

Programme Report 2016

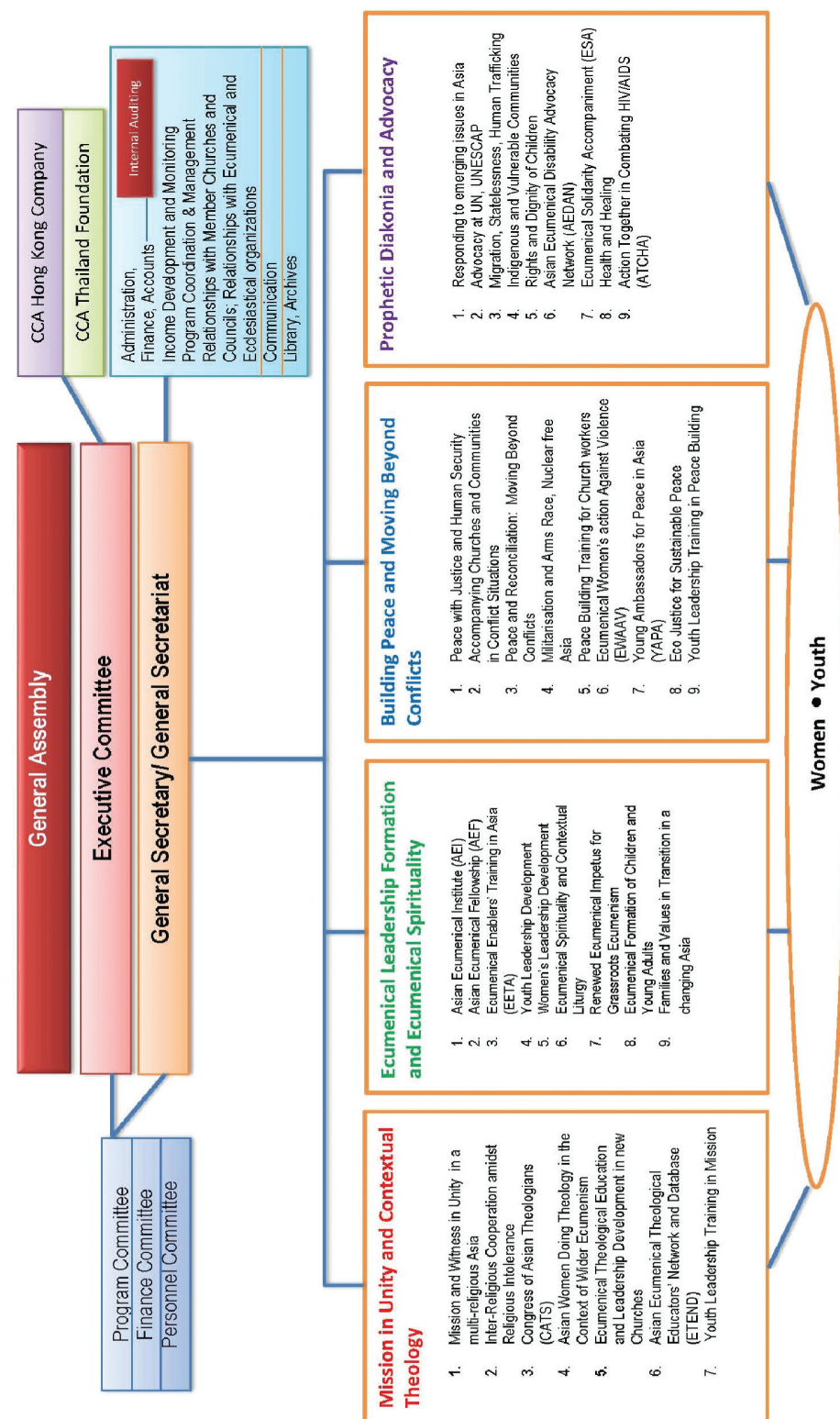
*'Shaping a New Ecumenical
Paradigm in Asia'*



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CCA Programme Structure 2015-2020



Appendix 3

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Foreword by the General Secretary

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2016, a synthesis of all the programmes and activities that the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) had undertaken in 2016. The year 2016 was the beginning of a new phase since a new programme structure was embarked with a new Strategic Programme Plan for a five-year period (2016-2020).

The CCA has been reviewing and streamlining its programme priorities and structures at different stages during the past 60 years of its history. Such processes have always helped the CCA to re-envision its programme priorities in changing Asian contexts. The sharpening of ideas to refocus programme thrusts continues to be a priority, while being engaged in fulfilling its mission.

The General Assembly held in May 2015 mandated to reorganise the CCA's programme structure based on new priorities relevant to changing Asian contexts. Accordingly, a new programme structure was introduced; new programme priorities were identified and, relevant management methodology to coordinate and implement the programmes was initiated. It also required introducing new approaches for increased visibility of programmes, as well as timely communication about CCA's work with all its members and partners. During the year 2016, the CCA managed to implement significant volumes of programmes and activities. With a renewed commitment, the CCA has been continuing its journey and assisted its member constituencies in different Asian countries to shape the ecumenical movement.

The strength of the CCA is its vast constituencies and the experiences gained over the years of journeying together with them. The CCA's experience has proved that partnerships are the most important factor necessary for envisioning, implementing, and strengthening our common witness in unity. It was also our effort to ensure a greater sense of ownership by CCA's members, and as such, the CCA has been implementing programmes in collaboration with its member churches and councils, as well as other ecumenical partners.

The summary of the programmes and activities shared in this Annual Report elaborates the enormous efforts the CCA has undertaken during the year 2016. While implementing programmes, the CCA has tried to make qualitative improvements, as well as achieve impacts envisaged in the programme plan, including strengthening the ecumenical vision at the grassroots. This Report is a testament to the importance of CCA's programmes implemented, while serving its constituencies. Although much remains to be done, the experiences gained while planning, preparing, and facilitating the programmes, clearly show us the way forward. This narrative Report reminds us that we can do more in unity and our actions together will strengthen our commitment to ecumenism and the ecumenical movement in Asia.

Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary

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CCA VISION

Life together in common obedience of witness to the mission of God in the World.

Strategic Objectives

- Strengthen the unity of member churches and councils;
- Accompany churches and promote joint action to strengthen the Church's mission and witness in multi-religious contexts;
- Nurture ecumenical leadership formation and develop ecumenical spirituality for the stimulation of dynamic Christian living and action in Asia;
- Build peace with justice to move beyond conflicts and develop practical applications of prophetic witness through advocacy at regional and international levels;
- Evolve effective Christian responses to the challenges of changing Asian societies and uphold human dignity and caring of the entire creation; and,
- Communicate effectively within and beyond the constituencies about the work of the CCA to inspire, empower, and equip them to be engaged in shaping a new paradigm for living together in the Household of God.

CCA: Shaping a new Ecumenical Paradigm in Asia

New Programme Structure

The 14th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), which was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 20 to 26 May 2015, reviewed the programmes and activities of the CCA that were carried out during the past years. In different sessions, in groups, as well as in plenary, the Assembly provided opportunities to listen to the views, comments and suggestions by the participants about CCA's programmes and their relevance in emerging Asian contexts. The General Assembly made attempts to review the existing programme structure, which was originally introduced in the post-Tomohon Assembly period in 2000.

Taking into consideration various suggestions and contemporary Asian realities in ecclesial, ecumenical and geopolitical realms, the first Executive Committee (EC) meeting of the CCA discussed and reflected on programme priorities, as well as issues and themes identified for future programmatic involvement of the CCA in the next five years. The Executive Committee finally adopted a new CCA programme structure, which replaced the earlier one, from January 2016. The first meeting of the newly constituted Programme Committee, held in December 2016, worked out plans for programmes and activities. A new strategic programme plan was finally developed as an outcome of a series of processes undertaken by the CCA General Secretary with the assistance of the Executive Committee, Programme Committee and a Finance Expert Advisory group since the post-Jakarta General Assembly period.

The strategic programme plan designed for a five-year period (2016-2020), and the programmes and activities developed for each

programme area aimed at covering a wide spectrum of issues and themes pertinent to the contemporary Asian context. The focus of the new programme structure is centered on four thematic areas: Mission in Unity and Contextual Theology, Ecumenical Leadership Formation and Spirituality, Building Peace and Moving beyond Conflicts, and Prophetic Diakonia and Advocacy. Starting from 2016 January, the new programme structure has been in place.

Through the new programme areas, a wide range of concerns related to ecclesial, missiological, ecumenical, and theological relevance have been addressed during the year 2016. The programmes carried out in 2016 also addressed emerging geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic issues with the hope that the new initiatives and efforts will enable the CCA and its constituencies to shape a new paradigm in Asia enabling all God's people to live together in the household of God.

Strategic Programme Plan: 2016-2020

The 14th General Assembly of the CCA mandated the new Executive Committee of the CCA to restructure its programmes and identify relevant programme priorities in the emerging Asian situation. Subsequently, the CCA Governing Board and Programme Committee undertook the task of re-envisioning a new programme structure and strategic program plan for the next five years. Based on the vision, mission, purpose and overall objectives of the CCA, the priorities have been identified and programme plans have been developed for the period 2016-2020.

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The General Secretary and the General Secretariat (GS) of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) are mainly responsible for the overall coordination and administration of the CCA. The General Secretary, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is the main link and liaison with the governing bodies and the legal entities of the CCA, the Christian Conference of Asia Company in Hong Kong and the Christian Conference of Asia Foundation in Thailand. In addition to the day-to-day administration of the organisation and its legal entities, the General Secretary and General Secretariat oversee the coordination of programmes, finance, income development, church and ecumenical relations, and communications.

Programmes and Coordination

The General Secretary is the overall coordinator and supervisor of all programme areas, as per the new CCA Constitution and programme coordination directions.

In addition to internal coordination, the General Secretary is responsible for strengthening relationships with member churches and councils, liaising with the governing board and advisory bodies, building relationships with governments and inter-governmental organisations.

The General Secretary, with the assistance of other staff in the GS, shares and promotes the activities of the CCA, and encourages member churches and councils to plan and engage in joint action and ministries that manifest unity in Christ; persuades them to share their resources to support the common ecumenical

ministry through the CCA, and especially accompanies churches in Asia to address their needs for capacity building and to respond to emerging challenges.

The General Secretary also has the task to build and strengthen relationships with other ecumenical organisations within the region and globally; with related ecumenical organisations from other regions, and with the wider ecumenical family. For many years, the CCA has maintained a close relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in Asia through the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), and the Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA). Special attention has also been paid to develop relations with the Pentecostal Churches across Asia. Several efforts have been made to develop and promote relationships with other ecumenical organisations and churches that are not members of the CCA, civil society organisations and inter-faith organisations in different countries in order to strengthen inter-faith relations and cooperation.

Liaison with Governing Board and Advisory Committees

The General Secretary is entrusted with the responsibility of liaising with the governing boards and advisory committees of the CCA. The meetings of the Executive Committee and other committees or sub-committees as mandated by the CCA Constitution are convened by the General Secretary. The annual meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Medan, Indonesia, from 18 to 21 July 2016.



The CCA Executive Committee members in Medan

Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee of the CCA met in Medan, Indonesia from 18 to 21 July 2016 and was hosted by The Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP). The Executive Committee deliberated on several routine issues, including the 60th Anniversary of the CCA to be commemorated in 2017, and the Asia Mission Conference (AMC) to be organised in 2017, Income Development and Finance, Adoption of Membership Contributions and Financial Subsidy Policies, Review of the proposal on the relocation of the CCA headquarters, Programme Reports and Plans, Adoption of Framework Budget for 2017, etc. The Executive Committee members also had the opportunity to attend the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) VII seminar held in Medan.

Finance Committee

As per the new Constitution of the CCA, the Finance Committee is appointed by the Executive Committee with the help of experts. At present, the following members are serving on the Finance Committee:

Mr. Augustine Deepak Karmakar, Certified Public Chartered Accountant, Bangladesh, Treasurer of the CCA, Mr. Patrick Yuen, Certified Public Chartered Accountant and Financial Advisor to the Hong Kong Christian Council and Hong Kong Christian Schools and Colleges, Mr. Isarael Paulraj, Financial Consultant and Director of Companies in Sri Lanka, former Treasurer of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka, NCC Sri Lanka and former Treasurer of the CCA, Mr. Nuttee Kunlacharnpises, Pension Fund Manager of the Church of Christ



The CCA Finance Committee met in Chiang Mai, Thailand in October 2016

in Thailand (CCT) and former staff of the Stock Exchange, Advocate Robert Bruce. C, Treasurer of the Church of South India and CSI Trust Association Director, Rev. Diana Tana, New Zealand, Vice Moderator of the CCA, and Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary of the CCA.

The Finance Committee of the CCA met two times in July 2016 and in October 2016; in Medan, Indonesia and Chiang Mai, Thailand respectively.

CCA Foundation Thailand

The CCA Foundation Thailand is a legal entity registered in Thailand as per the Thai laws, under which the CCA has its functioning office based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The overseas staff working at the Chiang Mai office are

sponsored by the Foundation. The Foundation has a committee which consists only of Thai citizens and the CCA General Secretary, appointed by the CCA Executive Committee. The CCA Executive Committee appointed the following members of the CCA Thailand Foundation:

Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit, Chairperson, Mr. Surapong Mittrakul, CCT General Secretary, Mrs. Supaporn Yarnasarn, CCA Executive Committee Member, Dr. Sompun Wongdee, President Payap University, Dr. Prawate Khid-Arn, former General Secretary of the CCA, Dr. Chuleepran Srisoontorn, former member of the CCA General Committee, and Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary of the CCA.

CCA Company in Hong Kong

The CCA is registered and incorporated in Hong Kong as a private limited liability company (limited by guarantee), on behalf of the CCA. To acquire, hold, administer, manage, improve, maintain, transact, and facilitate dealings in CCA's movable and immovable properties, assets, investments, and funds. It is a constitutional requirement as per the provisions of the Article 11 of the CCA Constitution and approved by the General Assembly of the CCA. The members of the Company are the members of the Executive Committee of the CCA and the Directors of the Company are appointed by the Executive Committee. The following members have been elected by the CCA Executive Committee to be the members of the Director Board, who served on the Committee in 2016:

Bishop Thomas Soo, Dr. Tong Wing Tse, Rev. Eric So, Rev. Po Kam Cheong, Dr. Kim Jong-goo, and Dr. Mathews George Chunakara (Company Secretary/Ex. Officio).

CCA's Hong Kong-based Investment Committee

The Executive Committee of the CCA, in its meeting held in October 2015, decided to appoint a five-member Hong Kong-based Investment Committee to oversee the investment of the CCA in Hong Kong. The following members served on the Committee in 2016:

Bishop Thomas Soo, Dr. Tong Wing Tse Rev. Eric So, Rev. Po Kam Cheong, and Mr. Patrick Yuen.

The Committee met two times during the year 2016, and reviewed the investments in Hong Kong. CCA's investments in Hong Kong are now in Shares, Bonds, and Fixed Deposits.

CCA Staff

The introduction of a new programmatic structure and the completion of the terms of contracts of the Executive Staff necessitated new recruitments and appointments of Programme Staff members. Subsequently, staff vacancies were advertised for four programme areas and finance personnel.

The Executive Committee appointed Dr. Reynaldo Rey Ty (Philippines) and Rev. Grace Jung Eun Moon (Korea) as Programme Coordinators for "Building Peace and Moving Beyond Conflicts" and "Ecumenical Leadership Formation and Ecumenical Spirituality" respectively.

Ms. Nicky Phawinee (Thailand) has been appointed as Administrative staff, mainly for the CCA Foundation matters dealing with immigration issues and mandatory reports to be sent to the Thai Government. Ms. Janajurat Saedan (Thailand) and Mr. Rama Rao Gollu (India) have been appointed as Finance staff. Mrs. Sunila Ammar (Pakistan) was appointed as a home-based programme consultant for the EWAV (Ecumenical Women's Action against Violence) programme with effect from August 2016 and to be based at the NCC Pakistan office in Lahore, Pakistan. Ms. Rosanna So (Hong Kong), Finance and Ms. Susan Jacob (India), Communications Consultant ended their services on superannuation on 31 July 2016.

Identifying Young Ecumenical Talents in Asia

One of the programme priorities of the CCA is to facilitate leadership development and capacity building of the youth of CCA's member churches and councils. The CCA's internship programme has been redesigned as a year-long leadership development training with intensive practical guidance.



CCA interns in 2016

Through an annual recruitment process, selections are made to identify suitable candidates.

Six interns were recruited after a thorough screening process for the internship programme, and began working at the CCA headquarters in January 2016. The 2016 batch of interns were: Ms. Angela Kim (Presbyterian Church, Korea); Ms. Casey Faau'i (Methodist Church, New Zealand); Ms. Anam Gill (Presbyterian Church, Pakistan); Mr. Sankalp Sam Mathew (Marthoma Church, India); and Rev. Dedi Pardosi (HKBP, Indonesia). Mr. Sankalp Sam Mathews completed his six-month internship and returned to India at the end of June 2016. In his place, Mr. Jebasingh Samuvel (Church of South India, India) joined in June 2016, for a period of one year to be completed by the end of May 2017.

The internship programme has been designed to provide training and practical experiences in organising programmes, as well as opportunities to participate in various programmes, exposure visits, and interactions with churches and ecumenical leaders during the year-long internship. Since Asian churches have many young people with great potential often seen as “frozen assets” in the churches, the CCA will make special efforts to identify and train the talented youth as our future ecumenical leaders in Asia and in the world for the coming years.

Church and Ecumenical Relations

Ecumenical relationships with member churches and councils, related ecumenical organisations, regional and global ecumenical organisations and world confessional bodies are fundamental to the life of the CCA.

Building stronger networks and promoting the involvement and participation of all CCA's member constituencies contribute significantly to better cooperation and unity, and a greater sense of ownership.

Visits and Meetings

Ecumenical relationships can be effective only when there is a mutual sharing of responsibilities. The General Secretary and other staff members have participated in several ecumenical events and programmes during 2016, in addition to their direct involvement in programme planning and implementations.

The CCA has been constantly invited to participate in member churches' and councils' special events. These occasions are also opportunities for strengthening ecumenical relations and seeking the member churches' and councils' wider participation in and collaboration with the CCA. The General Secretary participated in the following programmes and events of CCA member churches, councils, as well as CCA's own programmes since October 2015:

Asian Conference of Ecumenical Sunday School Programme, Chiang Mai (January 2016); Working Group meeting of CCA-Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCA joint programme on Peace, Malaysia (February 2016); Visit to Karen Baptist Bible College at the Burmese Refugee Camp and Participation at the Convocation, Maesot, Thailand; Visit to CCT headquarters and participation in the ASEAN Conference (March 2016); Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) VII, Cochin, Kerala, India (April, 2016); Convocation of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary, India (April 2016); NCC India General Assembly (April 2016); Asia Sunday celebrations in South Korea and visits to CCA member churches and council in Korea, (May 2016);

Visit to Hong Kong Christian Council and Hong Kong Council of Churches of Christ in China (May 2016); Joint Planning meeting of CCA and APAYMCA on Interfaith Peace Consultation (May 2016); Article 9 International Consultation and CCA member churches and council in Japan, (June 2016), Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches Trondheim (June 2016), Visits to CCA member churches and council in Tokyo, Japan (June 2016), and the WCC Executive Committee meeting held in China (November 2016).

The GS attended and delivered keynote addresses or thematic addresses at various church and ecumenical events in 2016.

Consultation on 'Enhancing Mission among ASEAN Churches', Bangkok:

The General Secretary was invited to deliver the keynote address at the 'ASEAN Mission Consultation' organised by the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) from 27 to 30 March 2016. The consultation focused on the theme 'Enhancing Mission among ASEAN Churches', which brought together sixty-two participants from eight Southeast Asian countries.

Quadrennial Assembly of NCC India:

The General Secretary delivered the thematic address at the 28th Quadrennial Assembly of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) held from 28 to 30 April 2016 in the northern Indian city of Jabalpur, under the theme '*Towards Just and Inclusive Communities*'. Hosted by the Church of North India, the Quadrennial Assembly was attended by more than four hundred participants, representing thirty member denominations of the NCCI from across India. At the outset, the CCA General Secretary brought greetings to the Assembly on behalf of Asian churches and recollected the contributions of the NCCI and the Indian churches to the Asian ecumenical movement, especially the important role played in the formation of the

CCA in 1957. Today, several member churches of the NCCI are also members of the CCA.

Consultation on Campaign against the Revision of Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, Osaka, Japan:

Representatives of several Asian churches gathered for the fifth Interreligious Conference to oppose the Japanese government's attempts to revise Article 9 of Japan's Peace Constitution. Japan adopted its war-renouncing constitution following World War II, with Article 9 as a promise to itself and a pledge to the world, particularly its neighbouring countries which suffered under the Japanese invasion and colonial rule, to not repeat its mistakes. About one hundred and twenty participants attended

the global event held at the Mimami Mido Buddhist Temple in Osaka, Japan from 7 to 9 June 2016. The CCA General Secretary was invited to speak at the gathering on behalf of Asian churches. The General Secretary, in his address said that, "the most recent developments with regard to changes in strategic and defense policies of the Japanese and US governments aimed at reciprocal procurement of arms and defense equipment, which will eventually lead to an increase in the role of Japan's militarism" and that, "one of the major problems in relation to the change of Article 9 would be a matter of concern of perpetual support to the US military by the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF)".



CCA's participation in the campaign against the revision of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution

The Seventh General Assembly of the Protestant Church in Timor-Leste (IPTL):

Certain other events were attended by eminent people deputed by the CCA General Secretary or represented by CCA staff members. The Seventh General Assembly of the Protestant Church in Timor-Leste (IPTL), the only member church of the CCA in Timor-Leste, was held at the Hosanna Church in Dili, the capital city of Timor-Leste from 4 to 8 July 2016 on the theme ‘*Peace Be With You*’. Dr. Alphinus Kambodji represented the CCA at the General Assembly and conveyed greetings and messages on behalf of the General Secretary to the delegates of the IPTL General Assembly. The CCA also applauded the initiative of the churches of Aotearoa, New Zealand to constitute a national ecumenical platform, the National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU) in the country.

25th Anniversary celebrations of the priestly ordination of Women in the Indian Lutheran Church:

The General Secretary attended the 25th anniversary celebrations of the priestly ordination of Women in the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, which was held in Chennai, India from 7 to 8 September 2016, and he addressed the commemorative celebration valedictory event.

Visits of Church Leaders and Ecumenical Partners to CCA Headquarters

During the year 2016, various church and ecumenical leaders representing churches and ecumenical organisations from around the world visited the CCA and had meetings with the CCA General Secretary and staff.

- A two-member delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) visited the CCA on 3 February 2016. The leadership of the ELCF and the CCA

discussed the ecumenical and ecclesial situations in different Asian countries and the possibility of future collaborations with the CCA and its member churches.

- Ms. Kim Soon-Mi, Executive Board member of PCK General Assembly visited on 19 January 2016.
- Southeast Asia-based representatives of the Mennonite Central Committee, USA visited the CCA on 9 February 2016 and discussed the peace and reconciliation programmes in Asia.
- Regional Liaison Secretaries for Southeast Asia of the Presbyterian Church, USA visited the CCA on 12 February 2016 and had detailed discussions on CCA’s programmes in the post-Jakarta assembly period. The Chairperson and Secretary for Ecumenical Relations of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) visited the CCA on 15 February 2016 for a detailed discussion on future programme collaborations and the setting up of the new joint Asian Ecumenical Committee.
- A group of Korean Theological Students and Professors from the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Korea visited the CCA on 16 April 2016. The General Secretary spoke to the group about ecumenical and ecclesial landscapes in Asia and CCA’s ecumenical accompaniment over the years, as well as about the new programme priorities of the CCA.
- General Secretaries of the YMCA from fifty-three countries around the world visited the CCA on 18 February 2016 under the leadership of the General Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCA and the General Secretary of the Asian Alliance of the YMCA.
- A team of 10 students from the Dure Church of the Presbyterian Church of Korea visited on 2 March 2016.
- Asia Regional Director and Southeast Asia Regional Secretary of the Church of Sweden visited the CCA on 11 March 2016



National General Secretaries of 53 YMCA's around the world at the CCA headquarters on 18 February 2016

for discussions on CCA's programmes, as well as to plan a joint partner assessment workshop.

- The General Secretary and other representatives of the Korean Christian Forum on Life-Giving Agriculture visited the CCA on 2 May 2016 for detailed discussions with the CCA General Secretary on the planning of the Sustainable Development Workshop.
- A group of 12 women representatives of the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC), Myanmar visited the CCA on 12 October 2016 and had discussions with CCA's women's leadership development programme to explore the possibilities of being involved in CCA's Ecumenical Women's Advocacy against Violence (EWAV), as well as human trafficking advocacy programmes.

Roundtable Meeting with Ecumenical Partners

A Roundtable Meeting with the ecumenical partners was held at the CCA headquarters on the campus of the Payap University, in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 25 to 26 October 2016. Eleven representatives from CCA's ecumenical partner organisations attended the meeting. It has been a tradition since 1992 that the CCA organises roundtable meetings with its ecumenical partners on a bi-annual basis. The main focus of the meeting of 2016 was to share information with the partners about the new programme and administrative structures and strategic programme plans for 2015-2020, as well as providing detailed reports on:





The Roundtable Meeting with CCA's ecumenical partners
Chiang Mai, 25-26 October 2016.

- CCA's Programmes and Activities: October 2015-2016
- New programme directions and viable structure of the CCA in the post-Jakarta Assembly period.
- Report on CCA's financial profile, budget and income development strategies.
- Challenges to the CCA's mission and witness.

Each session was followed by an open floor to address the concerns and queries of the ecumenical partners and to provide space for comments for qualitative improvements to the CCA.

Relations with Ecclesiastical and Confessional Bodies

Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC)

The CCA and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) have been jointly working in various areas to try to strengthen the common witness. A visit of the leadership of the FABC to the CCA headquarters in February

2016 helped to plan different activities in the future and as an outcome of the planning meeting, the CCA and FABC planned the seventh meeting of the joint Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) and consultation to be held in July 2016.

The AMCU VII was subsequently organised from 12 to 15 July 2016 and held in Medan, Indonesia. The main theme of the AMCU VII was on "*Crisis of Climate Change in our Common Home*" and the ecumenical responses to the challenges in the Asia region. About forty participants representing the CCA, the FABC and the Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA) attended the consultation and deliberated upon the impact of the crisis of climate change in Asia. The encyclical of Pope Francis, the *Laudato si: "On Care For Our Common Home"* was discussed in detail from Christian ethical perspectives and critiques on consumerism and irresponsible development, environmental degradation and global warming, and joint action to combat the crisis of climate change.



CCA General Secretary addresses the 11th Quadrennial Assembly of the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) in Sri Lanka

The CCA General Secretary was invited to the 11th Quadrennial Plenary Assembly of the FABC held in Negombo, Sri Lanka from 29 November to 4 December 2016, and was attended by more than 140 cardinals, archbishops and bishops from forty countries. In his congratulatory message to the FABC, the CCA General Secretary highlighted the strong bond between the FABC and the CCA for the last 20 years of their common ecumenical journey towards the mutual witness of Gospel and Christian unity. The bishops addressed the theme on challenges faced by Asian families and the role of the domestic Church of the poor.

The General Secretary upon return reported that the draft document addressed a wide range of issues related to the challenges that Asian families are currently facing, which are relevant for all churches in Asian contexts and that the CCA will be addressing most of these issues. Asian societies face challenges with far-reaching proportions, discussed from various countries' perspectives, identified issues such as, Persecution – Religious Freedom under Siege, Poverty, Migration and Dislocation, Political, Ideological, Cultural Conflicts and Divisions, Ideological Colonialism and Cultural Values, Global Warming and Climate Change, Tensions within the Family, Deterioration of Religious Faith and Spiritual Values in the Family.

The final document adopted at the Plenary outlined the state of affairs of Asian families and observed: "The Asian family is at a crossroads; we are faced with a barrage of questions. Besieged by a thoroughly secularist, individualistic and materialist culture, which is at the heart of the postmodern spirit, will the Asian family succumb to the spirit of "global indifference"? Or will it preserve that human and kingdom value so characteristic of the Asian spirit – a deep dynamic sense of

community, as well as of mercy and compassion?"

Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) for Peacebuilding

The CCA has continued to have close relations with the Young Men's Christian Association-Asia, Pacific (YMCA-AP) and ICF (Interfaith Cooperation Forum). A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the CCA and the YMCA-AP regarding a joint collaboration and cooperation on interfaith peacebuilding. The General Secretary, together with Dr. Pradit Takerngangsarit, Chair of the CCA Foundation in Thailand, attended the Working Committee and Joint Working Group Meetings of the ICF held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 25 to 27 February 2016. The ICF sponsors affirmed that the interfaith cooperation for peacebuilding in Asia is a priority concern for the CCA and the Asia Pacific Alliance of Young Men's Christian Association (APAY). The CCA and YMCA-AP affirmed their commitment to support and lead interfaith activities of peacebuilding through their respective networks in various countries.

Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA)

The CCA continued to reach out to the Asia Evangelical Alliance and the Pentecostal Family. The AEA was invited to attend the AMCU VII.

Ecumenical Solidarity and Responses to Emerging Issues

The CCA tried to respond to emerging Asian issues and accompanied its member churches and councils that were either caught up in conflict situations or needed support on specific occasions.

- ***In solidarity with Churches in the Philippines on the brutal attacks on farmers***

The CCA condemned the violent response and shootings by the police on farmers in the Philippines and expressed solidarity with the leadership of the United Methodist Church in their continuing protection of some three thousand farmers and tribal leaders who were brutally targeted by the Philippine National Police in Kidapawan, North Cotabato, a Southern island in Mindanao on 1 April 2016. They were protesting and demanding drought relief from the government.

- ***Condemnation of suicide bomb attacks in Lahore, Pakistan***

In response to the news of a suicide bomb attack killing more than seventy people and injuring three hundred others at the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore, Pakistan on Easter Sunday, the General Secretary issued a statement. In his statement condemning the bombings and killing, the General Secretary stated that the CCA was deeply shocked and saddened by the untold suffering of the families from predominantly Christian settlements in the Youhanabad and Bahar Colony areas who were spending time with their children at the park, after Easter services in churches. The General Secretary also sent a pastoral solidarity letter to the National Council of Churches in Pakistan and other member churches of the CCA in Pakistan, and stated, "it was unfortunate that sectarian violence and blatant terrorism was continuously taking place in the Pakistani society due to widespread religious hatred against Christians and that such cowardly acts destroy the very core of the social fabric and communal harmony in the country".

- ***Condemnation of the suicide bomb attack on The Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church***

The CCA condemned the suicide bomb attack on the Patriarch His Holiness Ignatius Aphrem II, the Supreme leader of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East. The incident took place at the Church of St. Gabriel in the Al-Wusta district, Qamishli, northeastern Syria, during the celebrations of the Orthodox Pentecost and in commemoration of the memory of the martyrs of the 1915 genocide.

Expressing concern, the General Secretary stated that the CCA was deeply saddened by this unfortunate event and shared the concerns of all peace-loving people and communities in Asia and around the world and was praying for the blessed life and continued leadership of the Patriarch who works for sustained peace in the Middle East region.

- ***Congratulatory message to rights activist working against manual scavenging***

The CCA congratulated Bezwada Wilson, an ardent campaigner working against manual scavenging, who was honoured with the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award 2016. Wilson has been the national convenor of the *Safai Karmachari Andolan* – an Indian human rights organisation that has been campaigning for the eradication of manual scavenging – and has been working to eradicate manual scavenging for the past three decades. The Magsaysay Award Committee was impressed with the work of Wilson, which focused on ensuring the inalienable rights and dignity of hundreds of thousands of Dalits engaged in manual scavenging. Manual scavenging is the work of removing, by hand, human excrement from dry latrines and carrying, on the head, the baskets of excrement to

designated disposal sites. A hereditary occupation, manual scavenging involves 180,000 Dalit households cleaning 790,000 public and private dry latrines across India.

The CCA's strategic programme plan for the next five years, adopted by the Executive and Programme Committees, includes advocacy initiatives at the international level by the CCA, in collaboration with Dalit organisations working in India, and a national consultation will focus on ecumenical advocacy on the abolition of manual scavenging in India.

- **General Secretary's Message on World Humanitarian Day**

The CCA General Secretary issued a statement on World Humanitarian Day (WHD), themed *The World Needs a Bold Vision for 'One Humanity'*. The CCA General Secretary stated, "As the growing outrage at the number of people forced out of their homes has mounted to unprecedented levels, faith communities need to come forward to extend solidarity and support to the common desire for change expressed by world leaders". The World Humanitarian Day is held every year on 19 August to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, and to mobilise people to advocate for a more humane and just world. World Humanitarian Day this year follows on one of the most significant actions of a global summit initiated by the United Nations: The World Humanitarian Summit, held in May 2016 in Turkey. The CCA has a special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC).

- **Congratulatory message on the initiatives of the Philippines Peace Process**

The CCA, on 30 August 2016, congratulated the unprecedented initiative by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the rebel insurgents' political wing, the National Democratic Front (NDF), for agreeing to implement a unilateral, indefinite ceasefire as a remarkable achievement of the peace process mediated by Norway. The General Secretary, in his statement mentioned that, "the CCA recognises the role of the churches and the ecumenical movement in the Philippines over the years in witnessing and accompanying the oppressed and marginalised sectors of the Philippine society, including the peasants, workers, indigenous peoples, students, women and migrant labourers in their struggle for a just and peaceful society".

The statement by the CCA General Secretary also expressed CCA's concern about the situation of the rapid rise of extrajudicial executions committed by security forces and death squads. More than one thousand and seven hundred Filipinos, suspected drug traffickers and drug users, were summarily killed during the past two months since the new President came to power on 1 July 2016. The rebellion launched in late 1960s and the ongoing insurgency has claimed the lives of thousands of people in the country during the past forty seven years.

Income Development and Finance

Considering the vast operational geographical area of the CCA (from Iran in West Asia to Japan in East Asia; Nepal in the North of Asia to New Zealand in the South), for the number of member churches and councils, and the number of issues, concerns and themes that have to be addressed as part of ecumenical

responses, the CCA is now operating with very limited financial resources. Due to drastic reductions in staff and programme costs, as well as the relocation of the office to Chiang Mai from Hong Kong, staff costs and administrative costs have been reduced during the past years in order to keep a balanced budget. However, this approach has not been helpful for the CCA as a Regional Ecumenical Organisation (REO), as this has affected the quality of programmes and activities of the CCA, as well as the efficiency and motivation of the staff. The number of staff who can organise programmes in an effective way and raise the profile of the CCA by way of addressing emerging Asian issues has been much lower than during the period when the CCA was based in Hong Kong or at the beginning of the period when the CCA moved to Chiang Mai. The Executive Committee meeting of the CCA held in October 2015 discussed some of these issues and concerns. The Executive Committee felt that income generation from member churches and councils in Asia should be a priority for the CCA in the coming years.

The 14th General Assembly mandated the new Executive Committee to decide on policies related to membership contribution, income development, and sharing of programme costs by member churches and councils, and introducing a travel subsidy policy for committee members from financially well-off CCA member constituencies whenever they attend committee meetings and programmes. In a way, this is part of CCA's member churches' and councils' commitment to ensure a greater sense of ownership and sharing of financial resources for member participation in CCA committees and programmes.

The Executive Committee of the CCA in its meeting held in Medan, Indonesia in July 2016 adopted a new policy for reimbursement of

travel subsidies for participation in CCA governing and advisory bodies. It was also decided that for the purpose of reimbursement eligibility, at least the agreed annual membership contribution must have been paid.

It is heartening that more and more Asian churches are committing themselves to supporting the CCA in the coming years. In 2015, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, a member church of the CCA in Indonesia mobilised financial resources to host the 14th General Assembly of the CCA for which they generated US\$ 281,000 from local churches. The same church hosted two events of the CCA in July 2016 – a meeting of the Executive Committee of the CCA and a CCA-FABC consultation of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity with fifty participants. There were more encouraging gestures of extending increased level of contributions by member churches in 2016.

Asian Churches' Contribution to CCA in 2016

No.	Categories	Amount
1.	Membership Contributions from member churches	\$ 83,883.00
2.	Membership Contributions from member councils	\$ 36,446.00
3.	Contributions from Asian churches, organisations, and individuals	\$ 22,551.00
4.	Contributions from Asian churches for specific programmes	\$ 37,812.00
TOTAL		\$ 180,692.00

It has been a real encouragement in 2016 to see that CCA member churches are not always at the receiving end, but that Asian churches

are committed to contributing to the CCA and are taking an active part in their efforts to increase contributions and help CCA's financial capability.

The General Secretary has written letters to member churches requesting increased membership contributions. Several member churches and councils have paid their membership contributions at the increased levels and several others have promised to increase membership contributions starting from the year 2017. In addition to this, a number of other member churches have offered to contribute financial support to host programmes in the coming years.

Communications

During the post Assembly period, the CCA website was redesigned and completely revamped for a new, vibrant and dynamic look. The content too, was changed and rearranged mainly due to the changes in the structure and programmatic thrusts. In December 2015, the CCA obtained an exclusive server which gives the website more stability, flexibility, and space. The staff and intern in charge of communications, work on regularly writing and publishing news releases on CCA's

official website and send bulk e-mails via MailChimp to more than four thousand subscribers. The communications staff also manages the official Facebook and Twitter pages of the CCA, and they edit the content of the website. They work closely with the web-mangers and developers of the website based in India to assess any technical challenges in displaying the content.

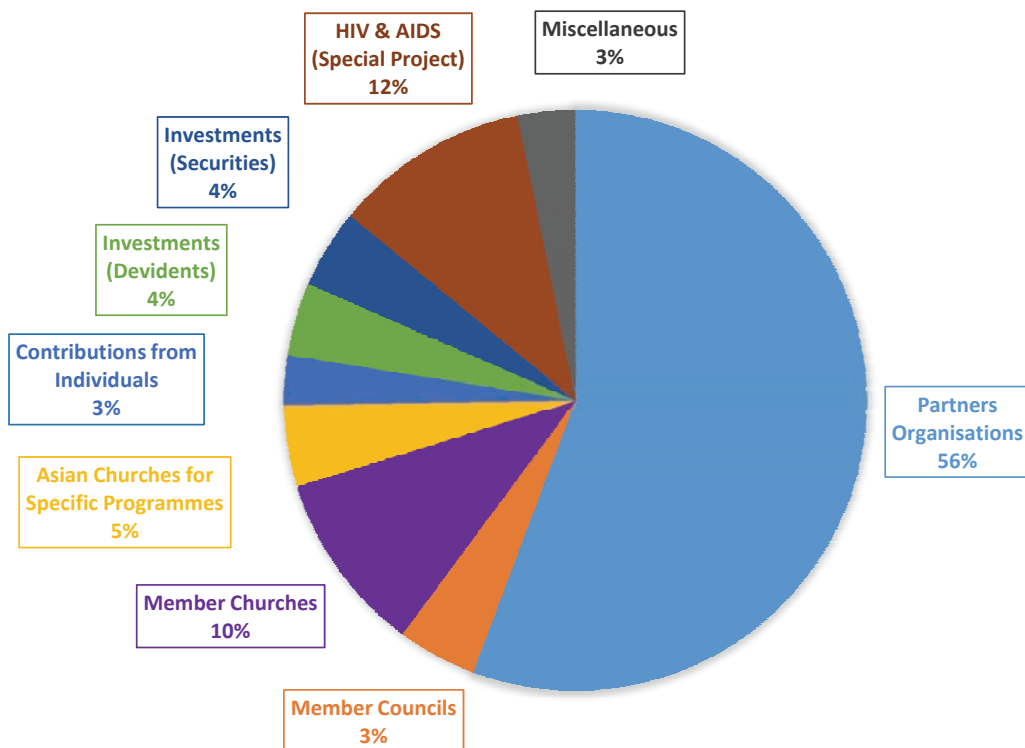
CCA communications continues to be the medium through which relationships with CCA's constituencies, the ecumenical world, civil society and other world bodies that are engaged in human welfare, justice and peace, are kept and sustained.

Overview of CCA's Finance – 2016

Overview of CCA's Financial Status as on December 2016

	2016	2015
Fixed Assets	1	1
Current Assets	4,630,873	4,543,810
Current Liabilities	37,608	17,865
NET CURRENT ASSETS	4,593,265	4,525,945

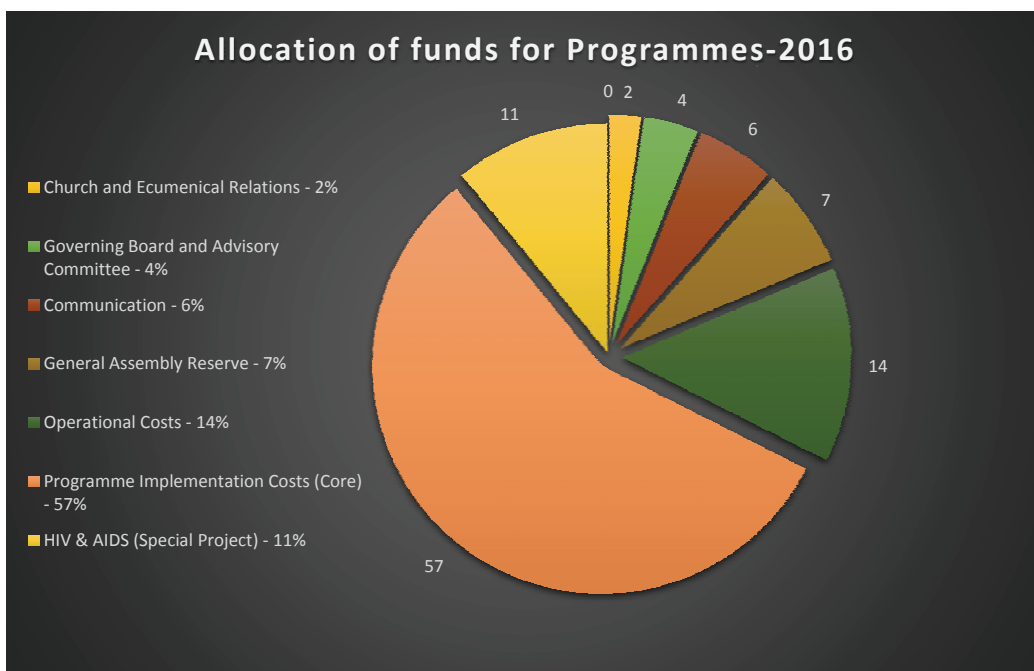
Income - 2016



Income Contributions from:	2016 (USD)	2015 (USD)
Member Churches	83,883	84,649
Member Councils	36,446	14,941
Partner Organisations	461,479	361,585
Asian Churches for specific programmes	37,812	823
From Churches and Councils and Individuals	22,551	4,881
Contributions from Indonesian member Churches for 2015 General Assembly		281,186
Designated Funds		36,301
Special Project – HIV & AIDS	90,153	22,423
Publications	86	83
Interest from Fixed Deposit	1081	393
Royalty	2868	6,754
Miscellaneous Income	22,251	2,385
Investments (Dividends)	33,723	
Investment (Securities)	36,304	
Total Amount	828,637	816,404

Expenses - 2016

Description	2016	2015
Expenditure:		
Programme Implementation Costs	443,451	147,436
Operational Costs	106,114	112,942
Communication	37,452	26,335
Governing Board and advisory	31,713	65,318
General Assembly 2015 & Reserve	50,000	281,186
Church and Ecumenical Relations	10,043	15,464
Special Project – HIV and AIDS	127,041	83,058
Exchange loss and Fixed assets written off	36,710	107,234
Loss on Investments		25,465
Total Amount	842,524	858,116



PROGRAMMES IN FOCUS – 2016

New Programme Structure

The programme structure of the CCA that existed until 2015, was originally developed in 1998. It was finally systematised and became fully operational during the post-Tomohon Assembly period in 2000. As no restructuring had been initiated until the Jakarta Assembly, there has been a growing demand from the CCA constituencies to set up programme directions in contemporary ecumenical, ecclesial, and missiological contexts, and to address the emerging realities of our times. The restructuring process was delayed further in the context of the constitutional amendments proposed by the General Committee of the CCA and a Constitutional Revision Committee was working on the amendments which needed to be adopted by the General Assembly. The Constitutional Revision Committee seriously considered the need for a new programme structure and gave a wider scope for restructuring the programmes. As per the provisions in the new Constitution adopted at the Jakarta Assembly, there is provision only for one Programme Committee, instead of three different programme committees with a total membership of 45 members and three moderators, as it was in the past. As per the old programme structure, three main programme areas existed with provisions for six executive secretaries. But since 2011, the number of staff in each programme cluster was limited to one due to financial constraints and there were only two staff to implement all the programmes.

The 14th General Assembly of the CCA met in Jakarta, Indonesia in May 2015 and reviewed

the then existing programme structure of the CCA and subsequently, mandated the new Executive Committee of the CCA to restructure the programme areas based on new and emerging priorities. It was in this context that the restructuring of the CCA took place in the post-Jakarta Assembly period. The Jakarta Assembly proposed several concerns as priorities for the future, and suggested CCA's programmatic involvement in various areas where ecclesiastical and ecumenical responses are warranted. The Jakarta Assembly, in its two separate sessions, initiated discussions about the future programme direction of the CCA, especially for the next five years. Each of the seven working groups of the Assembly identified several priorities and made certain proposals. Each working group also reflected on specific programme thrusts and proposed certain priority concerns for the future programmatic involvement of the CCA. The twelve specific themes discussed at the Sarasahan sessions also brought forward proposals with key suggestions. Those major areas of issues and programme priorities were subsequently filtered and grouped into specific thematic frameworks. The Executive Committee of the CCA, which met in October 2015, reviewed all those proposals, especially the proposal for a new programme structure. After having in-depth discussions and analysis, the Executive Committee finally adopted a new programme structure. As per the new programme structure, there are four programme areas: Mission in Unity and Contextual Theology, Ecumenical Leadership Development Formation and Spirituality, Building Peace and Moving beyond Conflicts and Prophetic Diakonia and Advocacy. Each programme area has provisions for only one

programme coordinator, but provisions can be made to recruit additional staff capacities for implementation of project staff or programme consultants. In this way, more flexibility is ensured for short-term staff positions, depending upon the need.

Programme Committee

The Executive Committee, which met in October 2015, appointed a Programme Committee. The first meeting of the Programme Committee met in the first week of December 2015, which reviewed the structure and thematic focus of each programme area. The new programme committee has twenty members and they all come from various backgrounds and possess expertise in at least four programme areas. The members of the Programme Committee are divided into four Working Groups (WG) and members of each WG are requested to be the advisors and companions of their respective programme area. Although, the Programme Committee, in its first meeting in December 2015, gave more pragmatic shape for strategic programme plans and directions, and prioritised programmes and activities, however, the biggest challenge to implement most of those plans is due to the lack of staff members and inadequate human resources. In the midst of such deficiencies, the CCA still tried to organise and facilitate most of the planned programmes and activities in 2016.

Programmes and Activities in 2016

During the year 2016, the CCA organised a total of thirty three (33) programmes in different countries and regions, which a total number of nine hundred and twenty six (926) participants attended. In addition to implementing these activities, the CCA was directly involved in several advocacy initiatives, including the participation of three accredited representatives of the CCA to the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women held in New York in March 2016. Although the CCA has the status as an organisation in special consultation with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, this was the first time that the CCA sent a delegation to the UN for a major event with official accreditation under the name of the CCA.

The other main advocacy initiative during this period was the observance of the Asia Sunday on the theme '*Peace and Reconciliation of the Korean peninsula*', and public issue actions through ecumenical responses to emerging Asian issues. The General Secretary and other staff members participated in several ecumenical events and programmes, in addition to their direct involvement in programme planning and implementation. The CCA has been constantly invited to participate in member churches' and councils' special events. These occasions are also opportunities for strengthening ecumenical relations and seeking wider participation and collaboration of CCA's member churches and councils.

CCA Programmes and Activities – 2016

No.	Programme/Activity	Date	No. of Participants	Reference Number as per 2016 Programme Plan
1.	Asian Conference on Ecumenical Sunday School Curriculum	12-15 January 2016	25	EF 8.1.
2.	Asian Interfaith Conference on HIV & AIDS	15-16 January 2016	30	SP 3.1.
3.	Strategic Planning Meeting for CCA's HIV & AIDS Programme 2017-2019	17-18 January 2016	12	SP 1.1.
4.	Training Program for Women Leaders in Laos	20-22 January 2016	47	EF 3.1.
5.	Comparative Study on HIV & AIDS by Medical Doctors from Indonesia	7-8 March 2016	20	SP 3.2.
6.	National Roundtable Dialogue in Bangladesh	9-10 March 2016	36	SP 3.3
7.	ICAAP (International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific)	12-14 March 2016	1	SP 3.4.
8.	CCA Delegation at the 60 th Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women	13-24 March 2016	3	PD 2.1.
9.	Bible Seminary programme at the Thai-Burma Border Refugee Camp	27 March 2016	3	MU 5.1.
10.	Collaborative Action: Thailand Christian NGO's Workshop on HIV & AIDS	26-27 March 2016	53	SP 2.1.
11.	Regional Consultation on Asian Women Doing Theology in the Context of Wider Ecumenism	15-18 April 2016	20	MU 4.1
12.	National Roundtable Dialogue in Colombo, Sri Lanka	21-22 April 2016	33	SP 3.5.
13.	Skill Building in a Holistic Approach to HIV & AIDS in Dili, Timor Leste	27-29 April 2016	35	SP 2.2.
14.	Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) VIII	19-22 April 2016	100	MU 3.
15.	Asia Sunday 2016 – 'Korea: Towards Unity in the Bond of Peace'	22 May 2016	All Over Asia	EF 6.1.
16.	Training of Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA)	12-18 June 2016	23	BP 7.1
17.	Ecumenical Formation and Youth Leadership Training in Cambodia	27-30 June, 2016	35	EF 3.1.
18.	Skill building in HIV & AIDS Programme Management in Cambodia	7-10 July 2016	35	SP 2.3.
19.	Youth Leaders' Training on Shaping a New Ecumenical Paradigm	12-13 July 2016	50	EF 4.2.

No.	Programme/Activity	Date	No. of Participants	Reference Number as per 2016 Programme Plan
20.	Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) VII	13-15 July 2016	50	MU 1.2.
21.	HIV & AIDS Awareness Training for Pastoral Counselling & VCT	17-20 August 2016	29	SP 2.4.
22.	Youth Leadership Training for Young Christians in the Mekong Sub-region	21-26 August 2016	24	EF 4.2.
23.	Asia Mission Conference Preparatory Meeting	22-26 September 2016	9	MU 1.1.
24.	Working Group Meeting for the Curriculum Building and Management of the East Timor Christian Institute	4-5 October 2016	8	MU 5.1.
25.	Pastoral Solidarity Visit to Pakistan	2-6 October 2016	1	BP 2.1.
26.	Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI)	24 October – 23 November 2016	19	EF 1.1.
27.	Seminar/Training and Workshop: Theological-Interfaith Perspective on HIV & AIDS	6-10 November 2016	33	SP 1.2.
28.	Seminar and Theological Consultation on HIV & AIDS Concerns and People with Disabilities	11-14 November 2016	26	SP 3.6.
29.	Consultation on Criminalisation of Trafficking and Its Impact on Women and Children	13-17 November 2016	35	PD 4.1.
30.	Regional Consultation on 'Women Building Peace and Transforming the World'	17-20 November 2016	35	PD 6.1.
31.	Consultation on Towards Sustainable Development and Food Security in Asia	28 November – 2 December 2016	60	BP 8.1.
32.	Ecumenical/Expert Consultation: Action Together in Combating HIV & AIDS in Asia	7-10 December 2016	26	SP 3.7.
33.	TOT Peer Educators: Youth and Women on HIV & AIDS and Reproductive Health	9-11 December 2016	10	SP 2.5.

1

Mission in Unity and Contextual Theology

Mission and witness belong to the very being of the Church. The mission of God cares for and loves all of God's creation. God's invitation is to all God's people in the community to become God's co-workers (1 Cor. 3: 9). The call is to participate in God's continuing act of recreating and uniting the whole of creation. The churches and its members are called to be engaged in God's mission and witness in unity, according to the Gospel's principles. Unity of the church is the essential factor in carrying out God's mission in all contexts. Unity brings to the world the power of the gospel to do what humans cannot do alone. In this context, mission in unity should be contextually relevant and inseparably linked to pertinent theological convictions. If mission has to be the mission of God, then the meaning of Christ in life has to be clearly formulated in order to present it relevantly in the world. Asian churches are engaged in mission and witness in contexts where they experience increased demands for inter-religious engagements. Such contexts also demand the need for inter-weaving of contextual theologies and initiatives that will underscore the values of wider vision for mission and witness in a spirit of ecumenical commitment to embrace all God's creation.

Objectives

- To accompany churches in Asia to strengthen the Church's mission and witness in multi-religious contexts;
- To assist member churches and councils of the CCA in revitalising and nurturing the unity of churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia;
- To develop contextual theological undergirding for mission and witness, while addressing emerging issues in Asia;
- To strengthen collaboration and cooperation among churches and various ecumenical actors in Asia and from other parts of the world who are engaged in mission and witness in Asia; and,
- To initiate, facilitate, and strengthen ecumenical theological initiatives in Asia.

Mission and Witness in Unity in a Multi-Religious Asia

The Church in Asia witnesses mission in a diverse context. Asian churches and the ecumenical movement have articulated their vision of new evangelistic tasks from time to time. However, emerging Asian contexts, especially Asia's pluralistic religious contexts, warrant a renewed thinking in areas of witness and mission in a multi-religious Asian context. The CCA programmes in the new programme structure well incorporated issues and themes related to the Christian witness and mission in a pluralistic Asia, with focus on engaging in dialogue with people of different faith and with the participation of interfaith representatives in different programmes based on wider ecumenical principles.

Within the framework of mission and witness in Asia's emerging contexts, the CCA tried to address major ecclesial and missional issues. Asia faces aggressive freelance missionary evangelism, which creates more hindrances in interreligious harmony and religious tolerance. Christian missionaries or independent church and para-church groups in different Asian countries have been accused of unethical religious conversion, the CCA addressed such concerns through its programmes at different levels in the region. During meetings and interactions with member churches and councils, the CCA entered into dialogue with them about the increasing trend of the mushrooming tendency and the multiplicity of new generation Christian missions and their fragmented witness and disunity. The CCA has already initiated a new process for Asian churches to stand on a common platform through various united actions to nurture their mission and witness in a multi-religious Asia and the first step of such an initiative was taken through the preparatory process of the Asia Mission Conference (AMC).

Asia Mission Conference (AMC) Preparatory Meeting

22-26 September 2016 | Bangkok, Thailand

Since its founding in 1957, the CCA has been involved in the reflection and articulation of the mission and evangelism of Asian churches. New missiological thinking and interpretations emerged through previous Mission Conferences, as well as theological and missiological reflections, initiated by the CCA at different times in its history. The AMCs organised by the CCA have been integral components of the life and witness of the Asian ecumenical movement. The first meeting of the CCA held in Prapat, Indonesia in 1957, jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the International Missionary Council (IMC), itself was focused on the theme "*The Common Evangelistic Task*". The two AMCs held in 1989 (Cipayung, Indonesia) and 1994 (Seoul, South Korea) were significant milestones in the history of the CCA. Such initiatives helped Asian churches and mission partners from the West working in Asia to reflect on new missiological thrusts relevant in emerging Asian contexts. However, the CCA has not been able to organise any AMCs since the last one held in 1994.

Over the past two decades, many issues in Asia's pluralistic contexts have emerged. Although new issues have emerged during the past decades, such concerns have not been taken into consideration adequately for initiating relevant missiology and theological articulations in Asia, which has created a substantial vacuum in articulating missiological issues in an ecumenical framework. It is in this context that the CCA has planned to organise the Asia Mission Conference 2017 to be held in October 2017.



The Asia Mission Conference Preparatory Meeting was held in Bangkok

In order to initiate the preparatory process of the AMC, especially to develop a theme of the mission conference, the CCA invited a group of missiologists and theologians for a serious discussion and analysis on developing the theme and various sub-themes of the AMC 2017. The preparatory meeting was held from 22 to 26 September 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Based on the proposals of this planning and preparatory process group, the officers of the CCA adopted the theme of AMC 2017 as 'Journeying Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light, in Asia'. The AMC planning group also developed four sub-themes and tried to ensure conceptual clarity on the theme in its relation to the mission and witness of the Church in Asia: *Mission as Prophetic Accompaniment* (Ref. Isaiah, 62:

1-12; Mathew, 25: 35-40; Micah 6: 8; *Mission as Affirming the Servanthood* (Ref. Mathew, 20: 28; Luke, 22: 27); *Mission as Participating in the Reign of God* (Ref. Romans, 12: 2; Ephesians, 2: 22; Hebrews, 13: 5; Luke, 17: 1-21, 2; Timothy, 2: 22); and *Mission as Embodying the Spirituality of the Cross* (Ref. Mathews, 16: 24; Luke, 6: 35). Six areas of mission concerns in Asian churches were also identified, which will be addressed in the plenary sessions of the AMC, in relation to the themes and sub-themes.

Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) VII

13-15 July 2016 | Medan, Indonesia

The beginning of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) can be traced to 1993 when the two Christian bodies in Asia – the

Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)—decided to set up the Asian Ecumenical Committee (AEC) to carry out joint programmes. Since then, such initiatives fostered ecumenical relations at the national and local levels, and conscientised churches to the importance of making unity in Christ visible. The idea behind the AMCU meetings was conceived by the two bodies in 1995 with the goal of promoting Christian unity by bringing together leaders, theologians, and ecumenical officers of the churches to study problems connected with Christian unity, and to find ways to promote it at local, national and continental levels among Christ's disciples in Asia; the first AMCU seminar was held in 1996 in Hong Kong.

the urgency to encourage Asian churches to join in a network of diverse groups, including non-governmental organisations, and to engage in educational programmes that aim to raise the consciousness of the people, as well as to engage in advocacy actions to mitigate climate change.

The themes addressed at the consultation included the impact of climate change in Asia, biblical and theological reflections, ethics of eco-justice, Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* and its significance, advocacy to mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as plans for joint actions on how to move forward for ecological renewal and eco-justice in different Asian contexts.

The AMCU VII was held from 13 to 15 July 2016 in Medan, Indonesia on the theme of '*Crisis of Climate Change in our Common Home*', which was hosted by the CCA with the support of the HKBP. Fifty participants, representing the CCA, the FABC and the AEA from various Asian countries attended the AMCU VII. The participants emphasised upon

Various participants shared their local situations with regards to the effects of climate change: in mainland Southeast Asia, specifically Myanmar and Thailand, deforestation and the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), which contaminate indigenous organic crops are major concerns; this culture of instant



Participants of Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) VII held in Medan, Indonesia

gratification contributes to pollution and climate change. In South Asia, the poor are most affected in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Major problems in these countries include deforestation, urbanisation and multinational profits. Major concerns in the rich countries of Asia such as Taiwan, South Korea and New Zealand include extreme weather conditions, floods, droughts, landslides, oil spills, water contamination, and excessive energy use.

The participants in their final analysis concluded that the Church, together with non-governmental organisations, can build a network to help build awareness and mobilise citizens for collective actions, as well as to promote a change in lifestyle. At the end of the AMCU, the participants visited the campus of the Universitas HKBP Nommensen in Medan to plant several trees as a symbolic gesture to engage in climate change mitigation.

Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) VIII

19-22 April 2016 | Cochin, Kerala, India

The Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) initiated by the CCA in 1997 has been able to create certain ripples over the years in stimulating innovative theological thinking among younger Asian theologians. With a keen need to articulate Asian theologies more clearly, to cultivate new methodologies of doing theology in the Asian context, and to polish academic and professional training for developing Asian theological scholarship, the CCA has initiated a prominent role in developing and promoting the Asian theological agenda in the Asian ecumenical movement through the Congress of Asian Theologians. CATS seeks and creates a theological community that brings together various theological movements and associations of theological education, as well as individual theologians. Over the years,

through the significant work of CATS, the CCA has been able to promote the cooperative process of theological studies and reflections among committed Asian theologians who are prepared to deal with critical Asian issues as part of the Asian theological agenda. Each CATS event has helped facilitate and foster a cross-fertilisation of theological insights and studies among Asian theologians. While doing this, the processes through CATS has served and assisted Asian Christian communities and people through articulations and engagement in witnessing the Gospel among intellectual and religious communities through academic studies and reflections of theological issues in the Asian context. It has further helped in deepening the theological foundations of the ecumenical movement in Asia and in developing a new Asian ecumenical vision. CATS has been recognised as an instrument facilitated and coordinated by the CCA, assisting in locating present and future ecumenically committed leaders from Asian churches, and providing a means to nurture them. CATS was also instrumental in providing avenues for participating in the ongoing studies and discussions of the wider international ecumenical theological community by making a distinctive Asian contribution to them.

Since the first CATS was organised by the CCA in 1997, six other CATS summits were also organised by the CCA, including the CATS VII held in Seoul, Korea in June 2012.

The eighth Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS VIII) was held in Cochin, Kerala, India from 19 to 22 April 2016 and was hosted by the Senate of the Serampore College (University) and the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India, on the theme '*Doing Asian Theologies in the Context of God's Oikos*'. More than a hundred participants and resource persons met together to seek what it means to live together in God's *Oikos* and



Participants of Asian Theologians (CATS) VIII held in Cochin, Kerala, India

to deliberate on 'God's *Oikos*' for the sake of reconciling all things in God and share in God's eternal life by promoting justice and peace, reconciliation and love.

Rev. Dr. Huang Po Ho, a prominent Asian theologian from the Chang Jung University in Taiwan delivered the keynote address on the theme '*Doing Asian Theologies in the Context of God's Oikos*'. He advocated for a new world order that is embedded in "justice, peace and fullness of life". He was critical of globalisation in its attempt to "overmaster the house of God with market principals under a dominant power of capitals". He further lamented the "import of Christian Theologies to Asia as missionary instruments under colonisation", despite Christianity tracing its roots to Asia.

While delivering a thematic address on the second day of CATS VIII, Sister Salini Mulackal, President of the Indian Theological Association, said, "traditional ways of doing theology had no relevance for people at the grassroots level without a minimum amount of suffering among the poor. Theologising needs to be a credible exercise". She minced no words in affirming that theology is an "ongoing" process.

Dr. Peter C. Phan, an eminent ethnic Vietnamese theologian and professor at Georgetown University in the United States of America, in the third thematic address of CATS VIII decried the "only-religion" claim propagated by some Christians when various denominations squabble for hegemony. He voiced his opinion to focus on migrant theology for the next CATS summit, pointing out that, "it was the migrant traders who took chaplains with them for evangelisation in many places". He believed that, "there is no Christianity outside migration". He was critical of the apparent mismatch in the words and actions of various theologians. He said, "theological exchange must be rooted in life, action and spiritual experience. Without these three, it is empty".

Dr. Binsar J. Pakpahan, a young Indonesian theologian, while delivering the fourth thematic address on the theme '*Re-imagining the Covenantal Relation and Stewardship in God's Oikos*', said, "with resurrection, Jesus destroyed the shame associated with the cross and made it a sign of honour". Pointing out that, "Asia is a continent of honour-based communities, Pakpahan admitted that, "there are several types of honour killings in Asian countries – contrary to the honour standards



Participants of CATS VIII in a worship session

Jesus has shown. What is required is a new healthy spiritual attitude to accept shame". We have to distinguish between social shame and spiritual shame. Jesus set a new model and established a new covenant," Pakpahan added.

Keen interest and active participation in group discussions was shown by the participants on emerging issues in Asia; Peace and Human Security, People on the Move, Religious Harmony, Poverty, Dignity of People with Disabilities, Spirituality in Digitalised World, and Violence against Women and Children. During CATS VIII, the participants presented their theological articles within the frameworks of Biblical Theology, History of Christianity, Contextual Theology, Missiology, Christian Ethics, Practical Theology and Inter-faith Relations.

At the end of CATS VIII, participants acknowledged the unique identity of Asian churches as people with diversity in culture

and plurality in faith and spirituality, affirming their commitment for the fullness of God's *Oikos* in suffering Asian societies by the creative use of the available resources in our diverse communities, being in solidarity with the struggle of the ownership of natural resources and the marginalised people of Asia for their survival and livelihood.

Regional Consultation on Asian Women Doing Theology in the Context of Wider Ecumenism

15-18 April 2016 | Cochin, Kerala, India

Creating one's own identity is a phenomenon in every sphere of life today. It is also imperative to constantly analyse and contemplate experiences based on the situations and contexts in which one's identity is established, as well as where new consciousness' are emerged and nurtured without negating the prevailing cultural and social milieu. This needs to be taken seriously in contexts where women are trying to



Participants of the Regional Consultation 'Asian Women Doing Theology in the Context of Wider Ecumenism' in Cochin, Kerala, India

nurture new ways and consciousness' in which their role and strength is assessed and asserted. The role of women in developing and doing theology is no exception.

Christian women in Asia increasingly insist that unless their distinctive voices as Asians and as women are heard, the emerging theologies cannot be relevant, or complete. More efforts need to be initiated to bring together the participation of women from various Asian countries who can contribute new models of women's participation in enriching indigenous Asian theology. New and relevant theological themes equipping Asian Christian women doing theology have to be developed within the framework of our Christological convictions and theological contexts. In this process, Asian women try to develop theology based on the Asian

indigenous identity as a collective identity different from that of theological jargons merely borrowed from the West.

In this context, Asian women doing theology in the context of wider ecumenism becomes relevant. Women theologians have an important and crucial role to nurture prophetic voices and theology that empowers and liberates women from oppression in churches and societies. Asian women doing theology is to serve the oppressed contexts of women in Asia seriously. This includes the tasks of taking a critical look at their own and other women's experiences. In this respect, Asian women doing theology should be practical, based on the experiences of the struggles of women in their daily lives. The emphasis on "doing theology" reflects this significantly to bring theologising work to the ground.

“Doing” has at least two basic connotations: it is about coming out of life in practice; it is always in process. In short, theologising work for Asian women always takes place and should be an ongoing process. In this regard, the theological reflection of women in Asia needs to be an active engagement in response to women’s confessions in their daily living experience and a commitment to strive towards full humanity. “Doing theology” is not confined only as the task of women who are theologically trained, but it is the task of all women who care enough about their own experience, their faith and addressing the concerns related to the future of all women in the Household of God.

The CCA organised a Regional Consultation on ‘Asian Women Doing Theology in the Context of Wider Ecumenism’ with an aim to provide opportunities for Asian women theologians to share their concerns, develop biblical and theological perspectives that would empower women pastors and theologians in Asia, and also to develop the fellowship and network of women theologians in Asia.

Twenty Asian women pastors, theologians and seminary students from India, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Aotearoa New Zealand, gathered at the Mar Thoma Guidance Center, Cochin, Kerala from 15 to 18 April 2016 and attended the Consultation on ‘Asian Women Doing Theology in the Context of Wider Ecumenism’. The participants discussed the ways in which they can raise the voices of women theologians and activists, the need to strengthen women leadership in church and society, and how Asian women theologians can create a legacy, where ever they are placed. The participants expressed the urgent need to carry out the partnership of men and women in God’s mission and ministry and to build stronger networks of Christian women in Asia in their

struggle to break the various walls that hinder them from doing theology in the context of wider ecumenism in Asia.

Working Group Meeting for the Curriculum Building and Management of the East Timor Christian Institute

4-5 October 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

East Timor is the youngest nation in Asia where the Catholic Church is the majority church. The Protestant Church in East Timor (IPTL), although a small minority church, has also been witnessing the Gospel and playing an important role for justice and reconciliation in East Timor. The IPTL has been involved in the leadership training and on-going education of its pastors to enhance their effectiveness and improve their pastoral skills. However, most of the pastors and evangelists of the Protestant Church in East Timor do not have opportunities to undergo systematic theological education due to the volatile socio-economic and political situation in the country over the years. In this context, the IPTL began the construction of its own theological educational institute named East Timor Christian Institute (ETCI) in 2016 with the support of the Korean churches and is expected to open by the year 2017. However, the ETCI – IPTL is in need of support and consultation on curriculum-building for the theological academic departments and development of an effective and practical management plan.

A two-day workshop was organised by the CCA to assist IPTL in their efforts to develop a theological education curriculum for their newly established theological institute. The workshop brought together a group of representatives from the IPTL and experts in theological education to facilitate developing short- and long-term plans for academic courses designed to assist the churches in East



Workshop to develop a theological education curriculum for the East Timor Christian Institute (ETCI)

Timor. The workshop focused on identifying the current challenges faced by the churches in East Timor in comparison with other churches in Asia; which were mainly that of limited pastors and their lack of developed skills in running self-sustaining ministries in East Timor.

Several strategies to create a shared learning between pastors and members of IPTL were discussed at the workshop, where both could generate income and help IPTL in its mission. Special emphasis was placed on developing a unique and contextual nation-building theology through training at the institute, which will also include the people's struggle, political history and indigenous culture of East Timor.

Scholarships

The CCA scholarship is for theological students from countries where there is a lack of theological education facilities. The scholarship fund can also be utilised to equip pastors or young leaders for a holistic ministry by facilitating and creating opportunities for them to attend relevant courses or short-term training and academic seminars.

In 2016, the CCA Scholarship was awarded to two Dalit theologians from India for their travel subsidy to attend the 11th Dalit-Minjung Dialogue, which was held at the Hanshin University in South Korea from 12 to 16 October 2016. Additionally, Mr. Win Min Nyunt from the Myanmar Baptist Convention who graduated from the McGilvery College of Divinity at the Payap University was supported for travel back to his home country.

Asian Ecumenical Theological Educators' Network and Database (AETEND)

Asian churches have been engaged in ecumenical theological education through their theological colleges, seminaries and theological faculties of Christian universities in various Asian countries. All these institutions have experienced theological educators' specialised in various branches of theology, missiology, and other academic areas. During the past several decades, many theologians from Asian churches and theological institutions have made significant contributions to the Church and the ecumenical movement.

The CCA, through the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), has been providing platforms for Asian theologians to network during the past several years. The networking and gatherings were organised in collaboration with sub-regional and national theological associations in Asia. However, there have not been any systematic approaches at the regional level to avail the expertise or to make use of the talents of the younger generations of Asian ecumenical theologians, especially for sharing ecumenical theological insights for the benefits of churches and theological institutions in countries where more qualified and well-abled theologians are absent.

In order to facilitate the need to identify the expertise of theologians, who are willing to help churches and institutions, the CCA developed a centralised database. An intern working in the area of Mission in Unity and Contextual Theology worked on developing this database. The information gathered for the database is being used to facilitate the networking and exchange of information and resources on ecumenical theology as part of the Asian Ecumenical Theological Educators' Network and Database (AETEND), which will be instrumental in assisting younger churches in Asia. The database has now been made available for wider use for Asian churches and theological institutions.

Youth Internship and Leadership Training in Mission and Contextual Theology

As part of the year-long internship programme with a focus on mission and contextual theology, an intern has undergone training in this programme area under the supervision of a senior programme staff. One of the specific responsibilities assigned to the intern was to create a database of Asian ecumenical theologians.

2

Ecumenical Leadership Formation and Ecumenical Spirituality

Ecumenical formation is an essential component for responsiveness to God's call for unity. It is a gift of God's grace calling all Christians to have faith in the mystery of God, who wishes to bring humanity to salvation and unity in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The unity we seek in the ecumenical movement and its vehicle of ecumenical formation is to receive the fruit of hope and realisation of Jesus' prayer, "that they all may be one". Often the opportunities and requirements of ecumenical activities do not present themselves in the same way within churches and among the Christian communities, as the doctrinal and denominational identities and barriers imposed upon the faithful are varied and emphasised differently without proper attention to ecumenical principles and values. It is often forgotten that ecumenism requires the involvement of the people of God within the ecclesial structures and the discipline appropriate to each level to embrace the grace of God which seeks unity in diversity of all God's people and the entire creation in the Household of God.

The CCA is engaged in a wider ecumenical involvement from the grassroots level to develop an ecumenical leadership through its members who can be instrumental in promoting ecumenism in their congregations, churches, and institutions, being responsive to issues in the local and national contexts, and to provide a human resource pool that can be engaged in wider ecumenical involvement and activities.

Considering the need for addressing various needs of the Asian churches related to ecumenical formation and development of ecumenical spirituality, the CCA organised several activities in 2016 as part of this programme area, including an annual 'Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI)', Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia (EETA), Youth Leadership Development Training, Women Leadership Development Training, and Renewed Ecumenical Impetus for Grassroots Ecumenism, etc.

Objectives

- To assist the ecumenical formation of a new generation of leadership in churches and ecumenical councils in Asia;
- To develop human resources committed to the renewal of ecumenical spirituality and understanding Christian traditions; and,
- To provide ecumenical space for sharing spiritual life among member churches and national councils in Asia.

Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI)

24 October – 23 November 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI), a new initiative of the CCA for ecumenical formation and leadership development was held from 24 October to 23 November 2016 at the Payap University, Chiang Mai. The month-long intensive course, attended by nineteen participants from various Asian countries, focused on the theme ‘*Shaping a New Paradigm for Wider Ecumenism in Asia*’ aimed at training a new generation of young ecumenical leaders in Asia and equipping them to be committed to ecumenism and contributing to the Asian and global ecumenical movement in the coming decades.

The AEI had four components: 1) analysis of Asian realities, 2) ecumenical vision based on biblical and theological reflections, 3) community-building, and 4) leadership training. These four components intertwined to provide the atmosphere and direction for the participants of the AEI to imbue the spirit of ecumenism and enhance on a wider ecumenical vision to apply in their respective ministries. Conducted by a variety of experts and resource persons, the participants were engaged in a range of activities, including presentations, panels and thematic discussions; as well as grassroots exposure visits, self-guided study and preparation of research papers.

“The Asian Ecumenical Institute has provided me with a wonderful opportunity to enhance my understanding of ecumenism. It has enriched my knowledge regarding the struggles and challenges of the people in Asia and beyond. I have gained fresh insights, which will help me see the contemporary challenges in Aotearoa, New Zealand in a new light. I am deeply grateful to the CCA for bringing a diverse group of people together. This convergence has enabled a diverse set of voices to tell their stories of struggles and successes. Without CCA’s commitment to ecumenical empowerment this might not have been possible”,
Abhishek Solomon from the Methodist Church of New Zealand



Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) - 2016 in Chiang Mai, Thailand

While presenting their research papers on a wide range of issues, the participants shared their views and affirmed to be engaged in building inclusive communities by nurturing youth leaderships, focusing on building peace,

upholding the dignity of women, children and people with disabilities, and highlighting climate change and ecological justice in their respective churches.

"The Asian Ecumenical Institute 2016 was an unforgettable experience for me. I learned that our societies label people based on their cultures and beliefs. However, coming together and sharing our lives, as we have done during the AEI, can open the door for dialogue and collaboration in Asia. The AEI has taught me that ecumenism is a bridge for obtaining peace and justice",

Ms. Zhara Jhane A. Alegre from the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)

The AEI provided the participants an opportunity to understand and analyse challenges, develop Asian and international ecumenical networks to pursue collaborative

ecumenical actions in the future, establish peer to peer networking and enhance individual capacity and leadership.



Participants of Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) - 2016 in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia (EETA)

The Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia (EETA) is a program designed to develop ecumenical leadership at various levels, especially for young pastors and lay members from CCA's constituents across Asia. The EETA is organised at sub-regional and national levels, especially where there is lack of ecumenical theological education, as well as in contexts where pastors are not trained or equipped with proper theological training. Churches in several Asian countries, especially in situations where Christianity was newly introduced, and also in contexts where churches lived in closed-door societies due to political situations, such as Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan, and East Timor, etc., are increasingly digressing from ecumenical commitments and adequate ecumenical theological understanding. Denominational and confessional competitions are becoming stronger and new identities are being introduced and ascertained in the name of denominations. As a result of this trend, ecumenism is no longer a consideration for churches in several Asian countries.

Through various programmes of the EETA, Asian churches and ecumenical councils in Asia are assisted to train new ecumenical and church leaders and to help them enhance their leadership. The EETA programmes helped to reach out to more people in their local contexts, thereby enabling more participants directly in nurturing ecumenism. The EETA helped pastors and evangelists at the grassroots levels, as well as young people to build a strong national network of churches for mission and evangelism with a sense of ownership of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

Training Programme for Women Leaders in Laos

20-22 January 2016 | Vientiane, Lao PDR

The CCA conducted an EETA training for women leaders of the Lao Evangelical Church (LEC), under the theme "*Women in the Household of God*" from 20 to 22 January 2016 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR). About forty-seven women – pastors, church workers and lay leaders from different parts of Laos attended the training, which aimed to address issues faced by women pastors and church workers in their local context, nurture ecumenical perspective in their missionary work and provide non-formal theological education. The LEC women committee facilitated the arrangements and mobilised participants. Rev. Dr. Khamphone Kounthapanaya, President of LEC, Pastor Kummol from CCT, and Mrs. Sunila Ammar of the CCA provided leadership for the training.

Mrs. Ammar introduced the participants to CCA's involvement and leadership in the ecumenical movement in Asia. Interactive sessions on violence against women, women's leadership in church and Bible studies with women's perspective gave participants the confidence to share and speak about their issues.

Pastor Kummol led a theological discussion on women leaders in the Bible: 'Miriam', 'Deborah' from the Old Testament, 'Mary', 'Martha' from the New Testament; she said that, "these women were prophets, advisors, warriors and early church leaders and they exhibited God-given leadership skills in those times. Their proven leadership qualities and their commitment for God's mission should be a model for Christian women in any society. God has given the same leadership skills to the women of today and they must use their talents in the Household of God".



Participants of Ecumenical Enablers' Training of Women Leaders in Lao PDR

The LEC leadership and women's committee expressed gratitude to the CCA for facilitating the training, held specifically for women for the first time, in Lao PDR. The participants expressed that, "It is the first ever ecumenical training for women in Laos and the training was unique. It was mainly focused on women's concerns, especially re-reading the Bible with women's perspective". The need for more training programmes for women and youth in Laos in the areas of ecumenical formation and leadership development were emphasised upon by the participants and the LEC leadership.

Ecumenical Formation and Youth Leadership Training in Cambodia

27-30 June 2016 | Phnom Penh, Cambodia

In the pluralistic and multi-religious context of Asia, it is vital for Christian youth to relate

their faith with Asia's socio-economic and political realities. The ecumenical youths need to root their faith within Asian contexts so that they can act as God's people in God's world and be agents of transformation for building communities of peace with justice.

The CCA believes that Asian churches and ecumenical movements need to nurture a prophetic zeal among the youth as they are not merely leaders of the future but, leaders of today. However, the youth of today are faced with adverse challenges of limited resources, inaccessible and unaffordable education and healthcare, lack of training in life skills, unemployment and poverty. In the current era of globalisation, the youth are victims of economic injustice, consumerism, human trafficking and other forms of human rights abuses. Many of the Asian youth are forced to migrate in search of jobs, making

them vulnerable to racist intolerance and inhuman treatment in their new surroundings.

Even though many young people have contributed in the past to shaping the modern ecumenical movement and regional and global ecumenical organisations, it is hard to find active youth members and leaders in the ecumenical movement today. It is in this context that the CCA is focusing on programmes to nurture youth leadership skills. While recognising the contributions of young people, which are often ignored and unrecognised by the church and society, this programme aims to provide opportunities for wider exposure which will help them in becoming tomorrow's ecumenical leaders.

Two out of every three persons are aged below 25 and more than 30 percent are aged between 10-24 years; giving Cambodia one

of the biggest youth populations in Southeast Asia. Such an abundance of young people brings with it both enormous possibilities, as well as complex development challenges. Young people are a dynamic and promising economic, social and cultural force in Cambodia. They offer new perspectives, new ideas and a willingness to build a brighter future. However, their daily struggles to survive, to complete basic education, to maintain good health, to find a decent job, to support their families, to participate fully in society are real and urgent.

Cambodia is undergoing rapid economic growth and with it, tremendous social change. The country is also recovering from three decades of civil war and isolation which has left a deep scar on the society. This leaves the youth of Cambodia to face adverse challenges of limited resources, inaccessible and



Participants of National Training for Youth Leaders in Cambodia

unaffordable education and healthcare, lack of training in life skills, unemployment and poverty. Numberless job seekers leave school, and there are simply not enough jobs for them. Migration for economic and educational opportunities is transforming the composition of village life and forcing more young people into urban areas, exposing them to new risks and vulnerabilities.

The national training for youth leadership in Cambodia was held at the Ecumenical Center of the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) from 27 to 30 June 2016, with thirty five young participants from Cambodia. The youth form an integral part of Asian churches and play very important and positive roles in church and society. In the rapidly changing society of Cambodia, it is very important for Christian youth to relate their faith with their own socio-economic and political realities. The Regional Training for Youth Ecumenical Leadership Formation provided young Christians in Cambodia, especially from members of the KCC, a platform to receive appropriate training and knowledge and to establish networks to improve themselves as qualified youth leaders in the KCC. With this youth leadership training programme, the participants could strengthen their capacity and commitment to become future leaders of churches in Cambodia and build up their fellowship of Christian youths in Cambodian churches.

Youth Leaders' Training on Shaping a New Ecumenical Paradigm

12-13 July 2016 | HKBP Theological Seminary, Pematang Siantar, Indonesia

An ecumenical youth conference was held at Pematang Siantar, Indonesia from 12 to 13 July 2016 bringing together fifty young people representing different denominations from the North Sumatera region in Indonesia,

including from the Roman Catholic Church. The objectives of this youth conference were to promote ecumenism and share CCA's mission to encourage the youth to be ecumenically aware in their society and churches. The conference was held to provide opportunities for wider exposure to the ecumenical movement so that the participants could be more meaningfully involved in advocating for issues of social justice across the borders through ecumenical youth networks.

The two-day conference, conducted at the HKBP Seminary in Pematang Siantar, Indonesia, focused on introducing the ecumenical movement and reshaping the ecumenical paradigm in Indonesia. During the conference, participants engaged with various speakers who are involved with the ecumenical movement in Indonesia and learned about the history of ecumenism in Indonesia and the various aspects that require urgent attention by the ecumenical movement in Indonesia. The second focus was on youth leadership, and bridging the gap between denominations to create a cohesive whole for the youth in the North Sumatra region. The conference encouraged the youth to develop networks amongst themselves and to discuss various challenges and their proposed solutions to the youth in the Indonesian context.

Youth Leadership Training for Young Christians in the Mekong Sub-region

21-26 August 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Ecumenical Youth Leadership Training (EYLT) under the theme '*Youth Shaping a New Ecumenical Paradigm*' was held at the CCA headquarters in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 21 to 26 August 2016. For the leadership training of young adults from the Mekong sub-regional countries — the participants

came from countries, such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand where emerging social issues are similar for young people, such as living in large majority Buddhist countries and experiencing comparable social issues, in particular unemployment, human trafficking, unaffordable education and healthcare. Some of the Mekong sub-regional countries have just opened up and so the churches are young and the ecumenical movement is still quite new.

The programme provided an environment where young people were able to learn about ecumenism, the concept and meaning of

ecumenism, as well as the movement and the wider context of ecumenism. Participants were given the opportunity to present and share issues and challenges that they are facing back in their home countries, which allowed them to start a dialogue about issues that were common among the Mekong sub-region. Resource person, Mr. Saw Tychicus spoke about Christian self-understanding and Buddhism, where participants were able to learn about Buddhism and Christianity and draw the similarities and differences of the two religions. Other issues that were covered in the programme were environmental justice, and HIV & AIDS.



Ecumenical Youth Leadership Training (EYLT) of young adults from Mekong sub-region in Chiang Mai

The participants committed themselves to helping the youth in their churches and continuing to build up the ecumenical movement in their local contexts. Towards the end of the training program, the participants discussed how they could move forward in developing the Christian youth with a stronger vision of God's mission and Christianity in the Mekong sub-region.

Asia Sunday 2016 – 'Korea: Towards Unity in the Bond of Peace'

Asia Sunday is observed every year on the Sunday before Pentecost, which coincides

with the founding of the CCA. The Asia Sunday celebration focuses on a particular theme and calls upon CCA's member churches and councils, as well as churches and ecumenical partners around the world to organise special prayers worship services in commemoration of Asia Sunday.

In 2016, Asia Sunday focused on the theme '*Korea: Towards Unity in the Bond of Peace*'. This is another initiative of the CCA to provide an opportunity to prepare churches and various actors in the ecumenical movement around the world to renew their commitment to peace, reconciliation and reunification of the Korean peninsula. The special Easter



Gathering of Asia Sunday 2016 observance in Seoul, South Korea on the theme '*Korea: Towards Unity in the Bond of Peace*'

North-South joint prayer of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) and the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) was included in the liturgy. The liturgy and posters of Asia Sunday 2016 were printed and distributed to all the members of CCA's constituencies and ecumenical partners.

Korean churches observed Asia Sunday 2016 at the Seoul Cathedral Anglican Church of Korea on 22 May 2016, conducted by the NCCCK. The CCA General Secretary, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara attended the special occasion of observance of Asia Sunday in South Korea.

Ecumenism at the Grassroots programme at the Thai-Burma Border Refugee Camp

27 March 2016 | Mae Sot, Thailand

Political grievances among the Karen and other ethnic nationality communities, which have driven over half a century of armed conflict in Myanmar, still remain unresolved. The conflict between the Myanmar government and the Karen and other ethnic groups, such as the Karenni, Mon, and Shan is considered by many analysts as the longest-running civil war in the world. Along western Thailand's border with Myanmar, there are nine refugee camps which are overseen and run by the Thailand-Burma Border Consortium, a union of eleven international non-governmental organisations that provide food, shelter and non-food items to the refugees and displaced people from Myanmar. Among these camps, the Mae La refugee camp is the largest with a population of 76,000. The camp's population is mainly made up of families of farmers and low-income workers, while religious lines are more or less evenly divided between Buddhists and Christians.

The Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College (KKBBSC) in the Mae La refugee camp was established in June 1983 with four teachers and six students. Over the last thirty-four years, the KKBBSC has attained great development and improvement in its education system, accommodating around three hundred and fifty students currently. In 2015, the CCA organised an ecumenical formation training with special emphasis on ecumenical theological education for the lecturers of the Bible schools in the refugee camp.

On Easter morning 27 March 2016, the Graduation Ceremony of Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College was held at the Mae La refugee camp at the Thailand-Burma border. Ninety-eight students in the B. Th. course graduated this year in a bilingual ceremony in Karen and English. Most of the graduating students came from different churches in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, from the IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps, from the Karen villages in Thailand and other ethnic groups and some were even born in the Mae La refugee camp itself. A three-member delegation of the CCA, attended the meaningful ceremony.

Asian Conference on Ecumenical Sunday School Curriculum

12-15 January 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Asian Conference on Ecumenical Sunday School curriculum program jointly organised by the CCA and the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW) was held at the headquarters of the CCA in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 12 to 15 January 2016. About twenty-five representatives of various Sunday school Associations and Sunday school departments of the national



Rev. Martin Krieg from the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW)

ecumenical councils from various Asian countries attended the conference.

"The vision of ecumenism should be taught to everyone, children, youth, men, women and lay, and the churches should focus on a strategic direction in theological and ecumenical formation to nurture the values of ecumenism among the future generation. The concern for ecumenical formation and theological education has been an integral part of the ecumenical movement from its early beginnings, as well as an essential dimension of the missionary engagement of churches around the globe. However, regional and international ecumenical organisations are not considering Christian education for children in their current priorities," said Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary of the CCA in a keynote address at the opening session of the Asian Conference on 'Ecumenical Sunday School Program'.

Rev. Martin Krieg, Regional Secretary for Asia of EMW stated that, "Churches need an ecumenical framework for Sunday school programmes and ecumenical curriculum development should be a priority of churches and Christian missions". The conference discussed the importance of Sunday school programmes as a place for ecumenical

learning with an aim to encourage national ecumenical bodies dealing with Sunday schools to develop curricula on ecumenical themes. The participants provided suggestions to develop ecumenical curricula for Sunday school programmes, to have cross-visits to churches in Asia to learn each other's Sunday school programmes, to encourage churches in Nepal, East Timor, Cambodia and other nations to develop their own Sunday school programmes and to continuously communicate and share news and information.

Youth Internship and Leadership Training in Ecumenical Spirituality

As part of the year-long internship program with focus on ecumenical formation and ecumenical spirituality. A senior programme staff supervised the intern who worked in this area. One of the specific responsibilities assigned to the intern was to work on organising CATS VIII, and the follow-up of CATS.



A graduate of the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College with family

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Building Peace and Moving Beyond Conflicts

The absence of peace in Asia is to be understood not merely in the context of violence and civil wars. The denial of basic socio-economic, political, cultural, and environmental rights to a vast number of people leads to a situation where peace is negated and justice is denied. The end of the Cold War, the growing impacts of globalisation and rapid economic growth are requiring several Asian countries to reposition and redefine their roles both at the regional and at the global levels. While the pivot of international politics is shifting towards the Asia region, the new century also poses several challenges to peace and security in Asia. There are many factors and key stakeholders from within the region, as well as outside of the region responsible for threatening peace in Asia and intensifying conflicts. When we agree that civil wars and conflicts have already ended in several contexts in Asia, it becomes increasingly evident that threat to peace and security at different levels continues to be a pervasive phenomenon in several Asian countries.

Asia, today, faces an ever increasing level of multifaceted social, economic, political and security challenges. Armed conflicts and violence, increasing poverty, inadequate healthcare, economic exploitation, environmental degradation and the exploitation of natural resources, militarisation, arms build-up, nuclearisation, spread of small arms and light weapons, domination and intervention of major powers, ethnic and religious conflicts, communal violence, and political unrest; torture, custodial death, suppression of people's legitimate right to self-determination; lack of rule of law and democratic governance are all part of a series of issues affecting Asia's peace and security. It is in this context that Asian churches are called to be peace makers and to be committed and consistent in their efforts in order to be credible voices in the Household of God. Churches are also called to be instruments of God's purpose in the world, which calls them to take concrete action in peacebuilding in order to move beyond conflicts.

Objectives

- To analyse the context of conflicts and develop methodologies of churches' participation in peacebuilding; and,
- To assist churches in their initiatives in responding to conflict situations and raise awareness through inter-religious platforms to contribute and sustain peaceful societies.

Peace prevails where everyone has fair and equal access to justice and an atmosphere to live in security. Peace sustains only in a situation where everyone is able to participate equally in shaping their society. Peace is, therefore, a state of order, of freedom from fear and want of being secure. In such a society, as Prophet Micah says, “everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid” (Micah, 4: 4). However, today, we are forced to live in situations where peace is threatened and justice is denied. Social injustices, such as domination, marginalisation, violence, conflicts, wars, and poverty are threatening and challenging the dispossessed and impoverished. This contradicts the purposes of God’s ways of living together in the Household of God with a collaborative, mutually recognised and respected atmosphere, which makes the Household a place where peace with justice and security prevails. Such a situation requires a radical reversal of the existing systems and conditions, to a context in which, “justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream” (Amos, 5: 24).

Pastoral Solidarity Visit to Pakistan

2-6 October 2016 | Lahore, Pakistan

The week-long programme “Pastoral Solidarity Visit to Pakistan” was held from 2 to 6 October 2016. The programme aimed to accompany conflict-affected churches and communities in Lahore, Pakistan, and to stand in solidarity with the minority Christians in Pakistan and their struggles to uphold their human dignity and human rights. It emphasised the need for empowering the Asian and global churches through acts of prophetic witness in times of suffering amongst the Pakistani Christians, focusing on teaching the foundations of peace and justice.

The pastoral solidarity team composed of three members. The members of the delegation engaged in fellowship and witnessed through dialogue with churches and communities affected by religiously motivated violence. As a regional fellowship of Asian churches, the CCA expressed its solidarity and commitment to accompany and support them in their efforts to construct communities of peace.



CCA's Pastoral Solidarity Team meets with inter-religious leader in Lahore, Pakistan

Violence perpetrated in the name of religion has become a common trend in Pakistan, taking the lives of hundreds of people. From the resurgence of religious fundamentalism to aggressive religious extremism, community members of different religious backgrounds are often at odds with each other. The programme further highlighted the challenges faced today by many Christian communities in Asia, such as mounting religious intolerance, conflicts leading to religion-inspired violence, among the minorities in Pakistan, including Hindus, Christians and Shi'ite Muslims who live in a state of terror.

During the visit, the team members learned that religious minorities in Pakistan, including Christians and Shi'ite Muslims face policies and social realities that give rise to discrimination, persecution, and targeted attacks. Non-Muslims who propagate and profess their faiths explicitly are treated as

criminal offenders. While the rules apply to citizens of all faiths, blasphemy laws affect religious minorities excessively, who are convicted and put on death row. The lack of protection of religious minorities, including Christians, from acts of violence perpetrated at their domicile, the community at large, and while in legal custody has become a serious cause of concern to the CCA.

The programme started with the solidarity team's meeting with the General Secretary of NCCP discussing and sharing about the current situation of Christians in Pakistan. The delegation paid solidarity visits to Christian communities, including one community in Youhanabad where there were two simultaneous suicide bomb attacks on two churches. In addition, the team had meetings with non-governmental organisations dealing with the Blasphemy Law and Violence against Religious Minorities, including the Centre for Legal Aid



Bishop Philip Huggings of Melbourne, Australia (NCCA President) and Dr. Rey Ty with Bishop Azad Marshall of Lahore, Pakistan and Founder and Chair of Lahore College of Theology with students

Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS) and the National Commission of Justice and Peace (NCJP). There were also visits to CCA's member churches, Bishops of the Church of Pakistan, the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (PCP), as well as to the offices of the Lahore and Raiwind Dioceses of the Church of Pakistan and the headquarters of the PCP. Other interactions included visits to and dialogue with the Bible Society, YMCA, the interfaith group, Gujranwala Seminary, the United Bible Training Center, the Christian Technical Training Center, the Swift Memorial Church, Forman Christian College, and the Lahore College of Theology.

The pastoral solidarity visit heightened the awareness of Asian churches and councils about religious persecution in Pakistan. At the end of the pastoral solidarity visit, the CCA issued a press release in which the CCA General Secretary stated that, "The CCA is committed to accompanying and supporting Pakistani Christians in their efforts to advocate for the repeal of the blasphemy law, which is being misused by religious extremists and vested interest groups in Pakistan. The injustice of the blasphemy law is something that needs to be urgently addressed by the Pakistani government". He added that, "The CCA is committed to supporting the advocacy efforts highlighting the plight of religious minorities at the 28th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council in 2017."

While in Pakistan, Rt. Rev. Bishop Philip Huggins, President of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) spoke to the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Islamabad, Pakistan, addressing the issues of the vulnerability of the churches, discrimination against Christians, and the due process before the law. Upon returning to Australia, Bishop Huggins wrote a formal letter about these concerns, stating that Christians and all sects

of Islam can work in harmony with each other. To spread the word about religious persecution in Pakistan and how to work for interreligious harmony, Rt. Rev. Bishop P. Huggins of Melbourne, Australia wrote an article in the *Oodthenong Newsletter*, as well as submitted a resolution to the Synod which was adopted in Australia. Behind the scene, Bishop Huggins is helping many Christian Pakistani refugees, among others, in Australia.

Regional Consultation on 'Women Building Peace and Transforming the World'

17-21 November 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

Violence against women is rising rapidly in Asia. Gender constructed roles, attitudes and stereotypes establish that many women and girls experience poverty, discrimination and unequal access to health services and the education and justice systems. Their fundamental human rights are denied or restricted. Women and girls in the region face serious violations of their human rights, such as gender-based violence, harassment and human trafficking. Asia is home to the largest number of "missing women" in the world, according to the Asian Development Bank, which said women's safety in public and private spaces remains precarious across the Asia region. The best way to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place, and prevention should start early in life. This should be done by educating and working with young boys and girls promoting respectful relationships and ensuring gender equality.

In an increasing context of violence against women, the CCA initiated a programme to create a network of women's ecumenical action against violence – Ecumenical Women's Advocacy against Violence (EWAV). Gender equality and the liberation of women from outdated social values and customs that



Participants of Asia Regional Consultation 'Women Building Peace and Transforming the World'

violate the dignity and rights of women are essential parameters for fulfilling the aspirations of inclusive communities. As Asian societies need to develop and promote a culture of preventing violence against women, concerted efforts have to be taken to achieve the goal. Asian Christian women have responsibilities in this regard to initiate ecumenical actions in combating violence against women in their respective societies. While also aiming to sensitise and mobilise Asian Christian women to engage them for ecumenical actions, the CCA's new initiative is aimed at increasing the capacities of church women in participating in advocacy on violence against women.

A regional consultation organised by the CCA on '*Women Building Peace and Transforming the World*' was held from 17 to 21 November 2016 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The consultation provided space for women in Asian churches to come together on a common platform from where they launched ecumenical action to

combat violence against women, empower women to address gender inequalities, and advocate for the realisation of women rights and dignity.

Thirty five representatives of churches and national councils of churches from seventeen countries in Asia attended the consultation. The participants discussed and worked on different strategies and action plans and created a network of church women and ecumenical organisations in Asia titled, *Ecumenical Women Action against Violence (EWAV)*.

They proposed the following strategies and actions to promote the culture of prevention of violence against women:

1. To integrate the network in their churches on local, national, and regional levels.
2. To facilitate and organise national level campaigns on empowering women to be enabled peacebuilders.

3. Two regional follow-up programs on violence against women in 2017.
4. Observance of the World Day of Prayer and International Women's Day through church and ecumenical networks to create awareness about violence against women in each member church and council, share liturgies, and conduct Bible studies focusing on women's rights.
5. To create a public web link for the sharing of information and resources, and to keep the network digitally connected and all members updated with network activities across Asia.

Training of Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA)

12-18 June 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA) is an initiative by the CCA to build communities of peace. Youth, as key stakeholders in conflict and post-conflict situations, can play a positive role in promoting peace in their communities.

The Asia region requires a new generation of peace activists committed to work for peace and harmony. Young people in every society have always played a role towards transformation and structural changes. At the same time, they are also lured to conflict situations in many places in Asia. To build a peaceful and harmonious Asia, youth can play a vital and positive role as ambassadors of peace in their communities and commit themselves to peacebuilding, reconciliation and the post conflict reconstruction of conflict-affected societies. Young people in Asia will be in a better position to discover the joy of living together and understand the importance of peaceful co-existence. Asia's long nurtured and valued tradition of religious harmony and co-existence can more easily be practiced among the younger generation. This approach is developed in an interfaith framework.

The YAPA is envisioned as a programme that will span for the next few years to build a strong network of young peace workers. This will culminate in an Assembly for Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia with the participation of two hundred young peoples, before the next Assembly of the CCA in 2020.

The YAPA 2016 training was held from 12 to 18 June in Chiang Mai, Thailand. With the participation of twenty three youths representing eleven different countries. These participants came from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand. The week-long training programme featured sessions focusing on teaching its participants the foundations of peace with justice. It also further helped them build action plans as an initiation of their peace projects upon return to their home countries. The training saw a balance between the theological underpinnings of the importance of peace work among Christian youths and teaching skills to implement peace-related work at the grassroots level.

The participants got an opportunity to interact with the facilitators who shared their knowledge on Sustainable Peace with Justice, Conflict Transformation, Interfaith Dialogue, Human Rights and Wider Ecumenism. Activities included participants delivering presentations about the current conflict situation from their home countries and communities. Guided by these presentations, action plans were then formulated to help fulfill the needs of their community.

The main objective was to equip the participants with skills to identify and analyse conflict situations and strive towards conflict transformation. The programme aimed at promoting the role of young people as positive actors of change in peacebuilding processes. As young people can play positive roles in their



YAPA 2016 participants in an interactive session

societies in identifying issues and speaking up against discrimination, hate speech and human rights violations, they can be effective peacebuilders. They will also be in a position to foster cooperation with key stakeholders, partners, and non-governmental organisations working in the field of peacebuilding to develop the impact and the expertise of Asia's youth sector in conflict-affected areas through training activities with young people, to develop the competencies of youth peace ambassadors in the promotion and protection of human dignity, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, as well as other specific competencies according to the participants' needs, related to their role as future ambassadors; and to create and support an Asian network of youth peace ambassadors to secure the sustainability and medium-term impact of the project.

Workshops educating the youth on 'Diverse methods of Conflict Resolution and Project Building' were led by Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, Dr. Rey Ty and Ms. Srey Sotheavy of the Alliance for Conflict Transformation. Dr.

Mark Tamthai from the Department of Peacebuilding, Payap University led sessions on Interfaith Peacebuilding. Buddhist and Muslim speakers from Cambodia and Indonesia also contributed to this week-long training programme. Rev. Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit from the Church of Christ in Thailand, Dr. Alphinus Kambodji, and Rev. Grace Moon, led Bible studies and theological reflections.

The participants were trained to identify and address various conflicts happening in their contexts, thus spreading ecumenical ideas regarding cooperation between different generations, faiths, denominations, cultures, and ethnicities.

The youth participants created their own action plans that aimed at achieving peace in their immediate communities. They committed themselves to building upon the basis of peace amongst people of different faiths and ideologies in their own communities. Participants were able to identify the different causes and outcomes of conflicts, and design

action plans that suited their immediate communities. They were also exposed to conflicts happening in different areas of Asia through presentations based on the local experiences of the participants for a broader understanding of the variety of conflicts in Asia. The action plans proposed were diverse, among which were training for trainers on peacebuilding and advocacy campaigns. Most of the action plans were designed to start in January 2017.

Consultation on Eco-Justice: Towards Sustainable Development and Food Security in Asia

*28 November – 2 December 2016 | Chiang
Mai, Thailand*

The land, forest and water are gifts of God to all on earth. The Life-Giving Agriculture (LGA) initiative has been focusing on a way of life that relates to livelihoods based on the

theology of life. It is a life-enhancing process grounded in faith and nurtured in a culture of sharing, caring, loving, and promoting peace and harmony. It is diverse yet holistic, participatory, non-exploitative and builds equity in gender, dignity and justice. It is critical of the present dominant development model of agriculture, which is corporate and market-driven. It is capital intensive, export-oriented, and mono-cultural with profit as its motive. It compels farmers to use GMO seeds, pesticides, and chemical fertilisers. This leads to soil degradation, loss of indigenous seeds, bio-diversity and concentration of lands in the hands of a few. It restricts diversity of agriculture based on the food patterns that are dictated by fast-food companies, increases occupational losses, displacement, drought and migration. Decades of these unsustainable agricultural practices have led to the erosion of cultures, traditional knowledge and sustainable agricultural systems.



Participants in a worship session of the Consultation on 'Towards Sustainable Development and Food Security in Asia'

The CCA, in collaboration with the Korean Christian Forum on Life Giving Agriculture (KCFLGA) organised a Regional Consultation on 'Towards Sustainable Development and Food Security in Asia', which was held from 28 November to 2 December 2016.

The consultation was aimed at valuing both nature and social justice in order to ensure the well-being of human beings on Earth, to promote the significance of Life-Giving Agriculture divergent to Life-Killing Agriculture, to examine in-depth into eco-justice, sustainable development, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), food security and the right to food and to immerse in an indigenous community and work on a farm as a way to learn first-hand the ways by which sustainable organic farming is practiced.

The programme took place in two places in northern Thailand for four days. The first part of the programme which ran for two days took place at the 75th Anniversary Building of the Church of Christ in Thailand. There were Biblical reflections, as well as presentations on agriculture and the poor, eco-justice, sustainable development, GMOs, food security, and the right to food. The second half of the program was conducted at the Mae Hang Village in the province of Lampang, northern Thailand. Day one involved a survey of the indigenous village, tilling the terraced land, cultural presentations by the three indigenous groups in the village, as well as by participants from different parts of Asia, and a home stay with indigenous families. The second day started with a Bible study, followed by a plenary discussion of the final statement. The consultation also had two Bible studies, one in Chiang Mai and another in Lampang, Thailand.

About sixty participants, from different parts of Asia attended the consultation. The CCA, CCT, and KCLGAF shared responsibilities of planning, organising exposures and presenting Bible studies, giving presentations, and conducting workshops.

The programme started with an overview of the elements of Life-Giving Agriculture, as well as a natural scientific and a social scientific synopsis of the issues related to eco-justice, sustainable agriculture, and the poor. The thematic areas of the consultation included discussions on eco-justice, sustainable development, GMOs, food security, and the right to food. As a result of attending this eco-justice consultation, participants from different parts of Asia have gained knowledge about the relationship between access to food and the poor, the hazards of using synthetic chemicals, and the need to engage in organic farming that produces quality food that, at the same time, uplifts the condition of the poor.

Youth Internship and Leadership Training in Peacebuilding

As part of the year-long internship programme in peacebuilding, one of the interns selected was assigned to work under the programme area of Building Peace and Moving beyond Conflicts. Under the supervision of a programme coordinator, the intern worked on organising the Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA) programme, monitoring the UN Human Rights mechanism, and also analysing and interpreting the peace conflict situations in Asia, such as Korean peninsula, West Papua and the Philippines process.

4

Prophetic Diakonia and Advocacy

Diakonia affirms and acknowledges the continuing need for manifesting the practical ways of love and care to the people and communities in times of need. Prophetic diakonia emphasises resolutely to move beyond this classical pattern and embraces a more practical approach which dares to uncover the root causes of structural injustices and confront critically those who benefit from the prevailing structures and social order. The principles of prophetic diakonia warrant the need for working towards conditions that are conducive to peace with justice, human rights, and human dignity. Prophetic diakonia recalls the liberating and transforming power of the Gospel and following Jesus' example, who challenged the powers and principalities.

Prophetic diakonia affirms the essential value of prophetic witness. It affirms and reminds us of the Old Testament traditions – commenting, critiquing and challenging unjust social norms and structures. Prophets spoke the truth to the people with strength and power received from God, regardless of how their message was received. They called the attention of the governing powers, religious powers, and society. Justice, rights, truth, reconciliation, and healing amidst brokenness were the essential themes of the prophetic witness and call for action.

Advocacy is a way for raising voices by speaking out on behalf of all those with whom we stand with. It is a means to witnessing our belief in the reconciling love of God for all creation found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through such acts of advocacy, the Asian churches have to address the root causes of injustice, which have political and public dimension, and work to seek the achievement of human dignity and the integrity of all God's creation. Awareness building, analysis and interpretation of situations and emerging trends, development and justice, human rights education, public advocacy, policy research, study reflection, and actions are core components of any effective prophetic advocacy measure.

Objectives

- To empower Asian churches to be competent in responding to social, economic, and political issues through acts of prophetic witness at times of brokenness and human needs; and,
- To coordinate and facilitate ecumenical advocacy at the national regional and global levels on emerging issues in Asia, while expressing solidarity, as well as upholding human rights for human dignity.

Advocacy at the UN-CSW 60th Session in New York

13-24 March 2016 | New York, USA

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has officially accredited the CCA with the special consultative status as an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) since 2003. This special consultative status enables the CCA to facilitate the advocacy of Asian Churches in various areas of their concerns through regional and international platforms. This year a three-member delegation of the CCA was accredited to participate in the 60th session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 to 24 March 2016. The members of the delegation were Rev. Kyrie Kim, Moderator of the CCA Programme Committee and an ordained minister of the Anglican Church in Korea, Mr. Sunil Babu Shrestha, a member of the Executive Committee of the CCA from Nepal and Mrs. Sunila Ammar, CCA Programme Consultant for the Women's programme.

The theme of the 60th Session of the UNCSW was '*Women's Empowerment and its link to Sustainable Development*', and the review theme was '*The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*'.

Mrs. Ammar and Rev. Kim attended the NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day, an event organised by civil society organisations aimed at orienting participants from NGOs about CSW and effective lobbying and advocating for gender equality during CSW sessions. The NGO Forum and UN entities organised side and parallel events provided participants spaces to discuss their issues, exchange information and engage in negotiations with their representatives and members of permanent missions to the UN for their



CCA delegation at the 60th session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) in New York.

commitment towards gender justice and gender equality. The Ecumenical Women at the UN facilitated the role of faith-based organisations and amplified their voices through several programmes and gatherings. Various entities acknowledged each other's efforts, and were ready to collaborate to fulfil the agenda of Gender Equality by 2030.

CCA representatives at the UNCSW interacted with various Asian and international organisation representatives, engaged in discussions at several side and parallel events and brought the attention of the international community to the vulnerable situation of women in several Asian countries.

Asia Regional Consultation on Criminalisation of Human Trafficking and its Impact on Women and Children – Towards an Ecumenical Advocacy

13-17 November 2016 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

Every year, traffickers entrap thousands of men, women, and children, either in their own countries or abroad. Trafficking affects almost every country in the world, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery which has become a multi-billion dollar industry. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) states: "Human trafficking is the fastest growing means by which people are enslaved, the fastest growing international crime, and one of the largest sources for organised crime". The major forms of human trafficking in Asia include, sex trafficking, labour trafficking, and organ trade/trafficking.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2012 reported that nearly 30 million persons are trafficked globally, 11.7 million of whom are Asians. The Global Slavery Index 2016 reports that now 45.8 million people are trafficked worldwide. By 2016, the number of trafficked persons who are enslaved in the Asia-Pacific region has increased to over 30 million people, which represents nearly 67 percent of the world's total population.

The CCA, on the basis of faith and Christian values, felt an urgent need to respond to its prophetic call and be involved in the issues of forced migration, statelessness, and human trafficking. Thus, the CCA initiated intensive efforts for churches and other faith-based organisations, civil society organisations, and policy makers to plan and implement coordinated action for public awareness and capacity building for both vulnerable sectors of society and anti-trafficking groups and activists; offer assistance; as well as to engage in anti-trafficking advocacy for faith-based groups, non-governmental organisations, and



Participants of the regional consultation on 'Human Trafficking and Its Impact on Women and Children'

politymakers. Churches, as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations can build a network to help promote awareness and mobilise citizens for collection action.

The consultation was aimed at building competent churches and communities to respond to the growing trend of forced migration and human trafficking, to sensitise churches and related organisations about the deteriorating situation, causes, and impacts of forced migration and human trafficking. Furthermore, it emphasised upon the need to equip organisations with information about laws that deal with forced migration and human trafficking, especially assisting churches on how to be involved in advocacy to alleviate the suffering of survivors of forced migration and human trafficking, including fact-finding and filing complaints. Hence, this gathering provided a forum where participants and resource persons shared information on how to prevent, rescue, restore, and reintegrate survivors and other forms of relief and rehabilitation to trafficked persons.

A regional consultation organised by the CCA from 13 to 17 November 2016 held in Chiang Mai, Thailand highlighted Biblico-Theological Reflections, social realities in Asian countries, as well as the roles played by international and non-governmental organisations to combat human trafficking. Thirty five participants from various countries in Asia spent one day sharing inputs from the current situation of human trafficking in their respective countries. In addition, participants engaged in interactive workshops, and discussions during which they shared their thoughts about the causes and effects, and possible remedies to human trafficking. Participants prepared their own action plans to implement in their churches upon return to their home countries.

The consultation also saw the participation of representatives from Asian churches and

ecumenical councils which are working in areas of advocacy on human trafficking, as well as issues of migration and statelessness.

The sessions started with worship, reminding us to be in solidarity with, as well as accompany trafficked persons from Asia. Contents included Biblico-Theological Reflections, as well as discussions by a governmental organisation, namely the 'Royal Thai Police Academy', non-governmental organisations, such as the 'Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)' and 'The Map Foundation', and an international organisation, specifically the 'United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)'. Lectures were supplemented with an open forum followed by a discussion. The process was interactive and participatory, as participants were engaged in various workshop activities. On the last day, participants conceptualised and presented their action plans in an effort to end human trafficking in their respective home countries. CCA's facilitators helped simplify and sharpen their ideas within three months after the completion of the programme.

The consultation ended with an evaluation reflecting that the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of participants to promote and respect the rights of trafficked individuals had increased considerably after attending the programme.

Youth Internship and Leadership Training in Prophetic Diakonia

As part of the year-long internship training program with focus on prophetic diakonia, an intern worked with the staff team on specific assignments on monitoring the human rights mechanism, the Universal periodic review process and the human rights and religious freedom of minorities in Pakistan. A programme coordinator supervised the work and simultaneous training of the intern.

Special Programme on Action Together in Combating HIV & AIDS in Asia (ATCHAA)

The Christian Conference of Asia's special programme on HIV & AIDS Advocacy has been in partnership with Bread for the World, Germany – (Protestant Development Service) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). The ongoing phase of this programme has been developed for a three-year project implementation phase under the project titled 'A Holistic Approach to Build up Sustainability in HIV & AIDS Competent Churches and Communities' and was placed under the General Secretariat as a special programme. However, in the new programme structure, this programme has been placed under Prophetic Diakonia and Advocacy and renamed as 'Action Together in Combating HIV & AIDS in Asia' (ATCHAA).

Action Together in Combating HIV & AIDS in Asia (ATCHAA)

The Mission was articulated to facilitate and strengthen churches and faith communities in Asia to:

- Be inclusive in all HIV & AIDS projects;
- Intensify HIV prevention efforts in communities to reduce new HIV infections, stigma and discrimination;
- Utilise a holistic approach for human sexuality and reproductive health education for young people;
- Advocate to increase access for comprehensive services and economic opportunities for Brothers and Sisters Living with HIV (BROSLIH), and Key Affected Population (KAP) for 'No one left behind';
- Advocate for access to comprehensive HIV & AIDS services; and,
- Develop, and strengthen partnership, coordination, and collaboration with other stakeholders.

The goal and long term impact of this project was envisioned as the development of inclusive churches and faith communities and the formation of an enabling environment in churches and faith communities to address these issues, including that of human sexuality.

The year 2016 was the final year of programme implementation of the phase, which started in 2014. The Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service has agreed to continue the support for a new project implementation phase for the next three years. A core team of experts was invited to plan a new strategic plan based on Asian realities and the challenges posed to the churches and ecumenical movements in the region. The focus of the activities conducted from January-December 2016 were categorised under three main components, namely: Mainstreaming HIV & AIDS, Capacity Building, and Strengthening Networks and Collaborations.

- **Mainstreaming HIV & AIDS**

Strategic Planning Meeting for CCA HIV & AIDS Program 2017-2019
Seminar/Training and Workshop: Theological-Interfaith Perspective on HIV & AIDS

- **Capacity Building**

Collaborative Action: Thailand Christian NGO's Workshop on HIV & AIDS
Skill Building in a Holistic Approach to HIV & AIDS in Dili, Timor Leste
Skill building in HIV & AIDS Program Management at KCC, Cambodia
HIV & AIDS Awareness Training for Pastoral Counseling and VCT in Bhutan
TOT Peer Educators: Youth and Women on HIV & AIDS and Reproductive Health

- **Strengthening Networks and Collaborations**

Asian Interfaith Conference on HIV & AIDS
Comparative Study on HIV & AIDS by medical doctors from Indonesia
National Round Table Dialogue in Dhaka, Bangladesh
ICAAP (International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific)
National Roundtable Dialogue in Colombo, Sri Lanka
Seminar and Theological Consultation on HIV & AIDS Concern and People with Disabilities
Ecumenical/Expert Consultation: Action Together in Combating HIV and AIDS in Asia

Mainstreaming HIV & AIDS in Theological Colleges and Seminaries

The Church is called to be an inclusive community that engages in creative listening, hearing the stories of people and sharing experiences as the journey continues. Sacred places in the community are characterised by love, mutuality, dignity, and freedom from fear of stigma and discrimination. Theological seminaries and Biblical colleges run by churches play a crucial role in training young seminarians to be sensitive to the devastating realities of HIV & AIDS and its multi-dimensional effect on not only the infected and the affected, but on their families, children, society, and the economy of the countries to which they belong.

Seminaries can introduce to them, the spiritual foundation of sympathy and kindness and the humanitarian aspect of advocacy and practical assistance. Such special attention and training is important because students of theological seminaries/colleges who are in ministerial training will be the future shepherds of various congregations. Such training will also enable and inspire them to accompany the affected with a compassion which springs out of theological reflection and Christian spirituality that supports life. It is in this context that the CCA started to work together with theological seminaries and colleges through theological associations, such as the Senate of Serampore, the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), and the Association of Theological Schools in Indonesia (PERSETIA), with the three-fold objective of providing training and workshops for lecturers in Asia. By educating their spiritual communities and students regarding HIV & AIDS issues; and

mainstreaming these issues in various areas of theological education curriculum.

Strategic Planning Meeting for CCA's HIV & AIDS Programme 2017-2019

17-18 January 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

A core team of experts in the field of HIV & AIDS was invited to a Strategic Programme Planning meeting to lay down the vision, mission, goals and activities of a new, integrated, four-year HIV & AIDS project for the CCA for the years 2017-2020. Twelve experts from India, Myanmar, Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand, Switzerland and Indonesia, who worked with international, regional and national organisations, deliberated on the issues and challenges posed to the ecumenical movement and churches to design an effective and comprehensive programme that would address these challenges across Asia at all levels. The planning meeting was held from 17 to 18 January 2016 at CCA's headquarters in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Based on the Assembly theme of *"Living together in the household of God"* and the vision of an AIDS-free Asia, where people can live together in the Household of God with the goals of Zero Stigma, Open and Inclusive Human Sexuality, No one left Behind, and Equality and Full Access for Brothers and Sisters Living with HIV (BROSLIH), the committee developed the basis for a new project.

Seminar/Training and Workshop: Theological-Interfaith Perspective on HIV & AIDS

6-10 November 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

The seminar/training and workshop were conducted in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 6 to 10 November 2016. Thirty-three participants from seven theological seminaries (ATESEA members) in Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Indonesia, CCA's member churches, social workers, representatives of HIV & AIDS advocacy organisations and rehabilitation centers, as well as by representatives of different religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam attended these activities. The seminar affirmed the importance of theological seminaries in Asia to develop a strategic role to respond to the growing concerns of the HIV & AIDS epidemic, especially in building HIV-competent churches and communities.

The main objectives of this seminar were to increase HIV & AIDS awareness with a comprehensive perspective, to mainstream HIV & AIDS issues in the theological seminaries/colleges curriculum, and specifically for theologians to develop teaching skills on HIV & AIDS issues, based on the theological perspectives of the dignity and rights of all of God's people. Theological education plays a significant role in the training of theologians

to have a deeper understanding about the concerns of the HIV & AIDS epidemic in Asian communities, accompanied with a heart of compassion, which springs out of theological reflection and life-supporting spirituality.

The programme comprised presentations on HIV & AIDS from the Biblical, ethical, and pastoral perspectives; Bible Studies, sharing experiences among participants, as well as dialogue with the Key Affected Populations (KAP). In-depth presentations were made on various perspectives of HIV & AIDS, such as the interfaith perspective, medical repercussions, human rights aspects and issues of human sexuality by eminent resource people.

An idea for a curriculum, based on the Biblical, pastoral and ethical aspects of HIV & AIDS was developed by the participants with the objective of mainstreaming education about HIV & AIDS into seminaries. This was also agreed to be included in the syllabi of the theological seminaries of ATESEA members.

The participants developed an increased understanding of HIV & AIDS and the current trends and issues in the global, regional and local contexts. They enhanced their capacities on integrating and mainstreaming HIV & AIDS issues in their lectures and other educational purposes.

Seminar/Training and Workshop: Theological-
Interfaith Perspective on HIV & AIDS



Capacity Building

The global HIV & AIDS epidemic has entered its third decade in Asia and the Pacific Region. Although much progress has been made towards reversing the trends by diagnostic care, support, prevention, and treatment, the epidemic is still rampant, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands around the world, accounting for thousands of new infections.

The focus till recently has been on providing awareness, education on prevention and intervention programmes at various levels. In keeping with the needs of society, we need to have a paradigm shift that focuses on programmes that address the important aspect of developing and improving the skills of CCA's member churches in the area of programme management.

Collaborative Action: Thailand Christian NGO's Workshop on HIV & AIDS

26-27 March 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

Fifty three participants from different Christian NGO Networks working on HIV & AIDS issues attended a *'Workshop on HIV & AIDS for Christian NGOs in Thailand'*. The workshop was conducted from 26 to 27 March 2016 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, by the Church of Christ Thailand AIDS Ministry (CAM) and supported by the CCA. The workshop enabled them to have a common understanding of the HIV & AIDS Ministry, share Best Practices and work together on a common platform.

Skill Building Training on a Holistic Approach to HIV & AIDS in Dili, Timor Leste

27-29 April 2016 | Dili, Timor Leste

The CCA, in collaboration with Igreja Protestante Iha Timor Lorosae (IPTL), conducted a Skill Building training on the Holistic Approach to HIV & AIDS was held in Dili, Timor Leste for thirty five participants comprising pastors and church leaders, youth and women leaders, and six resource persons.

Exposure trips gave an opportunity to all participants to visit government and NGO shelters in Dili, as well as engage in dialogue with affected and infected people. They also learned how to develop networks and to refer HIV cases in their respective districts and local churches to the proper agencies. From BROSLIH, the participants received insights on how they can work together for the prevention and the reduction of stigma and discrimination in the community.

Skill Development in HIV & AIDS Programme Management in Cambodia

7-10 July 2016 | Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The CCA, in collaboration with the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC), conducted a skill building program on HIV & AIDS Programme Management in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 7 to 10 July 2016. Thirty five participants, comprising pastors, church leaders, youth and women's leaders, interfaith groups and KAP representatives attended it.

The training provided insight on 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) related to the HIV

& AIDS issue, presented by the Country Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Cambodia, Ms. Marie-Odile Emond. Other inputs given by representatives from international, regional and national NGOs in Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar were on: Integrated Program Planning, Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation (PIME) on HIV & AIDS and Community Development; HIV & AIDS Case Management and Referral System; Resource Mobilisation for Program Sustainability; Advocacy for Accessibility & Affordability of Treatment, and Communication Skills for Social Marketing. Theological reflections and Worship added the spiritual dimension and the aspect of diakonia. Group discussions helped the participants to develop action plans based on the context of their own countries.

HIV & AIDS Awareness Training in Bhutan

17-20 August 2016 | Paro, Bhutan

In collaboration with the National Council of Churches in Bhutan (NCCB), the CCA conducted HIV & AIDS awareness training, with a focus on Counseling and Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) in Paro, Bhutan from 17 to 20 August 2016. Twenty nine participants, mostly young people from different part of the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan, attended the program. The topics included understanding HIV & AIDS, Reproductive Health, Voluntary Counseling, Confidential and Testing, and Pastoral Counseling. Using the participatory method, the participants were involved in discussion, games, and group work to develop action plans.

Tsheyang Dema, a young female participant from Thimphu, stated: *'This is the first time my friends and I are attending an awareness building training on HIV & AIDS that uses friendly methodology for young people, where we can openly discuss, play games, and learn in an easy and comfortable way. I promise to*

share this awareness information with my friends through social media to share what I have learned here'.

As 'HIV & AIDS Advocacy Ambassadors', all the participants went back to their home countries with a strong commitment to share the HIV & AIDS prevention message to maintain the low prevalence of HIV & AIDS in Bhutan.

TOT Peer Educators: Youth and Women on HIV & AIDS and Reproductive Health

9-11 December 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

"Training of Trainers for Peer Educators: Youth and Women on HIV & AIDS and Reproductive Health" was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 9 to 11 December 2016. This training was conducted for ten participants from Northeast countries, such as Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The objective of the training was to increase the knowledge of participants (youth and women) on HIV & AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Reproductive Health, as well as to develop interpersonal communication skills so that participants can share the information with their peers. By the end of the training, participants were able to: 1) provide accurate information about HIV & AIDS and Reproductive Health; and, 2) demonstrate their ability to inform and teach peers regarding HIV & AIDS and Reproductive Health.

This was a first-time experience for many participants because most of them came from 'conservative' theological backgrounds where talking about sexuality is taboo. On the action plan, they committed to be active in creating awareness on HIV & AIDS & Reproductive Health with their peers, and to advocate to their church leaders and parents to be more open-minded and to "break the silence" on HIV & AIDS.

Strengthening Networks and Collaboration

The creation of a supportive faith-based environment in the region to respond to the needs of vulnerable beneficiary partners and communities of faith, needs to be pursued through networking and alliance building. Activities such as organising ecumenical and interfaith networks are necessary to share information and Best Practices, to understand various faith perspectives, to provide spiritual counseling to Persons Living With HIV & AIDS (PLWHA) and Key Affected Populations (KAP) and to pursue an effective collaborative advocacy program. The objectives were:

- To support the development of sustainable partnerships between religious leaders, faith-based organisations, and key affected populations; and,
- To identify opportunities for joint work at local and national levels on the HIV & AIDS ministry (prevention, care, support and treatment).

Asian Interfaith Conference on HIV & AIDS

15-16 January 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

In collaboration with the Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA), the CCA hosted an Asian Interfaith Conference on HIV & AIDS in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Thirty participants from different interfaith networks and countries (religious communities and KAP), such as Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand, including representatives from APCOM, APN+, INERELA+, UNAIDS, UNFPA, and WCC attended the conference.

The objectives of the consultation were:

- To have an understanding of the current situation of AIDS in Asia, and the challenges

and success stories in relation to faith communities experienced by PLWHA and KAP in the region;

- To document and map out different HIV & AIDS programmes or services that different FBOs are implementing, and to review methodologies to enhance dialogue and collaboration between faith communities and KAP; and,
- To develop new strategies to scale up cooperation.

All participants agreed to increase collaboration in working together on prevention and intervention activities, as well as for advocacy at regional and local levels with their government, donor agencies and within their communities. The participants also agreed to ask the CCA to be an umbrella organisation for AINA at the regional level.

Comparative Study on HIV & AIDS by Medical Doctors from Indonesia

7-8 March 2016 | Pattaya, Thailand

The CCA facilitated a group of twenty medical doctors from Indonesia to conduct a comparative study on HIV & AIDS in Thailand. The study group visited and discussed with City Hall Officers in Pattaya who are responsible for the HIV & AIDS programme. They also observed how the Glory Hut Foundation took care of BROSLIH in their shelter home. This enabled them to get insight on government policy and strategy on how to manage the HIV & AIDS prevention program, and how to increase community participation to fight against HIV & AIDS. From the Glory Hut Foundation, they also learnt about shelter management and mobilising communities for program sustainability.



Indonesian medical doctors for a comparative study and exposure visit to Thailand from 7 to 8 March 2016

National Roundtable of Interfaith Activists in Bangladesh

9-10 March 2016 | Dhaka, Bangladesh

A 'National Roundtable Dialogue with Interfaith Communities and Key Affected Population' was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 9 to 10 March 2016, in collaboration with NCC Bangladesh. Thirty six participants attended the Roundtable representing the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities, representatives from the Key Affected Population (sex workers, drug users, transgender persons, BROSLIH, MSM), NGO activists, and government representatives were in attendance.



The National Roundtable Dialogue with Interfaith Communities and Key Affected Population (KAP) was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 9 to 10 March 2016

According to the participants, this was the first formal dialogue between interfaith communities and KAP groups to have been conducted in Bangladesh. They appreciated the dialogue and committed themselves to follow-up dialogues and activities in the future, in order to reduce the misconception, stigma, discrimination, negative perceptions, ignorance, and judgmental behaviors surrounding the issue. All participants agreed to declare the formation of the “*Bangladesh Interfaith and KAP Network on AIDS (BINHA)*” by involving representatives from different groups to form coordination teams.

International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP)

12-14 March 2016 | Dhaka, Bangladesh

For an update on HIV & AIDS information and related issues, the CCA HIV & AIDS coordinator attended the 12th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) that was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 12 to 14 March 2016. The central theme of ICAAP was “Ending AIDS by 2030”. The important issues

that were raised by the Community Forum in ICAAP included questions on how to increase the participation of KAP to initiate policy, strategy, implementation and evaluation of the HIV & AIDS programme intervention at all levels, to work together to eliminate stigma and discrimination, and to improve accessibility to treatment and care. The key points raised by the Scientific and Policy Forum regarding the Strategic Priorities to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, included: focus on adolescent girls, KAP, migrants, children and older people, focus on locations with highest HIV transmission and burden, integrated HIV response expanding contribution towards United Health Care, and sustainable programmes-transition to domestic funding of essential HIV services.

National Roundtable Dialogue in Sri Lanka

21-22 April 2016 | Colombo, Sri Lanka

The CCA, in collaboration with NCC Sri Lanka, conducted the ‘National Roundtable Dialogue with Interfaith Communities and Key Affected



The National Roundtable Dialogue with Interfaith Communities and Key Affected Population (KAP) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 21 to 22 March 2016

Population', which was held in Colombo from 21 to 22 April 2016. Thirty three participants attended the Roundtable Dialogue, representing the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities, as well as KAP (sex workers, drug users, transgender persons, BROSLIH, and MSM), and an officer from the government sector.

The dialogue was well appreciated as all parties had an equal opportunity to speak out frankly, based on their context, experiences, and perspectives. It gave them the forum to plan to work together by sharing expertise and Best Practices to prevent HIV from spreading and to reduce the stigma and discrimination against KAP. In conclusion, all participants signed a declaration as a symbol of collaboration through a new network named "Sri Lanka Interfaith and KAP Network on AIDS (SRIKANA)".

Seminar and Theological Consultation on HIV & AIDS Concerns and People with Disabilities

11-14 November 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

Many misconceptions abound among Christians that BROSLIH and People with Disabilities (PWD) are related to sin or are considered a punishment from God. The ideas of perfection and beauty that are ingrained in our psyche and sanctioned by our culture tend to preclude any form of disability; which is widely considered a curse and punishment from God. There was an emerging issue regarding the relationship between HIV & AIDS and disability. HIV itself has the potential to actually cause disabilities, temporarily or permanently, and certain medications used in the treatment of HIV may actually precipitate disability. The concern of BROSLIH and PWD



Participants of the Theological Consultation on HIV & AIDS Concerns and People with Disabilities was held from 11 to 14 November 2016

has not been given much attention in theological education and the ministry of the church. Cultural prejudices, exclusive or negative theological perspectives, social stigmas, and taboos have often led to the exclusion and isolation of PWD and BROSLIH.

Therefore, the CCA HIV & AIDS programme conducted a Seminar and Theological Consultation on HIV & AIDS Concerns and PWD, in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 11 to 14 November 2016, and was attended by twenty-six participants – theologians, church workers and social activists from different Asian countries. The consultation came up with the following conclusions:

- Churches in Asia must empower their members to acknowledge the dignity and identity of People With Disabilities (PWD) and Brothers/Sisters Living with HIV & AIDS (BROSLIH) to liberate themselves from the stigma and discrimination.
- One of the main ways to get rid of the stigma against PWD and BROSLIH is to read the Bible and understand the essence of the message of the Bible in social and cultural contexts: as Christians, we should treat each person with dignity and humbly acknowledge each other's distinctive features.
- As we live amidst a cultural taboo in our societies and churches in recognising the dignity of people living with disability and with HIV/AIDS, it is our responsibility to challenge the existing values.
- We have to provide insights on organising solution-based advocacy, and changing the labeling, redefining the problems, as well as re-conceptualising the solution.

Ecumenical/Expert Consultation: Action Together in Combating HIV & AIDS in Asia

7-10 December 2016 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

In order to increase the participation and the roles of ecumenical organisations, interfaith group, UNAIDS and NGOs, and to contribute to the “fast track strategy of UNAIDS”, the CCA HIV & AIDS programme initiated an Asian Ecumenical/Experts Consultation. The consultation was attended by twenty six participants from nine countries (Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Taiwan, Korea, UK, and, the Philippines).

At the conclusion of this consultation, all participants committed to collaborate for constructive approaches, and to strengthen communication and promote joint actions to contribute to the “90 90 90” UNAIDS target. The consultation also provided meaningful inputs to CCA's HIV & AIDS programme for the coming years on the efforts of ‘Action together in combating HIV & AIDS in Asia’.



Ecumenical/Expert Consultation on HIV & AIDS in Asia

External Evaluation

1-30 September 2016

The CCA, in consultation with Bread for the World (BftW), undertook an external evaluation of the HIV & AIDS projects from 2011-2013 and 2014-2016. An independent evaluator, Mr. Leo L. Basyam conducted the evaluation in September 2016 by visiting six countries to interview CCA HIV & AIDS

stakeholders, as well as the beneficiaries of the programme. The final report of the evaluation was sent to BftW for review. Additionally, the CCA HIV & AIDS programme has developed a new proposal for the next three years, which the BftW has agreed to support.



HIV consultation in Pakistan



HIV consultation in Sri Lanka



HIV consultation in Indonesia



HIV consultation in Cambodia

Appendix 1

Report of the General Secretary to the CCA Executive Committee Meeting 2016

It is almost nine months since we met last time as members of the Executive Committee of CCA. Although the provision in the constitution is for the meeting of an Executive Committee once every year, this is probably the first time that we are meeting much ahead of the time frame than the normally stipulated for the frequency of the Executive Committee meeting. However, there are several issues we need to address in this Executive Committee meeting as part of our routine business as well as we need to reflect on the contemporary realities. The role of the executive committee is not only deal with the routine business agenda, but our task is also to address the emerging contexts and their wider implications in the life and witness of churches in Asia and the ecumenical movement. As we are expected to undertake this task as part of our mandate, it is an imperative for us to analyse and reflect on the contemporary situation and evolve ecumenical responses while we move ahead with programmes, activities and plan of actions.

The events in our day to day lives are replete with numerous challenges. It is no longer news or novelty in hearing stories about the crises in our world today. The reality is that the crises are spreading far beyond its point of origin. The crisis is not limited in a particular area or aspect, or confined only in a specific geographical region; it is global and it is spreading in many parts of the world, often with multiple effects. René Guénon (1886-1951), French metaphysician and scholar of religions, who was also a critic of modern civilisation, wrote nine decades ago a manifesto and 'call-to-action' in response to the then world crisis, which was known as 'The Crisis of the Modern World'. The reasons for today's global crises may have now surpassed René Guénon's theories of the modern world crisis in 1920's. The world order today is in the worst state since the end of World War II. The crisis in today's world goes beyond the boundaries of nation-states. For example, the war in Syria that has spread to the entire region and has led to large-scale migration crises in other continents. This is what was recently described by Wolfgang Ischinger, the Munich Security Conference chairman, that "today's international relations experience dramatic crisis, the worst since World War II". He said, "The international community needs 'greater solidarity, integration and cooperation'".

It has been evident for some time that the contemporary crisis, whether it is of neoliberal globalization, militarization or ecological degradation, has deep roots in the capitalist world-system. One may argue that this is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it was pointed out long time ago by the great moral philosopher and economist Adam Smith, who had critiqued what he called "prodigals and prospectors". It is more evident from recent happenings, such as increasing global conflict and its relationship with economic inequality, climate change, peace and security, that the world is affected with more complex problems. More than at any time

in history, the contemporary world is engaged in conflicts and their effects are seen in manifold forms, which create a fragile landscape of peace and security. The biggest threat to security and stability in the world over the next decade is likely to come from various forms of geopolitical tensions. Asia will have to witness or face the direct or indirect impacts of such crises; whether these crises stem out of the crisis in Ukraine, Russia’s simmering tensions with Europe, tensions regarding South China Sea, or strained relations between China and Philippines or China and Japan on their respective territorial claims. All these factors are evidences of the strategic power struggles in which the world’s biggest powers have again started their engagement. The effects of the spiraling crisis are more and more visible in Asia. The alarming trend is reported every day from some corners of Asia.

Although not all these tensions and conflicts are explicitly violent in nature, there are more probabilities for regional spillovers, which might derail global stability in the short and long-term. Often we talk about economic crisis in the world, but we are now facing several other problems in addition to the economic downturn. It was true that the world was faced with an “*annus horribilis*” in the economic realm about two years ago, the worst in a decade, with high unemployment, corporate failures, and the downturn of the stock market. The geopolitical threats now have topped the risk index, overtaking the financial crisis. Although, the world has not escaped from such a crisis, in addition to that, what is being experienced now is an “*annus horribilis*” in the geo-political arena, especially in terms of conflicts, violence and threats to peace and security.

The geopolitical threats now have topped the risk index, overtaking the financial crisis. There are various signs of this trend. Quarter of a century after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world again faces the risk of major conflicts between states. There are a number of issues and reasons have been identified or pointed out for increasing crisis in the world. There are several problems and concerns that have leapfrogged to the top of the list of crises; increasing role of non-state actors, mounting environmental problems, crisis in the world’s water supply, especially when clean drinking water is becoming a rare commodity. Water becomes an economic and political issue as well when people have started fighting for this resource. An estimated four to five billion people in the world suffer from strained access to clean water. In Asia, struggle for access to clean water is a growing problem. The spread of terrorism and violence have become common trends in many countries and regions, in which the role of non-state actors are systematic. The emergence of non-state actors such as Islamic State (IS) over-ran the sovereignty of nation states. They are not only posing threat to Syria or Iraq or in the Middle East. The influence of IS is spreading over to many parts of Asia. Asia is becoming a breeding or multiplying ground for terrorist groups. Militants from many parts of Asia have been recruited by terrorist groups and taken to Syria and Iraq for Islamic State. The recent events, especially the increasing violence and terrorism in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, and the growing influences of IS and other religious extremist groups in Indonesia and several other Asian countries are more alarming. Intelligence reports and analyses give signals that the religious terrorist groups also could trigger use of weapons of mass destruction and engage in large-scale terrorist attacks in the coming years. From Asia, young people from several countries are being recruited to IS, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia, China, and Brunei. This is an alarming situation and a grave concern on as how they will be used after their return to their home countries or if they are deployed to

work in a neighbouring country. A growing concern is that the spread of terrorism orchestrated in the name of Islam remains the most significant immediate threat to regional security in Asia.

Religious fundamentalism has emerged as the most serious threat to democratic values, peace and security in most of the Asian countries. In Pakistan, the menace of terrorism, in particular, terrorism of the religious kind, has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. There are people and groups who extend direct or indirect support to the terrorist activities of the Taliban and its link in the name of religion in Pakistan. Violence has become a norm and religion is routinely used to silence voices of reason and compassion. The society has taken a turn towards the right-wing. In India, attacks by fanatic religious fundamentalists are becoming increasingly common in several parts of the country, especially in areas where minority religious communities live. A systematic campaign spreading reactionary political ideology among the adherents of majority religions and this tendency is patronising communal violence as well as communal polarization. Recent events indicate that violent extremist ideals are expanding throughout the region. In the coming years, these threats will coincide with other incidents that could aggravate the situation for countries in the Asia region. In Asia, religious fundamentalism and extremism find their roots in the backwardness of society. The proponents of religious fanaticism exploit the situations of social deprivation, a low level of consciousness, poverty and ignorance of illiterate or semi-literate people. The growing tendency of propagation of hatred and religious intolerance is becoming a common trend connected with all major religions in Asia - Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hinduism.

Religious extremism and violence are not the only threat Asian countries are facing or that require the attention and response of the Churches and the ecumenical movement. While the major environmental problems are affecting the entire world in serious ways, their manifestations are more and more evident in Asia. Increase in air pollution, climate change and global warming, overpopulation, depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, water pollution and sanitation facilities, industrialization, spread of toxic pollutants are major threats Asian countries are facing. Several Asian countries face the worst hits of climate change in recent years. The typhoons, floods and droughts are common scenes for several months every year in most Asian countries. Bangladesh is among the most vulnerable to climate change. While flooding and cyclones have always plagued this poverty stricken nation, climate change is increasing their frequency and severity. Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is full of climate refugees every Monsoon season.

The world today, especially the Western countries are lamenting the influx of migrants arriving in their countries due to the crises in many parts of the world, especially in the Middle East and in Africa. We hear stories every day on how the whole European Union is under threat amid differing strategies to deal with the issue of migrations and border controls. The current number of displaced people globally is nonetheless the highest since the aftermath of World War II. The global population of forcibly displaced people today is larger than the entire population of the United Kingdom. Displaced people from different Asian countries also are seeking asylum in different parts of the world. Migration of people from zones affected by religious conflict is not just confined to countries in West Asia or North Africa. South Asian countries have witnessed various instances of mass migrations by persecuted religious

minorities. In Pakistan, scores of Ahmadis, Christians and Hindus have left the country for safer shelters. The Christian minority communities in Pakistan live in a state of fear and terror. They are being persecuted, tortured and killed in the name of their faith or because of religious hatred. Every day, at least one Christian in the country is persecuted because of his or her Christian identity. Over 800,000 people have left their homes in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) linking Pakistan and Afghanistan in the wake of an ongoing military operation since last year. Most of these have ended up as internally displaced people (IDPs) and are forced to live in inhumane conditions in refugee camps.

Statelessness is another major issue today faced by a sizable number of Asians. Statelessness is the situation when a person does not have the nationality of any country, which restricts their fundamental human, social, and political rights, such as access to education, health care and freedom of movement. The UNHCR estimates that at least 10 million people globally are stateless in 78 countries and Asia alone has more than 1.33 million Rohingyas with 800,000 in Myanmar and 500,000 in Bangladesh, and many others in Indonesia and Malaysia. Asia has about 1.5 million stateless people. Hundreds of thousands of stateless people are believed to be in Nepal, although there is no official figure. Part of the problem derives from laws which prevent women passing their nationality to their children. There is also a stateless population of people who were expelled by Bhutan in the 1990s. More than 500,000 people are stateless in Thailand. Many are from ethnic hill tribes such as the Yao, Hmong and Karen who live in the mountainous border with Myanmar and Laos and have distinct languages and cultures. The government denies them ID cards or access to state services, leaving them vulnerable to trafficking. Tens of thousands of children in the Malaysian state of Sabah in Borneo are stateless. They are the children of Indonesians and Filipinos who have migrated to work, often in palm oil plantations. They have no rights to education or healthcare and many end up as child labourers. Sometimes authorities force them to leave the country and the mass deportations often end up with children stranded without their parents. It is also evident that statelessness is severely underreported in Asia. It is more realistic to project that the true number of stateless persons in Asia is more than double what UNHCR is currently able to account for in its statelessness statistics. It may be far higher if, indeed, there are widespread problems of statelessness in India, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

The growing level of unemployment, poverty, farmer and peasant suicides, and the increasing number of women and children who are trafficked for sex slavery are serious situations in various Asian contexts. Gross and systematic violations of human rights, increasing militarisation and other forms of dehumanisation have become a common trend in various Asian countries.

Where are we heading to: Challenges in our witness and mission?

As the world faces innumerable challenges, and we live in the midst of sense of frustrations and darkness, the question that is being asked is where are we heading to? The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church in the USA echoed his concern about the deteriorating or degenerating situation in his home land, the U.S. He recently told at the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod in his address that the violence in the U.S. had its roots in a "spiritual malady". "Our culture, our society, our world is begging us, show us another way". "Show us

another way' is the cry or plea of the people in many parts of the world! We hear this cry in our day to day lives in Asia. We heard the cry of many innocent people who are persecuted and violently attacked and killed recently in violent conflicts and terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand and in India as well as in many other parts of the world – in Paris, Nice, Turkey, Brussels, and the U.S.

In recent months, there were several instances of violence and terrorism on Asian soil. The churches and ecumenical movement often come forward to express their solidarity during such instances. Often we are strengthened and supported by the mutual prayers and expression of solidarity by churches and ecumenical movement. In this context, I would like to mention about the solidarity and cooperation being extended by different Asian churches as well as churches around the world. I received a letter from the Moderator of the United Church of Canada expressing concern about a suicide bombing, which killed several innocent people in Lahore, Pakistan on Easter Sunday this year. The moderator of UCC, the Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell, while expressing UCC's solidarity, stated in the letter that we stand together and commit to respecting and caring for one another, to protecting one another, and to preventing such violence, and offered a prayer that, "The United Church holds in prayer and love all those grieving loved ones killed in the violence, the wounded and all those caring for them. As a church, we mourn the perversion of an expression of religious faith through violence and harm done to innocents in the name of religion. We continue to pray and act for peace in this troubled world, working with all those of like mind. We join with other faith communities across borders and boundaries and forces that seek to divide to oppose violence, terror, oppression and domination. And as church we offer this prayer, from our Song of Faith, seeking to live out God's call for peace and justice: Yet evil does not—cannot—undermine or overcome the love of God... we embrace the present, embodying hope, loving our enemies, caring for the earth, choosing life". This message and prayer was heartening, and it really conveys the true sentiments and solidarity of the brothers and sisters in Christ who are mindful of their sisters and brothers in Christ in Pakistan or elsewhere in Asia. We very much value this kind gesture of solidarity and concern expressed by the leadership of the UCC.

Programmes since the Executive Committee meeting in October 2015

We adopted a new programme structure in the last meeting of the Executive Committee held in October 2015. Subsequently the programme committee in its first meeting in the first week of December 2015 gave more pragmatic shape for a strategic programme plan and direction, and prioritised programmes and activities. However, the biggest challenge to implement most of those plans was due to lack of staff members or adequate human resources. In the midst of such deficiencies, still we tried our level best to organise and facilitate several or many programmes and activities from October 2015 to July 2016. During the past nine months, CCA organised 26 programmes or activities. In addition to these programmes, CCA was directly involved in several advocacy initiatives including the participation of three accredited representatives of CCA (Rev. Kim Kyrie, Mr. Sunil Babu Sreshta, and Mrs. Sunil Ammar) to the United Nation's CSW held in New York in March 2016. Although CCA has the status as an organisation in special consultation with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, this was the first time that CCA sent a delegation to the UN for a major event with official accreditation in the name of CCA. The other main advocacy initiative during this period was

the observance of the Asia Sunday on the theme 'Peace and Reconciliation of the Korean peninsula', and public issues actions through ecumenical responses to emerging Asian issues. It is heartening to specially mention here the contribution of five youth interns CCA has recruited for a one year internship programme in implementing some of these programmes. It is also an encouragement for all of us to know that Asian churches have many young talents. There are many "frozen assets" among the young people in the churches and in the ecumenical movement in Asia. They need to be identified and more young people should be given opportunities by CCA to build up their talents and make them as future leaders in church and ecumenical movement in the coming years.

The General Secretary and other staff members have participated in several ecumenical events and programmes during the past nine months in addition to their direct involvement in programme planning and implementations. CCA has been constantly invited to participate in member churches' and councils' special events. These occasions are also opportunities for strengthening ecumenical relations and seeking member churches' and councils' wider participation and collaboration in CCA. The General Secretary participated in the following programmes and events of CCA member churches, councils, as well as CCA's own programmes since October 2015:

150th anniversary of PCT, Taiwan (October, 2015); Programme Committee meeting, Chiang Mai (December 2015); Asian Conference of Ecumenical Sunday School Programme, Chiang Mai (January 2016); Working Group meeting of CCA-Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCA joint programme on Peace, Malaysia (February 2016); Visit to Karen Baptist Bible College at Burmese Refugee Camp and Participation at the Convocation, Mae Sot, Thailand; Visit to CCT headquarters and participation in the ASEAN Conference (March 2016); Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS)-VII, Kochi, India (April, 2016); Convocation of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary, India (April 2016); NCC India General Assembly (April 2016); Asia Sunday celebrations in South Korea and visits to CCA member churches and council in Korea (May 2016); Visit to Hong Kong Christian Council and Hong Kong Council of Churches of Christ in China (May 2016); Joint Planning meeting of CCA and APAYMCA on Interfaith Peace Consultation (May 2016); Article 9 International Consultation and CCA member churches and council in Japan, (June 2016).

Financial sustainability

Financial sustainability continues to be a major issue before us. We are being informed by the traditional ecumenical partners from the West of their inability to support CCA the same way they generously supported us during the past many years or decades. Although this is not a new signal to us, they are again reminding us that we need to be mindful of their early warnings. This gives us an opportunity to search for new strategies for more concerted efforts in raising resources within Asia and from our member constituencies. As I mentioned in my last report, among the CCA member churches, a large number of them are in a situation to contribute more to CCA. In fact, a sizable number of CCA member churches are already contributing regularly to various other ecumenical and confessional, as well as mission, bodies in the West. It is high time now that there should be more solidarity from Asia to CCA for strengthening our common ecumenical journey. I don't know where the barrier lies. Maybe it is due to our

organisational weakness of making any serious attempts or effort to approach our member churches and councils on a regular basis. We need the special attention and support of CCA Executive Committee members, programme committee members and all other advisory board members to generate more financial contributions to CCA.

The Finance Committee, which met during the past three days, came up with certain policy guidelines for fundraising and income generation. This will be presented to you for further discussion and adoption. The Finance Committee also tried to explore various options to increase the income through proper investments of the endowment funds and certain proposals will be brought forward to the consideration of the Executive Committee and further action. With regard to the follow-up of the earlier decision regarding the sale of the property in Chiang Mai, this will also be shared at a later stage.

Update on the process of reviewing the current location of CCA headquarters

You might recall that the last General Assembly of CCA, and also the last meeting of the Executive Committee held in Bangkok last year, discussed about the need to review the current location of CCA headquarters. A sub-committee was appointed by the Executive Committee to initiate a discussion and study about various options. However, we have not been able to meet yet due to various reasons. Meanwhile, the General Secretary has initiated a discussion with the leadership of the Church of Christ in Thailand, the current sponsor and host of CCA in Thailand, to seek their advice on this matter. The Indonesian churches and Sri Lankan churches also have informed us that they are willing to discuss more seriously about this matter and explore options for CCA to be located in these countries through the sponsorship of churches in these two countries. It is a long way to go for us before we take any decision in future. A meeting of the sub-committee will be convened soon to discuss on how to move forward.

CCA: 60 Years of existence; sustainability in the future

In our last meeting, I reported about CCA completing 60 years of its existence in 2017. In our Asian culture, the 60th birthday is very significant. In Asian culture, the 60th birthday holds special meaning and is widely celebrated with food, gifts and festivities. In the East Asian culture and tradition, it is believed that when a person reaches the age of 60, he or she has completed a full cycle of life, which calls for a grand celebration. In Korean it is *Hwangab* (Hangul; hanja), in Japanese it is *Kanreki*, and in Chinese it is known as *Jiazi*. The number 60 means accomplishing one big circle and starting another one in one's life as the traditional 60 years calendar cycle. In Indian culture as well as in most South Asian cultures and traditions, it is known as *Shasti Poorthi*, a celebration on completion of 60 years of age. It marks the completion of half the years of one's lifetime. In Hindu tradition, 120 years is considered the life span of a human being. The sixtieth years in one's life is a significant milestone, memorable turning point, a touching reminder, mellowed life that would unfold in the years to come. *Shashti Poorthi* marks the completion of one such cycle. Considering all these Asian traditions, one can imagine how much importance we give for 60 years of a life span. In this context, 60 years is a very important year and milestone in CCA's life, which will be in 2017. We need to reflect and plan on how best we could make it a memorable event. What are the best ways

we can contribute to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of CCA as a celebrative occasion? Should we make it as a one bigger event at the end or organise several events that will provide opportunities for CCA member churches and councils to come together to give thanks for the ways God has led this organisation as his instrument to perform the mission of God.

CCA is not the sole representative of the Asian ecumenical movement. However, it has been demonstrating a unique and prominent role as the coordinator, facilitator and well-respected regional ecumenical body during the past six decades. CCA has the support of a large member constituency with its membership expanding or covering from Iran in the West to Japan in the East, and Nepal in the North to New Zealand in the South. That means, the roots are widely spread from one end to the other and it is indeed deeply rooted. As a person who has been privileged to associate with CCA in various ways during the past several years I am fully aware of its deep roots. As a phrase in Charles Dickens' novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, "the Worst of Times and the Best of Times", CCA has faced or experienced the worst and the best times of its history. However, its strength lies with its strong roots in the constituencies.

When I am reminded of the strong roots, I often think of the analogy used by Prof. Masao Takenaka, the famous Japanese theologian who was a strong pillar of EACC/CCA for many years. In his book under the title, 'When the Bamboo Bends', he mentioned about the unique characteristics of bamboo in its root system and strength. We know that in spite of wind and storm, the bamboo demonstrates amazing flexibility or elasticity. In winter, it bears heavy snow. Though it bends, does not fall down. It swings at the time of the storm yet when it is over, the bamboo returns back to a straight position. When Takenako describes the symbolism of bamboo, he talks about the practical character of bamboo. I would argue that the special characteristic of bamboo is an apt analogy when it is compared with CCA and its life during the past decades. CCA faced many storms and winds, but it showed amazing capacity to overcome those strong winds and storms. When CCA was expelled from Singapore and, it has been moving around from place to place as a wanderer, when a severe financial crisis affected during latter part of 1990's, it survived all those winds and storms by the grace of God. CCA's roots strengthened its vitality in the midst of the storms. We do not normally see the roots of bamboo as they are hidden from our sight. But, these roots are the source of the vitality of the bamboo as they stretch and grow, putting up new shoots. Its root grows horizontally with amazing strength, stretch steadily and gradually increase the size and strength of the plant. Bamboo grows steadily even when bending under the weight of snow during winter season. It also multiplies. This is what exactly happens in the case of CCA.

When the CCA was founded only 14 countries and about 36 churches were involved in CCA. It was even known as the 'East Asian Christian Conference', showing its limited geographical jurisdiction, but it has gradually taken roots across Asia. Today, the roots have reached horizontally from Iran in the West to Japan in the East; Nepal in the North to New Zealand in the South. The roots widely spread to new countries such as Iran, Nepal, Bhutan, Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor; all were added subsequently to CCA's wider fellowship. CCA also helped to multiply the ecumenical genus over the years through the establishment of several other specialised ministries in Asia such as the Asia Migrant Centre (AMC), ECPAT, CAW, AHRC, ALRC, and DAGA. Considering all these factors, there is a valid reason for CCA to celebrate its Diamond Jubilee in 2017. I do hope that this Executive Committee will come up with a concrete

proposal, and a mandate to initiate the preparation for the 60th anniversary celebrations in 2017. The 60th anniversary is not only a time for looking at the past history, but it should be seen as an opportunity to reflect about the past, looking at the present and envisioning the future.

Towards Envisioning Mission and Reshaping the Ecumenical Identity

Mission of the church is not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to greater numbers of people, but the essence of the Gospel is meant to transform the world to higher humanity. While analysing the Christian mission in the third millennium, Jose Cheriampattan said, "Mission is transformation of the world to higher humanity". He said, at Vatican II that the concept of mission was in transition and the language of mission concept itself was changed; from "missions" in the plural to mission in the singular, from evangelisation to development, to humanisation; from enculturation to liberation, to preferential option for the poor. As far as the Roman Catholic Church, a new thrust in the missiological emphasis was articulated since the Second Vatican Council in 1964. However, earlier to Second Vatican Council, in 1957 itself, at the Prapat founding Conference of CCA, reflected on the theme of "The Common Evangelistic Task", reflected on "the mission and its encounter with the Asian revolution". M.M. Thomas in a keynote presentation at Prapat said, "By mission, we mean the mission of the church to witness to as Lord and Redeemer... The Church is involved in the Asian revolution and in part reflects it. But this involvement gives the Church the opportunity to encounter it". Bishop E.C. Sobrepena of the Philippines said at the Prapat Conference, "the Asian churches, in rediscovering the compulsion of witness bearing, are at the same time recapturing the sense of urgency. Asian Christians live and work in situations of rapid social change; they are confronted by ideologies that negate the basic philosophy and practice of Christianity... The struggle becomes deeper and more intense every day". He added that Asian Christians and Churches were called to mission and action even in their numerical weakness. Ever since the Prapat Conference, EACC/CCA has been providing the Asian churches a sense of togetherness and a common responsibility in doing Mission as well as helping churches to discern Christ's presence in Asian history in terms of its socio-religious, economic and political context. Mission in action involves the participation in all forms of struggles in the world and it cannot be merely interpreted as preaching Gospel for adding numerical numbers or church planting. CCA believes that the purpose of God for the Church in Asia is life together in a common obedience to him for the doing of his will in the world.

The CCA affirms its conviction that the mission to transform the world is not secondary to the Church but a constitutive of the Gospel proclamation and that it is the rethinking of human existence in the light of the Gospel. It is with this perception and conviction that CCA tries to shape ecumenism as a cardinal principle of mission. N.B. Gladstone Robert, a young pastor of the Church of South India who tried to reformulate and comprehend socio-cultural and religious life of the people of Asia in the broader framework of Mission and Ecumenical Concerns of CCA as part of his doctoral studies, observes, "The significance of ecumenical thoughts which originates from the Asian scenario towards the global level as well to the Asian situation is the kernel of the mission understanding and the contribution of the CCA... It is noteworthy that the ecumenical witness, enhanced by the very formation of CCA, continues to gain its distinct character through challenging the divisive denominationalism, confessional,

ecclesiastical and theological differences that had originated in the Western churches and their missions in Asia". While engaged in its ecumenical witness in Asia from the very beginning of the formation, CCA has gained its character of doing mission in Asia together, for which CCA has called "the churches in Asia to be in unity not only across different ecclesial and theological traditions but also beyond the religious, cultural, and political boundaries or barriers". With this conviction, the CCA, time and again emphasises "God's mission in Asia is for all God's people in Asia".

As the CCA approaches to the 60th anniversary of its founding, it gives us an opportunity to seriously reflect and discuss about envisioning its mission and reshaping the ecumenical identity in the emerging Asian context. From the very beginning of its existence as a regional ecumenical body, CCA has recognised that ecumenism in Asia has its deep roots in mission of the Asian churches. This was also based on the firm conviction that mission of the churches in unity only can bear the fruits as they are inseparable and the Church is called to participate in God's mission in unity. Mission belongs to the very being of the Church, and through its mission, the Church is expected to transform the treasures of the Gospel. CCA made attempts from time to time to articulate the mission of the Asian churches and the ecumenical movement. Asia Mission Conferences organized by CCA in the past have been an integral component of the life and witness of the Asian churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia. The mission conferences were part of Asian churches' efforts of contextualization of theological thinking and articulation of missiological issues in Asia. CCA has been a catalyst to equip the churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia as a whole to perform mission in the midst of emerging Asian context and realities. CCA assemblies as well as Asia Mission Conferences provided opportunities and impetus to think loudly about the missiological convictions amidst Asia's pluralistic contexts and shape the ecumenical identities. However, it has been a while that CCA made any specific effort to provide another opportunity for Asian churches and all other ecumenical partners in their common faith journey to reflect on the emerging mission contexts in Asia. The last such attempt was in 1994. Now the time has come, especially in the context of CCA's Diamond Jubilee, to provide such an opportunity. In a separate session later, we will be discussing the proposal of the Assembly and the programme committee, and more concrete plans for organising an Asia Mission Conference in 2017.

Has the ecumenical movement becomes more divisive and less effective?

It is also important for us at this stage to look at the current situation of the ecumenical movement. The Asian ecumenical movement is not detached from the global ecumenical movement. We believe in one ecumenical movement and the need for affirming and strengthening the value of one ecumenical movement. Changing landscapes of ecumenism, changes in ecclesial landscapes, etc., are certain terminologies repeatedly used in ecumenical circles for almost two decades now. However, the question is how successful we have been in addressing emerging challenges in various contexts thus far. On the one hand, we try to analyse the landscapes and often end up in the same old analysis or end up using exaggerated symbolisms or analogies to illustrate the situations of ecumenical and ecclesiastical structures. However, as time passes, no effective actions are taken to really understand and respond to the challenges in ecumenical or ecclesial perspectives with certain authentic approach or commitment. In the Asian contexts, we can identify various examples for more and more

divisiveness which is fragmenting the ecumenical ethos and values of ecumenism. In other words, what we see today is a more visible expression of lack of coherence and coordination of the ecumenical movement in Asia or other parts of the world. This is often initiated by those who are expected to ensure the coherence of one ecumenical movement.

As the ecumenical agenda has been changing and moving away from the priorities of ecumenical commitment three or four decades ago, there is no point in simply repeating the same jargon with certain cosmetic changes or prefixes and suffixes. Whatever may be the issue to be addressed, what we need is a strong and committed ecumenical movement with the full cooperation and support of its member constituencies. In addition to this, what is required is full cooperation and participation with all ecumenical and ecclesiastical partners and actors in our region. We find today a variety of organisations and institutions working on similar areas or concerns – NGOs, INGOs, faith based organisations, governments, multilateral organisations, etc. These groups are loosely connected with institutional churches or ecumenical organisations. In many contexts, collaboration with them is much easier, but often the problem we face is lack of ecumenical cooperation and collaboration among ecumenical partners and mission agencies who are working in the same region with similar agendas where collective ecumenical actions are needed. It is important to demonstrate Christian unity and ecumenical visibility in actions when the same church-based organisations are trying to address similar issues in one region or country with an aim for a common goal. It is in this context that the relevance of a conciliar body like a Regional Ecumenical Organisation (REO) such as CCA has been valued over the years. Dr. Konrad Raiser, former General Secretary of WCC, described the special role of such conciliar bodies – the WCC, REOs and NCCs – and he stated that these ecumenical structures should be seen as the backbone of ecumenical cooperation. While he was leading the WCC, he emphasised the importance of discussions on such issues at the annual meetings between WCC and the REOs, as well as in the periodic meetings of NCCs. The specific roles of the conciliar bodies on local, national, regional and world levels need to be worked out more carefully as their role will not be in implementing programmes and projects but in facilitating, interpreting, connecting and providing the communication flow for the entire multilateral ecumenical configurations. However, what we see today is more polarisation and divisiveness due to lack of clarity and vision in shaping unity of the one ecumenical movement. CCA has always given special importance to relate with NCCs in Asia. The meetings with the General Secretaries of NCCs in Asia have been mutually helpful in strengthening in our common ecumenical bonds and joint ecumenical actions in the past. However, CCA's meetings with NCC General Secretaries have not been taking place for some time now. It is expected that a meeting of CCA and NCCs in Asia will be held in 2017.

Called to bear witness to the truth and hope in action

In this report, I tried to portray a picture of Asian realities in which we are deeply immersed in and also the current state of affairs of CCA in the context of wider ecumenical, ecclesiastical realities as well as missiological convictions. In this context, I would say that it is an imperative for us to see the rays of hope in the midst of darkness and affirm our faith in the presence of the living reality, God. As Christians, we are bound to be strengthened by our faith and to live in hope in order to be a light of life amidst darkness. We are reminded of the assurances of Christ who said: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,

but will have the light of life (John, 8: 12)”. The Gospel tells us that Jesus shares with us the healing power that is a part of God’s kingdom with those who were deprived of all strength: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest (Mathew, 11: 28)”. The words of St. Gregory the Theologian, 4th century, remind us that Jesus assumed the worse that “He might give us the better. He came down that we might be lifted up. He was tempted that through him we might conquer. He died that he might save us”. From the beginning, Christian communities have regarded the death of Jesus in the light of the words of the prophet Isaiah: “Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases... he was wounded for our transgressions... (Isaiah, 53: 4-5)”. This is not to venerate suffering for its own sake or to perceive it as an advantage in itself, but it is to encourage people simply to accept the sufferings imposed upon them by others. It is a reminder for us to be encouraged that Jesus is beside of us with the assurances of the restoration of light at times of darkness in life, restoration of wholeness to every stage of brokenness in life. As Paul writes to Timothy, “For this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe (1 Timothy, 4: 10)”.

The conviction of our ancestors who initiated CCA was based on their firm belief that mission is the core of the ecumenical movement in Asia and ecumenism cannot be a mere fellowship of a few Christians. The new ecumenical venture in Asia came into being out of such a conviction of the Asian churches that the united witness and mission of the churches in Asia is inevitable. Almost six decades later, we are still affirming this conviction and we are still hopeful that ecumenism in Asia will grow and flourish to face the challenges that Asia faces today. We are hopeful of the fact that CCA will be instrumental to bear witness to the truth and face the challenges of the ecumenical witness. We need to be hopeful that the ecumenical witness envisioned by the very foundation of CCA will gain more momentum of doing mission in Asia in unity, beyond narrow ecclesial and theological boundaries. We are hopeful that God’s presence and guidance will lead to people-centered mission and ecumenism. This is hope in action to live in God’s presence in the midst of despair. There are many moments of despair we are faced with during our ecumenical journey, but I am hopeful of the fact that CCA, as a privileged instrument in the hands of God assigned to perform His task, will be in a much better position by the grace of God in future to bear witness to the truth. Often, we are not prepared or not confident enough to respond to God’s call to be His witnesses. Often, we are not confident enough to bear the witness to the truth. In human history, this has been a perennial problem at every stage in life. An ancient Vedic prayer in Indian tradition echoes the same message and earnest longing to be freed from such despairs in the midst of ignorance and darkness:

“From ignorance, lead me to truth;
From darkness, lead me to light;
From death, lead me to immortality”.
(*“asato mā sadgamaya, tamaso mā jyotirgamaya, mṛtyormā amṛtaṁ gamaya”*)

While appreciating the bursting buds on a plum tree in the winter, Joseph Hardy Neeshima, founder of the Doshisha University in Japan, once said:

“Truth is just like the winter plum blossom
 It dares to bloom despite snow and wind”.

Nasheema wrote these lines about plum blossom at the time of the year when the trees have shed all their leaves. But he saw a bud on the branch of a plum tree – a foretaste of the spring to come. It gave him hope that something was happening despite snow and wind. This is true in our ecumenical context too. Often, it is said that the ecumenical movement is facing a winter, in which everything is frozen and movement is restricted or everything becomes static and we are in the midst of a sense of darkness. But, we are being called to respond to such situations with hope in action and we are called to “bear witness to the truth” and be “the light of life” (John, 18: 37; John, 8: 12). We will be able to bear the witness to the truth only in faith of the living reality of the presence of God in our midst. This situation of experiencing the beauty and reality of God’s presence in everyday life, in the midst of anxiety or doubts, is narrated in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was called to be a prophet among the nations. He thought that he would not be able to perform the task. Jeremiah was doubtful and not confident. He expressed his lack of confidence and doubt. Then, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” He said, “I see a branch of almond tree” (Jer, 1: 11). The Hebrew words for almond means “to awaken”. In this context, Takenaka says, this story is an allegory for the awakening of people to the living reality of God’s presence. Let us awake to experience the living reality of God’s presence and let us respond to His call to bear witness to the truth and light of life in Asia.

18 July 2016

Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary

Appendix 2

CCA Executive Committee Members 2015-2020

Officers

Moderator

Archbishop Willem T. P. Simarmata

Vice Moderator

Rev. Diana Tana

Treasurer

Mr. Augustine Dipak Karmakar

General Secretary

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara

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Rev. Kim Kyrie
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Rev. Moises Antonio de Silva
Rt. Rev. Ruel Norman Marigza

Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian
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Ms. Supaporn Yarnasam
Rt. Rev. Taranath S. Sagar (Late)
Rev. Terence Corkin
Dr. Tong Wing Sze
Mr. Za Uk Sang

CCA Programme Committee Members 2015-2020

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Bishop Philip Huggins
Prof. Martha Mary Marwein
Ms. Lizette Galimia Tapia
Rt. Rev. Dr. Daniel Thiagaraja
Rev. Dr. Henny William Booth Sumakul
Mr. Victor Wan Chi Hsu
Ms. Molina Karmaker
Mrs. Mary Thomas
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