see Christian mission more broadly. It includes preaching, evangelism, the call to personal and corporate repentance, healing and social action. These tasks cannot be carried out by single groups or individuals. We need to recognise each other's gifts in the Body of Christ.

Questions were raised over the need to be cautious about the potential of religions for nation-building.

What about the inherent evil in some religions, e.g. the religious sanction of the caste system? It was felt that more space be given to reconciliation between nations in view of ethnic conflicts.

The imperative to build the church needed to be qualified. We need to take account of problems of fragmentation of churches, competition and relationship between ecumenical bodies and churches.

\* \* \*

Following the meeting the participants have pledged to share written work and publications and to seek ways and means of engaging in Mission together in all ways possible given the respective parameters and boundaries. They also decided that they would seek as many opportunities as can be seized on to meet and continue the dialogue. They decided that probably they need to develop a narrower focus for future meetings and perhaps instead of the model of papers and responses they need to agree on a topic and engage in a free dialogue on issues and emphases of respective concerns, paying more attention to Bible interpretation and mission imperatives. Thanks to the two moderators, Dr Sam Kamaleson of World Vision International and Dr Gert Ruppell of the World Council of Churches, who did an excellent job, and to Dr Clive Pearson and Dr Simon Chan, who provided the services of being listening-in theologians.

The financial facilitation and encouragement came from the Common witness Program of the WCC Unit II and the National Council of Churches in India, and the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, provided local hospitality. (Dhyanchand Carr)

## Reading the Bible with New Eyes

### In Indonesia

**A** program on Reading the Bible with New Eyes was co-sponsored by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI) and CCA in Kinasih, near Jakarta, 3–7 February 1998. There were thirty-five participants, including resource persons.

The participants were a balanced group—women and men, lay and ordained, middle aged and youth. Most crossed over the theological barrier of their traditional eyes and went over to see the Gospel and its implications with new eyes.

The success of the program is due entirely to the careful preparation of a team coordinated by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI). Septemy Lakawa, who teaches in Jakarta Theological College, Audy Wuisang, the Youth Secretary of CCI, Andaru Satuyoto, who teaches in the Indonesian Christian University, and Indriani Bone, Methodist Church in

Indonesia, had attended earlier ecumenical enablers programs and were highly motivated. They were ably coordinated by Mrs Stien Jalil, Assistant to the General Secretary of CCI, into forming the local team. They also roped in two more resource people. Dr Kadarmanto Harjowasito, who was involved in two workshops for preparing the study resources, assisted as a resource person, and Ms Esther Pudjo Widiasih, who trained in the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music, organised a meaningful worship program.

The most encouraging feature was the continuing enthusiasm of the participants. Some started study groups in their churches or institutions. All want to have further opportunities for deeper study and reflection. So a second review meeting for the group was held in Salatiga 18–19 April 1998. A movement has begun well in Indonesia. May God bless it in all ways.

### In Taiwan

**T**he Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has been totally taken up by an enthusiasm to read the Bible with new eyes. Last September they hosted an enablers program in Kaohsiung.

Now they have launched a three-year phased program to reach 6000 people who have come forward to be registered for learning to read the Bible with new eyes and to engage in the mission of community building in their neighbourhood.

As a preparation for a launching of the program a training program for forty-two potential leaders was held in

Taipei on 16–19 March. This workshop was followed up by an intensive reflection with national leaders along with six enablers from different parts of Asia. They endorsed the need to simplify the language, expand the notes with a lot of stories of life to illustrate the perspectives, bridge some gaps in theology, especially with regard to portraying and imaging God, add illustrative art and add two units on prayer and the Holy Spirit.

This indeed is a big job. Hopefully it will be completed by June.

(Dhyanchand Carr)

# CCA Cluster Meetings

*After the decision was made by the General Committee to 'cluster' the work of the various administrative and program units of CCA, Program Cluster I, which includes the program units on Theological Concerns and Communication, met in Kuala Lumpur on 23–26 February 1998, Cluster II, which includes the program committees on Mission and Evangelism, Education, Women and Youth, met in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 3–5 March, and Cluster III, which includes the program units on Development and Service, International Affairs, Indochina Concern and Urban Rural Mission, met on 3–4 March 1998 at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, India*

## Program Cluster I

**T**he Cluster I meeting received and discussed a report on 'Recent Developments in the Life of the CCA and Their Implications for Programming', and reports on program implementation on theological concerns and communication over the past two years. Bearing in mind the organisational adjustments and limitations, the meeting also approved and drew up program profiles for theological concerns and communication in CCA that undergird the activities for theological concerns and communication in the coming two years.

### Program Profile for Theological Concerns

The program profile for theological concerns involves areas of theological activity around which four programs will revolve.

The first lies in the area of explorations into new areas of theological concern and enquiry, the second lies in the area of building new networks of theological relations and common work, the third lies in the area of initiating efforts at ecumenical theological formation and the fourth lies in the area of possible new publications.

### Asia Conference of Church and Society

The Program Committee on Theological Concerns (PCTC) set in motion the planning of one of its 'highlight' events—and hopefully one of the highlight events for CCA—during this term: the Asia Conference of Church and Society. To be held during the first half of 1999, this conference is planned to bring together up to fifty participants who will address the task of:

- initiating a serious attempt, a process of analysing, identifying and exploring the broad range of critical issues, both old and new, in the

life of contemporary Asian church and society or societies

- addressing the churches in terms of their witness in relation to these issues
- providing occasion for Asian contributions towards the revitalisation of ecumenical social thought
- locating some of the 'new' men and women, organisations and institutions who can help in continuing to understand and deal with issues of church and society and what coalitions and networks might be set up to sustain these concerns.



Participants will be made up of selected theologians and those engaged in ethics and society, people in the academic field, especially those who are engaged in the social sciences and in some fields of the natural sciences, and people who are active in various forms of Christian social action and research on social issues. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) is expected to send participants to the conference. It is hoped that this event will be hosted by churches in Australia and more specifically by the Council of Churches in the Northern Territory of Australia.

#### **Congress of Asian Theologians**

The Program Unit on Theological Concerns will once again be one of the sponsors of the Second Meeting of the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), to be held 9–15 August 1999 at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore. Up to 130 theologians from all over Asia will attend (as well as Asian theologians who are in 'diaspora' outside Asia) and selected participants from other areas of the world. Considered a 'salient ecumenical event' when it was founded in Suwon, Korea, in May 1997, the congress has been one of the new vehicles not only of theological exploration in Asia but also of building new networks for theological work among Asian organisations and institutions. Invitations to the congress, the announcement of the theme, the sub-themes and the various areas of issue and disciplinary group discussions will be issued in August 1998.

#### **Asian Conference of Theological Students**

This has been projected for the end of 1999, as a vehicle for both theologi-

cal exploration and ecumenical theological formation. It was noted at the meeting of Program Committee that many of the current leaders of the ecumenical movement first made their contact with ecumenical life and thought during their period of theological training in theological schools and colleges in Asia. Therefore this conference is conceived to revive an 'old' tradition of work with theological students in the ecumenical movement and to initiate a concern for the formation of ecumenical life and leadership among those who are undergoing formal training in the various forms of ministry within the churches. A working paper is being drawn up for the conference around which a planning committee will be formed before the last quarter of 1998

#### **Theological Roundtable**

A theological roundtable on the theme 'Towards a Network of Theological Enquiry' in a global context was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong 19–23 March 1998. (See the report elsewhere in this issue of *CCA News*.) Co-sponsored by the Council for World Mission (CWM), and undertaken in cooperation with the Centre for Advanced Religious and Theological Studies (CARTS) of the University of Cambridge, this roundtable brought together eighteen theologians from Europe, the West Indies, the Pacific and several countries of Asia to set up common areas of theological enquiry and research and to explore the possible networks that would enable both individual theologians and theological institutions and organisations to undertake the joint work that is necessary for the research and theological

explorations to be made. A second roundtable will be held before the end of 1998 in the area of 'Methodologies of Doing Theology' in the age of globalisation.

#### **CTC Bulletin**

In addition to continuing the publication of the CTC Bulletin, which will serve as the publications vehicle of the work of the committee, several publications projects are envisaged, around which new work is hoped can be done. One of these is a project for a writing of the history of the ecumenical movement in Asia around the biographies of a selected number of outstanding ecumenical leaders. A publications proposal has been drafted for this purpose that will soon have an editorial committee to work on it.

The Program Committee on Theological Concerns is scheduled to meet at the time of the Second Meeting of the Congress of Asian Theologians in August 1999 in Bangalore, India.

#### **Program Profile for Communications**

The Program Committee on Communications was aware of the financial constraint of CCA and the restructuring process of program committees into cluster groups.

The committee also understood the proposal of the General Committee with regard to the shift of emphasis of the Communications Unit from a program-implemented unit to a service unit.

However, the committees underlined the crucial role of communications work in the life of CCA—not only in terms of communicating the programs and activities of CCA to its member constituencies but also as fa-



cilitating agent in disseminating and exchanging information and resources among CCA constituencies and the wider ecumenical family. This includes receiving and sharing information related to matters of interest from an individual member church or council to the rest of CCA constituencies.

With regard to *CCA News* as a major medium of CCA Communications, the Program Committee realised the limitation of staff but strongly encouraged that the magazine be produced at least quarterly. The committee also proposed that the General Secretariat produce a monthly update of breaking news and events.

The committee welcomed the effort to make an in-house consolidation of

different publications of CCA, especially to avoid duplication, which eventually lead to development of the CCA publication policy. At the same time, the Committee recognised the need to facilitate information sharing among different networks within the CCA family. CCA, although organised by different program units, needs proper coordination.

The idea of promoting and disseminating the existing CCA publications to the libraries of theological schools in Asia was very much supported by the committee. Also, the need for an update of CCA Directory was very much felt.

The committee proposed the following recommendations to the Gen-

eral Committee:

- To find staff (intern, volunteer etc.) to support the work of the Communications Committee.
- To address the issue of the globalisation of mass media, particularly (a) the impact this makes on violence against women, (b) the accessibility of new information technology and how this affects our values, and (c) the need to read the media critically.
- To continue to encourage member churches and national councils to take responsibility for the translation and circulation of CCA communications and to keep CCA informed of their own programs and activities so that CCA can support and work alongside these.
- To be aware that communications will be of major importance in the next millennium and thus the General Committee needs to address this in the restructuring of the Programs Committee.

The cluster committee meeting was also attended by Mr Yotaro Konaka, a member of the CCA Presidium, from Japan. (Staff team)

## Program Cluster II

**T**he Cluster II (which includes the Program Committees on Mission and Evangelism, Education, Women and Youth) meeting received the information from the CCA President, Bishop Fernando, and discussed the General Secretary's report on 'Recent Developments in the Life of the CCA and Their Implications for Programming'. In individual committee meetings, the members received the

report of the program implementations and developed profiles for each committee for the coming three years.

### Program Profile for Mission and Evangelism

The Mission and Evangelism Desk will continue to strengthen the Programs on Reading the Bible with New Eyes, especially at the national and local levels, in cooperation with the National

Council of Churches and/or member churches. Another regional training for Ecumenical Enablers, the training of the facilitator for the Program on Reading the Bible with New Eyes, will be held in Korea this year. The program on Dialogue for Mission and Unity will be continued. The Asia Missionary Support Program (AMSP) is an ongoing program with a purpose to enhance the exchange of people con-

cerned with various mission involvement in Asia, including areas such as ministry with migrant workers, migrant congregations and exchange of faculty of theology or resource persons for specific mission involvement of the churches.

### Program Profiles of Women's Concerns and Education

A combined report was presented to both committees outlining the work done for the last year, particularly since the programs on Women's Concerns has been the responsibility of the Education Secretary. After having their individual meetings, both committees agreed to discuss their present and future programs together and support each other in the merging of certain programs through a mutual support.

#### Women's Concerns

Program on Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Training will be continued for the coming three years. For 1998, one program will be held in Thailand and another in Sri Lanka. A consultation on women's spirituality through artistic expression will be held in July 1998. The leadership training program, which facilitates women's leadership development of the churches in Asia, is an ongoing program. In addition to that the Women's Concerns Desk, on the request of the WCC, has been involved in facilitating the recruitment of the Asian participants to the Decade Festival to be held in Harare prior to the WCC General Assembly.

#### Education

A Curriculum Writers Workshop will be held in August this year to facilitate

those who are involved in educational ministry or formation programs of the Asian churches to discuss and develop curriculum for Christian Education that emerge out of Asian context. The Education Desk will coordinate the Asia Ecumenical Course at least this year and another one prior to the General Assembly 2000. The Asia Ecumenical Educational Exchange Program is an ongoing program to facilitate the exchange study of Asian students in the areas of both theology and non-theology beyond their culture and denominational backgrounds. This program is not for individual advancement, but is an integral part of the leadership development of Asian churches. Therefore, the students should be sent by their churches who are willing to return to their home churches to strengthen the ministry of the church. Another workshop on 'Living Together in Worship: Toward Inclusive Community' is planned for the year 2000. (Staff team)

#### Youth Initiatives

The 1998 meeting of the World Youth Projects (WYP) and Rural Youth

Projects (RYP) of CCA Youth also took place in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The WYP Committee agreed to support seven local initiatives while the RYP Committee provided support for twelve local projects across Asia. While WYP focuses on cutting-edge issues, the RYP concentrates on development projects for, of or by rural youth organisations.

Attending the WYP Committee Meeting for the first time since his appointment as WCC Youth Secretary was Freddy Knutsen. Freddy stressed the WCC-Youth's intention to make itself more programmatically involved in defining WYP guidelines for support to local and regional initiatives. This encouraging move would mean a closer working relationship and a more coordinated effort in addressing cutting-edge issues confronting the youth.

The WYP affirmed the need to have a Youth Internship Program for 1998 to focus on the publication of the resource materials gathered from the Intensive Biblico-Theological Forum or IBTF series. Owing to financial limitations, the committee intends to approach the Program Committee of Mission and Evangelism to propose a



Members of the CCA Youth Committee attending the Cluster II meeting in Chiang Mai



joint-internship program. IBTF 5 or Reading the Bible through Asian Eyes 5 will be held in August this year.

WYP is supported the Youth Consultation on Globalisation: Development with a Human Face. This was held in April 1998 in Malaysia. Participants were young economists, business administrators and young people involved in alternative development.

Another regional initiative supported by the WYP is the Asian Youth and Student Gathering (ASYG) in 1999. This proposal was drafted by a working group formed from staff of different Christian youth organisations within the region. This network was initially formed to plan for ASYG in 1993 as a regional preparatory event for Ecumenical Global Gathering of Youth and Students (EGGYS) 93. Another preparatory meeting will be held to make specific plans for ASYG in December of 1999.

Evaluation of the past year's local and regional initiatives showed an improvement. Report guidelines circulated to project holders contributed to improving the evaluation process. Report of Project Holders helped in determining the success or failure of the project and in providing information for the committee to report to funding partners and to determine the focus

for future regional initiatives. The RYP program received financial assistance from EZE, Germany.

Two types of regional initiatives will be supported by RYP this year. One is a regional activity: Exchange Training Workshop for Rural Youth, to be held in October at Murree-Punjab, Pakistan. It will focus on social investigation and analysis and project identification as major components of project management. This came about from an observation on the types of project proposal for local initiatives the RYP Committee has been receiving in past years. Much has yet to be done to assist rural youth in developing projects that are attuned to their condition and situation but at the same time addressing the root cause of their status. The other type of regional support is human resource development. RYP will be sending current project holders to regional training workshops sponsored by the Development and Service Desk of CCA. This desk will be have two programs on savings, credit and finance management. It is hoped project holders will learn new skills and even consider developing a savings and credit cooperative in their local areas.

It is hoped youth and the Development and Service Desk will conduct

joint activities in the future. One is to have a Regional Project Management Training Workshop for new and current RYP project holders in the first quarter of 1999.

The RYP Committee also approved a Youth Internship Program. The intern will be placed with CCT-Youth to be part of the staff for the Rural Youth Projects of CCT and will also assist in the planning of a Regional Consultation with Indigenous Young people, an RYP regional initiative for 1999. Details have yet to be determined but it is proposed the internship will start in September and continue for 9–12 months.

Present at the WYP meeting were Rachel Beleo (Philippines), Eric Brown (India), Emma Leslie (Australia), Simon Moglia (Australia), Freddy Knutsen (WCC Youth Secretary) and Lung Ngan Ling (CCA Youth Secretary). Prior to their meeting the group had an enlightening two-day visit to the Thai–Burmese border in Mae Sot, Thailand. (See the separate report elsewhere in this issue of *CCA News*.) Attending the 1998 RYP Committee meeting were Lidya Tandirerung (Indonesia), Stephen Mridha (Bangladesh), Emma Leslie and Lung Ngan Ling.

(Rachel Beleo)

## Program Cluster III

**T**he Cluster III program committees chalked out programs for their respective program desks for the next two years, until the General Assembly of CCA in 2000.

At the joint session on the first day CCA General Secretary, Dr Feleciano V.

Cariño, outlined the new vision and priorities for CCA programs. Ms Margaret Rodgers, President of CCA, chaired the session. The executive secretaries in charge of program units presented reports of program implementation during the 1996–97 period.

### Development and Service

While identifying the priorities for the future programs, the committee observed that the spread of globalisation has been afoot for some time in Asia. Structural adjustments and transfer of technologies did not benefit poor peo-

ple—instead the technologies (the green revolution, health care etc) fattened foreign companies or the elite in host countries. In this situation the church in Asia has to play a role in influencing development. Environment and gender issues can not be handled by governments alone. A new development paradigm should emerge that should be people centred, taking into account the interdependence of social, economic and cultural factors and the political aspects of a human community.

To enable and strengthen churches' participation in social development, peace and justice, the Development and Service Committee has evolved programs with a thrust on liberation, people's participation and human rights promotion, ensuring sustainability, alleviation of poverty and increasing the level of self-reliance.

In view of newer concepts of development, the following areas of activity were identified for 1998–2000:

- human resource development and leadership building for development work in churches

- community organisation and enhancing local initiatives of villages
- promotion of resource sharing among member churches, national councils and other ecumenical organisations in the region
- strengthening people's organisations, churches and organisations in social development work and promoting the formation of solidarity networks.
- promotion of eco-friendly and sustainable development.

The following programs are proposed for the next two years:

- development projects
- management trainings
- training on micro enterprises
- training on community saving and credit
- environmental workshops
- consultation on health and community sustainability
- national network on church in solidarity with the differently abled people
- regional consultation on internally displaced communities sub-re-

gional workshops on sustainable developments and peoples organisation.

### International Affairs and Indochina Concern

Based on the paper presented by the Executive Secretary/Coordinator of Indochina Concern and International Affairs units on 'Some priority areas/issues for CCA International Affairs desk's future involvement', the committee members discussed different Asian issues and identified program priorities for the next three years:

- social and economic costs of the Asian economic crisis
- the new balance of power game and the arms race in Asia
- security threats
- US–Japan security threat and its implications
- arms build-up in Asia
- human rights concerns
- the anniversary of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights
- peace conflict resolution
- territorial confrontation and disputes
- unification of Korean Peninsula
- North Korea: food crisis
- religious freedom and religious liberty
- ethnicity and nationality
- ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka
- Afghanistan, Central Asian Republics, US interests and their implications
- Naga–Kuki conflicts in Manipur/ North East India
- Burma/Myanmar: worsening situation
- East Timor
- civil war in Cambodia



The following program thrusts were identified/proposed for Indochina Concern Unit:

- ecumenical formation
- leadership development in churches and support for local initiatives
- human resource development
- people to people exchange
- labour unrest and trade union issues in Cambodia
- human rights
- diplomatic relationships
- peace and security issues
- landmines, agent orange problem, unexploded ordnance
- church–state relations
- gender and development
- women's leadership development

The committee members emphasised the need for CCA to address these vital Asian issues and interpret them for Asian churches.

The committee also discussed the suggestions from the Consultation on 'Globalisation and its impact on Human Rights'.

The committee decided to pursue the mandate given by the General Assembly to study the situation of religious liberty and human rights in different Asian countries, especially socialist and former socialist countries. As an initial step a consultation will be organised of church leaders and other knowledgeable people from Asian countries to discuss the matter of religious freedom. Appropriate mechanism/processes to study the situation be worked out. The findings will be submitted to the next General Assembly of CCA. Human Rights training and education will continue as one of the main program thrusts. Regional,

subregional and national human rights training will be organised in the next three years and study materials on human rights will be published. Peace and conflict resolution efforts will be undertaken in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and North East India. The Korean unification issue will be given priority. Another important decision of the program committee was to recommend the CCA Executive and General Committee to integrate the two program desks, International Affairs and Indochina Concern, in the light of a possible restructuring of CCA programs in near future.

#### Urban Rural Mission Program

The URM program committee decided continue to implement its ongoing programs such as Second Line Leadership Development Training, Grass Root Training, National networking, etc.

The committee has given the mandate to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of URM, to be held in Seoul, Korea, in June 1998. (Staff team)

## Secondline Leadership Formation Program

**U**rban Rural Mission (URM) conducted a regional program, Secondline Leadership Formation, in October–November 1997, with a focus on 'Church and URM Dialogue', and its follow-up work is expected this year. The program was held in Kwachun City, Korea. NCC Korea, together with the Presbyterian Church in Korea, Korea Christian Action Organisation and Yong-Dong-Po UIM provided local support for the program.

Seventeen church workers and URM activists from nine countries met. Main speakers were Dr Ahn Jae Woong (Christian Institute for Social Justice and Democracy) on the Asian situation, Rev In Myung Jin (CCA-URM Moderator) on mission perspectives, Dr Kim Yong Bock (Hanil University) and Mr Ed de la Torre (Education for Life) on dialogue of Minjung theologies.

Korea provided wonderful practical examples of local churches involved in work for social change: local migrant workers' centers run by churches, urban poor communities struggling for housing rights and peasant organisers in a rural area. Theological and mission understanding underlying these activities were also extensively discussed. Participants were asked to work on a two-year 're-entry' plan with identified targets and strategies for URM/churches in particular country situations, using the method of participatory planning. The participants from Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), urban-based consultants for industrial workers, for example, concluded that they would try to coordinate the CCT church-based work in rural area as well as non-church related URM groups in slum areas. They expected some kind of dialogue/cooperation structure to emerge to cover all these urban-rural concerns. Another participant from Mara Evangelical Church in Burma shared the church's suffering as minority community in a war situation, and hoped the new generation of pastors would be trained with URM mission perspectives and community organising approaches. Post-program follow-up will be done through URM national coordinators and CCA-URM.

## Common Research and Enquiry in an Age of Globalisation

**E**ighteen participants took part at a theological roundtable on the theme 'Towards a Network of Theological Enquiry', held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on 19–23 March 1998. Sponsored by the Program Unit on Theological Concerns of CCA, with the support of and in co-operation with the Council for World Mission (CWM), the Centre for Advanced Religious and Theological Studies (CARTS) of the University of Cambridge, and the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), the roundtable was called to explore areas of common theological research and enquiry in an age of globalisation and to begin to set up the network, across national and continental boundaries, by which such common research and enquiry may be undertaken and supported. The participants came from the universities of Cambridge and London in the UK, Jamaica in the West Indies,

Tonga, Australia, Madagascar, the USA, Uruguay, and several countries in Asia—Korea, India, China (including Hong Kong SAR), the Philippines and Indonesia.

Papers presented and discussed included:

- 'Towards a Network of Theological Enquiry in a Global Context', D. Preman Niles, Council for World Mission, London
- 'Theological and Ethical Issues in the Age of Globalisation', Julio de Sta. Ana, Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland
- 'Impulses in Caribbean Theology', Michael Miller, United Theological College of the West Indies, Jamaica
- 'Asian Theology in a Changing Asia: Theology and Post Colonial Theory in the Asian Context', Wong Wai-Ching, Chinese University of Hong Kong
- 'Beyond Partnership towards a Glo-

bal Agenda', Alan Torrance, Kings College, London.

The roundtable identified six common areas of research in which the various institutions and organisations represented will undertake shared research in the coming years through a network coordinated in Asia by the Program Unit on Theological Concerns of CCA:

- The process of globalisation: issues, perspectives and challenges to the life and mission of the church.
- Faith, ethics and economic life in the era of the global market.
- Theological method in the emerging global culture.
- Global ethics.
- Religions and cultures: faith and life in the midst of religious and cultural pluralism.
- Communion, reconciliation and solidarity: global and local.

(Feliciano Cariño)



Archie Lee (Hong Kong SAR, China), Theresa Chu (Shanghai, China), David Thompson (Cambridge, UK), Julio de Sta. Ana (Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland), Philip Wickeri (San Anselmo, California, USA), Feliciano V. Cariño (CCA, Hong Kong), K.C. Abraham (Bangalore, India)



D. Preman Niles (CWM, London, UK), Michael Miller (Kingston, Jamaica), Sandy Yule (Nuku'alofa, Tonga), David F. Ford (Cambridge, UK), Margaretha Hendriks (Ambon, Indonesia), Alan Torrance (London, UK). Also present: Kim Yong Bock (Chonbuk, Korea), Kuncheria Pathil (Bangalore, India), Laurent Ramambason (CWM, London, UK), Gnana Robinson (Bangalore, India), Wong Wai-Ching (Hong Kong SAR, China)

# 'Globalisation Dehumanises Society,' Says CCA

**G**lobalisation has become a buzz word of our times. It is held out by its advocates as the panacea for all economic woes—and that the only path to prosperity is to adhere to free market principles. Nations are being urged to deregulate and open up their economies to free trade and foreign investment. But globalisation has also brought in its wake great inequities, mass impoverishment and despair—fracturing society along the existing fault lines of class, gender and community and marginalising and violating the basic human rights of millions of workers, peasants and farmers and indigenous communities.

CCA focused on these concerns during the consultation on 'Globalisation and Its impact on Human Rights', held at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, India, 26 February–2 March 1998 under the auspices of the Cluster III program units.

In his keynote address Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, a former judge of the Supreme Court of India, traced the history of suppression, torture and injustice perpetrated by the mighty against the weak, unprotected and poor sections of society to the very beginning of creation—Cain asking God, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' He said globalisation had brought in its wake poverty, sex-tourism and a degradation of cultural and moral values. Justice Iyer called on the participants in the consultation to take a firm stand against the evils of globalisation, to initiate a great Asian awakening by empowering men, women and children

with an awareness of their rights and a will to reject consumerism, adopt simple life styles and respect Asian values and culture.

## Speakers

■ Prof M. A. Oommen spoke about the magnitude of the globalisation process and how it is affecting the economy of developing countries and the lives of people in general. He wondered whether we could accept unchallenged the world view of development or try to search for alternative paradigms that would relieve oppressed and struggling economies. He said the church and each one of us should be worried about the stark, naked fact that we can sleep peacefully when our neighbour can't!

■ Dr Feliciano V. Cariño spoke on the ethical and theological concerns of globalisation. He said that globalisation is not new, but a process that has been going on for centuries. In the emergence of 'world history', Christianity and the Christian church have been a significant part, and therefore global in their ecumenism. One of the

key theological considerations, he said, would be to ponder on how we are to live in a world where neither our faith nor our visions control the things that go on.

■ Mr T. Rajamoorthy spoke on the implications of the policies of the developed nations that sought to consolidate their position and wrest power from states, governments and communities in order to empower corporations. Globalisation, he said, had brought in its wake mass impoverishment, despair, massive unemployment, the casualisation, feminisation and informalisation of labour, created urban poor and violated basic rights to food, shelter and education.

■ Dr Ann Pattel-Gray, Australia, spoke on the violation of the rights of the indigenous community in Australia. The indigenous were robbed of their land and were suffering without water, sanitation and food.

■ Ms Janejinda Pawadee, Thailand, spoke on how the initial boom in her country had faded, creating impoverished, landless and jobless hangers-on who lived at the fringes of society.



■ Prof. Michael Davis from the Chinese University of Hong Kong spoke on the difficulties of importing Western communitarian ideas into an east Asian authoritarian environment without adequate liberal constitutional safeguards.

■ Rev. Dr Rienzie Perera reflected on the Biblical implications of the violations of the rights of human beings, who are built in the image of God. We need a people who will go out into the world to be broken for the healing of the world.

■ Dr Jeevankumar, Bangalore University, gave a graphic overview of the adverse effects of globalisation on the economic, social and cultural rights of the people of the third world.

■ Ms Joy Balazo analysed the impact of globalisation on civil and political rights and the role of churches. Several actions were proposed for the Asian churches to be involved in defending civil and political rights.

■ Rev. Dr K.C. Abraham delivered a comprehensive talk on the perspectives and problems of globalisation, the resistance to marginalisation, the search for alternatives and theological considerations. He called on the church to reject economic fatalism, encourage people to adopt simpler lifestyles, revive spirituality and use the resources of the church to evolve a new global future.

### Commitment

Participants affirmed their commitment that in a world of helplessness, despair and frustration the churches in Asia must express their solidarity with those who are resisting the evils of globalisation and are its victims.

(Mathews George Chunakara)

## New Phase in CCA–UN/ESCAP Program

**T**he CCA–UN/ESCAP Joint Working Group praised a joint program and expects closer cooperation between the CCA, ESCAP and EZE on Youth and Development Training Program to the year 2000.

CCA, UN/ESCAP and EZE delegations met in Hong Kong 9–10 February to receive the reports of the past 18 months and to give comment and advice for future activities. The working group realised that the program provides another dimension of ecumenical relation and service between CCA and other government and nongovernment organisations in the region.

The program was initiated in 1979 by the World Council of Churches (WCC-CCPD), in cooperation with the EZE, to enhance the participation of youth in national development, to strengthen youth skills in economic self-reliance, and to encourage constructive social participation in poverty alleviation in the ESCAP region.

Since 1989, in the framework of regionalisation and cooperation between the WCC and CCA, the program has been administered by CCA. Dr Eliezer D. Mapanao (Philippines) was the first CCA 'Non-Reimbursable Loan Expert' (NRL Expert) to UN/ESCAP

from 1990 to 1993. He was succeeded by Mr Lawrence Surendra (India) from 1994 to 1996. Then, in September 1997, Mr Emmanuel N. Ilagan (Philippines) was appointed as the third CCA–NRL Expert.

The program beginning this year, 1998, leading to the year 2000, is the third phase and will carry the theme 'Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development'. It focuses on the less-developed countries in Asia and the Pacific, including Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Maldives and the People's Republic of China. Major activities of the program include:

- producing curriculum for training youth work personnel based on current literature and past experience in project implementation. As needed, the curriculum will be translated into the local languages for local use
- conducting jointly with national partners a series of seven national training programs in the targeted countries
- support for national and local-level follow-up of the courses to ensure maximum impact.

(Prawate Khidarn)



# Youth of North East Asia Gather for Peace

The end of the cold war has not brought real peace in Asia. There are still areas of conflict that endanger the peace of the north-east region. The USA continues to preserve its dominating influence there. Japan is reinforcing its military power. China has successfully reclaimed sovereignty of Hong Kong by 'one country, two systems', and is now turning earnestly for reunification with Taiwan—but Taiwan has a different agenda and strives to maintain the status quo. The painful division of the Korean Peninsula calls for healing and reconciliation. The recent serious food shortage in North Korea, which endangers the peace and stability of the area, deserves further attention and concern. These critical situations call for peaceful and enduring solutions.

Christian youth movements in North East Asia have expressed their concerns for the peace in the area for over twenty-five years. The Ecumenical Youth Council of Korea, the Youth Council of National Christian Council in Japan and the Youth Association of the Korean Church in Japan have come together to hold a biannual consultation with the theme 'The Peace and Peoples' Rights in North East Asia' since the 1970s. Recent developments in the area raise new challenges of a deeper concern and a closer cooperation for Christian youth movements there. They believe that dialogues, exchanges, and conversations among youth from different countries can facilitate them to acquire a new understanding of the international relationship in North East Asia. This new understanding will lead to a constructive development of peace in the long run.

As a regional organisation, CCA is committed to fostering peaceful and harmonious relations among peoples, communities, and nations. CCA is also challenged to motivate, encourage and

support Christian communities towards seeking the meaning of peace in the contemporary context of Asia, to renounce war and the use of violence for the settling of disputes, affirming the absolute priority of life, upholding the primacy of people's security, promoting a community where 'none shall make them afraid' (Micah 4:4), and bringing us all closer to the biblical vision of shalom.

With the visions and beliefs stated above, CCA Youth started the working process in 1996 for 'Youth Consultation on Peace in NE Asia', the first joint effort among the Christian youth movements in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong working for peace in the area.

The consultation took place 30 October–4 November 1997 with the following objectives:

- to understand the cultural and historical diversities and commonalities in the countries of North East Asia and the potential crises threatening peace
- to understand the meaning of peace from a Biblical-theological per-

spective in the contemporary context of North East Asia

- to understand the contribution of the ecumenical movement towards peace in the subregion and identify the common missionary tasks for the ecumenical youth movement to promote peace
- to enhance solidarity among Christian youth movements and strengthen networking among each other in North East Asia.

Around thirty Christian youth attended the consultation, which was hosted by the Kansai Youth Council and the Youth Desk of National Christian Council in Japan, in the Korean Christian Centre, Osaka, Japan.

The participants obtained a deeper understanding of peace from a Biblical-theological perspective in the contemporary context of the North East Asia. They presented papers and shared issues crucial to the peace situation in their own context. Issues included the reunification of Korea and suffering in North Korea, Koreans in Japan, the US military base in Okinawa, the future of Taiwan, and discrimination against indigenous people, as well as Hong Kong's situation after its return to China. The participants learned more about each other's ministries. Action plans were made to enhance networking among their movements.

The participants showed a great interest in a local festival celebrated in Kyoto and learned to appreciate the efforts of Koreans living in Japan to preserve their culture.

(Lung Ngan Ling)

# CCA in Action

## Laos

### Youth Participation in Development

**T**hirty youth workers—seven women and twenty-three men—from five southern provinces of the Lao People's Democratic Republic attended the CCA-UN/ESCAP joint sponsored training 2–7 February 1998. The five-day program, coordinated by the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LPRYU), included field practice of problems and needs assessment in a village. It was conducted at Lao-ngam training centre, Saravahn Province, Lao PDR.

Throughout the week, four resource people—one local and three from UN/ESCAP—alternated in shedding light on various aspects of youth and social development. Topics covered youth issues in the ESCAP region, basic concepts of development, youth role and participation in development and the Youth Plan for the Lao PDR in the year 2000. The main focus topic was given to project formation, which includes assessment of community needs, preparation of project proposal, project implementation, project monitoring and evaluation, and future planning. These led to the necessity of arranging the one-day field practice in the village.

Participants organised a special closing ceremony including the award-

ing of certificates to the participants successfully completing the course.

The evaluation of participants indicates their appreciation and the benefit they received. A major difficulty faced was the language problem. Most of the input, except topics presented by the local resource person, were given in English and had to be translated into the local dialect. Therefore it was strongly agreed that this issue must be seriously taken into account in future planning.

The LPRYU requested that the same course of training be conducted for youth workers in the northern provinces.

(Emmanuel Ilagan)

## Bangladesh, Sri Lanka

### Community-based Savings and Credit

**I**n the midst of economic downturn in many Asian countries, community-based savings and credit becomes one of the best strategies for community development and self-reliance, says a CCA workshop statement.

The workshop, held 22–26 September, also identified activities to be followed up, including:

- conducting an intensive training workshop especially for church people
- organising personnel exchange and exposure visits across countries
- disseminate information and documents on community-based savings and credit



Emmanuel Ilagan facilitates the training



- lobbying government to formulate more conducive policies.

To follow up the recommendations, CCA-Development and Service, in cooperation with the Christian Commission for Development and Service in Bangladesh (CCDB) and the National Christian Council in Sri Lanka (NCCSL), organised an issue-oriented visit to savings and credit programs in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on 25 April–4 May 1998. The program brought about ten development-oriented church workers from Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to discover the enormous potential on savings processes in different contexts.

In Bangladesh, facilitated by CCDB, participants visited savings and credit activities in the Shivalaya, Hirirampur and Gazipur areas. While in Sri Lanka, facilitated by the NCC Sri Lanka, participants were exposed to various programs of the YMCA, GSS and member churches of NCC Sri Lanka. It was decided that in the next three years, 1998–2000, a community-based savings and credit program become another focal program of the CCA-D&S. Its activities include regional and national training workshops, personnel exchanges and visits and information dissemination. (Prawate Khid-arn)

## Malaysia

### Young Economists

CCA Youth organised the 'Youth Consultation on Globalisation: Development with a Human Face' during 8–16 April 1998 in Malaysia. Eighteen youth from ten Asian countries studying economics or busi-

ness administration or involved in alternative development attended. They gathered to discuss the impact of globalisation in Asia and to strategise the Christian response from a youth perspective. Programs included inputs from resource persons coming from the fields of economics and theology as well as non government organisations involved in alternative development, exposure visit to indigenous communities and sharing and exchange among participants from different Asian countries.

(Lung Ngan Ling)

## Thailand

### Churches' Role in Mekong Development

Church delegations in Mekong subregion have made joint cooperation for churches' mission to the poor.

During 6–11 April 1998 twenty delegates from Thailand, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia met in Chiang Rai, the northern province of Thailand bordering Myanmar and Laos, to discuss the current situation, to find out common concerns and to search for future cooperation of the churches in the region. In the opening session it was stressed that it is important that churches' participation in development be promoted comprehensively and beyond individual nation borders.

The Great Mekong subregion, an area from the southern province of Yunnan in China to northern Thailand, central Laos and eastern Myanmar, is one of the focal areas of Asia. Since

the early 1990s the region has received international attention and many commissions have been formulated, such as the Greater Mekong Subregion Program (1992), the Forum for the Comprehensive Development in Indochina (1995), the Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (1996), the Golden Quadrangle and others.

In response to subregional development, infrastructure development has been designed to facilitate programs in agriculture, electric power, industries, tourism, human resource training and so on. While there are several visible signs of economic growth, there is, however, a large underside, the majority of people continuing to face worsening problems, including massive poverty, debts, unemployment, labour migration, health problems, widespread environmental degradation and violence against and exploitation of women and children.

Since the 1960s the World Council of Churches and CCA have been involved in various social activities in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. A bilateral collaboration has been initiated between the churches in neighbouring countries. The Church of Christ in Thailand initiated bilateral programs with churches in Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. Recently it also developed a program with churches in the Yunnan Province of China. The participants expressed the need for closer cooperation of churches while moving towards the new millennium. Various issues have been identified for future cooperation, especially human resources development, environment, labour migration, tourism and its impact, prostitution and health concerns.

(Prawate Khid-arn)

# Youth Visit Refugee Camps on Thai–Burmese Border

Karen refugees suffer relocation, attacks, cramped conditions and lack of water

A visit to refugee camps on the Thai–Burmese border was organised by the World Youth Project (WYP) Committee of CCA Youth 26–27 February 1998. The participants included Rachel Beleo from the Philippines, Eric Brown from India, Emma Leslie and Simon Moglia from Australia, as well as Lung Ngan Ling, Executive Secretary for Youth of CCA.

The young people visited two camps, Wangka and Mae La near Mae Sot. The residents there are mainly Karen refugees. In Wangka there are 9000 people living very close to the border. Its proximity to the border means sporadic attacks on the camp by Burmese army–related groups. During February 1997 the school and other buildings were burnt to the ground during one such attack. The Thai border police and security forces offer no resistance to such incursions. At the time of the visit there was a very real fear that another attack could be very close.

In Mae La, where 25,000 refugees have lived for up to fourteen years, there were similar fears, although the mountainous terrain there perhaps offers greater protection. The WYP committee members met with the security commander in the camp and found that he enjoyed a close relationship with the community. Whether this results in greater protection from border raids was difficult to ascertain. During the visit building supplies were



WYP Committee members meeting with a refugee leader in Wangka Camp



New arrivals in Mae La Camp

being received for 6000 new refugees moving to Mae La from Shoklo, a camp further north along the border. A number of Shoklo families had already arrived and were in the process of building homes with materials supplied by the Burmese Border Consortium and others. When questioned about the move, the people shared their concerns about being moved to Mae La. While they all appreciated the hospitality of the Thai government, news of the cramped conditions and lack of water in Mae La made the move

very difficult. Families the young people spoke to had made a home in Shoklo for up to eight years, and were now required to re-establish themselves on the side of a hill in an already overcrowded camp. Fear of disease in these conditions was also significant.

The refugee families visited were extremely gracious and forthcoming, offering cool drinks and telling their stories. Support for Karen refugees and the situation in Burma as a whole must remain on the agenda of all organisations who share a concern for human rights.

(Simon Moglia)



Wangka Camp on the Thai-Burmese border



Mae La Camp

## Newsbriefs

### New Leadership of CSI

The Church of South India (CSI) held its synod 13–17 January 1998 in Arogyavaram, Royala Seema Diocese, under the theme 'Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope'. The Most Rev. William Moses was elected as the new Moderator and Rev. Dyvasirvadham was elected as the new General Secretary.

### NCC Korea

Rev. Kim Dong Wan, the present General Secretary of the NCC Korea, was re-elected at an extra session of the NCC Korea Central Committee held on 23 March 1998.

### Asia Youth Week

11–17 October 1998

CCA Youth celebrates Asia Youth Week during the third week of October every year.

This year the theme is 'Peace'. A postcard and a resource book on liturgies, real stories and information regarding peace in Asia will be published and distributed in July 1998.

Please join us in the celebration with young people in your own locality!

## CCA Invited to Participate in the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia

**A**s a result of strengthening relationships and common work between the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), CCA was invited by the Pontifical Council for the Advancement of Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church to send four participants to the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia held at the Vatican City 19 April–14 May 1998. The four CCA representatives were Rt Rev. Kenneth Fernando, Bishop of Colombo of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka and a President of CCA, Rev. David Gill, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia, Rev. Agustina Lumentut, past Moderator and President of the Central Sulawesi Christian Church (GKST), and Fr Dr K.M. George, a priest of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam, Kerala, India. The first three are members of the Task Force on CCA–FABC Relations. The participation of Fr George is of special significance because of ongoing theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. In the apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente, On Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000*, Pope John Paul II announced his intention of convoking, in the years preceding this great celebration, Special Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops for America, Asia and Oceania. The Special Assembly for America took place in November–December last year. The Special Assembly for Asia dealt with the theme 'Jesus Christ the Saviour and His Mission of Love and Service in Asia: "... that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10)'.

The Special Assembly for Asia comes in a most propitious and important moment as both the FABC and the CCA are engaged in assessing the state of the life of the church in Asia as we come to the end of the century and the millennium and in seeking to understand the life and mission of the church in the coming century. Of special importance in this context is the decision that has been made by both the FABC and the CCA to undertake a conscious effort at defining areas of possible common work and to set up a mechanism by which the possibility

of forming a new 'ecumenical reality in Asia' that would involve directly the constituencies of both bodies may be discussed.

The participation of the CCA in the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia involves a significant new step towards manifesting that 'unity that already exists among us', as part of 'Being Church in Asia in the Twenty-first Century'. It is noteworthy that the invitation that was sent to the CCA was sent in the spirit of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, that period in the ecumenical calendar in which Christians all over the world, 'together and with special intensity', ask the Lord for the gift of unity for all of his disciples. The Asia Ecumenical Committee (AEC) and the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) are two of the organisational vehicles through which this joint effort is being pursued. (See the reports on the AEC and AMCU elsewhere in this issue of *CCA News*.)

We look forward with anticipation to the fruit of the work of the Special Assembly and to its harvest of perspectives and challenges for the ecumenical movement in Asia and the rest of the world. (Feliciano Cariño)



## Congress of Asian Theologians To Be Held in Bangalore

Up to 130 participants are expected to take part in the Second Assembly of the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), scheduled to be held 9–15 August 1999, in Bangalore, India. The dates for the Second Meeting were set during the meeting of the Continuation Committee of CATS, held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on 23–24 March 1998.

The continuation committee also decided to formally accept the invitation of the Ecumenical Christian Centre in Whitefield, Bangalore, India, to host the Second Assembly. The gathering of CATS in Bangalore will be one of the culminating events in the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Indian School of Ecumenical Studies (ISET), one of the established programs of the Ecumenical Christian Centre, which is devoted to the ecumenical formation of pastors and other leaders of the churches in India. CATS was organised at a founding assembly held at the Somang Academy House in Suwon, Korea, on 26 May–1 June

1997. This was attended by over a hundred Asian theologians and hosted by the Somang Presbyterian Church of Seoul, Korea.

‘Celebration of Life in Asia’ has been chosen to be the theme around which the Congress will discuss three subthemes:

- ‘Life in the Age of Globalisation: Possibilities, Threats and Alternatives’
- ‘Religious and Cultural Pluralism: Spiritual Resources for Life in the Asian Context’
- ‘Celebration, Communion and Solidarity: Peace, Reconciliation and Fellowship in Contemporary Asian Life’.

Noting that the founding congress was primarily ‘agenda setting’, the continuation committee hopes that the Second Congress will be ‘research setting’ and will thus begin to undertake serious thought and reflection on a number of critical issues of theological concern that confront Asian churches and societies as we move towards the twenty-first century. As in the first congress, a

significant part of the program of the second one will be devoted to alternative periods for issue groups and disciplinary and inter-disciplinary groups in which various papers will be presented for discussion.

In addition to reviewing the various recommendations of the first assembly, the continuation committee also decided to establish a CATS journal, which will contain news about CATS leading to the second assembly in Bangalore, substantial papers and articles specially solicited, book reviews and content reports and listings from other journals concerned with theological education in Asia. The committee also hopes that a brochure about CATS will soon be produced for publicity and for the recruitment of CATS members, and that a CATS website set up as a means of networking and publicising CATS activities.

A planning committee for the second assembly has been appointed and is scheduled to meet in August this year to finalise plans and invite participants.

(Feliciano Cariño)

### First Announcement

## **Asia Ecumenical Course**

**October 1998  
Chiang Mai, Thailand**

### **‘Towards Inclusive Community’**

(Please contact your national Council of Churches General Secretary or the headquarters of your church)

## Bishop Paulose Mar Paulose—a Great Humanist

**P**aulose Mar Paulose, an outstanding thinker, speaker, social critic, theologian, ecumenist and Bishop of the Church of the East (Chaldean Syrian/Nestorian) in India passed away on 24 March 1998 following heart surgery. He was 57.

Known for his radical views and stand on theological positions in church and society, Bishop Paulose tried to bring new dimensions to his Christian obedience and witness in a highly secular and politicised Indian context.

Paulose was born K.A. Paul in 1941 in a traditional Christian family in highly orthodox surroundings in Trichur, Kerala state. After he graduated in mathematics from St Thomas College, Trichur, he went for theological studies in Serampore College in Calcutta. He was consecrated as Bishop at the age of 27, on 13 September 1968, in Baghdad, Iraq, at the headquarters of the Chaldean Syrian Church. After the consecration he continued his theological studies in the US. He did his masters in theology at Princeton Theological Seminary and doctoral studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkley, California. His doctoral thesis was on a comparative study on Karl Marx and Bonhoeffer—‘A Bonhoefferian Corrective of Karl Marx’s Critique of Religion’. Like Blasé Pascal, the French mathematician turned theological thinker, Mar Paulose, who was trained as a mathematician and became a theologian and social critic, brought new dimension in Christian social thinking. He ech-



oed the need for the churches’ engagement in social, political and economic life, in both action and reflection. He was eloquent in emphasising the need for the churches’ mission to develop an ecumenical ecclesiology and ecumenical social ethics. Being one among the three bishops of a small church on Kerala much of his work related to ecumenical organisations. He was Chairman of the Student Christian Movement in Kerala. He became Chairman of the World Student Christian Federation (1985–90). As chairman of the WSCF he travelled all over the world and became part of the liberation struggles in several developing countries. He was associated with a number of other ecumenical bodies in India and abroad.

My first encounter with Bishop Mar Paulose was in 1976 when I was a young college student. He had just returned to India from the US at that time after his doctoral studies. He was only 35 years old and the youngest bishop at that time in India. Since then I have had the privilege and opportunity to work with him. Working with Bishop Paulose in the Student Christian Movement in Kerala and in other ecumenical organisations was always an

enriching experience for me. He always became a centre of attraction at ecumenical meetings as well as secular gatherings wherever he attended. Always with a pregnant smile on his lips, a smile expressing affection and humour, he was a great source of inspiration for many. The theological insights he shared with the young Keralites in the late seventies and throughout the eighties influenced many. He spoke with clarity and precision. He shared noble and novel ideas that often sparked controversies. Though he was an orthodox of a Nestorian tradition, Bishop Paulose was open in his thinking and outlook. He challenged the value systems that are unmindful of the marginalised and the oppressed and their liberation. His deep Christian faith had been shaped by his commitment to Christian values and principles. His openness enabled him to become a fellow traveller of the downtrodden in society, not always palatable for the conservative Syrian Christian communities in India. He remained fervently a Nestorian Bishop, yet at the same time he remained a true ecumenist in his thinking and action. He believed that the Lordship of Christ prevails over all realms of life—in society, economics, politics, everywhere. He was unashamed of proclaiming this truth anywhere. He wrote, ‘Jesus Christ is not only the lord of the church, but also of history, then we have an important role in the making of history. Living in the historical context, we are not merely objects of history, but also the makers of history.

History is the sphere of our responsibility.' In his book *Swathantbry-amanu Daivam* (Freedom Is God), he said that the Biblical truth that teaches an obedience to God over human and his own exposure to the student movement sowed in him the seeds of protest against the forces of sin, which he saw in all tyrannical and oppressive social structures. He said, 'We must obey God rather than any human authority. For many "obedient" means to be silent. This is not a right attitude. The Christian is not just a person who has clean hands. Resistance is a legitimate part of Christian life and Christian ethics, and we have no reason to be ashamed of it. Resistance is also a responsibility. It is not rebellion at any price, without discrimination. It means speaking up, even when it seems, at first glance, that it may hurt both rulers and ruled. Resistance is not directed against them but out of concern for them, to enable the possibility of creative change.'

Quite often he challenged people with the question Jesus asked his disciples in Gethsemane: 'Could you not watch with me one hour?' This question he paraphrased as, 'Are you not ready to participate in the sufferings of God in the world?'

Bishop Paulose was a moving spirit in the front of all progressive Christian groups in India. He influenced many young people with his radical views and interpretation of the gospel. What those who have associated with him remember vividly and cherish with gratitude is his great gift of friendship, his abhorrence of hypocrisy, his commitment of faith, his magnitude and his courage.

(Mathews George Chunakara)

## NCC Pakistan General Secretary Passes Away

**S**amuel Gill, General Secretary of NCC Pakistan, passed away on 13 January 1998 due to kidney failure. Last year he went to London to seek medical assistance but was not able to get the surgery there due to high expenses. He returned to Pakistan and got a kidney transplant in Islamabad, with his own brother as the donor. Although he was well after the surgery, he died after a few months.

Samuel Gill had served as the General Secretary of the NCC Pakistan since 1991. He was a former principal of Cathedral High School No. 2 in Lahore. He was known as dedicated and committed and as a loving and hospitable person. He served the Church of Pakistan for about forty years, especially in the diocese of Karachi and Lahore. 'The Church of Pakistan and the churches in Asia lost a good leader in him,' said Bishop S.K. Dass, Bishop of Hyderabad. On receiving the news of the passing away of Mr Gill, Dr Feliciano Cariño, CCA General Secretary, wrote a letter to National Council of Churches in Pakistan and underscored that 'Mr Gill was not only a colleague in ecumenical work but also a friend and a companion for



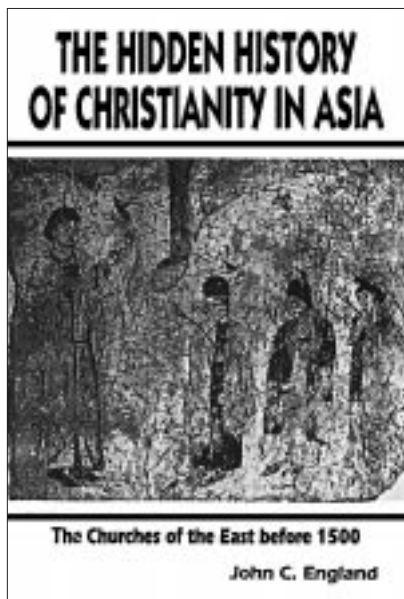
many of us. We have appreciated his deep devotion to the issues and concerns of the ecumenical movement, and the commitment of time and energy which he has so earnestly and constantly given to the work of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). The gifts he brought to his work were considerable, and the contributions he gave were numerous. We give thanks to God for his life, and for giving us the benefit of his friendship and work.'

### Thai Assembly

The Church of Christ in Thailand will hold its twenty-fifth Biennial Assembly on 19–23 October 1998 in the northern city of Chiang Rai, which is close to the Burma border. Let us remember them in our prayer.

## Note to Readers and Librarians

Unfortunately the numbering of the last two issues of *CCA News* was not correct. The April–September 1997 issue should have been Volume 32 No. 4–9 and the October–December issue should have been Volume 32 No. 10–12. *CCA News* will now be published quarterly, in February, May, August and November. However, as there was no February 1998 issue, this issue is dated May 1998 but numbered Volume 33 No. 1.



**The Hidden History of Christianity in Asia: The Church of the East before 1500**

by John C. England

The history of Christianity is often taught, and understood, as comprising only the westward expansion of the church. The long and richly diverse church history of the 'other half of the world' has been largely ignored, and seldom outlined in any complete form. This book provides a survey of the history of Christianity in the Asian region, from the second to the fifteenth centuries, i.e. prior to the coming of Western colonial powers to the region. An attempt has been made to see the whole story of the entire eastward movement of Christianity in this period, and to make available results of the very extensive discoveries and research made over some centuries.

Paperback, 203 pp, \$US9.50

**Indochina: From Socialism to Market Economy**

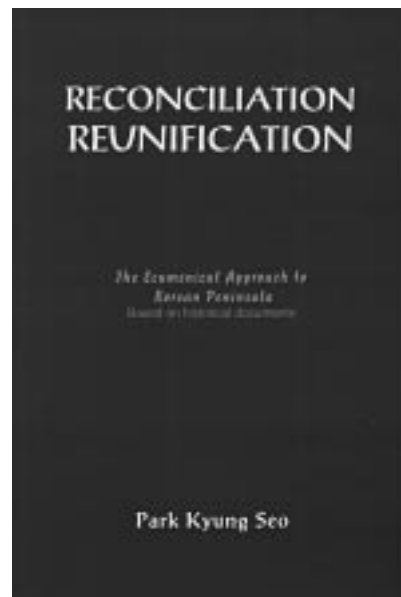
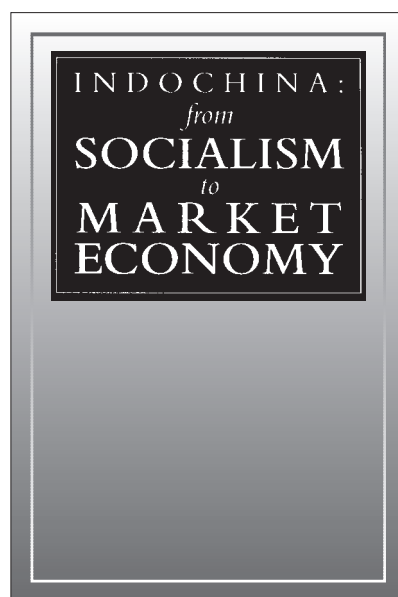
edited by Mathews George Chunakara

Socialism has deep roots in Indochina. Indochina's socialism is rooted in nationalism and anti-colonialism. But a wind of change has swept through these communist bastions.

Decades of war and the collapse of its socialist allies in Eastern Europe have forced countries in Indochina to move from a moribund, centrally controlled economy to a market oriented one.

The economic reforms have brought about changes, but Indochina's poor face tough new challenges and mushrooming problems. This book provides an objective analysis on problems and prospects of transition to market economic reforms in Indochina.

Paperback, 125 pp, \$US5.00



**Reconciliation Reunification: The Ecumenical Approach to Korean Peninsula**

by Park Kyung Seo

The ecumenical movement has been concerned about the Korean situation and has made several efforts to promote peace and unification in the Korean peninsula. In recent years events have brought significant changes and renewed hopes that the aspiration of the people for reunification of Korea may not altogether be in vain. Such signs provide encouragement and impetus for the ecumenical movement to strengthen its commitment and calling to be reconciling forces in history.

In his book, Dr Park Kyung Seo shares several valuable insights on ecumenical involvement for the reunification of Korea. It is based on historical documents.

Paperback, 240 pp, \$US 10.00