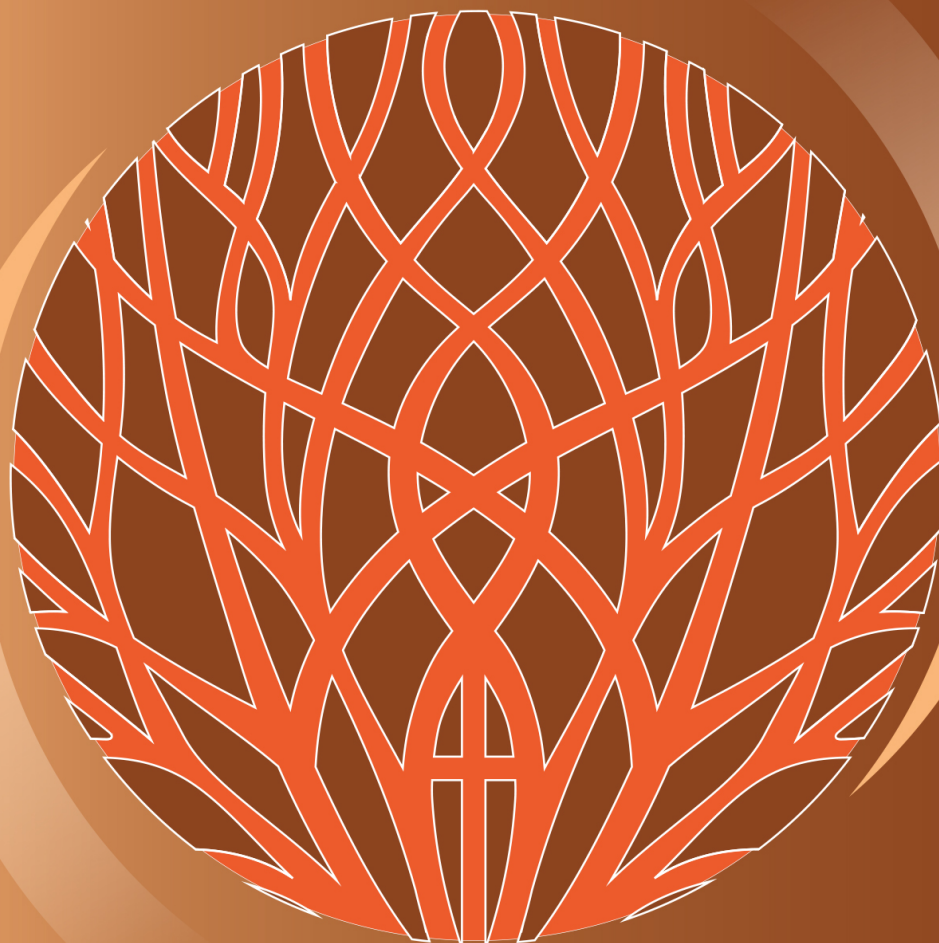




Christian Conference of Asia



Living Together in the Household of God

**Report of the
14th General Assembly**
21–27 May 2015 | Jakarta, Indonesia



Christian Conference of Asia

**OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE
14TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA**

**21–27 May 2015
Jakarta, Indonesia**

***LIVING TOGETHER IN THE
HOUSEHOLD OF GOD***

**Official Report of the 14th General Assembly of the Christian
Conference of Asia
Living Together in the Household of God**

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Foreword

The General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), which is the supreme decision-making body of CCA, convenes every five years. The General Assembly presents an opportunity for CCA's member churches, councils, and other related organisations in the wider ecumenical family in Asia as well as from other parts of the world to celebrate the life and witness of fellowship. It also gives an opportunity to biblically and theologically reflect on Asian situations and what it means to be the faithful Church of Jesus Christ amid challenges and opportunities posed by Asia's rapidly changing pluralistic societies. It is an important occasion to bring together the official representatives of the member constituencies of CCA on a broader platform and to review the work of the CCA in the previous five years as well as to develop the vision and mission of the CCA as an Asian ecumenical fellowship for the next five years.

The 14th General Assembly of the CCA was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 21 to 27 May 2015, with the theme, 'Living Together in the Household of God'. The theme reiterated that amid alarming and dismal ground realities, the call to churches in Asia and its people was to commit themselves to reaffirming the 'sanctity of life' and be co-workers with God in protecting and sustaining the life of all creation in the household of God, as "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." (Psalm 24:1)

Each General Assembly of the CCA leaves a legacy of recollections of its ecumenical journey during the past five years in between Assemblies. The Assembly started with an opening worship which was an occasion for the delegates and the participants to celebrate 58 years of life and witness of Asian churches starting from Parapat in 1957 to Jakarta in 2015. In addition to the official business sessions and reflections on the main theme and sub-themes of the Assembly, the participants had opportunities to enter into meaningful discussions on various issues and themes related to Asian realities in general plenary sessions as well as in dialogue sessions. This Assembly also considered enormous challenges

confronting the programmes of CCA during the past five years and identifying programmatic priorities for the next five years. The concerns discussed and reflected at different pre-Assembly events were also shared at the Assembly.

The rich diversity of Asia was manifested in different ways by participants of the Assembly who gathered from Iran in West Asia to Japan in East Asia; and from Nepal in the North to New Zealand in the South, bringing together not just CCA constituencies but also fraternal delegates and representatives of church and ecumenical bodies from different continents. The 14th General Assembly was hosted graciously by the Batak Christian Protestant Church (HKBP), in collaboration with the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI).

The official Report was compiled by my colleagues Ms Susan Jacob, Ms Zeresh John, and Ms Ruth Mathen. We are indebted to them for putting the documents and reports of the 14th General Assembly together into a coherent whole. This Report will remain an important record of another milestone in the history of the Asian ecumenical movement.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA

An Overview of the 14th CCA General Assembly

The world that was created by God is the abiding place or the 'house' where all beings in God's creation live together. All God's creations depend on each other for the sustenance of life, and, therefore, shall continue to weave their existence in such a way that they can live together in peace and harmony, and for the well-being of each other (Colossians 1:16–17; 19–20). Human beings are mandated to be responsible stewards of God's creation, tending the garden of God (Genesis 1:26–28; 2:15; Psalm 8:5–8; Luke 12:42–48; Romans 12:1–2; 1 Peter 4:10). This theme implies and envisages a recommitment to responsive and responsible actions to be pursued by churches, ecumenical organisations, and individuals in the years to come.

The theme of the 13th General Assembly, 'Called to Prophecy, Heal, and Reconcile', inspired the programmes of the CCA to focus on the vision, 'Life together in common witness to God's love through transforming mission'. From this vision emerged the Mission Statement that in the next five years (2011–2015), the CCA 'will encourage, equip, accompany, and share with churches in Asia to engage in prophetic and compassionate healing, and reconciling ministries of justice and equality for all'. The CCA is encouraged by the support and cooperation of the member churches and councils and is grateful for the willingness of our ecumenical partners to journey with us and support us in implementing programmes towards this vision and mission.

However, the situation in Asia and around the world has shown further signs of deterioration in the quality of life (Jeremiah 4:23–26; Hosea 4:1–3; Romans 8:22–23). These realities continue to challenge the churches in Asia to proclaim God's love and justice for all (Psalm 33:5; Matthew 23:23; Isaiah 65:17–25) and to follow Jesus in believing that:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Luke 4:18–20)

In many countries in Asia, Christians are small in number. Yet, this cannot be an excuse for Christians to refrain from proclaiming this prophetic, liberating message through our words and deeds. Jesus reminded the people of his time and our time that “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing...” (Luke 4:21). This is a promise of the realisation of the kingdom of God characterised by fullness of life for all (John 10:10, Joel 2:21–23, 26–29).

Asian churches are called to be messengers of this good news amid the challenging realities of today (Isaiah 52:7–10; 61:1–4, 8–11). Inspired by the unceasing love of God, who said to Noah:

“This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” (Genesis 9:12–14)

We, the church of today, should do our best to ‘live together in the household of God’.

The 14th CCA General Assembly

1. The Household of God:

Witnessing Together as Asian Churches

Churches throughout the ages continue to be reminded of Jesus’ prayer: “...that they may all be one, so that the world may believe that you have sent me...” (John 17:21). Amid unfortunate fragmentations and divisions within and among churches, special attention needs to be given to Christian unity and the Church’s reflections on the brokenness of the body of Christ. What are the factors that contribute to the increasing tensions and conflicts in the life of families, congregations, or among different denominations? Our congregations, even within a denomination, are no longer homogenous. They reflect the plurality in society, in terms of culture, ethnicity, language, religion, age, social and economic background, as

well as in ways of thinking. This makes living and witnessing together in unity complicated and difficult. The dangers of excluding others are noticeable. The crucial questions to contemplate are: How does the Church witness the love of God to all when members are not willing to accept and forgive each other, and respect differences? How can the Church, as a household of faith, speak prophetically when she tends to defend her comfort zone and is not ready to take risks? How can the witness of the Church bear fruits of renewal when she herself is not open to being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit? How can the Church facilitate Christian families to function as the 'household of love' and promote a culture of peace?

2. The Household of God: Moving Beyond the Boundaries of the Church

The household of God is larger than the Church as the 'household of faith,' because it encompasses all God's creation. "The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made..." (Psalm 145:9). It is a call for churches to proclaim the goodness of God and to demonstrate God's compassion to all, beyond boundaries. However, many people in today's world are busy erecting higher and stronger walls to segregate and hinder people from genuinely communicating with each other across these boundaries. Social barriers of class, caste, creed, and fault lines that demarcate minority groups, based on religious, linguistic, and ethnic differences, habitually divide and fragment humanity. It is time that we move beyond these boundaries, seen and unseen, real and imagined. We must try to weave a matrix that includes, interconnects, and intertwines all in love, compassion, and the joy of fellowship. In the midst of the widening gap between the poor and rich, among communities and countries, the flow of migrant workers and refugees from the less-developed to the developed countries has tremendously increased. Similarly, ecological disasters, political unrest, and war in many places in Asia and around the world, often caused by communal conflicts due to ethnic and religious differences have pushed people to seek refuge in other places. Mass migrations of people beyond the borders of countries is a common phenomenon today. As a result, many countries have tightened their security along their borders and tend to be unfriendly towards migrants and refugees. What are the responses of churches amid these conflicts? How can churches in such places witness the love of Christ that welcomes strangers

and heals the wounded, regardless of their background? What is required by the Church to be able to offer hospitality and a safe space to those who seek justice? In the context of pluralistic societies as in Asia, how can churches witness God's love to all, regardless of their social, economic, cultural, and religious background?

3. The Household of God: Managing with Responsibility

The world created by God is the house for all creation. Everybody and all things should have the proper space to live a decent life and to glorify God the Creator (Psalm 95:1–7). Human beings, who are created in the image of God, are entrusted to responsibly manage the household of God. However, many a time, driven by self-interest and greed, we, as human beings, have failed to fulfil this responsibility. The tendency to accumulate power for one's self has hardened the hearts of many and driven them away from God's ways of justice for all (Psalm 95:8–11). Instead of exercising stewardship with responsibility, they marginalise and oppress others, particularly those who are different from them in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, social, and economic status. The majority tends to dominate and oppress the minority and discriminate against them. Globalisation that is centred on a market economy encourages people to accumulate profit limitlessly and perpetuates the spirit of individualism and consumerism, often at the expense of others, especially those who are weaker members of society. People suffer from social and economic injustices and lack of peace and human security. Human trafficking is escalating and spreading beyond control. Children, women, indigenous communities, and other weaker groups become victims of discrimination. The increasing incidence of violence and injustice should once again call the attention of the churches in Asia to biblically and theologically reflect on the role of the Church in developing responsible stewardship that can promote God's justice for all.

4. The Household of God: Sustaining God's Creation

As Paul stressed, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now..." (Romans 8:22). In the recent past, Asia and the world have suffered various forms of natural calamities. Indeed, the whole creation is crying out loud from the depths of severe suffering caused by human negligence and greed.

Human beings, who were placed by God in the Garden of Eden and were entrusted to take good care of all creation, have misused their power. Instead of exercising good and responsible stewardship, we have indiscriminately exploited nature and without limit for the sake of gaining maximum profit. In the name of development projects, land and mountains are stripped of their trees and forest cover; water and air are polluted, and the fertility of the soil is destroyed by the use of strong fertilisers and chemical waste. As a result, many deformity-causing diseases have come into existence and many species of birds, flora, and fauna have become rare or extinct. As if this were not enough, the carbon precipitation in the atmosphere has gone beyond permissible proportions, further endangering all life. The womb of the earth is groaning as human beings ceaselessly assault it, to the extent that it has lost its capacity to sustain its own life and the life of all creation. Seasonal weather that used to be reasonably predictable is now erratic and in extremes due to climate change. Standardisation of lifestyles and commercial food chains selling junk and processed food has encouraged a kind of 'brand consumerism' that undermines and destroys traditional local culture, healthy food habits, and economic well-being. In short, the 'oikos', or the dwelling place of the whole creation, created by God, is in danger.

This is a 'kairos' moment for people, including the churches, to repent and return with all their heart and mind to God's ways of peace and justice as proclaimed by Prophet Joel:

"Yet, even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing, return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents in punishing." (Joel 2:12-13)

How can the Church play the role of a facilitator to heal wounds in our common house, the whole universe? What are the programmes that can be enhanced by the churches that can lead to the full freedom of creation, especially from human bondage? Although problems are mounting and are becoming increasingly complex, we, as people of hope, are not to lose courage or give up our struggle, 'for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God'. (Romans 8:19)

Opening Worship

The Spirit moved through music and dance during the Assembly's opening worship service.

Music, dance, lively colours—the gifts of culture—provided the energy of the Spirit flowing through the opening worship service of the 14th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia on Thursday night.

Through the liturgy, the delegates remembered and celebrated 58 years of Christian life together as members of the CCA and its prophetic witness in Asia as readings recalled all of the CCA assemblies, from Parapat in 1957 to Kuala Lumpur in 2010. Those attending each Assembly shared in the reading, which was followed by the musical response of Ay, Ay Salidummay, 'Let us give thanks to God'.

A moving drama reflected the tears and pleas of Asia's suffering people, accompanied by the responsive reading that lifted today's issues confronting the region and the world: major proliferation of war and conflict, widening financial disparities that ignore the poor and leave them further behind, migration and development without a human face, the suicide of farmers, spending on greater military might at the expense of education and health, the contraction of democratic space and the expansion of poor governance, threats to religious freedom and the rights of minorities and, lastly, refugees fleeing all of the above manifestations of violence.

Words of welcome were extended by the CCA General Secretary, Rev. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, to the delegates from across Asia and from Africa, Europe, and North America.

The Assembly welcomed and greeted the incoming CCA General Secretary, Dr Mathews George Chunakara, a member of the Malankara Marthoma Syrian Church in India. Dr Mathews George, who had served the CCA and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in various capacities in the past as an Assembly steward, youth intern, Committee member, CCA staff member in Hong Kong, and WCC Asia Secretary and Director of International Affairs, was introduced by the outgoing General Secretary Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang. A special prayer was offered at the opening worship service beseeching blessings upon Dr Mathews George Chunakara for his

future leadership at the CCA and his ministry through the Asian ecumenical movement.

After hearing the Word of God from 1 Peter 4:10—“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received...”—Rev. Willem T.P. Simarmata, Ephorus of the host church, Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP), reminded the delegates in his sermon that all of the 55 million members of the CCA have received gifts and charisma from God but that each individual Christian needs to discover these gifts and charisma within themselves also.

Rev. Simarmata in his message also highlighted the challenges Asia faced today. “There is a need for justice in our beloved continent of Asia,” he said. “Despite the efforts of all of our predecessors, we see the spirit of separation. We seem to have a growing intolerance in Asia.” He further added, “Living together is impossible if there is no spirit of sharing with each other. We need to think of others.”

Among these ‘others’ that he upheld were the Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar, migrants from Bangladesh who were stranded at sea, and those who mourned the loss of life after the earthquake in Nepal and worked to rebuild their lives.

He further challenged the CCA delegates saying, “We need to be good stewards of the oikos of God (the house of God). We have to be accountable to God. We need to manage the natural resources that have been entrusted to us.”

After the anthem ‘Living Together in the Household of God’ was sung by the choir, an intergenerational blessing by a child, a young person, and an adult was then offered, and the delegates were sent out into the world to be faithful witnesses of God’s love.

Inauguration

Indonesia’s minister of religious affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, officially opened the 14th General Assembly of the CCA and expressed pride that Indonesia hosted the Assembly.

Part of his address to the Assembly was devoted to the issue of terrorism that afflicted Asia and the world. “In dealing with terrorism,” he said, “we need to build peace in the world, based on justice and equality. Justice and peace cannot be understood

separately. Otherwise, they will be mere slogans. Terrorism must be dealt with together. We should not fix a problem by creating another problem.”

Saifuddin discredited the perception that religion and terrorism are linked. “Religion does not teach terrorism,” he explained. “Instead, religion teaches how to build a better society for the future.”

In his message to the Assembly, Saifuddin also emphasised the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

“With dialogue, we can understand that religion is not the problem,” the minister said. “There is no religious conflict. There is only personal conflict, there is only political conflict, and there is only economic conflict. We need to be careful so that our religious life is not affected by these other factors.”

Behind the Liturgy of the Opening Worship of the CCA’s 14th General Assembly

Under the theme of ‘Living Together in the Household of God’, or in the Indonesian language ‘Kebersamaan Hidup Dalam Rumah Tangga Allah’, the CCA 14th General Assembly’s Opening Worship began with a liturgy that stressed two important points.

Rev. Dr Ester Pudjo Widhiasih, who designed the liturgy, said that at first, people of faith in Asia were invited to come with grateful hearts to God. It was a thanksgiving where churches were called to thank God, who works and acts especially to empower churches in Asia in facing various problems. So, the liturgy was an expression of the churches’ gratefulness for their existence to be called as God’s partners.

The second point of the liturgy was lamentation; the heart which voiced concern on various problems faced by churches, both internally and externally. From disharmony in community life to the absence of justice and peace in development, structures and systems that operate in society were, to a very significant extent, built by victimising the powerless. Churches in Asia, in both their weakness and limits, were urged to open their eyes, ears, and hearts to see, hear, and feel the marginalised and poor. Solidarity with the poor meant that churches compassionately took part to usher in a new earth and a new heaven.

The symbols and interior design used during the opening worship were also of great interest. Rev. Dr Ruth Kadarmanto designed the same using bamboos and branches of trees. “There are meanings for the use of bamboo and branches of trees,” she said.

The first was to show simplicity (ugahari) that was to become a way of life for churches in Asia, and thus plastic or metal materials were not used.

The second purpose was that ‘household’ referred to ‘family’; bamboo and branches of trees that could be found everywhere in one’s surroundings in Asia were expected to bring about the feeling of being ‘at home’ and becoming ‘a family’ for the participants of the CCA’s 14th General Assembly, which in turn would become a wider phenomenon in Asian churches.

The third purpose was to bring to awareness the fact that one of the important contemporary concerns of churches in Asia was the power that stemmed from greed and led to nature’s exploitation. The worship interior placed the focus on eco-theology. Made from bamboo and tree branches, it became a call for all participants of the CCA’s 14th General Assembly and churches in Asia to take part in the movement for the actualisation of the vision of a new earth and a new heaven.

Both the liturgy and the interior provided mutual synergy to bring participants to lament and be grateful to God, and to be more sensitive to the call of the Living God, the host of the household, who takes part in bringing justice and peace as the signs of a new earth and a new heaven.

14th GENERAL ASSEMBLY /
CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA
Jakarta - Indonesia, 20 -27 May 2015



LIVING TOGETHER
IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD



LIVING TOGETHER
IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD



Welcoming Dance by members of Toraja Church



Opening Ceremony of Women's Pre-Assembly



"Moving Beyond the Boundaries of Church" during a Morning Worship service



Holy Communion led by Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan, Rev. Diana Tana, and Bishop Paul Sarker in the Closing Service



Business Session in the Plenary Hall



Indonesian Children playing 'Angklung'



Playing Indonesia's traditional drums to welcome the CCA General Assembly



Dr Simi Thambi, from the Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India, voting in the Business Session



"Partnership of Women and Men" – Women's Pre-Assembly: Presentation led by Rev. Kyung In Kim, Presbyterian Church of Korea



Prayer of blessings for the incoming General Secretary of CCA, Dr Mathews George Chunakara, led by Bishop Dhiloraj Canagasabey from the Church of Ceylon



Incoming CCA General Secretary, Dr Mathews George Chunakara, with Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, outgoing CCA General Secretary



“Living Together in the Household of God”, singing the Assembly theme song



Business Session during the General Assembly



Rev. David Das, NCC-Bangladesh, in the Plenary Session



Traditional Javanese performance during the Assembly



Rev. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, Associate General Secretary of WCC, delivering the first Theme Presentation



Bishop Willem T.P. Simarmata from Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, Indonesia



Members of CCA Presidium playing 'Angklung'



Assembly Resource Books



The daily Assembly newsletters, 'Sarasehan'



Participants with the daily Assembly newsletter

Thematic Presentations

Living Together in the Household of God: A Theological Reflection

Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri¹

Associate General Secretary, World Council of Churches

Introduction

It is a pleasure and honour for me to bring greetings to you from Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC). On behalf of the WCC, I would like to thank the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) for inviting me to give the D.T. Niles lecture at its 14th General Assembly. This is an occasion for us to remind ourselves of the great contribution of D.T. Niles¹ to the global ecumenical movement and to the process of formation and leadership of the East Asia Conference of Asia (EACC), the predecessor of the CCA. It is my great privilege to stand in solidarity with people and churches of Asia whom he served faithfully and to deliver this message in his name.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the local hosts—The Batak Christian Protestant Church (HKBP) and the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI). The warmth, hospitality, and love we are experiencing are remarkable. Truly, I am in the Household of God!

I would like to thank my sister, Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, for her dynamic and servant leadership of the CCA for the last five years. She has been a guiding light to the Asian and global ecumenical movement. We are proud of you for being the first woman General

¹ Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri is Associate General Secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia, World Council of Churches. She is a former Professor of African Theology, Dean and Head of the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics at the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa; former Moderator of the WCC Commission on Ecumenical Formation and Theological education; and former General Coordinator of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.

Secretary of the CCA. You are a role model for so many women who aspire to be ecumenical leaders. As an ecumenical leader in Asia, you also found time to serve the World Council of Churches through its Executive Committee and Central Committee. I acknowledge your leadership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches globally and the support and encouragement you continue to give to churches here in Indonesia. I wish you great success and the blessing of God for your future ministry as the President of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI). I thank you, my sister, for inviting me as an African woman theologian, in particular, to address this Assembly in the year 2015, in which we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Afro-Asian meeting in Bandung, Indonesia, of the Non-aligned countries². I thank you very much for this honour.

I would also like to express my heartfelt congratulations to my brother, the incoming General Secretary of the CCA, Dr Mathews George Chunakara. He is a former colleague of mine in Public Witness and Diakonia of the World Council of Churches, where he was the Director of the Commission of Churches on International Affairs. I can affirm that he is a dynamic leader, who has steadfastly served the ecumenical movement from the national, regional, and international arena. I look forward to working closely with you, as you lead the ecumenical movement from Asia to serve the children of God in this vast, beautiful, and diverse region that you know so well.

It is a privilege for me to be part of the group giving some theological insights and foundation on the theme of the Assembly, 'Living Together in the Household of God', for the deliberation of the Assembly. The publication of 'Living Together in the Household of God: Challenges to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in Asia' by your very own Dr Mathews George Chunakara³ is key to theological insights and foundations on the Assembly theme. I also wish to acknowledge the work already done at a theological workshop organised by the Christian Conference of Asia at the Jakarta Theological Seminary in Indonesia on the CCA's Assembly theme in 2013. I have seen that the process of reflecting on this theme goes as far back as 2006 when I found the article by Hope S. Antone entitled: 'Living Together in the Household of God: Becoming a Household of Love, Faith and Hope'.⁴ As I engage with scholars from Asia,⁵ I come at the theme drawing from the perspectives of African women theologians⁶ (hereafter the Circle) who are members of the Circle of Concerned African Women

Theologians.⁷ This is because when the Circle was inaugurated in 1989, ecclesiology became a central issue. Therefore, since then, the Circle conferences focus on the theological understanding of what it means to be in the household of God, and publications have come out from such deliberations which I would like to draw from to feed into the discussions at this Assembly.

I have therefore divided this presentation into three sections. In the first part I will reflect upon the first part of the Assembly theme: 'Living together'. Second, I reflect on the second part of the theme: 'the household of God'. Finally, I will conclude by submitting that the theological principles of 'Living Together in the Household of God' are an asset in the process of walking together in the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

1. Living Together

Living together means different things, depending on the context in which it is being used. In the theme of the Assembly, I want to interpret living together in the context of the ecumenical movement. We need to seek the following questions as we live together: Where? With whom? Why? How? I seek to identify three dimensions of living together. First, we live together ecumenically. Second, we live together to respond together. Third, we live together in love.

a. Living Together Ecumenically

In a lecture by Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, former General Secretary of the WCC, which he delivered at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary on 17 November 2006,⁸ he described the 20th century as the 'ecumenical century', when the churches built on work started in the previous century to form ecumenical organisations.

As an ecumenical movement, we are living together on the whole inhabited earth; the whole planet is our common home. This is based on our interpretation of Psalms 24 which says: "The earth (i.e., the oikoumene) is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." This is where we are living together. Kobia also stated:

In our faith, we confess the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all life. The ecumenical dimension of our faith compels us to take the risk and to announce God's presence in the world as a whole. We

are there to discern and follow God's calling in all dimensions of our life. We need to recognise that we can never be fully Church if we are not being Church ecumenically. God is not limited to an individual church, nation, gender, or race. God's love is at the origins of creation and God's grace is a power that transforms all according to God's will and purpose.

In John 17:21, it is Jesus' prayer that his followers should be one so that the world may believe in him as the one sent by God. Therefore, being an ecumenical church requires of us to share together our spirituality and to act together. It is these two which make the presence of Jesus Christ visible among us and in our witness in the world credible. It requires us to discern together the will of God for the church and the world. Therefore, this week that we will spend together here allows us to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us together.

b. Living Together to Respond Together

Living together ecumenically allows churches to respond together to the events happening in the churches and the world. Kobia went further to define ecumenism in the 21st century as referring to 'the fellowship of Christian churches working together in the ecumenical movement: the context they encounter, the witness and mission to which Christ is calling them here and now, and the shape their fellowship will take'. The dimension of responding together means acting together. This action is based on what we have heard God saying to us about the issues in the Church or the world. It is a space for the analysis of the state of the Church and the society today and the role of the Church in the world.

For Asian churches, the commitment to live together to respond to the issues in Asia from an Asian perspective goes back to 1957, when the EACC was formed. The WCC was present then and has continued to accompany the churches in Asia in a spirit of mutual and shared commitment in our ecumenical journey. As mentioned by Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the current General Secretary of the WCC, in his lecture given at the 13th CCA Assembly in 2010,⁹ the WCC cannot describe for the churches in Asia what issues they need to respond to together. Nevertheless, his major point was that the prophetic voice and the call to healing are rightly reflected in CCA's theme. Both are needed for unity and life together, truth, critical

voice, and a vision for a healed community is needed. He made it clear that this was a particular contribution from the Asian churches in their context, to see this interrelation and dynamic between the prophetic and the healing ministry.

In line with the observations made by Rev. Dr Olav Fykse, the WCC was happy to hold its 10th Assembly in Asia as it presented an opportunity to magnify the joys and challenges of Asia so that the ecumenical movement can accompany the Asian churches in responding to the key issues. In this case, living together ecumenically is not just for the Asian churches but also for the global churches to be in solidarity with Asian churches.

c. Living Together in Love

Living together in love is also a commandment for all followers of Jesus Christ as stated in John 13:34–35: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.”¹⁰ Here we see an explanation of why the followers of Jesus should love one another. In the Gospel according to Luke 10:27–28, Jesus agreed fully with the summary of the Commandments as given by the scholar who was testing him. The scholar summarised the Ten Commandments in two, quoting from Deuteronomy and Leviticus: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ (paraphrased from Deuteronomy 6:5); and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (quoted from Leviticus 19:18). The two commandments merge into one when we see ‘the other’ as a reflection of the divine; as part of the one body we belong to; and when we love the other as ourselves, however remote the part may be from us—Love the other as ourselves (John 13:34–35).

While the verses quoted above are focusing on love among the fellowship of believers, in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12), Jesus challenges us to break free and step out from our deceptive comfort zones, to empathise with those who are in vulnerable situations and to make ourselves vulnerable. He clearly wants us to respond to realities in a caring and compassionate manner, to be able to yearn for justice and peace and to have the courage to respond, even when our interests and life are at stake. It is this costly discipleship that can make a difference in the world: “Love the Lord your God

with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.”—Jesus’ teaching about seeing God in the most marginalised people (those who hunger, thirst, the stranger who needs accompaniment, the one who needs clothing, protection and care, the sick, and the incarcerated: Matthew 25:31–46) clearly indicates that our caring for the other is part of our loving our God!

However, we should not limit being followers of Christ to our denominational, ethnic, class, regional, or national silos. We have to listen to each other’s narratives, challenges, and successes. We need to accompany each other in our lives as part of living together. This is the great ecumenical mandate that each of you has. This is why ecumenical spaces are precious. The Christian Conference of Asia is a God-given instrument and opportunity, for you to witness together as Asian churches!

2. Household of God

A household consists of people who live together, sharing the dwelling place and food, bound by relationships, values, existential needs, and economy. The size of the household varies according to cultures and regions, ranging from nuclear households to whole communities and nations. The second part of the theme for this conference focuses on the household of God. It clearly shows us that living together is to be done in the household of God. The question this raises is: what is our common understanding of the household of God and what are the challenges that come with it? I have chosen to reflect on the household of God in three ways: (a) within my cultural context; (b) in the context of the Old and New Testament; and, (c) in the context of the challenges faced by the Church of God today.

a. The Household of God: My Cultural Context

From my childhood in Malawi, I have happy memories of my parents’ household. From an early age, I understood that our household consists of my parents, uncles and aunts, my grandparents, and great-grandparents. In our village, we trace our bloodline through the mothers. I am the fourth generation of Christians. Holiday times were the best when we could all congregate at our great grandmothers’ village. We ate, worked, and did everything together as one big lineage. Despite differences in denominations¹¹ we prayed together too. On my father’s side of the family, we learnt that

part of our household was also Muslim. My grandfather, who was a Presbyterian minister, had a brother who was an imam. There were also others among the members of our family who made a conscious decision to remain in the traditional religion of our ancestors. Our household includes sisters and brothers-in-law, nieces and nephews of Indian and European descent and other ethnic groups within Malawi and the African continent. Our household is therefore ecumenical, interreligious, multi-racial, and intercultural. Religion, race, and ethnicity are not a dividing factor as it is the bloodline that keeps us united. Within this rich religious heritage, I grew up experiencing warmth and security, companionship and love, the joys of discovery and learning, spiritual and physical nurturing and mentorship. All this contributed to who I am today and influenced my understanding of the household of God and interdenominational Christianity. Even though I grew up in a country where Christians are the majority,¹² I am sure that my story resonates with many experiences of the Christians in Asia, where Christians are the minority. If this is our common experience because of our context, how much of the values of togetherness across ethnic, cultural, racial, denominational, religious lines impact the relations in the churches and in the communities where we come from in Asia! The metaphor to pluralistic living described by Sathianathan Clarke has a ring of familiarity to my experience as described here. He invites his readers to consider a model for a large, traditional, rural household in India as a metaphor for pluralistic living.¹³

b. The Household of God in the Context of the Old and New Testament

The Bible has several ways in which the term ‘household(s)’ is used. Hope Antone has identified 119 references to the *oikos* for ‘household’ and ‘households’ in the Bible.¹⁴ It seems that the understanding of household varies from the way it is used in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Again, drawing from the work of Antone, ‘in the Old Testament the word ranges in meaning from house or dwelling, to family (and all who live in the house, including slaves and servants), to clan or tribe (meaning a group of households), to an entire nation’. Besides, Mathews George Chunaraka has brought our attention to the link between the *oikos* and the land of Israel.¹⁵ He also links the household of God and the command to take care of the creation as found in the creation story. The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple is an example of a vision, even within

the Old Testament, that the temple of God was to bring all nations together, thereby going beyond the nation of Israel.

Similarly, the New Testament has a variety of meanings for the household. In John 2:16, Jesus uses *oikos* to refer to the Jewish temple as his 'Father's house.' As he was facing his imminent death, he used the 'Father's house' in reference to heaven as an abode of God and God's children (John 14:2).¹⁶ During the period of the early Christians, the household of God referred to the Church of Jesus Christ. In particular, in Ephesians 2:19, the household of God is where the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians become one in Christ. It says: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone." Here, we note that it is Jesus Christ who holds the Church and its teachings together. 1 Corinthians 6 further links the bodies of Christians with the temple of the Holy Spirit, where the Holy Spirit resides.

c. Challenges to the Household of God Today

Christ, the head of the household, is the very personification of servant leadership: the master who serves and who washes the feet of his disciples. We are dynamic members of this household. Philip Potter, one of the former general secretaries of the World Council of Churches, whose life and death we commemorated recently, called it the 'house of living stones—a living community of sharing in justice and peace'.¹⁷ While previously the ecumenical movement focused on bringing churches together to deal with interdenominational issues that hindered the unity of the church, today the landscape has changed. The ecumenical movement is forced to deal with divisions within churches over exclusion and discrimination based on race, caste, gender, HIV and AIDS, and sexual orientation. Mostly, it is about moral discernment in the household of God. How do we live together in such a way that no one is made to feel that they are aliens in the household of God?¹⁸ Is one form of discrimination among Christians in the household of God better than another? The WCC Unity Statement states this powerfully:

To be a credible sign our life together must reflect the qualities of patience, humility, generosity, attentive listening to one another, mutual accountability, inclusivity, and a willingness to stay together, not saying 'I have no need of

you' (1 Corinthians 12:21). We are called to be a community upholding justice in its own life, living together in peace, never settling for the easy peace that silences protest and pain, but struggling for the true peace that comes with justice. Only as Christians are reconciled and renewed by God's Spirit will the Church bear authentic witness to the possibility of reconciled life for all people, for all creation. It is often in its weakness and poverty, suffering as Christ suffers, that the Church is truly a sign and mystery of God's grace.¹⁹

Under the leadership of Dr Aruna Gnanadason, the WCC launched a study on 'Being Church' at the same time as another on 'Overcoming Violence'. Both were responses by the WCC's 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre to the results of the World Council of Churches' 'Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women', 1988–1998. Violence against women and questions of women's participation in the Church are divisive issues in the body of Christ. But they have remained important in the ecumenical movement as they still raise issues of justice in the household of God where God is justice. Human trafficking and the brutal rape of women in Asia have not abated, as is the case in other parts of the world. Now, more than ever, there is a need for more coordinated efforts by churches in Asia to purge this evil from the household of God.

Inequality has no theological or biblical bases since the suffering of the children of God mars the image of God. Inequality is magnified when people are affected by natural disasters like floods and earthquakes, as we have seen most recently in the Philippines and Nepal. Then, there is the issue of migration, which is putting the lives of people in danger as they travel on seas in unsafe boats and ships. Unfortunately, hospitality is not granted to all who need help, as we see also in the story of the Good Samaritan. Even in the household of God, the tendency is to want to give humanitarian aid only to other Christians and not people from other religions. Yet, the Church is called to raise its prophetic voice to advocate for people suffering from inequality irrespective of their religious affiliation, race, caste, class, or nationality. As noted above, all are children of God and deserving of God's love.

As observed above, the household of God includes the whole creation. It has now become clear that the survival of the human race is linked to the way we treat the environment. The head of the

household of God is expecting Christians to practice stewardship by taking care of the earth. Most ancient religions have long since respected the earth as they holistically see their worship of God. Unfortunately, for the majority, in our practice of Christianity, we have failed to see the link between our consumption patterns and the destruction of the earth. The focus on the household of God gives us an opportunity to see this connection and strive for economic and ecological justice. Again, the Unity statement clearly says:

The unity of the Church, the unity of the human community, and the unity of the whole creation are interconnected. Christ who makes us one calls us to live in justice and peace and impels us to work together for justice and peace in God's world. The plan of God made known to us in Christ is, in the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ, 'things in heaven and things on earth' (Ephesians 1:9-10).

Just peace in Asia has been the concern of the ecumenical movement and the churches in Asia. The past assemblies of the CCA have focused on this theme. The 10th Assembly of the WCC, which was held in Busan, South Korea, in 2013, aimed at raising the issue of the reunification of the Korean peninsula and other issues of justice in Japan, Pakistan, and Nepal to mention some countries.

3. The Framework of the 'Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace' for Living Together in the Household of God

One of the key outcomes of the WCC 2013 Assembly was an invitation to Christians and people of goodwill from everywhere to join in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. The Assembly theme, 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace', formed a uniting prayer, bringing together the diversity of concerns and expectations into a framework for understanding and for the commitment to move forward together in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. The Assembly also identified the following key themes for the pilgrimage: peacebuilding, economic justice, climate change, and social justice informed by spirituality, formation, and theological reflection.

I now extend this invitation once more to you to deliberate on how you are going to make this pilgrimage of justice and peace a reality in your context. The key elements of the pilgrimage are:

- i. It is spiritual: therefore, it involves identifying gifts that God has already given to churches in Asia to embark on this pilgrimage.

- ii. It is contextual: it demands you to analyse your context to identify areas of brokenness, where God's people and creation are hurting and where you feel Jesus Christ is calling you to respond. At the same time, it brings you into contact with global issues of brokenness. It is in line with what you are already doing here.
- iii. It is transformational: you are called to bring healing, reconciliation, and peace with justice to the brokenness you have identified.

In 2015, the ecumenical movement is focusing on climate change. Churches are gathering at different stations to reflect and pray together as they move to the UN Conference of Parties (COP21), which will take place in the Le Bourget area of Paris on 7–8 December 2015. Subject to the approval of the WCC's Executive Committee, the 2016 pilgrimage of justice and peace will focus on a just peace in Israel/Palestine.

How are the churches in Asia accompanying this pilgrimage of justice and peace? Whatever ways you decide to be involved in the pilgrimage, the ecumenical movement would like to be informed about your stories, so that we can accompany one another in the pilgrimage of justice and peace. The WCC has launched an internet site, a blog, and a Facebook page in support of it. I invite you to be part of the social media interaction on the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

My sisters and brothers in Christ, you may be a minority in this vast continent, but you are the yeast and salt of Asia (Matthew 5:13; 13:33). You are catalytic and transformative; an inclusive community establishing the household of God!

May the God of life lead us to justice and peace. Amen.

Endnotes

- ¹ Newbiggin, L. and Niles, D., 2002. In: N. Lossky, J. Bonino and et. al., ed., Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement. Geneva: WCC Publications, pp.827–828.
- ² The first large-scale Asian–African or Afro–Asian Conference, also known as the Bandung Conference (Indonesian: Konferensi Asia-Afrika), was a meeting of Asian and African states, most of which were newly independent, which took place on 18–24 April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia. The conference’s stated aims were to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neocolonialism by any nation. The conference was an important step toward the Non-Aligned Movement. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandung_Conference (accessed on 15 May 2015).
- ³ Chunakara, Mathews George., 2015. Living Together in the Household of God: Challenges to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in Asia. Thiruvalla: Christava Sahithya Samithy.
- ⁴ Antone, H., 2006. Living Together in the Household of God: Becoming a Household of Love, Faith, and Hope. CTC Bulletin, Vol. XXII (No. 2, August 2006), pp.52–61.
- ⁵ Jin, Y., 2001. On Being Church: Asian Women’s Voices and Visions. Ecumenical Review, 53, pp.109–111.
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- ⁸ Kobia, S., 17 November 2006. Ecumenism in the 21st Century: Common Witness in A Globalised, But Deeply Divided World. Lecture at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. Accessed from <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/speeches/ecumenism-in-the-21st-century> on 17 May 2015.
- ⁹ Tveit, O., 2010. Called To Prophesy, Reconcile, And Heal: An Ecumenical Perspective. Thematic Address at the Christian Conference of Asia’s 13th General Assembly, 15–20 April 2010, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- ¹⁰ New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).
- ¹¹ Among my relatives, we have those who are: Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostals, Classical African Indigenous Churches, and Baptists.
- ¹² According to the 2008 population and housing census, there were about 13 million people in Malawi, of whom about 83 percent were Christians, 13 percent were Muslims, 2 percent belonged to other religions, and 2 percent did not belong to any religion. 2009. Population And Housing Census, 2008. Zomba: National Statistics Office, p.13.
- ¹³ Sathianathan, C., 2000. Religious Liberty in Contemporary India: The Human Right to be Religiously Different. The Ecumenical Review, Vol. 52 (Issue 4), pp.679–489.

- ¹⁴ Antone, H., 2006. Living Together in the Household of God: Becoming a Household of Love, Faith, and Hope. CTC Bulletin, Vol. XXII (No. 2, August 2006), p.53.
- ¹⁵ Chunakara, Mathews George., 2015. Living Together In The Household Of God: Challenges To The Pilgrimage Of Justice And Peace In Asia. Thiruvalla: Christava Sahithya Samithy, p.11.
- ¹⁶ Antone, H., 2006. Living Together in the Household of God: Becoming a Household of Love, Faith, and Hope. CTC Bulletin, Vol. XXII (No. 2, August 2006), p.53.
- ¹⁷ Porter, P., 2018. A House of Living Stones. The Ecumenical Review, Vol. 70 (Issue 1), pp.67–83.
- ¹⁸ Germond, P. and de Gruchy, S., 1997. Aliens In The Household Of God: Homosexuality And The Christian Faith In South Africa. South Africa: David Philip Publishers.
- ¹⁹ 2013. WCC Unity Statement, Document No. PRC 01.1. Busan, South Korea: World Council of Churches, 10th Assembly, p.4.

Living Together in the Household of God: A Geopolitical Perspective

Dr Leonard Hutabarat
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Dr Leonard Hutabarat, a Career Diplomat and Acting Director of the Centre for Policy Analysis and Development on the American and European Region in the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made a presentation on the geopolitical perspective of living together in the household of God, amid the prevailing geopolitical system in Asia.

‘Power politics’, ‘perceptions’, ‘spheres of influence’ were some of the concepts that were shared with the delegates of the 14th General Assembly of the CCA. Pointing out that geopolitics was simply adding geography into the equation of political, economic, military, and cultural relationships between nations, he said that in geopolitics, there were always the dynamics between power and a country’s interests, as well as the impact of the spheres of influence of other countries. A government’s perception of the intentions and capabilities of other nations, he said, was another dimension of geopolitics.

Dr Hutabarat made a four-part presentation on geopolitics: (a) definition and why it matters; (b) geopolitics in Asia; (c) regional mechanisms; and, (4) Indonesia’s role in the region.

1. Geopolitics: The Definition and Why It Matters

Geopolitics is the study of the effects of geography (human and physical) on international politics and international relations. It is a method of studying foreign policy to understand, explain, and predict international political behaviour through geographical variables (area studies, demography, natural resources of the region) being evaluated.

Geopolitics is a way of ‘seeing’ the world. It is the struggle over the

control of spaces and places and focusses upon power. Power has always had a central role in geopolitics (Flint, 2006).

Geopolitics is the analysis of the interaction between geographical settings, and perspectives and political processes. It focuses on the dynamic interaction between power and space and addresses the consequences of this interaction (Cohen, 2003).

2. Geopolitics in Asia

Geopolitical situations in Asia depend on relationships, interests, perceptions, and the impact of the spheres of influence. Power relationships, competing interests, and struggles for influence may create conflicts and violence.

Asian geopolitics is determined by economic factors like:

- The struggle for economic resources and economic dominance in Asia, especially in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.
- Expansion of trans-Pacific and intra-Asian trade, as seen in the proliferation of economic partnerships like Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Trans-Pacific Partnerships, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- The emergence of the Indian Ocean as one of the busiest commercial shipping lanes in the world. The magnitude of vessel traffic in the Indian Ocean has outnumbered vessel traffic in the Atlantic Ocean.

Among the areas of tension in the region are various maritime disputes, such as in the South China Sea involving China and many members of the ASEAN. Other factors affecting international relations in Asia are the economic and military rise of China and India, the renewed interest in the region by the United States and its alliances with Japan and South Korea and the expanding influence of Russia.

The major actors in the Asian region are ASEAN, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, India, the United States, and Russia. Their major interests are territorial disputes (South China Sea conflict); military/security issues; economic issues (trade, investment); resources (oil, fisheries, mining, etc.); and, regional influences or ambitions for a leading role in the region.

Power relations and dynamics between major players in Asia are perceptible. While Russia, which is a 'slowing-down economy' is intent on expanding its influence in East Asia/ASEAN, USA, dominating the Asia-Pacific region as a 'superpower in decline' it is looking towards the East to revive its economy and has also intensified defence cooperation with Vietnam and the Philippines. Emerging challenges in the region are Korea and Japan strengthening alliances with the USA; India as an emerging economy and military power intent on growing its relations in East Asia (Look East and Act East Policy); and the threat of China becoming a rising military and economic power with ambitions for regional leadership.

3. The Need for Regional Mechanisms

One basic tool of analysis while discerning the foreign policies of nations is to determine whether the country is trying to develop cooperation or conflict. Geopolitical analyses focus on the dynamic interaction between power and space and address the consequences of this interaction. These studies can help in strategising and establishing international alliances that promote peace, stability, development, and economic growth in the region.

Interactions and communication are crucial in international relations (Adler, 2002). It could be the starting point of the institutionalisation of values that develop into cooperative behaviours in international society. Cooperative behaviour among nations calls for regional mechanisms that enhance cooperation, trade, and growth. Regional mechanisms or regional forums help to promote cooperative measures and peaceful relations and prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in the region. In the absence of such regional mechanisms, competing nations that vie with each other for power and supremacy will result in conflict, instability, and fear.

4. Regional Mechanisms

Asia has many regional mechanisms that it can be proud of. Regional mechanisms in the Asian region are the East Asia Summit (EAS), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

East Asia Summit (EAS)

The EAS, established in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, consists of eighteen

countries: ASEAN–10, China, Japan, Republic of Korea (Korea), India, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Russia. The EAS serves as a forum for dialogue on the strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern to promote peace, stability, and economic prosperity in East Asia. The importance of the EAS is that it brings together three Asian major powers (China, Japan, Korea), balances the influence of external power in the region (US, Russia), serves as a medium for ASEAN to retain its centrality in the region, and is a forum for deliberations, which make collective agreements on trade or security affairs.

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

The APEC was established in 1989 in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and Japan's economy, and to establish new markets beyond Europe. It is a forum for twenty-one Pacific Rim member economies that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The objectives included greater regional economic integration by promoting more connectivity (the APEC Connectivity Blueprint) to achieve better physical, institutional, and people-to-people linkages across the region by 2025.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The ASEAN, formed in 1967, is a political and economic organisation of ten South-East Asian countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, and Thailand).

The ASEAN is one of the cornerstones of Indonesia's foreign policy. Indonesia and all ASEAN countries are now working towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community 2015 (the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community). The ASEAN has relations with eleven dialogue partners, cooperation within the framework of the ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan Korea); the East Asia Summit, and the ASEAN Regional Forum, maintaining ASEAN centrality.

5. Indonesia's Role in the Region

Indonesia's role in the region is influenced by Indonesia's strategic location (geographical destiny) between two continents and two oceans, and between the global economic growth epi-centrum (Asia

Pacific), and resource-abundant regions (the Middle East and Africa). With the world's shifting economic gravity from Trans-Atlantic to Indo-Pacific, Indonesia emerges as the new middle power.

Indonesia's foreign policy is committed to contributing and playing an important role in safeguarding world peace and security by adopting the role of a peacemaker, confidence-builder, problem-solver, and bridge-builder addressing the adversarial balance of power in the region, especially within the ASEAN's regional mechanisms (e.g. South China Sea dispute).

In keeping with its foreign policy, Indonesia's role in the South China Sea involves a concerted effort to maintain regional peace and stability to allow development and prosperity; to build trust between stakeholders; to play an intermediary role in the issue as a non-claimant State; to resolve overlapping territorial claims peacefully and enhance regional capacity to deal with change as it comes, and to engage in trust and confidence-building measures by being an active player in the making of the Declaration of Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (DoC), and ensuring the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (CoC).

In the discussion that followed, questions and comments related to the issues of the role of religion in international affairs, the perceived threat of a more aggressive foreign policy by China, the link between greater defence spending, greater poverty, and the role of the Church were raised by the delegates.

In response, Dr Hutabarat said that sometimes religion was being misused for geopolitical and economic reasons and that conflicts portrayed as being religious were, in reality, related to politics and economics. He said that religion was being manipulated to gain support from their followers for other agendas. The Indonesian government, he said, attempted to engage more moderate Muslims concerning those espousing extreme ideas, as moderate Muslims desired living in harmony with people of other faiths—an approach, he suggested, which could be adopted by other countries such as Pakistan.

As for China, especially its use of foreign aid to influence and sway the policies of other countries, Dr Hutabarat said that what would be good for China, as well as other countries, was to use investment

and its economic strength as a form of 'soft power'. It was up to the developing nations, he added, to use this aid wisely so that they one day rise to the ranks of developed countries. Increased defence spending, he explained, was based on a nation's perceptions.

"When we perceive our neighbours as enemies," he said, "we need to defend ourselves. The perception can be wrong based on miscalculations and miscommunication. Thus, countries purchase weapons because they do not have trust-building measures. A meeting of foreign leaders is one way to build trust and prevent misperceptions."

Dr Hutabarat encouraged the Church to play a role in addressing many of these issues, such as being advocates for governments to tackle the economic hardships that create fertile grounds for religious extremism, and to promote trust-building measures between nations to foster peace.

Living Together in the Household of God: Interfaith Perspectives

Hatred is Stopped by Love: A Summary of the Interfaith Panel Presentation

A variety of interfaith perspectives from the teachings, traditions, and wisdom of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity were presented to enrich the understanding of the delegates on the Assembly's theme, 'Living Together in the Household of God'.

The importance of interfaith dialogue in Islam has been inherent since the origins of the faith in Mecca and Medina, said Prof. Dr Musdah Mulia, President of the Indonesian Conference on Religion for Peace (ICRP) and lecturer at the Islamic State University Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta. She cited the four cornerstones of Islam upon which peacebuilding through interfaith dialogue rested. These were attested to through the agreements and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, such as the Medina Pact and his Last Sermon.

In the Medina Pact, she said, an agreement was reached with Jews, Christians, and idol worshippers in which the Prophet accepted all parties to the pact, regardless of their religion, as one 'ummah', or people. In this pact, religious freedom was recognised as a core value and right, and all members of the pact were to be treated equally by the governing authorities. This view, she added, was reinforced in his Last Sermon which was addressed to non-Muslims as well as Muslims. In his Last Sermon, he included all of the basic principles of human rights. It can, therefore, be considered as the first 'Charter of Human Rights', as well as a foundation for peaceful coexistence among all people and a message promoting interfaith dialogue.

To this historical perspective, Prof. Dr Mulia shared her views about the value of interfaith dialogue and interfaith relationships. "Promoting interfaith dialogue must begin from the principle of acceptance of others," she explained. "Faith is dialogical— first between God and human beings and second among human beings. I do believe that interfaith dialogue is not only possible but is also

necessary to engender an appropriate understanding of other religions.”

Prof. Dr Mulia reinforced her views by outlining four principles that must be realised to establish any interfaith dialogue— the principles of humanity, of one family, of democracy, and of religious pluralism.

“As a religious community,” she said, “we tend to take on the position of God by being arrogant and judgemental. In all honesty, we tend to judge and find fault in others instead of devoting ourselves to each other and caring for each other. We claim to be in the right and ‘others’ are always in the wrong, misguided, and are infidels. As a result, religion-based wars and conflicts become the main stories in the media.”

“In living together, we must always maintain our position as human beings, not as God,” she emphasised. “We must contend for goodness and leave judgement to God about whether our devotion is ‘acceptable’ or not. Therefore, our task as humans is only to try our utmost to do as much good as we can do, and then, leave everything to Him.”

In speaking about the principle of one family, she noted, “The enemies of all religions are injustice, oppression, greed, ignorance, and poverty. Once we have this awareness, as people of faith, we can work together to eradicate these common enemies.”

In working together, Dr Mulia, however, was not content to talk about problems. “I propose,” she declared, “a form of dialogue in action where the actions of supporters of interfaith ideologies are used to transform the community to become a more just and humanitarian society. In other words, enlightenment and transformation at a personal level are not enough. Dialogue participants have to make social transformations, and these transformations must be carried out across all religions.”

Her words resonated with Ven. Banagala Upatissa, President of the Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka and the Chief Sangha Nayaka for Japan, who said, “For most people in Asia, religion is their life; religion is in their body. We have to live equally with each other and respect each other. If one does not respect others, others will not respect oneself.” He added a simple, but wise teaching of his faith: “Buddha said, ‘Do good, not bad. Whatever you do, do it with a very pure heart.’ Hatred never ceases by hatred; hatred is stopped by love.”

He linked faith with action saying, “When your stomach is burning, when you are in hunger, you cannot think of God, you cannot think of Buddha. The first and most important thing is food. Since we all have enough food, we do not think of others begging on the streets. We are here though to serve the people. We are here to show our followers the correct path. If not, there is no need for me to wear this yellow robe.”

Ven. Upatissa explained that Buddhism is a religion of tolerance. “The absolute spirit of tolerance is the most fundamental principle to the teachings of Buddha. Buddhism prohibits attempts to force others to accept our beliefs. Buddhism, with an open and accommodating attitude to other religions, does not claim a monopoly on truth,” added Ven. Upatissa. “Truth,” he said, “must be self-realised and cannot be imposed on others.”

“In line with this reasoning and widely tolerant attitude, Buddha,” he continued, “encouraged his followers to listen to other teachings with an open and critical mind. When others challenged him, he convinced them, by rational ways, the folly of their attachment to dogmatic views.”

In his message to the delegates, Swami Isa, a Hindu spiritual leader and theoretical scientist from Trivandrum, India, explained the interconnectedness of all life through his I-Theory, which was based on the unifying theory of energy. Swami Isa explained, “Everything in the universe is made of energy or vibration. A single unit of vibration is the fundamental particle— the so-called building block of the universe. One of these units is called the ‘I’.”

In relating his thinking to human beings, he said, “Thought creates emotion. Emotion is the energy that pushes us to do something. Thought and emotion are disturbing, and we have to find a way to remove these disturbances.”

“‘How can I be happy?’ is the question of all philosophies,” he continued. “Life only becomes fulfilled through happiness. Life has no value otherwise. People should have the awareness that, being an individual, he or she is also an integral part of the world. Each thought, emotion and action will affect not only one and one’s family but also society and the world. Loving oneself is loving the world.”

This mission was parallel with the CCA 14th General Assembly’s theme of ‘Living Together in the Household of God’.

“As a tiny unit of vibration, the frequencies of our body can be controlled by the material— food—as well as through what we put into our mind,” explained Swami Isa. “Good food (natural food), good rest, and godly thoughts, no matter what religion one follows, will influence the vibration of the ‘I-particle’ of each body, and, as a result, people from different religions can live together in harmony.”

Most obstacles in living together in harmony, Swami Isa added, were when people lived with their negative energy. Therefore, the objective of his mission was to educate people to live in positive energy so that people could live in consciousness and impart it to others all over the world, as exemplified by his own presentation to the CCA General Assembly.

Prof. Dr Tong Wing-Sze, Director of the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Hong Kong, and an adjunct professor at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, Chinese University and at the Lutheran Theological Seminary shared the Christian perspective. She emphasised, “We cannot live together in the household of God alone without relating to other faiths. How we live together in peace is first through going home to ourselves.”

To go home to ourselves, Tong said that feminist theologians believe that a person finds themselves through spiritual practice. Drawing upon the meditation practices of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, she invited the delegates to practice meditation by focusing on their breathing.

The second step in this process, she explained, was to go home to our neighbour. She asked who our neighbour was, and how we were to reach out to them. To find our neighbour, we were to be in touch with our culture and the land, she said.

The final step in the journey was to go home to God, said Tong, but the path to God was even more difficult to find than that of our neighbour. Tong, however, offered an answer: “We can go back to God by hearing the suffering of the people.” This suffering filled the pages of newspapers and the airwaves of radios and televisions. Akin to the other speakers before her, she combined faith with witness.

From the interfaith contributions of the speakers, living together in the household of God bore meaning and relevance only if people of faith were willing to express their relationship with the Divine by engaging with the tragedies of this world. Again, in the words of Ven. Upatissa, ‘Hatred is stopped by love.’

Living Together in the Household of God: A Buddhist Reflection

Ven. Banagala Upatissa Nayaka Thero
Sri Lanka

I am privileged to address the 14th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia. That it has also provided space for discussions on religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the global community is a matter that earns our highest esteem. Despite great advances made by humankind, today, we live in a world that challenges the notion of 'tolerance' as an acknowledgement that others have a differing belief.

The common ground for all religions is not found in debates on the relative merits of different philosophies. The common ground for our discovery of universal truth and tolerance is in the hungry, the poor, the suffering, and the sick. Suffering is not an abstract concept. It is the result of too few having too much, while too many have almost nothing. It is also our collective failure to do almost nothing about it.

The *Dhammapada* in verse 26:399 states, "Him I call a Brahmin who fears neither prison nor death. He has the power of love no army can conquer."

John 15:13 says, "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends." All religions represent human efforts to arrive at a universal truth. In Buddhism, the truth is not dispensed by a higher being. The truth, according to Buddha, is a realisation. We humans can discover the truth by self-realisation.

Apart from that important difference, Buddhism lays down the general lines of conduct by which a person lives his daily life. It has set down rules on important matters of social conduct.

Buddhism does not claim a monopoly on truth. Buddhism teaches us that truth is something that every individual has to discover and realise for himself (*pacattam veditabbo*). Therefore, I must remind my dear friends here that Buddhism has an open and accommodating

attitude towards other religions. This absolute spirit of tolerance is the most fundamental principle of the teachings of Buddha.

Buddhism prohibits attempts to force others to accept our own beliefs. Buddhists strongly believe in our own ability to see things as they truly are. Truth must be self-realised, it cannot be imposed on others. Self-realisation must grow from within the individual. It should be based on the sensitivity and refinement of human nature. That takes time. Forced conversions are therefore unheard of in Buddhism.

The authority of the teacher and guide is different in Buddhism. Buddha is recognised only with the discovery of the *Dhamma* (universal truth). He is not a messenger or a redeemer; he only gives directions that we could follow.

Buddha is a teacher who insisted on reasoning and rejected the blind acceptance of his dictates. He showed the way, but he wanted us to decide for ourselves. Every one of us must understand the truth following our own efforts. Buddha firmly believed that it was within the capacity of every person to make a genuine attempt in reaching the truth.

No other religious founder has made such liberal concessions to other religions. He readily accepted that other teachers too were genuine in their search of the truth. A Japanese Buddhist scholar describes it well, "Buddhism has attempted to arrive at the truth not by excluding its opposites as falsehood, but by including them as another form of the same truth."

What Buddha does not approve of is not the existence of other religions but the discord and rivalry among religions. In a humorous parable, Buddha narrated the story of blind men trying to describe an elephant just by touching one part of the animal. Buddha compared religious sectarians to blind men who kept arguing among themselves about the true nature of the elephant.

Once, two materialistic Brahmins asked Buddha: "Who was the honest one between *Purana Kassapa* and *Nigantha Nataputta* in their claims to omniscience?" Buddha instructed them to put aside the question and listen to what he had to tell them.

In his widely tolerant attitude, Buddha encouraged his followers to listen to other teachings with an open and critical mind. He advised, "You should train yourself thus: whatever doctrine I shall hear connected with what is good (i.e., *kusala*, or wholesome), to this I shall listen attentively, investigate objectively, reflect upon deeply, and upon this concentrate wholeheartedly."

When others challenged him, he convinced them by rational ways the folly of their attachment to dogmatic views. As a religious leader, he did not run away from his responsibility of showing people the ill effects of wrong philosophies (*miccha ditti*). The term '*miccha ditti*' he used as an abstract term, not referring to any system specifically.

He did not attack any system of thought or religion by naming it. He limited himself to pointing out that certain views, if held and allowed to determine our behaviour, may lead to the spoiling of our spiritual welfare. According to Buddha, if *ditti* or philosophy goes wrong, everything goes wrong. Every activity done by someone who holds a wrong philosophy becomes unwholesome, bad, unpleasant, and productive of suffering.

The idea of a universal religion is both unrealistic and impracticable. However, a universal code of conduct as a desired human goal in this age of technological advances is not out of place.

When Buddha taught the *Dhamma*, he appealed only to reason. Over 2,600 years ago, Buddha offered a way that I commend to this gathering to consider. The proposition I present is based on mutual respect. However, it maintains and respects the separate identity of each religion.

It is a practical guide to universal harmony. It requires us to cultivate four basic virtues:

- Metta: a friendly feeling of loving-kindness to all beings in every situation regardless of race, creed, or caste;
- Karuna: compassion for all who suffer and to take practical steps whenever possible to eliminate or alleviate those sufferings;
- Mudita; altruistic joy, to be happy in others' happiness, in their prosperity and success, thereby counteracting feelings of jealousy and unhealthy rivalry between individuals and groups; and,
- Upekkha: equanimity, the maintenance of an even mind when faced with the difficulties inherent in life.

These four virtues make a Christian a better Christian, it makes a Hindu a better Hindu, and a Muslim a better Muslim.

Buddhism can coexist with other religions; the principle of 'live-and-let-live' is fundamental to its ethos. Buddhism teaches us to distinguish between emotions that are constructive, such as *metta* and *karuna*, and those that are destructive, such as anger and jealousy.



Extra-Ordinary General Assembly



'Sarasehan 7' – Ecumenical Conversation on Health and Healing: Imperatives for Ecumenical Advocacy Initiatives in Asia



'Sarasehan 8' – Ecumenical Conversation on Marginalisation of Indigenous and Vulnerable Communities in Asia



Jessica Hiu-tung Tso from Hong Kong Christian Council



Bishop Dr Dhilloraj Canagasabay from Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka



Rev. Hiroko Ueda from National Christian Council in Japan



Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian from Armenian Orthodox Church in Iran



Programme Direction Report on 'Prophetic Diakonia and Ecumenical Advocacy' presented by Victor Van Chi Hsu from NCC-Taiwan and Prof. George Alex from Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India



Rev. Po Kam Cheung from Hong Kong Christian Council



The Assembly Stewards team



"We are marching in the light of God!" – Assembly participants wearing 'ulos' and dancing together in closing ceremony



Living Together in the Household of God: Islamic Tradition of Interfaith Dialogue

Prof. Dr Musdah Mulia
Indonesia

Introduction

Islamic tradition has a glorious history of interfaith dialogue. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace be upon him) has set many examples of dialogue, both verbal and written. The Prophet entered into a dialogue both with the followers of revealed religions and idol worshippers.

The prophetic dialogue was also accompanied by a tradition of cooperation on common human grounds with followers of other religions. To institutionalise this cooperation, the Prophet (pbuh) concluded written agreements with followers of different religions which can serve as models of cooperation and coexistence for the pluralist societies of today.

The Prophet's (pbuh) Activism for Interfaith Dialogue

Hilful Fudūl

We witness the first-ever instance of the Prophet's (pbuh) activism for cooperation with others in acts of goodness and to undo excesses and injustice in Mecca when he was yet to be bestowed with prophethood. He (pbuh) became part of this agreement, called '*Hilful Fudūl*', and accorded a lot of importance to it even after he was granted prophethood.

The Madina Pact

After migrating to Madina to establish peace, stability, and a civil society based on human rights, the Prophet (pbuh) concluded a deal with the Christians, Jews, and *mushrikīn* (idol worshippers) which is recorded in history as *mithāq-e-Madina* (Madina Pact). The most striking feature of the pact has very meaningful relevance to our own socio-political situation in this era of globalisation—he

accepted all religious entities represented in the pact as forming one single *ummah* (people). The Madina Pact accepts religious freedom as a core value and right and guarantees equal rights and obligations of all the participants in the pact in matters of the state. This also establishes the principle that the religious differences of a society or people do not place any obstacles in the affairs of the state and its defence against any external enemy.

The Pact of *Hudaibiya*

This pact also forms a great landmark in the Islamic tradition of interfaith dialogue. It concludes with Muslims paving the way, on one side for the suspension of hostilities against Muslims and opening interaction, and negotiations with different religious groups on the other. These negotiations facilitated the processes of mutual understanding so that coexistence became a reality, and also created conditions for an unobstructed propagation of Islamic teachings.

The Khutba Hujjat Al-widā

The most important initiative taken by the Prophet (pbuh) having utmost relevance in the context of the present interfaith dialogue is his Last Sermon, addressed not only to Muslims but intended for all human beings. It is very interesting to note that the Sermon contains the basic principles of human rights in Islam in the most lucid language. The Last Sermon, the *khutba hujjat al-widā*, not only constitutes the first 'Charter of Human Rights' but also provides a firm ground for peaceful coexistence and the promotion of interfaith dialogue.

These four models of the Prophet's (pbuh) acts of peacebuilding through interfaith dialogue—*Hilful Fudūl*, the Madina Pact, the Pact of *Hudaibiya*, the Last Sermon—contain very clear guidance that can help us in the process of initiating a model of interfaith dialogue in present-day pluralistic societies, a dialogue that will have a set destination, clear principles and strategies, gentle and persuasive language, leading to the establishment of a universal human fraternity, where human beings will be free from all forms of discrimination and violence based on creed, colour, race, and religion.

The Role of Indonesian Muslims in Interfaith Dialogue

There are many Islamic organisations which voice the importance of peace, democracy, and human rights on behalf of Islamic teachings.

Among others are the two biggest Islamic organisations, namely Muhammadiyah (established in 1912) and Nahdhatul Ulama (established in 1926). These two organisations are very active in promoting interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. Besides, progressive Muslim scholars have made great efforts of reinterpreting Islamic teachings, even though their attempts have often received much opposition and resistance from radical groups or groups who maintain conservative religious values that very often make no accommodation to the reality of plurality in Indonesia.

In many cases, Muslims in Indonesia, who are actively involved in promoting interfaith dialogue and propose religion for peace, demand that the government eliminate all regulations and public policies which are discriminatory against minority groups and cause ignorance of the civil rights of citizens. Prominent Muslim figures promote the observance of civil rights, including the right of religious freedom for all citizens and the observance of human rights without taking into account religion, ethnicity, nationality, or gender differences.

The Principles of Interfaith Dialogue

In my experience, promoting interfaith dialogue must begin with the principle of the acceptance of others. For me, this principle of acceptance of others is very important in the promotion of interfaith dialogue and must be instilled in society, particularly through education in its widest meaning. I do believe that interfaith dialogue is an attempt to overcome all forms of prejudice in religious societies. Dialogue participants believe that up to a certain point, faith can be discussed by human beings.

In short, faith is dialogical—first, between God and human beings, and second, among human beings. In this context, I do believe that interfaith dialogue is not only possible but also necessary to engender an appropriate understanding of other religions. Through dialogue, each side understands the problems faced by other religions and from this there emerges a feeling of sympathy and empathy which motivates a desire to work together to overcome their problems.

Many forms of interfaith dialogue can be carried out by multi-faith communities. I propose a form of 'dialogue in action' where the actions of supporters of interfaith ideologies are used to transform the community to become a more just and humanitarian society.

In other words, enlightenment and transformation at a personal level are not enough. Dialogue participants have to make social transformations and these transformations must be carried out across all religions. Therefore, we can still rely on religions as vehicles to govern one's individual spiritual relationship with God and social relationship with other people, and use religions as forces of transformation for individuals and communities to gain common progress in all aspects of life, including peace, justice, and welfare.

There seem to be four fundamental principles that must be fulfilled in establishing interfaith dialogue:

The Principle of Humanity

Frankly speaking, as a religious community, we tend to take on the position of God, by acting arrogantly and being judgemental. In all honesty, we tend to judge and find fault in others instead of devoting ourselves to each other and caring for each other. We always claim to be in the right and others in the wrong, being misguided or infidels. As a result, religion-based wars and conflicts become the main stories in the media.

In living together, we must always maintain our position as human beings, not as God. We have to contend for goodness, and leave the judgement of whether our devotion is acceptable or not to God. So, our task as humans is only to try our utmost to do good as much as we can; and then, leave everything to Him. We do not know who among us will be saved, who among us will have our devotion accepted, only God knows that.

The Principle of One Family

As a religious community, we must consider other people, of whatever faith, as our brothers and sisters, as part of one family. We must realise that we all come from the same origin, namely from God, although we call Him by different names. All of us come from the One and because of it, we are a family. This affinity can become a force that has unprecedented meaning in building peace among different human beings; this kinship will give birth to love and affection among us, and in turn, eliminate hatred and hostility. A sense of affinity will generate sincere respect and appreciation for others. Because of this feeling of unity, there is a sense of caring and a desire to help each other.

In my experience, this feeling of kinship and being of one family will distance us from behaviours of violence and crime. If we feel pain when we are hit, then we will not hit others. This feeling of affinity will eventually lead us to social solidarity, we do not want to see other people in trouble or in pain. Ultimately, we will realise that, as brothers and sisters, we have a common enemy. The common enemy of all religions is none other than a set of negative phenomena that are manifested as injustice, oppression, greed, ignorance, and poverty. Once we have this awareness, as people of faith we can work together to eradicate the common enemy. We can work together to rid the world of injustice, we can cooperate to eliminate oppression, greed, ignorance, and poverty. Does not cooperation and working hand-in-hand make our tasks much easier and less arduous?

The Principle of Democracy

As a religious community, we should actively promote the principle of democracy. Democracy stems from respect and appreciation for other people. The essence of democracy is respect for nature and the dignity of human beings as noble beings. In a society that upholds democracy, all citizens are treated the same in the eyes of the law, the terms 'majority' and 'minority' do not exist. All communities have the same basic rights, which is to live as human beings.

In a democratic nation, we must not be anarchic. Even if other people commit sins, we should not take the law into our own hands and must leave the law enforcers to accord appropriate punishment. In this context, we should urge the state and the government to fairly enforce the law and take a neutral stance. There should be no public policies or legal decisions that are discriminative to any groups, especially to minority groups.

The fact is that in a country, the government is often unable to be impartial and neutral, especially towards religious minority groups. This discriminative attitude can be very dangerous and may well become the starting point of numerous conflicts and humanitarian tragedies. In a nation with a heterogeneous population with regards to religion and culture, such as Indonesia, the government should take a more prudent stance and apply the principle of human rights regarding religious freedom. Religious leaders should actively create and promote religious interpretations that are democratic, that emphasise the principles of tolerance and pluralism, and gender equality.

The Principle of Religious Pluralism

One of the major problems faced by religious communities in this era of globalisation is religion-based conflict and violence, both internally, as well as between different religious communities. Why do conflicts happen? It is because religious communities no longer live in isolated blocs, but interact with each other, and so it is taken for granted that friction occurs with the potential to cause conflict. The relationship between interreligious groups is not always peaceful. Religion-based conflicts and violence frequently occur in several areas and is usually a result of the growing politics of identity. In other words, it is the mobilisation of religious identity for political interests of certain parties.

The Importance of Religious Pluralism

In order to achieve peace and harmony in living together, all parties in society should adopt a tolerant and pluralistic attitude. Tolerance is the ability to constrain oneself and one's emotions to minimise and eliminate potentials of conflict. Meanwhile, pluralism is much more than tolerance. It is the willingness to recognise differences and accept diversity as a natural force in life and to subsequently be committed to building solidarity and cooperation for the sake of peace and harmony. Pluralism must be built upon the principles of love, care, equality, and the recognition of human dignity. Pluralism urges us to work for the fulfilment of human rights, including women rights.

Pluralism is the process of the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. To sum up, pluralism does not mean that one has to shed one's own religious identity and disclaim one's commitment to the religion embraced, but it also does not imply syncretism where one mixes teachings of different religions. The core of pluralism is a strong commitment to building a synergic relationship with each other to ensure peace and harmony.

When one is a pluralist, it does not mean that one does not recognise the existence of religious differences, because such differences are natural, intrinsic and cannot be avoided. But such religious differences can become the source of a healthy interreligious relationship as a uniting force, and not as a divider that threatens certain religious identities and cultures. Pluralism is built upon the foundation of interreligious dialogue.

Pluralism can be achieved, at least through two activities:

Intensive Dialogue

The problem is the dialogue between people of different religions has been done too frequently but is not effective. Why? Most dialogues end at the level of elites, which means only among prominent religious leaders at the national level. Dialogue should not only be carried out among the elite but should be done at the grassroots. It must involve all elements of society, namely youth, women, entrepreneurs, cultural, and educational organisations. Moreover, the process should involve marginalised groups.

Also, the topics of the dialogue should be based on the crucial issues in our society, such as the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combatting HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; eliminating all forms of violence and corruption; and developing a global partnership for development. Through this dialogue, different religious communities learn more about each other, and this will subsequently lead to a better understanding between them. Mutual understanding ultimately leads to seeking common factors between different religions to be then rendered as the foundation for living together in peace and harmony.

Participatory Activities

This strategy must be carried out following dialogue. Through participatory activities, religious leaders and religious communities can experience living or working together. This can be realised in the form of, for instance, a jamboree, or activities involving the provision of humanitarian aid or medical aid for victims of disasters. The experience of living or working together will open the minds of different people and encourage them to eliminate all forms of prejudice and eradicate the tendency to stereotype other groups.

Some Barriers in the Implementation of Interfaith Dialogue

There are at least three barriers in the implementation of interfaith dialogue in Indonesia:

Cultural Barriers

A number of studies on interfaith dialogue in Indonesia explain that the main obstacle in upholding interfaith dialogue is cultural barriers.

Indonesian people still hold firm the values of gender inequality, feudalism, and intolerance—none of which are conducive to the implementation of interfaith dialogue.

Our society still holds firm the values of patriarchal culture, which are not conducive to the principles of democracy. The indicator of such a culture, among others, is a society that still adheres to beliefs that give preference according to sex. In all matters, men have the advantage over women, boys have priority over girls. This culture is deeply interwoven into Indonesian society and is introduced into all aspects of life, such as in education, economy, and politics.

This patriarchal culture in societies indoctrinates all that the husband is the leader or head of the family. The man is the master, the boss of the household. Consequently, the woman is no one but a maid, a domestic servant whose place of activity is never away from the kitchen. So, decision-making at home also places the right in the men's hands. As a result, many women do not have the liberty of choosing their leader or rather of taking part in making important decisions in their lives.

Structural Barriers

Structural obstacles include discriminative public policies and laws, particularly towards women, minority groups, and vulnerable people. For example, in Indonesian's context, the ICRP has recorded at least 147 discriminative regulations with regards to the implementation of interfaith dialogue. As long as those laws are permitted to prevail, there is always a strong potential for violence and conflict in our society.

Theological Barriers

Theological barriers in the form of patriarchal misinterpretations of religious teachings: in general, religious interpretations are widely disseminated in our society and are still exclusive, unsympathetic towards different congregations, and also still discriminative against women and minority groups.

Conclusion

The Indonesian Muslim community has a vast experience of living together side-by-side with people of different religions. The founding fathers and mothers of this country respected humanity

and were active in interfaith dialogue efforts to overcome prejudice and campaign for justice and peace.

Indonesian Muslims have played many important roles in empowering Muslim societies and they dare to voice Islamic teachings that are more rational and also more accommodative towards humanitarian values. Such Islamic teachings respond to contemporary issues of modern society, such as interfaith dialogue, gender equality, women empowerment, democracy, and human rights. Indonesian Muslim organisations are at the forefront in promoting interfaith dialogue and campaigning for humanistic, rational, and progressive Islamic interpretations that are able to liberate Muslims from ignorance, poverty, and injustice.

Finally, I would like to elaborate on the real efforts of Indonesian Muslims in promoting interfaith dialogue in Indonesia:

Cultural Reconstruction Efforts

Cultural reconstruction efforts have to be made through education in its wide sense, from education in family life to formal education in school and then through non-formal education in social life. To reconstruct the culture, particularly the culture of peace, a culture of respect and dialogue is very important.

This is because respect for different cultures and religions should be incorporated into educational curriculums at various levels, in both private and public educational institutions. These efforts are direly needed because a culture of peace, tolerance, and inclusivity cannot emerge naturally and spontaneously in society, but must be arranged through the education system, particularly in family education. I believe that interfaith dialogue must begin at home, from family life.

Islamic Reinterpretations

Some efforts have been made regarding the promotion of humanistic, inclusive, and progressive Islamic interpretations which are more conducive to the fulfilment of democracy and the principles of human rights, and are also more compatible with interfaith dialogue.

Law Reform Efforts

Many efforts have been made in line with amending and revising important laws and public policies which are not conducive to the

establishment of interfaith dialogue. As a consequence, we need to encourage awareness and sensitivity to variety and diversity. In this context, rules and regulations in Indonesia must take into account such diversity. Hence, it is hoped that a model of a pluralistic society, which is inclusive, open, and guarantees freedom of religion can truly emerge.

In urîdu:

Illa al-ishlâh mastatha'tu.

Wa mâ tawfîqiy illâ billâh.

Wallahu a'lam bi al-shawab.

Living Together in the Household of God: Reflections from Hinduism — The New Science for Happiness and Arsha Samskara

His Holiness Swami Isa
India

Many humans live together on one planet, and as vastly different as the climates, eco-systems, and terrains, there is a diverse array of human cultures, religions, and lifestyles. Still, we find that the essential goal of every human being is the same. All are striving and suffering for only one thing: happiness. When we want a job, we expect happiness. When we want a new house, we expect happiness; a family, a vacation, etc.—the result is that what we are expecting is always happiness.

But what is happiness? How do we obtain it? Are there any dos and don'ts? How does this tie into faith? Does it contradict science?

The 'I-Theory': The New Science for Happiness

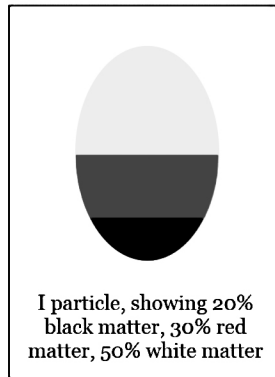
The language of the modern world is science. To an increasingly large percentage of the global population, science is a new religion. Rather than diverging from them, persons of all faiths must join together with scientific-minded people and agree on some basic fundamental realities. Therefore, we need a new scientific language that satisfies our thirst for real understanding, our quest for happiness, and our longing for God.

First, we need a clear and objective understanding of the fundamental reality of the universe. There are only two entities: the vibrating, observable reality and the non-vibrating, immeasurable reality: 'Energy' and 'Consciousness'.

Energy is nothing more than vibration. Vibration can be observed everywhere in the universe: from the movements of the galaxies, solar systems, planets, biosphere, populations, human organs, tissues, cells, DNA, molecules, atoms, subatomic particles, elementary particles, to the one single unit of vibration called the 'I-particle'.

The existence and origin of the universe lie in this 'I', the vibration. Only when we know this 'I', can we understand the universe.

Every vibration needs two forces to act on it: positive and negative. The I-particle is an ovoid-shaped vibration with a positive pole and a negative pole. Between them is a neutral force. The makeup of these is 20 per cent negative (black matter), 30 per cent neutral (red matter), and 50 per cent positive (white matter), as seen below:



White, red, and black matters have different frequencies and wavelengths. The frequency in the I-particle is inversely proportional to the wavelength. Black matter has the highest frequency and shortest wavelength. White matter has the lowest frequency and longest wavelength. Red matter has the middle frequency and wavelength.

The makeup of every I-particle is constant. Variety in the universe is apparent only because of their arrangement and interactions. As science has told us about Energy, it can neither be created nor destroyed. There can be no more and no fewer I-particles. Change is apparent only because of their arrangement and quality. Time and space also exist only because of vibration: the duration between two I-particles is time, and the length between two I-particles is space. Therefore, each fundamental particle carries within it frequency, wavelength, matter, space, and time. When similar poles of I-particles face together, they repel. When 100 per cent of particles are in repulsion, Ether (space) develops. The so-called 'empty space' is full of repelling energy. Space is made up of particles called S^∞ particles. The speed of the S^∞ particle is $(3 \times 10^8)1000$ m/s, or light speed to the 1000th degree. When the S^∞ particle is divided, millions of I-particles are produced.

When up to 12.5 per cent of I-particles are in attraction, a substance called 'subtle air' is formed, and between 12.5 per cent and 25 per cent attraction is gross air (or gas). Because of this attractive force, the first evidence of mass is observed in subtle air. It can also be said that life starts from here because life energy flows through the attractive field of subtle air. The particle of subtle air is the A1 particle. Its speed is $(3 \times 10^8)100$ m/s, or light speed to the 100th degree.

When more I-particles are arranged in attraction (25 per cent to 37.5 per cent), it forms 'subtle fire'. Between 37.5 per cent and 50 per cent is gross fire or light; 50 per cent to 62.5 per cent attraction is 'subtle water' and 62.5 per cent to 75 per cent is gross water or liquid. 75 per cent to 87.5 per cent attraction is 'subtle earth' and 87.5 per cent to 100 per cent attraction is gross earth or solid. These five elements are the only constituents of everything in the universe.

Whether ether, air, heat, liquid, or solid—white, red, or black matter can dominate at any time which creates the quality experienced.

When white matter dominates, the frequency lowers and the wavelength increases. Peace and harmony are experienced. The resulting transparency allows the light of Consciousness to shine through, and that is why happiness is experienced. When black matter dominates, the frequency is very high and the matter is very thick. The shadow blocks the light of Consciousness, and one becomes dominated by ignorance or darkness.

Consciousness is the non-vibrating reality that is omnipresent, omnipotent, and unchanging. It is the eternal light, eternal bliss. Some call it God, Allah, Father, or Atma.

Non-vibrating Energy is called Consciousness. Vibrating Consciousness is called energy. Therefore, both are fundamentally the same.

Since we are all made of energy, we are essentially Consciousness. Our fundamental nature is Consciousness; but nowadays, most people struggle to see this reality and do not realise that they are a part of the universe or a part of energy. No one can realise that their essential nature is God.

Religion is the link between God and humans, which is created to aid us in realising this fundamental reality.

Aarsha Samskaram

We have discussed our questions about what Happiness truly is, and we have peeked into where faith plays a role in this.

The Indian heritage of '*Aarsha Samskaram*' is one lens that has been developed through which to view the being's role in the universe, our makeup as energy, and our relationship with God or Consciousness. It helps us to answer those questions about how to obtain happiness, what are the dos and don'ts, and where faith plays a role.

Man is the sum total of innumerable subtle functions. To enable the process of man knowing himself, the Vedas impart simple, scientific, transparent, and practical knowledge. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha* are the core principles of the Vedas and form the fountainhead of Indian culture and civilisation.

The monumental text of the four Vedas towers high upon these four pillars, which shall be considered one by one.

Pillar 1: Dharma

'*Dharayathi ithi Dharma*': 'Whatever is worn by myself and the Universe is Dharma.' Dharma Consciousness manifests when the entity is recognised by the intellect and is activated through the physical body. The solid, liquid, heat, air, and ether elements have to be maintained in the right proportion for the well-being of the individual. Man must know how to live in harmony without causing sorrow to others. The term Dharma embodies the knowledge that will enable him to maintain a balanced, healthy relationship with another individual. It is the thought of the man that will determine whether he is a human or a demon. In thought lies the secret of creation. The vision of the Veda projects the perfection attainable by a life based on sublime and pure thoughts, the perfection of the intellect, and glowing energy radiating through the individual.

Pillar 2: Artha

The gross body is meant to perform *karma* (action). As life originates and grows from a single cell it absorbs energy from outside. Energy in its various shapes and forms, from solid and liquid to food, can be labelled as *Artha*. People attain *Artha* in two ways: the right way and the wrong way. Wealth attained through the right means giving light, purity, peace, and calm. Wealth acquired through ignoble means results in darkness, impurity, conflicted emotions, harm to others, and falling into the depths of sorrow. Forgetting one's noble

obligations, man would behave like a beast or a demon. In this modern world, it is the dance of the demon that we see around us. If we attempt to view the modern world from the perspective of the ancient texts, we can have a vision of the palace and the kingdom of *Ravana* filled with all luxuries as described in the *Ramayana*. Modern education is making giant leaps in the realm of information, but we have to be cautious about the path we take and use our intellect to keep away from the path of the demons.

We have to struggle to mould a generation that would acquire *Artha* through noble means, based on *Dharma*. Negative energy accumulated through everything from food onwards ends up creating a world of fear and horror. If we remain blind to this predicament, the loss is ours.

Pillar 3: Kama

The stream of negative emotions enriched with materialistic pleasures would deprive one of the right sense of perception, true Consciousness. Every day TV channels and newspapers scream the horrors of man's degeneration and his cruel, bestial tendencies. We have to understand the relation between our thoughts, the food we take, and our emotions, to understand the mystery of the mind. The mind is the by-product of the thought—i.e., food chemistry. Food becomes thought, and thought creates emotions in a wave-like process and manifests as the mind. Creation, generation, and destruction occur in this great spontaneous flow of chemical reaction. If the mind, the originator of creation, gets filled with darkness, man and woman and all objects of sensual pleasure would become the source of dark negativity. We have to trace the root of all conflicts and restlessness to the dark-dominated emotions constituting the mind. The *Vedas* illustrates how man, life, world, and material life are closely linked to the great stream of emotions.

Pillar 4: Moksha

It is the purity of the body, mind, and intellect that leads to the ultimate bliss: moksha.

The eight filters: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* are the steps in Ashtanga yoga that provide the tools to attain this purity. Individual purity and impurity are based on thought. Thought has its outward and inward journey through the sense organs and as a result of the actions performed by thought, emotion, and ego, impurity is absorbed and accumulated. Ashtanga yoga can purify these impurities.

- *Yama*: The major factor in *yama* is the simple and *satwik* intake of food. It helps to control the five gross senses.
- *Niyama*: Indicates *ahimsa* or non-violence.
- *Asana*: *Sidhasana*, *padmasana*, etc., enables one to have a comfortable posture for meditation. These will enable the individual to get rid of laziness, pride, unhealthy relationships, intense longing for sensual pleasures, etc.
- *Pranayama*: When one can sit with one's spine erect, one can identify the *pranic* energy in the inhalation and exhalation process. Once in control of respiration, one can have *Ida* and *Pingala* merge in *Sushumna* moving upwards in the spine, purifying the nervous system. The body becomes light, filled with glowing energy, increasing the digestive fire. This yoga practice will endow the person with miraculous powers.
- *Pratyahara*: One may obtain great powers from *pranayama* but it should not distract one from the ultimate goal. The subtle senses have to be brought under control through *pratyahara*.
- *Dharana*: All thoughts carry Consciousness. All thoughts must be realised as the manifestation of Consciousness. This is *dharana*, or understanding. *Dharana* helps with following the teachings of the Guru: that Supreme Consciousness is the underlying thread connecting everything in the universe.
- *Dhyana*: When one can discern thoughts from Consciousness, this is the beginning of *dhyana*. The Supreme Consciousness can be meditated upon either with a form or without a form. When awareness can stay constantly fixed on Consciousness, this is the true *Dhyana* or meditation.
- *Samadhi*: The ultimate experience of Consciousness is *samadhi*. The *Arsha samskara darsanam* (ancient Hindu philosophy) can teach a person to carry on their outward journey, as well as their inward journey scientifically and practically. Body, intellect, mind, ego, and ignorance can attain purity through *Ashtanga* yoga. The individual can leave behind the limitations of mass and vibration and reach the Infinite. Leaving the gross, subtle, and causal entities one can attain the Real Self—a state of bliss that cannot be described by words or the mind. This great bliss of Consciousness is called *Moksham*. The term indicates the stage when, within the body, one can move beyond the body. From the state of *Bhava Samadhi* to

Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the self attains total perfection. It is not the state enjoyed by any object or energy and hence beyond description.

In *Vaiseshika darsanam*: ‘*Yatya dyradaya nigneyasa sahi: sa dharmā*’ or, ‘Dharma is that by which one can attain *artha, kama, and moksha*’.

In short, ancient Hindu philosophy is the philosophy of humanity. It teaches man to realise his real self, get rid of the darkness of impurity, attain purity, and move towards the light or Consciousness. At this stage, all the actions performed by the body, intellect, and mind will give peace and wellness to the individual.

Dharma is doing good to others, sin is harming others...

When this slogan of Hindu culture becomes the heartbeat of an individual, one becomes a genuine human being. One will attain fulfilment in one’s life journey. All Great Masters, the divine personalities, have offered this truth to mankind. The sound ‘*dya*’ means light. *Divya Avatars* (divine incarnations) are those great souls who can remove the darkness of sorrow and lead to the light of joy and happiness.

One who has absorbed light carries it with one and becomes a beacon of light to the passers-by. The great epitomes of religions are the guiding lights. The moral obligation of all religions is to lead mankind to perfect, absolute light. Language is no bar to light, for light will always remain as light. It is the light of infinite Consciousness that illuminates everyone and everything in the universe.

The society that recognises this truth will always be a blessing to humanity. The creation of a blessed society is the goal of a life based on *dharmā, artha, kama, and moksha*.

*Awake! Awake in the Light
Walk, sharing the light!
Journey till we attain Light
Journey is with Consciousness:
This is the Dharma of mankind.*

*If a human being can practise Dharma—
A Universe of perfection
Perfection untouched by sorrow
Let that be the Thought, Emotion, and Dharma of Man!*

Sarasehan

Deliberative Sessions

Contemporary Asian Challenges

As part of the programmes of the Assembly, delegates and participants were engaged in dialogue and discussions on emerging Asian issues that were relevant to the witness of churches. These sessions were named '*Sarasehan*', an Indonesian word meaning 'dialogue' or 'discussion'. Participants selected one of twelve topics identified as issues or concerns in the Asian region based on their preferences and participated in discussions and deliberations during the Sarasehan sessions.

The outcome of the deliberations in each Sarasehan was summarised and shared with the participants of the Assembly for further reflection and discussions to define and determine ecumenical responses to these concerns, especially as tools for setting the priorities for CCA's future programmatic involvements.

The issues, concerns, and the emerging Asian contexts were explained in a background paper that was shared widely among all participants and member churches and councils. What follows are the Sarasehan summary reports.

Sarasehan 1

Called to be United in Witness and Mission in a Multi-Religious Asia

Background

Mission and witness belong to the very being of the Church. The churches and its members are called to witness according to the gospel's principles, with respect and love for all human beings and all God's creation. Asians live in a multicultural and multi-religious context. Although Christianity was born in Asia (West Asia) and

several Asian Christians trace their history and traditions from the first century onwards, Christianity in Asia has by and large been the outcome of Western missionary involvement. As such, the witnessing of Christ in Asia has often been branded or labelled as a Western agenda, linked with colonialism. The leadership of churches and the mission of the churches for a long time remained in the hands of missionaries and had the colonial ethos built into it. The Asian world in the missionary era was primarily a mission field and an arena for Christian service and humanitarian missions. In the post-missionary colonial era, the biggest struggle for churches in Asia was to rediscover the identity of Asian Christianity and the Christian mission. Over the decades, Asian churches have tried to establish their own identities, but still, in many contexts, ecclesiastical traditions and the mission agenda of the churches is very much influenced by their historical past.

The mission and witness of the churches in Asia has still not been integrated into its local, cultural, and indigenous roots. Today, the major challenges Asian churches and their mission face is due to ‘aggressive missionary evangelism’ promoted by Asian churches, as well as freelance missionary evangelical groups from other regions. Asian churches and the ecumenical movement have articulated their vision of new evangelistic tasks. However, the emerging Asian contexts, especially Asia’s pluralistic religious contexts, warrant new thinking in the areas of mission and witness in a multi-religious Asian context. Christian mission and witness in a pluralistic world should include engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures. The Church in Asia needs to rediscover its mission to be fully involved in concentrating on the manifestation of the kingdom of God in its fullness. It is in this context that this specific Sarasehan— ‘Called to be United in Witness and Mission in a Multi-Religious Asia’—focused on issues related to the emerging missiological trends in Asia and identify areas of possible cooperation among Asian churches beyond ecclesial boundaries, for a united mission and witness in Asia.

Thematic Foci

- An overview of the global landscape of mission and Christian witness.
- Witness and mission in multi-religious Asian contexts.
- Identifying areas of cooperation and collaboration in mission and witness in Asia today.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

There is the present struggle in overcoming the older (Western) models of mission. Such models of mission are deemed irrelevant in the context of Asia. The context of mission in Asia today includes plurality: the postmodern approach, globalisation, and the challenge of other religious traditions to the Christian mission are critical factors to be taken into consideration while planning mission in the Asian context.

Mission has a frequently forgotten basis, which is, Baptism—we die unto our self-centred life and rise to a life centred around others. Thus, we must ‘love our neighbour as oneself’. Committing one’s life to the other is mandatory for those who respond in the calling to be involved in God’s mission. We affirm that everyone is called to be active participants in the mission of God. As we engage in this mission, we recognise that we are the holy image of God, and this perspective demands us to respect other faiths. We must carry out mission in solidarity with all people of every nation, culture, race, and gender. We must also bridge victims and perpetrators towards peace. Amidst diversity, we must publicly demonstrate the unity that we are called to, which needs perseverance in witness and service for the Lord.

Mission is God’s; not any individual’s personal mission and not that of the churches, but God’s mission. It comes from the Trinity, the triune God—to the world and for the sake of the world. God has died first, a manifestation that God truly is love. Mission is God’s gift, a manifestation of God’s love. Before it became a human task, mission originated from God, the very being of the Church. The Church is not the owner of mission, but is simply privileged to participate in *Missio Dei*. Mission is the very identity of the Church, and God’s mission must be the attitude of the Church.

Hermeneutics for Mission: Mission must be considered a social engagement that leads Asian churches towards securing the ‘fullness of life’. Christianity in Asia is in the ‘margins’ since it belongs to the minority. In the biblical perspective, Asia is the centre of mission amidst being marginalised. However, in the mission of God, there is no distinction between the margin and the centre, as it encompasses

all of God's creation. Here is where the understanding of power comes to play; in many situations where we are called to respond, power is essential. In reality, marginalised groups are powerless.

Amidst all the contradicting perspectives and situations, Christians are called to be united in working towards the mission of God and demonstrate the theme, 'Living Together in the Household of God'.

2. Summary of Discussion

- One approach towards mission that must be rejected is the emphasis on increasing membership within the Church, which stems from the concern that failure to do so may lead to the dying off of the Church.

Response: The church cannot focus only on increasing its population, but should rather be actively working in the mission of the triune God. God's mission is the attitude of the church.

- We have always blamed Western imperialism to be the root cause of problems the society is experiencing—why so?

Response: The concept of Missio Dei in earlier times was a colonial idea. This idea of mission was not social development, but social engagement. The West also received the faith that was infused with colonial imperialistic ideas. The implications are that colonial imperialism has been conflated with the vision of God's mission. We must make the Gospel grow organically within our own contexts and then carry it forward as mission.

- Within mission and evangelism, the understanding is that spreading the Christian faith is spreading the 'good news' and thus must be done all over the world.

Response: In engaging in mission, we must recognise that we are the holy image of God. This requires us to respect other faiths. If respect is not accorded, we have no part to do God's mission. Every act of mission is a sharing of the love of Christ, which is evangelism, to realise who we are and whose we are, and to fulfil what God has called us to do. Christianity is never merely a religion but is a living relationship with the living God.

- Local people must work together.

Response: Firstly, it must be noted that we are all called to be part of God’s mission, regardless of faith, gender, age, and race. Working together at local levels is essential but insufficient in the context of globalisation. Thus, a collaboration at the regional level to work for the struggle is fundamental.

- People who have owned the mission of God as theirs question the resources needed to work on mission.

Response: We have to go back to the origin of the mission. The mission is God’s and is God’s gift of love to us. It implies growing up with the love of God. God loves us individually, and we are called to develop and share the love. Discernment of God’s wonderful plan is key to mission. God is working things together towards the achievement of the fullness of life.

3. Issues Identified

- Human indignation
- Violence among countries
- HIV and AIDS
- Human trafficking
- Migration
- Climate change
- Capitalism
- Conversion issues

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- *Network Building:* In Hong Kong, people of different faiths gathered to protest injustices by bridging the people to the government. They issued a positive statement for the government, which has captivated their attention and helped in connecting the people to the government.
- *Confidence-Building:* In Laos, the church has demonstrated love for the country which has gained the trust of the government, thus making the church an ally in the service of the people. The religious sector is tasked by the government to provide teachings on issues of smoking, drugs, cybercrime, etc. Church leaders met to analyse the situation and raised their voices together.

- *Creating Second-Liners*: Children and young people of all faiths must come together for joint learning and work together. A Church that has gathered the children and youth of different churches and faiths has taught them human values aids in the creation and establishment of a good relationship with other faiths.
- *Interfaith/Interreligious Dialogue*: Gaining an understanding of the different perspectives of diverse religions is fundamental to being able to respect each point of view.
- *Enculturation*: Grounding theology and missiology in Asian experiences so that it is local and universal is fundamental to increasing the awareness of the Church. In doing the mission of God, we are silently proclaiming the Gospel, which we need not interpret, but those who witness must interpret. We must also be able to announce the love of God and denounce injustices. Sharing of facts and stories of people is an excellent way of increasing awareness within the community.
- *Healing of the Broken World*: The Church is a place for everyone to find comfort and care. The Church must be able to foster a welcoming environment to be able to start the healing of all the broken parts in the world.

Main Speaker Address

(by Ms Pranika Kuyo)

- Vulnerable groups: those groups whose cultures, livelihoods, and traditions are under threat.
- There is pride in Asian governments about the cultural diversity of Asia, but a failure to recognise the rights of indigenous groups in an adequate sense.
- In some countries, the rights of indigenous/vulnerable groups have been denied.
- Indigenous cultures are being appropriated by governments to promote tourism, utilising such people as cultural mascots.
- Refusal to issue indigenous groups identity cards in some areas.
- Policies in Bangladesh have become harsher for indigenous people to move freely. Additionally, there are

territorial disputes in the north of India with Bangladesh, and there is no consultation with the people who have been living in these areas for centuries—hierarchical, inhumane, and non-consultative approaches to indigenous rights.

- Vietnam is denying that there are indigenous peoples in the Asian region. ASEAN countries seem to accede to this approach.
- Increased vulnerability of indigenous women, youth, and children. Indigenous people are the poorest of the poor and are most vulnerable to human trafficking.
- Because of a lack of opportunities for indigenous people in their own land, they look towards foreign countries for increased access to employment, education, and development opportunities, leaving them easy prey for human traffickers.
- A growing identity crisis amongst indigenous youth who are caught in a dilemma to fit in with national paradigms or identify with the indigenous culture and be ostracised. The psychological trauma of these tensions in identity, leading to rising suicide rates of indigenous youth.
- Natural disaster data often hide statistics related to the effects on indigenous communities, who are disproportionately affected. There is also an overwhelming lack of accurate data relating to indigenous communities, particularly those living with disabilities.
- Difficulty in obtaining birth registration in areas dedicated to indigenous settlements—leading to problems with being unable to obtain national identity cards, and the lifelong limitations and challenges of that.
- Seizure of ancestral lands; livelihood, knowledge, and skills; conservations of linguistic diversity. One indigenous language becomes extinct every day.
- Teachers change names of indigenous children to make it easier to pronounce—the psychological impact of forced name changes are often ignored. Also, indigenous voters in the recent Cambodian elections have had their names changed by authorities in Khmer: they could not recognise their names and therefore could not vote.
- Thailand is doing a good job of providing bilingual education.

- Issues in Nepal in implementing bilingual laws and education policies.
- Shaming of indigenous peoples; considered dirty or unclean.
- Oversight or insensitivity of health officials; physical distance, language, and cultural barriers for indigenous persons to access healthcare. The stigmatisation of HIV and AIDS.
- Economy: seizures of indigenous lands is generating revenue, but this is a one-way improvement. Aggressive development and mass evictions from traditional lands.
- Lack of ‘free, prior, and informed consent’ (FPIC) of indigenous people is holding back reconciliation.
- Militarisation: north of India, parts of Bangladesh, and the Philippines; resources spent on internal conflicts, guerrilla forces want to recruit indigenous persons, the government views indigenous peoples as primary suspects. The military is being used to forcibly take over indigenous territories, forced disappearance of indigenous land activists.
- Untouchable castes in India; Dalits being subjected to sexual exploitation.

Sarasehan 2

Towards an Authentic Asian Theological Undergirding for Renewed Ecumenical Impetus

Background

The ecumenical movement is more than a singular movement for one Church, it is a movement providing an impetus for the Church to proclaim and live out the gospel of Christ in the entire world. The insights and motivations that should sustain the ecumenical movement are not only based on addressing ecclesiastical divisions but focused on sustaining the spirit of overcoming the obstacles to unity of the whole inhabited world, of all of God’s creation. As new issues and questions will arise in every context of human history, new ways of addressing the issues with theological undergirding for churches’ witness also need to be identified and manifested.

The Church is a ‘pilgrim people’, it lives and witnesses in constant readiness to move on. Whatever be the confession or context, or

whatever be the missiological interpretations, the Church should remain mindful of the fact that God is continually leading the Church to fulfil God's mission. So the theological convictions of the Church should lead us to live in readiness to be led out beyond our present encampment. A profound sense of solidarity and fellowship are to be demonstrated in our common journey of developing renewed ecumenical impetus in Asia, for which an authentic Asian theological undergirding is nurtured. Asia with its ancient cultures, heritage, diversity and richness, seems to have lost its soul, as modernisation and technological development reject traditional values. Poverty; violation of human rights; terrorism; religious fundamentalism; discrimination against minorities—with women and children as primary victims; authoritarian regimes and the domination of some nations over others; environmental challenges; information and technological changes and transformation in almost all aspects of societal life in Asia, continue to polarise and divide Asian people and countries. Churches and ecumenical movements are challenged by these events that traumatise people causing severe mental and physical stress, leading to a gradual alienation from spirituality.

These contexts in Asia warrant ecumenical responses and the churches' participation in responding to such crucial issues as part of their prophetic witness and mission. Asians are becoming aware of the need for inter-contextual engagements and inter-weaving of emerging contextual theologies with a wider ecumenical vision and ecumenical commitment which transcends the Church or Christian unity and humanity, and embraces the whole of God's creation. However, the fact is that the ecumenical movement these days is not in a position to address these issues and Asian contributions to the future of the ecumenical movement have not been visible. It is indeed a fact that the ecumenical movement in Asia is in a state of general decline in many ways due to factors such as leadership crisis, increasing denominationalism, lack of ecumenical formation of the youth in churches and a lack of vision and theological thinking. It is in this background that the churches are encouraged to look for new paradigms and models of ecumenical engagement.

Our theologies should be living theologies that stand against 'every dehumanising situation that is contrary to fellowship, justice, and liberty.' It should strive for addressing a wide range of issues we are confronting in Asia—economic justice against exploitation; human

dignity against oppression; solidarity against alienation and hope against despair.

We must revive our spirituality and gain ecumenical impetus through Asian theologies that ignite us to uphold the values of 'concern for the whole oikoumene'.

Thematic Foci

- Discuss contextual theologies rooted in Asian soil.
- Explore ways to nurture ecumenical dialogue among the churches and all ecumenical actors in Asia towards revitalising the Asian ecumenical movement.
- Find ways and means to develop theological undergirding in addressing emerging Asian issues.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

The discussion focused on what is needed theologically and practically for a response to some of the trends and issues in Asia today, and how we can do this ecumenically.

2. Summary of Discussion

The context of Asia demands that we continue in solidarity with people who suffer due to hardships that include continued displacements, loss of loved ones and property due to circumstances outside their control. Many people live in constant danger of political and religious threats and domination by those in the majority and in power. What theological themes can guide us as we address these problems?

3. Issues Identified

The input was an exploration of the biblical and theological framing of reconciliation. The paper went on to apply insights to the life settings of people in Asia. The failure to reconcile is a serious issue across Asia.

The responses to this paper stressed the importance of our actions being ecumenical and that we ask questions out of the spirit of Receptive Ecumenism i.e. 'what can we learn or receive with integrity from our various others in order to felicitate our own growth together into deepened communion in Christ and the Spirit'.

This exploration of reconciliation included a careful and thoughtful understanding of the experience of victims and thus we must be careful in relation to what we expect of a victim. Reconciliation from the point of view of the victim, especially when the persecutor or aggressor does not change, is very difficult. It is very hard even to talk about reconciliation and healing with a person who is or has been hurt.

Christian reconciliation is moving beyond repaying violence with violence—beyond retribution into a new process. We become part of establishing reconciliation and peace for the sake of human existence.

It is easy for the Church to tell a person to forgive. But it is very hard for the person who has experienced pain to forgive. We must give the freedom to forgive or not forgive to the person who has been hurt, and not expect forgiveness of them until they are ready. By this we support victims in the journey of forgiveness.

Another important aspect is to affirm that not forgetting what has happened is okay and healthy. Reconciliation means some level of healing for the pain, but not the erasing of memory (not forgive and forget). We are to be people who listen to people's stories and understand that reconciliation and healing for a victim is a process.

Reconciliation is a process that sometimes does not have an endpoint. This process is daily work. It cannot be assumed that this is going to end—the process is something that people live with.

The Church must reclaim the understanding of humanity being made in the image of God, an image of God that is affected by brokenness. This brokenness can be maintained in the way people are talked about, and also how people see themselves as living in hurt and pain.

Additionally, reconciliation is at its heart, the restoration of justice. So the full process of reconciliation includes healing for both victim and in time for the perpetrator also (even by the victim). The victim does not have the power to forgive without support; the Church can accompany the victim in forgiving and be a peacemaker—particularly with marginalised people. With such accompaniment Christian minorities can become communities of reconciliation. It is not a one-way street and minority communities need support.

Churches in Asia can advocate for minorities and so start to bring about change.

For this justice to have meaning there must be acknowledgement of the suffering by those responsible for the suffering and in a process of reconciliation this can begin to happen.

Truth telling and proposals for healing are important and cannot be separated. However, the importance of truth telling can be forgotten in the urgency for reconciliation. Reconciliation is a movement from the state of victimhood to a state of sovereignty and this takes time and is guided by the victim. Reconciliation involves a shift in power, and those in power need to be in a space of openness (vulnerability) to desire reconciliation on the terms of the other rather than saying to the other that they must reconcile. Therefore, we need to have a social and pastoral approach with a goal to restore the image of God in people. We understand Jesus as the wounded healer.

Reconciliation takes us out of our comfort zone and to the heart, character, and nature of God to discover this is a process. Christian reconciliation is modelling a new way of forgiveness.

How can we go out in mission unless the Church in its life is known by our love? This reconciling love is the witness we have to the world.

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

A paper like this can equip us to speak out on behalf of those who suffer and are marginalised and so be advocates for one another. We propose, and a network between churches in doing this, that this paper be developed further and include:

- Stories from across Asia of people's experiences of being reconciled.
- Further reflection from a biblical point of view that in Christ God has reconciled and the way that Christ has achieved this reconciliation.
- An exploration of the way that structural justice and distributive justice are the same, and how, as Churches, we do not respond from a punitive point of view.

We are aware that Churches can develop a superiority complex because of campaigns such as 'Asia for Christ', which can create tensions between peoples that need to be shared and explored. This

matter needs to be taken seriously for the sake of the church and its health in Asia. We propose an exploration of new ways for Christian communities to witness—*Martus* and *Diakonia*—as alternatives to programmes such as ‘Asia for Christ’. This is really important in settings of religious pluralism in the face of growing fanaticism and fundamentalism.

The paper ‘Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World’ published by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance is an important resource and gives guidelines for Christian witness in a minority context.

In the Asian context, there are some countries that protect the rights of religious minorities in the country’s constitution; India is one example of this. This protection is not offered in all Asian countries and is something we can all work towards.

Respondent Address

(by Rev. Dr Y. Moses)

- Stratified caste system in India after the historical invasion.
- Assigned menial and unclean occupations from ancient times.
- Monopoly of power and wealth by higher castes.
- Liberal democracy has provided the chance for greater representation and emancipation led by Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a Dalit who also was involved as Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee.
- Dalits under his leadership began to assert themselves. Dr Ambedkar also created constitutional safeguards for the protection and emancipation of the Dalits; affirmative action system.
- 50 percent Dalits hold land less than 0.1 hectares; 2/3 of Dalits in rural areas are agricultural labourers. Affirmative policies have allowed a small number to join the government, but overall the Dalit economy is essentially unorganised, informal, and ungainful.
- 60 percent Dalits are illiterate.
- Lack of political will to address the Dalit marginalisation systematically; resistance from other castes.

- Continued atrocities and violence perpetrated against Dalits.
- Prevention of Atrocities Act and Protection of Civil Rights Act fails to protect Dalits from systematic violence.
- State allocation of funds for welfare expenditure and Dalit welfare is decreasing.
- Privatisation of education has impacted Dalits by making education costly and unattainable for most.
- The original approach of the missionaries was to convert the higher castes; the mass movements of the lower caste and Dalit communities took the initiative to join the Church.
- Appeal of the Gospel made the Dalits believe in a vision of equality and dignity beyond what their everyday circumstances afforded them.
- Majority of Christians are Dalits.
- Economic studies have shown that at the functional level, Christians do not follow egalitarian principles, when it comes to practice. Caste Christians continue to follow old caste practices.
- The higher castes are trying to influence the church as much as possible, which marginalises Dalit Christians in the Church.
- Dalit Christians are poorly represented in the church hierarchy, especially the Catholic Church.
- Dalit Christians are invariably regarded as inferior people by other Christians.
- Dalits are generally street sweepers, latrine cleaners, whereas non-Dalit Christians are well represented in 'superior' categories of occupations.
- Dual identity Christians declaring themselves Hindus to get the support of the state, while remaining in the Church.
- *Recommendation 1:* Dalits demanding affirmative action in non-government and private industries, not just government industries. The Church should support this.
- *Recommendation 2:* the Church must support the demand for equal treatment of Dalit Christians. State reservations not extended to Dalit Christians living in poverty; this is contrary to the constitution. The particular complexities of the marginalisation of Dalit Christians needs to be emphasised.

- *Recommendation 3*: the problem is not so much the laws or the policies of the state, but their implementation within society. Need for social change and social reform to alter India's caste mind-set. Churches must engage in social reform to campaign with the anti-caste movement. Stronger focus must be given to educational programmes.

Respondent Address

(by Dr Fransina Yoteni)

- Acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land on which we stand.
- Marginalisation of people in Papua and West Papua. Indonesians do not recognise the indigenous people of Papua and West Papua.
- Argument that promoting indigenous rights will destroy the unity of the Republic.
- Papuans are ethnically Melanesian.
- West Papua is four times as large as Java, population of 3 million people; 50 percent indigenous Papuans and 50 percent migrants.
- The Dutch control, until 1961, were preparing Papuans for independence. In 1961 the Papuan Council (then known as West New Guinea Council) held elections, accompanied by a national anthem, flag, and constitution on 1 May 1961. In December 1961, President Sukarno prepared to annex the island of Papua, threatening war with the Dutch.
- In August 1962, the New York Agreement was finalised under consultation with Indonesia, the US and the Dutch, agreeing to hold Papua as a UN supervised territory from 1961–1962, until handing the territory to Indonesia on the proviso that the Republic must hold a referendum of self-determination.
- This referendum took place in 1969 as the infamous 'Act of Free Choice', forcing 1025 people to vote at gunpoint.
- Indigenous people of Papua continue to experience human rights abuses since 1969; indigenous massacres of indigenous people, murders, police brutality, rape and forced abduction of indigenous women.

- Papua also has the highest levels of HIV/AIDS throughout all of Indonesia.
- 13,000 person are living with HIV/AIDS out of 3 million people, with the indigenous persons overwhelmingly affected. Prostitutes from Java going to Papua infect the Papuan populations.
- Deliberate transmigration policies are gradually turning indigenous Papuans into a minority in their own country.
- From 800,000 indigenous Papuans to 36,000 non-Papuans in 1971.
- 1.7 million Indigenous Papuans and 1.9 million non-Papuans in 2011.
- Annual population growth rate of indigenous Papuans since 1971 has been 1.67 percent; in contrast, the population growth of non-Papuans living in Papua has been higher than 10.5 percent.
- Big cities in Papua are more populated by non-Papuans, with Indigenous Papuans forced into the remote outlying areas.
- Precious habitats and rare species in Papua are being damaged by logging and deforestation.
- Economic opportunities for palm oil plantations.
- Poverty levels in the villages are extremely high in comparison to the cities with higher migrant populations.
- An average of 7 years of schooling for indigenous Papuans.
- Freeport mine contributing to mass deforestation. Impacts of mining, tailing of extracts into local rivers impacting the health of indigenous youth.
- Open war between indigenous people and the migrant miners working in Papua.
- Social problems of pornography use and the vulnerability of youth living near mining areas.
- Conflict in Papua is irretrievably linked to the history, and the 'sham' referendum of the Act of Free Choice (Pieter Drooglever).
- It has never been recognised that the best of what an autonomous Papua has to contribute will be acknowledged as a good thing for Indonesia.

- Continued killings and human rights abuses, failure of President Joko Widodo to comment on or address these issues.

Questions—Answers

- Ms Sally Andrews: Does the future hold reconciliation with Indonesia or referendum in West Papua?
- Dr Fransina Yoteni: Discussion of the reconciliation of Timor Leste. Respect for the sovereignty of Indonesia under special autonomy; no decree or framework effectively implementing the special autonomy laws; lack of agency for indigenous Papuans in having a say in what the special autonomy system means for Papuans.
- Prof. Dr George Alex Kochidisseril: Discussion of the economic forces reinforcing preservation of the caste system and the marginalisation of Dalits. We need to focus on market mechanisms. Difficulties of implementing affirmative action policies in non-government jobs within the nominally meritocratic system. Structural barriers to achieving equality for Dalits.
- Fr. Rex Reyes: Failures of the UN to achieve justice; undemocratic and dysfunctional institution.
- Bishop Phillip Masih: Biblical perspectives of ownership when the Torah was given, land was parcelled out very deliberately, including the ownership of female descendants, so that land was preserved in the hands of original owners. Ownership in the hands of government, of legitimate or sham rulers; of colonialists, of corporations, creates a fundamental struggle by denying true ownership and recognition for indigenous people. Indigenous people exploited as cultural mascots. Property theft and land appropriation is creating violence and alienation among indigenous populations. Not true development.
- Issues with the role of the CCA; 'still theologising' and failing to engage with the issues of indigenous rights.
- Rev Francois Pihaatae: Pacific Council of Churches supporting application of West Papua for membership of the Melanesian Spearhead Group. The PCC was involved in facilitating the unification process of the different

factions now forming part of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), which submitted its application in February.

- Rev. Diana Anne Tana: These stories of indigenous struggles across Asia are not the same; we cannot develop a one-size-fits-all policy to apply to all indigenous struggles. The CCA is not doing anything at the moment. We need a dedicated space for indigenous activism in the CCA.
- Jemima Krey: The CCA wants to avoid the issue of indigenous people. The first missionaries met with indigenous peoples first. If the CCA is now ignoring those who first received the word of God from missionaries, what good is the CCA really doing? What is the meaning of good news for indigenous people? Each of us must contribute to making Asia a good household for everyone.
- Ms Pranika Kuyo: We have to accept that more and more countries in Asia have specific policies when it comes to developing mining, garment, extractive industries, and it is in those industries that labour exploitation of indigenous people are taking place. A lack of effective implementation of reservation and affirmative action policies. The state does not understand the consequences of forced eviction and environmental destruction. The CCA should begin its deliberations on how to approach the issue of indigenous rights by examining documents, such as the Outcome Document of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples; UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:
- Dr Hong-Ki Lo: We need to pray for these issues, and compose a prayer letter about the issues, such as the Dalit situation and West Papua's history, and send it to all churches as part of the CCA.
- Martha Mary Marawein: Recommendations to the CCA; necessity to address these issues.
- Rev. Dr Y. Moses: Caste system has existed since 300 BC. It is now hugely entrenched in the culture of India.

Sarasehan 3

Interreligious Cooperation for Communal Harmony amidst Religious Intolerance and the Politicisation of Religion in Asia

Background

The diversity and unity that was the strength and pride of Asia, has been threatened today by growing religious intolerance in several parts of the Asian region. Asia, the birth place of all major religions in the world, is now affected by conflicts that have been abetted in the name of religion, especially by the politicisation of religion. There is an increasing and alarming trend of political parties using religion to gain power; while religious leaders use politics as a means to establish their authority and influence in a political system. These tendencies often lead to more communal and social polarisation, and create a majority- minority religious divide that increases religious intolerance and hatred in society.

A study on global restrictions on religion reveals that although the highest level of social hostilities involving religion declined slightly in 2013, several Asian countries are still grappling with high levels of religious hostilities. Though freedom of professing any faith or religion of one's choice is guaranteed constitutionally, accusations and attacks prevail on issues of forced conversion and reconversion. Issues related to religious intolerance and the politicisation of religion in the context of Islamic majority countries, such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh; the Sinhalese Buddhist majority in Sri Lanka; increasing confrontations in Southern Thailand between its military and Muslim militants; eruption of Buddhist-Muslim violence in central and northern Myanmar; the rise of religious extremism of Hindutva ideologues in India and hatred against minority religions in India, especially the recent trend of the clarion call for '*Ghar Vaapasi*' seen as a return to the religion they originally belong to etc., are threatening the social fabric of Asia. This trend also curtails the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of religion.

Religious freedom, including the right to publicly profess, practice, propagate and change one's religion flows from the very dignity of the

human person which is grounded in the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God. Thus, all human beings have equal rights and responsibilities. Where any religion is instrumentalised for political ends, or where religious persecution occurs, Christians are called to engage in a prophetic witness denouncing such actions and to nurture a culture of communal and religious harmony.

In this context, the *Sarasehan* dealing with interreligious cooperation amidst growing religious intolerance and the politicisation of religion in Asia, examined the challenges of living together in the household of God and building a sense of community that goes beyond traditional boundaries of religion.

Thematic Foci

- How to evolve new methodologies and strategies for interreligious cooperation and to promote communal harmony in Asia.
- Ways and means of combatting politicisation of religion and religious hatred.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

The diversity and unity that was the strength and pride of Asia, has been threatened today by growing religious intolerance in several parts of the region. Asia, the birth place of all major religions in the world, is now affected by conflicts that have been abetted in the name of religion, especially by the politicisation of religion.

There is an increasing and alarming trend of political parties using religion to gain power; while religious leaders use politics as a means to establish their authority and influence in a political system. These tendencies often lead to more communal and social polarisation, and create a majority-minority religious divide that increases religious intolerance and hatred in society. Several Asian countries are grappling with high levels of religious hostilities, though freedom of professing any faith or religion of one's choice is guaranteed constitutionally, accusations and attacks prevail on issues of religious intolerance and the politicisation of religion in the context of Islamic majority countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan,

Malaysia, Bangladesh; the Sinhalese Buddhist majority in Sri Lanka; increasing confrontations in Southern Thailand between its military and Muslim militants; eruption of Buddhist-Muslim violence in central and northern Myanmar; rise of religious extremism of Hindutva ideologues in India and hatred against minority religions in India, especially the recent trend of the clarion call for 'Ghar Vaapasi' seen as a return to the religion they originally belong to, etc., are threatening the social fabric of Asia.

Religious freedom, including the right to publicly profess, practice, propagate, and change one's religion flows from the very dignity of human beings. Christians are called to work together and to nurture a culture of communal and religious harmony.

2. Summary of Discussion

- Communal harmony is crucial to one another's relationships. Relationships among the peoples in Asia always have something to do with religion. The religionisation of politics often emerges from the localisation of religion.
- The interreligious cooperation and dialogue at the grassroots level rather than on doctrines and social issues is crucial to the promotion of the mutual respect, love and appreciation both at an inter-religions and an intra-religions level.
- The challenges of living together in the household of God and building a sense of community that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of religion. Some positive models of communication, dialogue and networking are to be carried out between the Muslim-Hindu and the Muslim-Christian relations.
- The global resurgence of religion is transforming interfaith relations and cooperation.
- However, it is noted that there is also increasing religious intolerance and the politicisation of religion is experienced. Some serious obstacles and challenges to religious cooperation and communal harmony in Asia are to be identified including the politicisation of religion and religious hatred. It is necessary for the Christian

community to self-educate actions without exhibiting religious intolerance.

3. Issues Identified

- A growing trend of intolerance towards religious minorities.
- Radical Islamism is a threat to the tradition of religious pluralism.
- Minority religious communities are being marginalised and suffering due to the politicisation of religion.
- Governmental religious policies change victimised religious identity.
- The constitution curtails human right on religious freedoms.
- Why are we more intolerant today?
- The identity crisis of being a minority in society, why does Christianity develop an insular mentality?
 - How must religious freedom be pursued in the process of nation building?
 - Can Christianity be a renewable social contract?

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- Networking on how to discern the consciousness of minorities in a world of pluralism and to reflect on the intolerance toward minority communities.
- Taking examples and learning from each other from different religious institutions; such as the European Christian Conference stress on the humanitarian concerns for the oppressed and marginalised religious minorities.
- Churches have to share the responsibility of finding a space to join a social contract, together with other communities for serving the common good in the society from our own contexts.
- Creating opportunities to build-up relationships for carrying out interreligious cooperation from the ecumenical context.
- Educational programmes on learning how the Christian community is to self-educate actions without exhibiting religious intolerance.

Sarasehan 4

Migration and Human Trafficking: Challenges to Asian Churches

Background

Migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a country. Large numbers of Asians are living outside their home countries as migrant workers and most of them live and work in inhuman conditions. Migrant workers from Asia are scattered within the Asian region and at the same time, outside Asian countries. A substantial number of Asians are working in Arabian Gulf countries. The plight of Asian migrant workers is often unheard or unattended. As transnational migration increases, the world witnesses today an alarming trend of migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a phenomenon that is intimately linked to the undercurrents of global migration. Migrant smuggling is a complex crime that takes different forms in different parts of the world, virtually affecting every country in every region of the world. Trafficking in persons is unfortunately thriving in the form of modern day slavery and occurs within and across national borders, with victims often transiting through many countries to reach their final destination. Trafficking knows no borders and no country is immune to it. Asia is not an exception to this menace either, because there is evidence that forced migration and trafficking in persons are increasing in several Asian countries.

Human trafficking remains one of the fastest-growing criminal activities in the world which breaches dignity and human rights, posing an increasingly serious challenge to humanity. Girls, women, boys, men, and other persons are trafficked every hour, every day, within and across national boundaries, for commercial sexual exploitation, for the purpose of labour exploitation, forced labour, begging, domestic work, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, servitude, and even the removal of organs. While the demand for cheap labour, sexual services and certain criminal activities are cited among the root causes of trafficking, a lack of opportunity, resources, and social standing are also other significant contributing factors. Richer countries attract victims from a variety of origins, including

from other continents, whereas less affluent countries are mainly affected by domestic or sub-regional trafficking flows.

Advocacy and action to prevent this growing injustice against vulnerable people and the promotion of the well-being of the community is the primary responsibility of the State, as well as civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations. The churches are called to work on upholding the dignity of human beings, they are called to accompany individuals and families who are forced to become victims of exploitation and abuse; and to advocate for their rights and dignity in any country where they live and work.

Thematic Foci

- Migration within Asia and beyond the Asian region and the advocacy on the rights of migrant workers.
- Combatting human trafficking: Challenges to Asian churches and the ecumenical movement.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

- To understand the phenomenon of migration in all its dimensions.
- To evaluate the responses of the Church and society in dealing with the issues.
- To formulate further actions to deal with the issue.

2. Summary of Discussion

The Moderator started the proceedings by giving a short introduction to the issue of migration and human trafficking by drawing the group's attention to the burning issue of the floating, landless people of the Indian Ocean.

Ms Reiko started her presentation by giving an overview of migration with its statistics and then focused on the intra-Mekong regional migration. Highlighting the issues of migration, she drew attention to issues faced by migrants in general and those of women and temporary labourers in particular. The last part of her presentation focused on the existing responses as strategies and looked at the concept of 'Living Together' as a model for the future.

Bishop Philips Higgins in his response emphasised that human dignity was God-given, and shared his experiences of the WCC survey on migrants. He also talked about policy responses by stating examples and gave pointers as to how our responses could be strengthened.

Ms Janejinda Pawadee spoke on 'Human Trafficking in Thailand' from her experience as an activist working with the migrants. Defining human trafficking, she differentiated sex trafficking and labour trafficking and talked of the challenges to the Church in dealing with the issues.

Mr Solomon David gave the perspective from the Middle East which is a receiving region with the largest number of migrants. By his video presentation he showed the exploitation and abuse of migrant workers. He ended his presentation by talking about response of the Church and the way forward with suggestion.

The ensuing discussion focused on the following issues:

- The theological aspect was discussed with the identification of migration, human trafficking in the Old and the New Testament. But the discussants felt that the difference between the older migration and migration in the modern period should be clearly understood as they are qualitatively and quantitatively different.
- It was also felt that one had to realise that voluntary migration for better prospects by the qualified people and those of forced migrations and human trafficking are different and have to be dealt with differently.
- The floor felt that conceptual clarity on the issue is important as migrants have to be redefined as equal subjects. It was also felt that the vital link with structural issues needs to be addressed by the CCA and a critique has to be developed to understand the underlying issue of poverty and its relationship with migration and human trafficking.

c. Issues Identified

- Different types of migration and how they have to be dealt with.
- Conceptualising it in the context of global capital and not losing sight of the commodification and exploitation of labour.

- The exploitation of migrants and victims of human trafficking.
- The issue of Human Rights Violations—as Being, Becoming, and Belonging, and as an issue of justice.

d. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- To theorise the issue theologically—migrant as the ‘imminent outsider’.
- To be able to theorise the issue by taking into account its links with the economic structure—links with poverty and underdevelopment.
- Not use the term ‘illegal migrants’ as it fosters a negative attitude.
- Programmes to educate both the people in the sending and receiving countries.
- Programmes for the rehabilitation of victims in both sending and receiving countries like those of the Middle East and other parts of Asia.
- To develop networks within and outside the Church and to lobby governments to come out with policies and laws in their favour.
- To engage in advocacy by becoming partners with grassroots organisations working on migrant issues.
- To make churches open and safe places for migrants to come to where their voices can be heard.

Sarasehan 5

Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace with Justice in Asia

Background

The number of Asian countries affected by conflicts has increased during the past quarter of a century. However, conflicts in the Asian region are multifaceted and among these conflicts, some of the world’s longest serving armed conflicts are still ongoing in Asia. Such conflicts come under a category of sub-national conflicts, which are the most widespread, deadly and enduring form of conflicts. Over the past 20 years, there have been 26 sub-national conflicts in South and Southeast Asia, affecting half of the countries in this region; often lasting for multiple generations, and more than 40 years on

average.

There are various reasons for sub-national conflicts and they differ from regular civil wars. Sri Lanka, West Papua, Myanmar, Mindanao, Southern Thailand, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh are examples for sub-national conflicts in Asia. Sub-national conflicts are ultimately political problems; overcoming them requires political solutions. Changing the approaches of governments to these conflict areas also requires political will and this cannot be externally imposed. It was estimated that in the past decade, more than 100,000 people were killed in sub-national conflicts in South and Southeast Asia. The actual number of lives lost in many conflicts in Asia far exceeds this number. It is generally perceived that the deadliest conflicts in Asia right now are happening in Thailand, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

In a similar way, the economic explosion in China, for example, has been accompanied by deepening unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang. The majority of the people of Thailand's conflict-affected Deep South are Malay-Muslims, while Muslims probably account for only six percent of Thailand's population. The lack of peace in the Asian context is to be understood not in the contexts of violence and civil wars only. The absence of violence and war are not the only visible realities of peace, related to our classical understanding on peace. The denial of basic socioeconomic and cultural rights to a vast number of people basically leads to a situation where peace is negated and justice is denied.

Many citizens in conflict-affected regions have come to see their government as distant, unresponsive, inaccessible, or non-cooperative altogether. There are several countries in Asia today that experience post-conflict or post-war situations. Such situations bring many crucial challenges to efforts for sustaining peace and building reconciliation and healing. For example, the war or the violent phase of the conflict in Sri Lanka that plagued the nation for well over four decades came to an end. It has brought new challenges and opportunities to the nation, especially related to our ecumenical witness. There are several other similar situations in Asia. Many crucial questions have emerged in such contexts too, such as what is authentic peace? What is the interrelation between peace and justice? What are the core factors that contribute to reconciliation? How do we deal with and overcome the painful memories of the past? How do we talk of genuine justice without

a mechanism for accountability? These questions are foremost in the hearts and minds of the people in post- conflict situations when they are prepared to move beyond conflict or equipped to be permanent peace makers. These contextual questions emerge in a multi-faith context where cordiality and confrontation, cooperation and resistance are manifested.

The Asian churches have been accompanying people and communities in different contexts where they have taken keen initiatives in peace building. The Sarasehan on 'Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace with Justice in Asia' provided space for reflecting and discussing the need for the participation and on the contributions of Asian churches towards building peace with justice and reconciliation in post-conflict situations in Asia.

Thematic Foci

- Ecumenical accompaniment in churches' participation in building sustainable peace with justice and reconciliation
- How to share the rich experiences of peace building by churches and ecumenical movements in different contexts within Asia and outside the region in order to develop a strategy to move beyond conflicts?

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

The number of Asian countries affected by conflict has increased during the past quarter of a century. However, conflicts in the Asian region are multifaceted and among these conflicts, some of the world's longest serving armed conflicts are still continuing in Asia, these conflicts come under a category of sub-national conflicts. Over the past 20 years, there have been 26 sub-national conflicts in South and Southeast Asia, affecting half of the countries in this region; often lasting for multiple generations, and more than 40 years on average.

The Asian churches have been accompanying people and communities in different contexts where they have taken keen initiatives in peace building.

The focus of this group's conversation was around the ecumenical accompaniment in the churches' participation in building sustainable peace with justice and reconciliation and how to share the rich

experiences of peace building done by churches and ecumenical movements in different contexts within Asia and outside the region in order to develop a strategy to move beyond conflicts.

To this end the group of 21 participants received a keynote presentation from Rev. Ebenezer Joseph from Sri Lanka and a response from Rev. Dr Min Heui Cheon from Korea. Both presenters spoke out of their own contexts and experience of moving beyond conflicts and building peace with justice in Asia. Each participant then offered their experiences, stories, and wisdom to the challenging and practical presentations they had heard.

2. Summary of Discussion

It was proposed by the main speaker that conflicts in Asia arise out of issues of multi-faith, multiple identities and ideologies, a shrinking democratic space and political manipulation, which are aggravated by a lack of resources and fuelled by religious sentiments. On the physical plane, the conflicts result in injury, death, loss of property, displacement, loss of livelihood, orphans, and widows. On the emotional and psychological plane, the negative effects of conflict show up in the affected people as hate, suspicion, revenge, hurtful memories, fear, hopelessness, and a loss of dignity. The external, physical aspects can be 'fixed' in a time frame through offering relief, rehabilitation, restoration of livelihood and reconstruction. However, the internal scars and wounds that are left by conflict are much harder to manage for the restoration of human dignity.

A Christian response is sustained by our Christian values and spirituality and the quest is to work for peace with justice, reconciliation, and accountability. But how do we turn this theory into action?

The conceptualisation of language and differing world views is a huge problem as we work to build peace with justice because we perceive these things differently across different religious traditions. To work 'together' to build justice, reconciliation, and accountability means that trust between parties and individuals needs to be developed and that takes time. We need to be willing to 'encounter' others in the spirit of friendship and where there are common questions and a common quest for justice with peace is where a collective platform can be developed for people to work together.

The group was reminded that righteousness is the term that the Bible prioritises over the term justice, and righteousness means making something new - this is our quest as we move beyond conflict. Therefore, to move beyond conflict towards peace and justice it is essential that there is a commitment first that is driven by the core of our faith. We need to be willing to 'encounter' the other and share dialogue and avoid syncretism and then friendship can develop and the household of God can be acted out in real and meaningful ways. This calls for a transformation of our conceptual frameworks, an inclusive and collective journey, and a pilgrimage of grace, truth, and love.

It was in this context that the group discussion took place.

3. Issues Identified

- How do we deal with the traumatic conflicts that our people suffer from?
- It was suggested that we need solid and intentional programmes for dealing with healing from within of the wounds of conflict, with such things as drama and art therapy. Fr. Michael Lapsley's programme, restorative justice forums, and Ecumenical Peace Platform like in the Philippines work with the governments, offer friendships through sports or music, and all this is especially successful with young people.
- How do we enable reconciliation and healing in the generation that experiences conflict, in the present, rather than having the conflict passed on to the next generations, into the future?
- Conflict has many forms—not only theological but also political, social, economic, ethnic, and religious. It is often about power, control of resources, mistrust, discrimination, hatred, uncertainty. How do we approach conflict and strive and work toward peace with justice in these environments? How do we do this in pluralistic societies?
- Moving beyond conflict and building peace with justice is therefore about people, therefore it comes from a personal level. How can we have a dialogue to understand each other, a 'friendship' to develop? What if the other party does not want to talk? Can our churches be

channels to encourage this? Trust-building comes from this and then healing, forgiveness and transformation. We also often need the support of the international community to move beyond conflict and help name the root of the conflict. Also, much of the ability to move beyond conflict with peace and justice depends on who has power.

- Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian reminded us that acceptance of the ‘other’ is the key in this topic and that humans need change to survive. He reminded us of the poignant story that Winston Churchill once told: “When I was very young I wanted to change the world. In my youth I thought I could change the country. When I was middle-aged I thought I could change my family. Now, I am old, I realise I should have changed myself in order to have changed the world, my country and my family.” So this process needs to start with each of us.

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- Could the CCA advocate/model the particular approaches to moving beyond conflict with peace and justice that Rev. Ebenezer Joseph shared with us from his Sri Lankan context?
- Are there any other models or actions from other countries that the CCA could also champion to support those who are striving to make a difference in this area?
- The CCA should continue to be involved in the movement for unification of Korea.

Sarasehan 6 **Militarisation, Nuclearisation, and the Arms Race in Asia: Towards Ecumenical Advocacy for Peacebuilding in Asia**

Background

While the pivot of international politics is shifting towards the Asian region, the new century poses several questions related to human security in the region. There are many factors and key stakeholders from within the region, as well as outside the region posing threats to peace and security and responsible for the denial of justice in Asia. It

is also increasingly evident that insecurity at different levels continues to be a pervasive phenomenon in various Asian countries and sub-regions; hence peace and justice, as well as human security is in peril in various ways. With India and Pakistan testing nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, close on the heels of North Korea's test launch of a long-range rocket, Asian neighbours are living in the shadow of strategic mistrusts that is holding back nuclear disarmament. Owing to this mistrust among Asian countries, the future of extended nuclear deterrence in East Asia, as well as the nuclear disarmament push in Asia was stalled. Other complexities Asia faces in this regard relate to the geopolitical scenario: US allies unwilling to weaken the 'extended deterrence' umbrella under which they are defended by American nuclear weapons; China unwilling to cap the growth or the modernisation of its nuclear arsenal; and the China-India-Pakistan triangle of mistrust and arms competition adding another major obstacle to nuclear arms control and disarmament in Asia. It is observed that the situation could be worsened if the high cost of conventional weapons ever drove a future US Administration to expand the role of nuclear armaments in America's strategic 'pivot' back to Asia.

Asia is becoming increasingly militarised, as a result of rapid economic growth and strategic uncertainty. The militarisation and escalation of arms build-up have been on the increase in Asia. Defence spending in Asia, for the first time in modern history, overtook the European members of NATO last year. While Asia witnesses all kinds of strategic and security challenges and threats, from 19th century-style territorial disputes to economic rivalry and potential new nuclear weapons states, several Asian countries are witnessing new waves of an arms build-up and increase in defence budgets. Despite the negative impact of the global financial crisis, almost every country in South East Asia is now involved in the arms build-up, which makes it one of the fastest-growing regions for defence spending in the world. China, Japan, India, and South Korea accounted for more than 80 percent of total Asian defence spending and Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam were all investing in improving air and naval capacities.

The shifts in policies of purchasing most modern arms, lead to a situation where the Asian region is sliding into an arms race. The surge of military expenditures in the region these days, by its very nature, reflects the vulnerability of peace and security in Asia.

Conflicts in the Korean peninsula; moves to changes in constitutional provisions (Article 9) for rearmament and militarisation; the continued presence of US military on Asian soil; territorial disputes in South China Sea and the East Sea; the militarisation of politics in Myanmar and the Philippines; the militarisation and human rights violations in West Papua, etc., continue to be major concerns in Asia. All these factors reflect the susceptibility and the challenges faced in living together in the household of God in peace and security.

Thematic Foci

- A critical look at the factors behind the new wave of increased military budgets in Asian countries, especially the growing trend of militarisation, nuclearisation and the arms race (for example, North East Asia, Article 9/ Japan, South Asia, Philippines).
- How to build new momentum in peace and reconciliation in areas where peace and security is threatened in Asia? (for example, Korean peninsula, India-Pakistan, territorial disputes in South East and East Asia).
- An ecumenical initiative to campaign for Nuclear Weapon Free Zones in Asia.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

The Asia-Pacific is becoming one of the most militarised regions in the world. Territorial disputes and past conflicts are two forms of existing and potential conflicts in Asia. It includes the claim of the South China Sea by the five neighbouring countries, the historical dispute between China and India over the south border of Tibet, the divided people of South and North Korea, and the increasing military capacity of China, Japan and most of the south-eastern countries.

The panel had two objectives:

- Understanding militarisation, nuclearisation, and the arms race in Asia.
- Focusing on the religious perspective of regional security.

2. Summary of Discussion

The discussion began with the overview that Asia is in the process of preparing for war. The Asia-Pacific is becoming one of the most

militarised regions in the world. The military presence is increasing across the region. The causes of territorial disputes and past conflicts are complex; they involve major powers in the region including, Japan, China, US, Russia and India. For example, the division of the Korean people between the north and the south is the legacy of a past conflict. After Japan was defeated, Russia kept the management of order in the north, whereas, America controlled the south. The conflict in Afghanistan and along the Pakistan border is affected by the direct intervention and indirect influence of America.

Internal security is another contributor to militarisation. For example, Burma had its military dictatorship mainly for government security.

As the fulcrum of economic weight shifts to the Asia-Pacific region, this also becomes the reason for America to shift its strategic military placement to the region. A rising China is surrounded by the US military presence. This fundamental shift of American presence is viewed as the logical cause for China to increase its military capacity. Today, US military spending is equivalent to ten countries combined. The US foreign policy has a resolute strategy to put its presence around China.

The militarisation in Asia is the other side of the reality—increasing American military presence. China has responded with “guns around the country”. When China increases its military spending, the rest of its neighbouring countries like India also increase their spending.

Nuclear power plants are a key source of energy. The increasing use of nuclear energy throughout Asia’s developing countries, including China, India, Indonesia, is a reflection of the rapid growth of the Asian economy. After the earthquake, Japan is selling its nuclear power plants to Asian neighbours. In the perspective of most Christian churches in Asia, however, nuclear power is not the answer to energy shortages, nor is it a means to reduce the efforts of climate change.

3. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- As the CCA gathers people, it exemplifies unity in diversity. The unity of all member churches is a form of security based on peace, justice, love for all people and creation.
- The CCA seeks to develop a theology of security in the midst of militarisation. Human security is to be based on the harmony of human relationships.

- The CCA works with the worldwide ecumenical body for the unity of peace based on the principles of reconciliation. According to the WCC Unity Statement, “only as Christians are being reconciled and renewed by God’s Spirit will the Church bear authentic witness to the possibility of reconciled life for all people, for all creation”.
- The CCA engages dialogue with political leaders as a church-based public diplomacy to promote peace and justice in our region.
- The CCA conduces interreligious dialogue. Christian and Muslim people, and people of other faiths, can work together towards the common goal of building peace.
- The Church continues to speak truth to power in conflict situations.
- As member churches, we will increase awareness of climate change and promote renewable energy. The church takes the lead to adopt green energy sources.
- As church leaders, we want to work with our young people and empower and equip them to take on the active role of peace building as our future means of security.

Sarasehan 7

Health and Healing: Imperatives for Ecumenical Advocacy Initiatives in Asia

Background

In today’s increasingly interconnected world, we remain vulnerable as epidemics can spread faster than ever before with an increased movement of people and their travel. Global health security means safer nations and more stable economies. The vitality of the global economy is only as secure as the collective health of the people. Eleven years ago when the SARS virus erupted and spread, it cost USD 30 billion within four months; the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic killed 284,000 people within one year; AIDS spreads silently for decades before detection and response. Now, Ebola is the latest threat to life.

Asia is one of the areas in the world, where the number of HIV and AIDS continues to grow and spread. Global health is becoming a

greater concern due to the sharp increase in chronic diseases. Heart diseases, cancer, and diabetes are now occurring in larger numbers throughout the developing world. The World Health Organisation's studies observe that the positive impacts of globalisation have been greatly outweighed by its negative impacts, in terms of poverty, unemployment, and competition, resulting in severe mental and physical stress on common people. The number of people affected with mental health problems has drastically increased, especially in economically advanced societies in Asia. While economic affluence increases, communities and families are also faced with problems that affect mental health of family members. Long working hours in special economic zones and garment factories in bad working conditions, often adversely affect health, resulting in chronic diseases and a low morale among people. Access to medicines due to monopolisation by giant corporates, makes it difficult for ordinary people to afford even basic medicines and health services. The destruction of forests deprives access to traditional medicines and indigenous remedies. Development brings in its share of pollution and ecological deterioration that harms and contributes further to ill health. The health and well-being of the poor, disadvantaged, and vulnerable groups should be a major concern of the churches, as they are often hidden, living in remote rural areas, with hardly any political voice. Their complex problems that have roots in social and economic conditions and the failure of health services to reach them must be addressed urgently.

Jesus Christ was the model and master physician who healed not only diseases but the person in his or her entirety. Good health, both physical and mental, contributes to the well-being of individuals, the household, communities and societies. The Church adds the spiritual dimension which adds values of inner peace, comfort, and good will. As the mission of the Church is to ensure fullness of life for all, churches are called to be inclusive and healing communities where God's love and care is experienced, where all feel safe, and are valued as people created in the image of God. The Church, as an instrument of God's mission of caring and healing individuals and communities, is committed to addressing not just diseases but also multi-dimensional issues affecting every aspect of human life, based on the Christian principles of love, respect, and solidarity.

The Sarasehan on Health and Healing: Imperatives for Ecumenical Advocacy Initiatives in Asia explored ways to strengthen health

security and preparedness; focus on ecumenical responses to healing and caring in times of vulnerability; ensure a sustained effort to fight discrimination and stigmatisation; increase accessibility and affordability of drugs; and pastoral care and counselling that will help in the mental health of people.

Thematic Foci

- Call to churches to promote health and well-being for all.
- Practical approaches to develop an ecumenical advocacy addressing health and healing issues.
- Strengthening churches' mission in ecumenical advocacy on HIV and AIDS.

Report

1. Brief description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

- To explore ways to strengthen health security and preparedness.
- To focus on ecumenical responses to healing and caring in times of vulnerability.
- To ensure a sustained effort to fight discrimination and stigmatisation.
- To increase the accessibility and affordability of drugs.
- To enable pastoral care and counselling that will help the mental health of people.

2. Summary of Discussion

Healthcare and healing are not exclusive to health professions, health and healing is in the hands of all. We have diverse faith traditions, culture, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, political persuasions. Christ's love is inclusive, so when we turn to Christ we get physical, emotional, and spiritual resilience that enables us to handle our joys, successes, and comforts with humility and to overcome sadness, failure, pain, disabilities, disappointments, and sickness.

Scientific advancement in medicine and alternative treatments should be easily accessible and affordable. Dr Erlinda quoted Dr Margaret Chan's four reforms which emphasised the importance of primary health care and recognised them in the promotion of primary health care:

- Universal coverage;
- Leadership reform;

- Service delivery reform; and,
- Public policy reform.

Victims of all of kinds of violence carry with them the scars of trauma and need healing. Here, Dr Erlinda quoted Rev. Dr Jose Andres Sotto's suggestions that the following points should be taken into consideration as health and healing imperatives for ecumenical advocacy initiatives in Asia:

- Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) traumas can lead to disrupted brain development and survivors could suffer from social, emotional, and cognitive impairments. The ACE studies highlight the need for revitalising primary health care and attention to mental health.
- There is always the promise of healing and recovery from trauma. People living in high capacity communities are less likely to have high ACE scores, less substance abuse and mental illness. Skilled people are needed for the healing of victims.
- In a supportive community, trauma victims are not stigmatised, marginalised, or dehumanised but they are accepted, respected, and empathised with.
- The ecumenical community can be an influential, credible, and authoritative voice for a transformational society that believes in the full recovery of victims.

3. Issues Identified

- HIV and AIDS
- Physical and mental disability
- Sexual violence
- Violence and discrimination in churches and societies
- Changes in current lifestyles which have caused increased incidence of diabetes and heart diseases
- Deficiency in primary health care

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- Health is a minor focus for the CCA. The CCA should focus on social diseases, the poor, those living with HIV and AIDS, Persons with Disabilities, LGBTQ persons, discrimination in churches and societies, violation of human rights and mental health.
- We have to revitalise primary health care centres, including the health care system. We need to build

competent churches to deal with HIV & AIDS, substance abuse, and commercial sex workers.

- Churches and Christian institutions, including theological seminaries and colleges should have guidance and counselling centres.
- We should develop supportive communities.
- We should develop supportive attitudes.

Sarasehan 8

Marginalisation of Indigenous and Other Vulnerable Communities in Asia

Background

Despite the fact that the world has changed substantially in many areas, especially in terms of economic and technological advancements, a large number of indigenous peoples and other vulnerable communities remain impoverished and marginalised. In Asia, such marginalised and vulnerable communities face social segregation, racial discrimination, oppression, denial of basic human rights and dignity, cultural subjugation, economic backwardness, and political alienation. These marginalised and vulnerable communities in Asia include a vast number of indigenous peoples in almost all Asian countries: the discriminated Dalits in South Asia, the Burakumins in Japan, and other ethnic minority communities living in several Asian countries. The globalisation process, which emphasises neoliberal economics and liberal political values, has further increased the risks and vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples and marginalised communities in Asia. They face abject situations of poverty and discrimination, as well as social alienation in their day-to-day lives. The struggles of the indigenous peoples in Asia today revolve around the protection of their lands, territories, and resources against the exploitation by the state, by multinational corporations or by dominant powers. The voices of the marginalised sectors for asserting their traditional, political, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual systems are not heard or respected. As a result, discrimination and human rights violation is particularly glaring in the indigenous-inhabited regions in several Asian countries, where they have continued to suffer from violent land-grabbing and other forms of alienation. The indigenous peoples have been evicted, or threatened with eviction, from their traditional homes and ancestral

lands in the name of development projects, such as dams, eco-parks, national parks, protected forest and even the establishment of military bases on their ancestral and community land. These and other major problems faced by indigenous peoples continue to be neglected by governments and are worsened on account of the very limited participation of indigenous peoples in major decision-making processes.

Successive governments in independent India have denied constitutional guarantees, as well as protection of the right to the equality and dignity of vulnerable people and communities of the Dalits and other marginalised communities. There are many other socially and ethnically marginalised communities and groups in Asia who live in situations where they experience systematic and gross human rights violations. A large number of indigenous peoples in various Asian countries are now faced with serious problems related to their right to live on their ancestral lands as governments and multinational companies encroach on their land for mining and other forms of exploitation. Though several international organisations and agencies, including those of the UN specialised agencies, have their own policies of engagement with indigenous peoples and marginalised communities, they, however, do not follow these policies when they undertake development projects in the territory of indigenous peoples or when they deal with governments in those countries.

Thematic Foci

- As agents of transformation, healing, and reconciliation, how should the Church engage with people who are marginalised in Asia?
- Practical approaches to develop an ecumenical agenda to address the concerns on how to protect the rights and dignity of indigenous peoples, marginalised communities and the practical application of constitutional guarantees.

Sarasehan 9 **Upholding the Dignity and Rights of Children in Asia**

Background

Despite tremendous growth in economic activity, the globalisation of trade and capital, and the penetration of transnational corporations

into every corner of the world, the world's poor children continue to suffer in their day-to-day life. The rights and dignity of millions of children in Asia are negated as they are vulnerable and cannot protect themselves. The 'International Convention on the Rights of the Child' articulates the fundamental rights of children, such as their right to dignity, right to life, survival and development, equality and non-discrimination, right to their best interests being taken care of, and freedom to express their view in all matters affecting them. The economic, social, and cultural rights of the children guarantee a decent standard of living, education, healthcare and development to the maximum extent possible, and protection against exploitation like trafficking and child labour. However, in reality children all over the world, especially in Asia, find themselves in situations of neglect, abandonment, and exploitation. Many suffer violence and abuse, and unfortunately, some are trapped in the bondage of prostitution and drug abuse. They are trafficked for forced labour, sexual exploitation, drug peddling, begging, and recruited for hazardous games like camel races and as combatants in military zones.

Churches in Asia need to respond to this brutality and human rights violation of innocent children. As the Christian faith recognises that dignity and fullness of life are God's gifts, it is also affirmed that children deserve them as equally as any adult human being. One of the key meanings of being created in God's image and likeness is that by so creating us, God conferred on humankind a special dignity that contributed to the fullness of life. Every time that dignity is trampled upon, one tramples up on the image and likeness of God. The restoration of human dignity is the paramount concern and dimension that needs to be upheld in order to affirm the fullness of life of children. The Asian churches and ecumenical movement need to recognise and reaffirm this truth in today's Asian context.

Thematic Foci

- Deepen participants' understanding of the plight of children and empower Asian churches in their ministry with children.
- Explore the theological response to the dignity and rights of the child.
- Evolve strategies to equip churches and related organisations to address the issues on children in various Asian countries.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussion

Twenty-six years ago, the world made a commitment to its children: That we would do everything in our power to protect and promote their rights, to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard, and to reach their full potential. While the world celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2014, this historic milestone should also remind us of the millions of children who have not yet been reached, and urgently find new ways of reaching them.

Asia is home to nearly half of the world's population under the age of eighteen. Many of these children continue to suffer from discrimination, violence, abuse, and sexual and economic exploitation. Many more children face protection risks. Violations of the child's right to protection are often invisible, under-recognised, and underreported. Such violations may occur by acts of omission or commission and occur across all sectors of the society.

Asian churches and the ecumenical movement cannot ignore this reality, and are entrusted with the mission of saving the dignity of children. Each time that their dignity is trampled upon, one tramples the image and likeness of God. Living together in the household of God, we are called to give the child her rightful place and it is paramount that we understand and reaffirm this truth in today's Asian context.

Keeping this in mind, the Sarasehan group reflected and sought directions on 'Upholding the rights and dignity of the children in Asia' especially with regard to CCA's mandate and direction for the next five years.

Ahmad Taufan Damanik, Indonesia representative to the ASEAN commission on the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children (ACWC), in his speech outlined the realities and mounting challenges South East Asian nations faced with regard to protecting the rights of children.

2. Summary of Discussion

- Laws failing to fully reflect the CRC. Reservations are based on religious doctrine, emphasis of precedence

of domestic law over the CRC, legality of harmful cultural practices, especially corporal punishment and on national security. Also, for example: Child marriages are backed by domestic laws that set the minimum age below the accepted age.

- ASEAN countries are weak in implementation; lack of funds, corruption, armed conflicts, absence of political will. Laws are often poorly framed, or never implemented and enforced.
- Absence of vital data (for example: number of recorded child trafficking violations), both in quantitative and qualitative dimensions, affect the quality of analysis and appropriate intervention on children rights within state parties.

Dr Ipe Joseph in his presentation echoed the same concerns which are plaguing the South Asian region. He also shared best practices and lessons learnt. The need for the Church to keep renewing their understanding of children, in the way of:

- Christ's attitude to children,
- Holistic child development,
- Child participation,
- Children's deserving a share in the life of the Church.

3. Issues Identified

There were several issues identified during the discussion as participants shared their experiences from their local contexts. Some of the shared concerns were:

- Child labour and hazardous working conditions.
- Rising number of child refugees.
- Child trafficking and drug trafficking.
- The negative impacts of social media and the vulnerability of children.
- Lack of opportunity and access to education.
- Juvenile justice systems.
- Structural, cultural, and social issues when international law is adapted locally.
- Natural disasters and their severe impact on orphaned children.
- Militarisation and children suffering from targeted attacks.

- Christian education and training of trainers.
- Lack of trained child givers/investigators/trainers.

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- Member churches and councils to actively implement CCA's policy on child protection.
- Christian education:
 - to formulate a more child-friendly curriculum that also incorporates a unit on other faiths;
 - to effectively implement training of trainers and screening of trainers, creating safe spaces for children within the church;
 - to produce a CD and booklet on biblical and cultural values;
 - to help counter aggressive evangelisation of children and treat them with dignity (the malpractice of candy for attendance strategy).

We would also like to forward the recommendations below to the Public Issues Committee for study and action:

- The revision of laws on child labour and hazardous working conditions;
- The rising number of child refugees;
- Child trafficking and drug trafficking;
- Lack of opportunity and access to education;
- Juvenile justice systems;
- Natural disasters and their severe impact on orphaned children (special attention towards the current plight of orphaned children in Nepal);
- Militarisation and targeting children: The horrific trend of incidents recently with terrorist groups targeting schools and places of worship.

It is also imperative to remember that the primary role of the family cannot in any way be underestimated. It is acknowledged and promoted by the UNCRC. The quality of the relationships that children experience at home forms the foundation of a grounded future.

An important aspect of training for practitioners is how to work in partnership with parents and how to fully involve them in their children's holistic development. Also the roles played by the society,

state, religion, education, NGOs, and other organisations are crucial since upholding the dignity and rights of children cannot merely be attained through structural means but also with active social and cultural transformation.

Sarasehan 10

Overcoming Discrimination and Violence against Women: The Role of Asian Churches

Background

Violence against women is an increasing menace that causes widespread human rights violation in every part of the world. It is estimated that one in every five women faces some form of violence during her life, in some cases leading to serious injury or death. Violence against women and gender inequality result from a complex array of interwoven factors that are rooted in gender-based discrimination, harmful social and gender norms and traditions and social acceptance of violence as a means of conflict resolution and demonstration of power that perpetuates such violence. In many parts of Asia, women have no social or legal way out against violence by their husbands or partner. Harmful gender roles can be reinforced by traditional practices such as, widow cleansing, wife inheritance, child marriage, and systems wherein young girls are forcibly married as part of punishment for a crime committed by her male relatives. Dowry and bride price can become a basis for demands, resentment, threats, and abuse by husbands and in-laws. Women who try to leave abusive marriages may be murdered or driven to suicide in South Asia's context. Women and girls are killed because they are thought to have tarnished the honour of their husbands and families. Since such murder is considered justifiable, the perpetrators face no consequences. The effects of violence on women range from death and injury to psychological trauma, chronic ill-health, and reproductive health consequences. Equally distressing are the stories of families forced to send women and children for domestic work or other kinds of work where they are often neglected and exploited. Thousands of Asian migrant women are working as domestic workers, in inhuman living conditions, in different Asian countries and in the Arabian Gulf countries.

Churches in Asia have been slow to recognise the plight of women and to accept gender-based violence and discrimination. In many

churches sharing responsibilities with women is difficult, as a result of which they are not yet accepted as leaders and are denied prominent roles in the Church. The space that women occupy in the church is often perceived to be an extension of their home life which is service oriented and subordinate to the male members, whereas men are involved in mainstream church activities and decision-making bodies. On the whole, in the Asian context, the patriarchal structure which has dominated society and governed the relationship of men and women for many years, places women as subordinate, marginalised, and oppressed. Life in fullness for all, demands that churches take seriously the discussion on discrimination and violence against women and gender injustice, in theology and the Church. Jesus says “I came that they all may have life in its fullness.” Churches should acknowledge that the best way to end violence against women is to prevent it from happening by addressing its root and structural causes, for which a greater advocacy in all parts of society needs to take place. It starts by educating boys and girls, women and men and promoting respectful relationships and gender equality. For Asian churches and the ecumenical movement, it calls for the re-reading of the Bible with openness to God who reveals what the Word of God is, for all of us today as women and men, regardless of nation, culture, religion, gender, and colour. The struggle for inclusive communities and gender justice belongs equally to both women and men. Building strong partnerships requires that both women and men play critical roles and work together in ways that are positive, progressive, and respectful.

Thematic Foci

- Re-examine gender roles and the need to promote gender justice.
- Deepen the theological understanding of the partnership of women and men, in order to prevent discrimination and violence against women.
- Develop advocacy strategies to address the problems of women.
- Equip churches to be in partnership with the civil society and to be engaged in advocacy.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aim and Objective of Discussion

In every part of the world, there is violence against women, which is the violation of human rights. In many parts of Asia, women have no

social or legal way out against violence. Violence against women and gender inequality results from a complex array of interwoven factors that are rooted in gender-based discrimination, harmful social and gender norms and traditional and social acceptance of violence as a means of conflict resolution and demonstration of power that perpetuates such violence. The effects of the violence range from injury to psychological trauma, chronic ill-health, and reproductive health consequences to death.

Churches in Asia have been slow to recognise the plight of their women and to accept gender-based violence and discrimination. In many churches, sharing responsibilities with women is difficult as a result of which they are not accepted as leaders in decisions and are denied prominent roles in the Church.

On the whole, in an Asian context, the patriarchal structure has dominated society and governed the relationship of men and women as subordinate, marginalised, and oppressed.

Asian churches and the ecumenical movement are called upon to undertake a re-reading of the Bible with openness to God who reveals what the Word of God is for all of us today as women regardless of nation, culture, religion, gender, and colour.

The struggle for inclusive communities and gender justice belongs equally to both men and women. Building strong partnership requires both men and women to play critical roles and work together in ways that are positive, progressive, and respectful.

2. Summary of Discussion

After the reflections from the main speaker and respondents, the group discussed various issues of women in their respective churches.

Domination is grounded in control and silence. In the face of poverty, corruption and human rights violation—the greatest crimes in our societies today—our response must be resistance/to oppose the discrimination and violence against women.

The cries of many Asian women in our society are unheard. They need liberation from the shackles of human trafficking, domestic violence, and emotional and psychological problems.

As an ecumenical body we need to rise up and listen to the cries of those who need God. We need to cry out for ourselves and for those who need God.

Resist to uphold and defend the lives of the marginalised.

Be assertive and celebrate the joy of liberation from the violence and discrimination of women, which is possible through various programmes in our member churches.

Some of the programmes can be:

- Empowerment and training programmes for women that create awareness that can help to stop domestic violence within and outside the family.
- Campaigning through brochures/handouts.
- Premarital Counselling.

c. Issues Identified

- Ecological Disasters, migration of men and women, domestic helpers.
- Psychological/emotional violence.
- Unequal wages for women labourers.
- Human trafficking.
- Health issues, reproductive health and hygiene.
- Increase in number of rape cases.

d. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- Campaigning programmes.
- Introductory literature for Sunday school/youth and women to re-read the Bible in the present context with a feministic perspective.
- Orientation programmes to inculcate capacity enhancement and the ecumenical formation of churches, lay committees, and leaders.
- Educational programmes with regard to reproductive health and hygiene and sexual ethics.

Sarasehan 11

Economic Justice, Eco-justice, and Sustainability amidst Asia's Economic Development

Background

Asia has become one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing regions in the world and has achieved impressive economic growth over the past several years. Ever since the end of the Cold War, the rapid economic growth in several Asian countries has helped them

to reposition and redefine their roles both, at the regional and at the global levels. However, Asians lack many factors essential for attaining the goal of achieving economic justice, as well as protecting the dignity of a vast number of people. On the one hand, Asia's economic development and growth have been appreciated and applauded, but at the same time, the struggle of Asians to overcome emerging threats to justice and human rights continues.

In the midst of economic developments, Asia has become a region that is prone to environmental threats and disasters, which can be linked, directly or indirectly to ecological imbalances and climate change. The victims of these disasters are the poor, the marginalised, and the underprivileged who are denied their basic rights of access to clean water and clean air, due to increasing pollution levels as a result of rapid industrialisation. Bio-diversity destruction, deforestation, and rapid urbanisation are other such side effects of Asia's unsustainable modes of economic development. New agricultural methods of farming, marketing and distribution, and the introduction of patents even for traditional, indigenous agricultural products that have belonged for ages to particular communities, have almost killed indigenous and traditional methods of agriculture. The destruction of forests deprives access to traditional medicines and indigenous remedies. Thousands of poor people, especially farmers have committed suicide, as they are swamped with a sense of hopelessness.

Though the region benefits from natural resources and bio-diversity, a wide range of productive capabilities, diversified exports, an expanding middle-class and a young and dynamic population, it suffers from severe economic disparities, unemployment, and downward trends in many sectors that lead to suicides, depression, and ill-health. Here, a more significant question is raised about the real meaning of Asia's development. We are reminded that sustainable development strategies should focus on better standards of living; adequate infrastructure, energy efficiency, sanitation; poverty reduction by developing policies that promote innovation, entrepreneurship leading to the creation of jobs; strengthening of public financial management and governance, and improved access to public services. The situation in many Asian contexts is contrary to the goal of searching for the right path to development. Asia and Asians should have greater ownership of the common resources, including an open trading system, stable financial systems, and

climate change mitigation efforts. The Church has to be reminded that we have a shared responsibility to be good stewards of this creation that has been entrusted to us.

Thematic Foci

- Asia's economic development and its sustainability: Shared responsibility of Churches in stewardship.
- Towards economic justice for all and affirming fullness of life and dignity: Role of Churches in Asia.

Report

1. Brief Description of Overall Aims and Objectives of Discussions

Asia is one of the most dynamic and fast growing regions of the world, which has achieved, on the one hand, impressive economic growth and, on the other, is prone to environmental threats and disasters. Denial, deprivation, exploitation by the majority of those who still languish in poverty, destruction of bio-diversity, deforestation and rapid urbanisation, increasing air, soil and water pollution as a direct result of rapid industrialisation, severe economic disparities, rising levels of unemployment, patent laws and new methods of farming, marketing and distribution which has rendered farmers helpless, has made Asian economic development unsustainable.

What are the sustainable developmental strategies that Asian churches need to promote? How can Asian churches strive for strengthening public financial management and governance which promotes both eco-justice, as well as economic justice?

2. Summary of Discussion

Presentation of the resource person—Economic power in the world is no longer the result of a game of geopolitical balance among great powers, but instead, one of geo-economics.

The coercive political, economic, and social dispensation prevalent in Asian societies today has fallen far short of what is required for the restoration of human rights and human entitlements. Enjoying strong growth and exposing high vulnerability toward crises, Asia is the global economic powerhouse and a tinderbox at the same time.

The region still has the largest concentration of people without adequate food, income, and employment. Inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power, and resources between and within

countries, and among the rich and poor, men and women, and social groups, are growing and undermining the well-being of the population. Environmental conditions are deteriorating rapidly, especially in ecologically sensitive areas, such as oceans, forests, and mountain regions. Climate change is endangering the lives and futures of entire populations.

We need to challenge the current security paradigm that increases investments in the military-industrial complex, which contributes to violent conflict between and within countries.

Asians are confronted with disparities on a number of serious issues, like globalisation and the market economy, poverty and marginalisation, violation of human rights, burden of debt, discrimination against women, domestic violence, abuse of children, etc.

Sustainable development recognises that growth must be both inclusive and environmentally sound to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity for today's population and to continue to meet the needs of future generations.

The three pillars of sustainable development are economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion.

A fundamental obstacle to inclusive growth is patriarchy. Inclusive growth cannot be achieved without addressing the discrimination, oppression, and subjugation of women and girls, in both public and private domains.

The Asian Church should redraw social missionary boundaries to show new contours of hope in the lives of the groaning people.

3. Issues Identified

Discussion on globalisation: the Church needs to offer a critique of globalisation, presenting Alternative Globalisation Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE).

An economy of life reminds us of the main characteristics of God's household of life: The bounty of the gracious economy of God offers and sustains abundance for all; God's gracious economy requires that we manage the abundance of life in a just, participatory and sustainable manner; the economy of God is an economy of life that

promotes sharing, global solidarity, the dignity of persons, and love and care for the integrity of creation;

God's economy is an economy for the whole oikoumene: the whole earth community; God's justice and preferential option for the poor are the marks of God's economy. Churches should engage in a process that proposes, advocates and develops a framework and criteria for building a just, ethical, caring and sustainable international financial architecture, motivated by faith, based on ethics and justice (New Economic Engineering and Financial Architecture).

4. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

The CCA should strive to strengthen the resolve of its member churches:

- to promote stewardship of creation: water conservation, rainwater harvesting, in making clean drinking available to all;
- to seek alternative ways of solid waste management;
- to work against deforestation, in making people aware of the need to plant saplings and nurturing bio-diversity;
- to take note of carbon foot prints seriously; and,
- to take up the advocacy of alternative and renewable energy sources.

The CCA should strive to have an important role of voice and mobilisation to:

- Affirm an economy of life based on cooperation, reciprocity, and solidarity.
- Educate and help its members, especially the youth to critique the paradigm of current economic systems and help them to move from a free trade/economy to a just trade/economy.
- Advocate and practice life-affirming agriculture.
- Support alternate financing at grassroots level, and try to achieve the financial and economic inclusion of the poor and marginalised, especially women, farmers and labourers.
- Strengthen the already existing micro-financing structures at the grassroots level.
- Take up the cause of migrant workers, domestic workers, small farmers, refugees, and try to journey with them, accompanying, capacity-building., and empowering them constantly.

- Practice the economy of solidarity and promote ethical code and community wellness in investments.
- Take up advocacy for corporate social responsibility.
- Strive for an economic system where full participation of the stakeholders, especially the poor, the marginalised and women in decision-making processes becomes an imperative.
- Work towards a radical engineering of a different global governance system with democratic representation.
- Strive to create an alternative economic network that affirms justice and challenges injustices.

Sarasehan 12

Diakonia and Prophetic Witness in Asia: Towards a Coherent Ecumenical Approach

Background

Diakonia is central to what it means to be the Church. As a core component of the gospel, diakonia is not an option but an essential part of discipleship. Diakonia reaches out to all persons, who are created in God's image. While diakonia begins as an unconditional service to the neighbour in need, it leads inevitably to prophetic witness for social change that restores, reforms and transforms societies and communities. Christian theological understanding emphasises that diakonia cannot ignore the challenges arising from suffering, need and injustice. That would mean 'to ignore the sensitivity Jesus emphasised in his diaconal ministry'. Therefore, the Church must critically ask whether its diaconal practice is sufficiently sensitive to the clamour of the suffering, bold enough to respond to difficult and even controversial challenges, and willing to be renewed through its actions, not done alone but in a coherent and united way.

While affirming this reality, it is not sustainable if any diaconal ministry is implemented alone by any church or ecumenical body with a claim that these tasks are the monopoly of a particular agency, because it could give the impression that diakonia is exclusively the responsibility of certain agencies or local groups with vested interests. This tendency happens increasingly in Asia in recent years especially through the field offices of non-Asian church-based agencies in Asia. Often local churches are denied opportunities for demonstrating the mission and witness through their diaconal actions as overseas

agencies and personnel tend to work directly with governments and secular NGOs rather than equipping the churches in their diaconal ministry.

What brings diakonia into being, and motivates and sustains it? It comes from the same sources that give life to the Church, namely Word and Sacraments. Those same sources point to Jesus' diakonia deeply rooted in the mission bestowed upon the Church with sensitivity to human needs and sufferings. The global context in which churches and specialised agencies work for solidarity and sustainable development is rapidly changing and significantly affecting the witness of churches' engagement in diakonia. This situation calls for a coherent approach in the churches' engagement of diakonia and prophetic witness. There are several factors related to diakonia and prophetic witness that need to be addressed in today's Asian contexts.

The ecumenical dialogue on this topic provided a space for theological, ecclesiological, and practical reflection on how Asian churches can be engaged in diakonia as part of their prophetic witness with better coherence and coordination together with all ecumenical actors within Asia and beyond. The discussions in this session also will focus on opportunities and new patterns of cooperation in Asia by churches and ecumenical actors within the region, as well as from beyond the region in order to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach.

Thematic Foci

- Changing paradigms of diakonia in emerging geopolitical contexts and development strategies and policies.
- How Asian churches can be a witnessing community to God's transforming grace through diaconal missions in partnerships for the sake of all God's creation.
- How to ensure coherence and coordination in our common diaconal mission in Asia.

Report

1. Summary of Discussion

- Diakonia/diaconal ministry cannot be separated from Koinonia (fellowship), Marturia (witness) and Kerygma (proclamation).
- Spirituality of diaconal ministry: 2010 CCA General Assembly promoted a spirituality of frugality.

- Diakonal ministry should address causes of problems, not just symptoms.
- Diakonal ministry can be seen as a means of proselytising: this has led to some governments discouraging churches doing social work.
- Churches need to maintain high standards of accountability, transparency, openness.

2. Issues Identified

- Migration, displaced people, refugees.
- Disaster response.
- Environmental concerns.

3. Specific Proposals for Future Programmatic Engagement

- Employment of a full-time staff person for justice issues.
- Communication.
- Churches must work with other faith traditions in order to carry out diaconal ministry in response to humanitarian crises.

Business Sessions

Report of the Presidium

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, respected church leaders, all delegates and ecumenical partners,

We give thanks to God for all the good, the opportunities and the challenges that took place in Asia in the last five years, all of these have demanded our best. Often times, we have not stood up to the full measure of what is supposed to be our ideal response, for which we are sorry.

In the last five years, we were in a period of transition, following the mandate of the 2010 Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Primarily, there was a call to amend the Constitution and rules of the CCA. The period saw changes as we dealt with past issues and concerns on the financial sustainability of the CCA. The reports of the General Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer will provide details on these.

Suffice it to say that there has been a reduction of staff during this period. This also meant that the CCA was not able to make any major breakthrough in terms of its programmes. Still, we do recognise the ecumenical initiatives that took place in the sub-regional and national levels.

Now, we have a new Constitution and rules. Its full test will be in the crucible of lived-out realities in Asia and how the leadership of the CCA responds to the call to be a household of faith in the face of these realities and diverse perspectives, if not responses.

Confronted by a continent so diverse, we know that we are faced by certain realities that we can neither escape nor avoid. These are realities that deny the divine promise of abundant life made possible in Jesus Christ.

In recent weeks, we have been witness to these: natural disasters in many parts of Asia, most recently in Nepal; the agonising human

cost of human trafficking and forced migration; and the poverty and repression that stalks so many of our communities. Undeniably, these alone demand concrete response. We refer to the need to address the “principalities and powers” that are either at the root of or mainly responsible for these human miseries.

There is much to hope for beyond our churches, and structures like the CCA, are people’s movements often showing us the way to concrete responses. The coming years will be a challenging period to keep our household together and, at the same time, respond to the crying needs of the people of Asia.

Before coming to the end of this Report, let me, as the youngest member of the CCA Presidium express our gratitude to the faithful churches, Christian organisations, ecumenical partners, and all those people who have worked together, who share all the richness and have prayed for the CCA for so long until today, so that the works of the CCA can always be with the people in Asia. Let us move by hope and here, I do like to quote Isaiah 40:30–31:

*“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.”*

Let us continue our journey, full of commitment in our ministry and be faithful as we witness God in Asia. May God bless us and keep us.

Respectfully submitted by Ms V. Rasmey (Cambodia), Dr K.B. Rokaya (Nepal), Rev. Rex R.B. Reyes Jr. (Philippines), and Rev. Retno Ngapon (Indonesia).

Report of the General Secretary

Introduction

It is a great joy for me to welcome you to Jakarta, and my native country Indonesia. We are grateful to God for bringing us together, from far and near, to this General Assembly. We have experienced God’s unchanging faithfulness in our ecumenical journey as a family of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), especially in the past five years. We are here to celebrate our unity in Christ, the unity of the Church in Asia in worship, study, and action, beyond our many differences. This is the basis of our existence as the CCA. We joined

the CCA as an ecumenical movement in Asia, and at different times in the history of the CCA for the past 58 years, believing that though we are different from each other, we are all a part of the body of Christ and are committed to witness Christ in our life and ministry in the context of the pluralistic and changing society of Asia. Again, this time we assemble to renew our commitment to stay together with the confidence that God is journeying with us. It is my earnest hope that in times of joy and struggle, we will continue to devote ourselves to working together, believing that we are called to weave our life together in the household of God. This Assembly will receive the Report of the work of the CCA for the past five years, review it, and set our vision and general directions to guide us in implementing our common mission for the Church and society for the upcoming five years.

Let me express my deep appreciation to the leadership of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP) or Batak Christian Protestant Church, who sincerely invited us to hold this Assembly in Indonesia and offered generous hospitality to all of us. I am particularly grateful as they were willing to prepare this Assembly in the relatively short time of one year. We can imagine the demand of work and responsibilities shouldered by the Local Arrangement Committee (LAC). Fifty-eight years ago, the CCA was born in the ambience of the HKBP in Parapat, North Sumatera. The first Assembly was held from 17–26 March 1957 under the theme: “The Common Evangelistic Task of the Churches in East Asia.” Today, we return to Indonesia for another CCA Assembly, again hosted by HKBP, under the theme: “Living Together in the Household of God.” One of the interesting stories of the formation of the CCA in Parapat, then called East Asia Christian Conference (EACC), that was noted by Dr Yap Kim Hao, former CCA General Secretary, in the book *From Parapat to Colombo*, was that while discussing financial support for the EACC, “the meeting was interrupted unexpectedly by the arrival of the very first contribution of the Batak local congregation from a village on the shore of Lake Toba in the form of a young bullock.” (Yap Kim Hao, *From Parapat to Colombo*, p.25). The calf has a very special place in the Batak culture. When the CCA was born, the offering of a young calf was a powerful symbol that expressed genuine support of the local church to start the life of the EACC. I record my gratitude to the LAC, under the leadership of Mr Sukur Nababan and Rev. Dr Binsar Pakpahan for their hard work in preparing this Assembly, especially as they try

their best to make our stay here as convenient as possible. These sincere efforts, indeed are unmeasurable monetarily, beyond the counts of calf, or rupiahs. Such commitment inspires us to continue our journey, to manage our life together and meet the challenges of our era to work for God's peace and justice in Asia region.

I also record my thankfulness to the Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Di Indonesia (PGI) or Communion of Churches in Indonesia, for their great support, especially in assuming a coordinating role to make this Assembly and all related meetings as smooth as possible. We are grateful for the willingness of the PGI West Java region through its Women Commission and PGI Women's Desk to host the Pre-Assembly Women's Forum for Gender Justice from 17–20 May 2015 in Bandung, West Java. Similarly, our appreciation goes to the Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) for its preparedness to host the pre-Assembly Youth Forum from 17–20 May 2015 at the Kampung Sawah congregation in West Java. The host committees of both pre-Assemblies have gladly assumed a heavy responsibility to provide accommodation, food, and transportation for the participants. A word of thanks to the many families in Kampung Sawah who opened their homes, to host the participants of the Youth Forum. An appreciation also goes to the Jakarta Theological Seminary (STT Jakarta) for its cooperation in jointly organising the Asia Ecumenical Course which was held from 15–27 May 2015.

Moments in Asian Time

The year 2015 is a special year for Asia, especially related to two events. This year, we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, which enabled many Asian countries to gain their independence from the domination and oppression of the colonial powers in the past. Some of us in Asia may come to this point with mixed feelings. While still experiencing the ramifications of World War II, such as the division of the Korean peninsula, the pain of women during the Japanese occupation in some Asian countries, etc., we are facing a new emerging geopolitical situation in Asia which has complicated our condition. As churches in Asia, we are challenged to find wisdom to move ahead in promoting human security in the region which is characterised by a genuine effort to promote peace with justice for all. I do hope that through the sessions on "Sarasehan" or discussions on emerging issues in Asia and ecumenical responses, this Assembly will be able to address these concerns in depth.

Secondly, this year is also the commemoration of 60th anniversary of what is known as the Asia-Africa Conference that took place in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia from 18–24 April 1955. This conference was initiated by five countries namely Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and India in the context of: (a) intensifying conflict between Eastern and Western blocs, which had differing interests and contradicting ideologies, and in which each tried to gather support from Asian and African nations; and (b) escalating conflicts in newly independent countries in Asia and Africa, that were affected by colonialism resulting from the divide and conquer strategies employed by colonial powers. On its 50th anniversary in 2010, the spirit of Bandung was revived as a way to strengthen the solidarity of Asia and Africa in responding to global concerns, and on its 60th anniversary, held in Jakarta and Bandung last month, an Asia-Africa summit was held under the theme, *Strengthening South to South Cooperation to Promote World Peace and Prosperity*. In this light, it is indeed timely for the churches in Asia to build and strengthen their relationship with churches in Africa.

It is my joy to welcome our main speaker for this Assembly, Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri from Malawi, who is presently the Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. She will share her biblical and theological reflections on the theme of this Assembly and what it implies for us. Also, it is a special privilege for me to welcome Dr Samuel Kabue and Ms Angeline from Nairobi, Kenya representing the Ecumenical Disable Advocacy Network (EDAN). Dr Kabue will be a resource person in one of the Sarasehan or ecumenical conversations in this Assembly. It is a privilege for me to welcome Rev. Dr Andrew Karamagar, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches. I sincerely hope that the presence of the representatives of the churches in Africa will be a reminder for us as churches in Asia to relate and work together with the churches in Africa in promoting fullness of life between the two continents. Similarly, the presence of the General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Rev. Francois reminds us of the common issues we are facing together in the Asia- Pacific region. The three continents, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific share many similar experiences; and in a way, are still caught in the remnants of colonialism and, though some have gained their independence they are at the same time facing a new emerging neo-colonialism in various manifestations in the social, economic, and political arenas.

We also remember with sorrow the Armenian Genocide that took place 100 years ago.

We meet in this 2015 Assembly amidst mounting problems that impinge upon the life of Asian people. Our situation reflects what Paul said, "The whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruit of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of the bodies." (Romans 8:22). Despite many efforts to promote peace with justice, today, we are still surrounded by many problems caused by different forms of dominations. The realisation of freedom and justice are still far away and the road to attain it is not that smooth, often bumpy, full with small and big stones. In many Asian cultures, the 70th anniversary is crucial as it signifies the attainment of the age of wisdom. It is our hope that God will grant wisdom to the churches and the leaders of Asian churches and society in pursuing peace and justice for all. With this background, it is my pleasure to present my Report on the last five years in which I have had a privilege to serve as the General Secretary of this fellowship. Five years in the life of the CCA have run by fast. It is, however, a time when we experience God's grace day by day. Let me highlight a few illustrations.

1. The Ecological Crises

During the past five years, Asia has faced many traumatic experiences as the result of the escalating numbers of natural disasters that hit the region and caused severe damage to the life of the people. Floods, landslides, tsunamis, as well as cyclones and earthquakes, all in small and big scales, smashed many parts of Asia one after another. A number of natural disasters happened recently on a gigantic scale, killing a huge number of people and causing massive destructions. They forced thousands of people to leave their homes and lands in uncertainty. For example, the devastating earthquake that struck Christchurch in Aotearoa, New Zealand in February 2011; the triple disasters (earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear leakage) that heavily hit the Fukushima area in Japan in March 2011; the super-typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines which washed away the coastal city of Tacloban in 2013; the continuous eruption of Mt. Sinabung in North Sumatra, Indonesia for the past five years; and recently, a shocking earthquake that heavily destroyed Nepal and some parts of North India and claimed thousands of lives, leaving the area in a chaotic

situation. These incidents constantly remind us of the severe fragility of mother earth which is reflected in the groaning of all creation in pain, and an urgent prophetic call for churches to develop a lifestyle that is environmentally friendly. In such times, churches in Asia tried their best to help each other, especially to enable churches in the affected areas to respond to these calamities. The congregations in New Zealand, for instance, witnessed that this incident made them work together more than ever before.

2. Poverty and Economic Crises

The ecological crisis described above is closely connected to the economic crisis that severely affects the life of the people in Asia especially in the past five years. Although, some Asian countries seem to enjoy economic growth, there is massive poverty in other places. The Agape Consultation and Study Process on “Poverty, Wealth and Ecology” jointly organised by the WCC, CCA, and PCC (Pacific Conference of Churches) in 2009, analysed links between wealth creation, poverty and ecological destruction. In the age of globalisation, capitalism, which emphasises gaining profit as much as possible, becomes the dominant paradigm of society. This phenomenon is prevalent in Asia. The above study underlines that: “in the pursuit of super-profits, the neoliberal system of wealth creation and accumulation in Asia has not only produced poverty, it has generated tremendous social and ecological debts.” Therefore, the consultation believed that “the interlinked economic and ecological crises are manifestations of a larger ethical, moral, and spiritual crisis”.

Increasingly people are focusing their attention only on accumulating resources for their families and groups, marginalising others. While God grants enough resources for all, accelerating human greed causes many other people to sleep on empty stomachs. Despite the fact that a few Asian countries have played significant roles in the world economy, poverty is still one of the dominant features of the region. Some churches in Asia have been able to critically address this concern and have initiated concrete programmes in alleviating poverty by strengthening the capacity of local people through activities such as life-giving agriculture and promoting income-generating programmes.

3. Violence and Religious Freedom

For the past five years, an increasing number of instances of violence in various manifestations have destroyed lives among Asian

people and communities. We are disturbed by aggregating domestic violence, and also the significant increase of violence in the public arena, such as incidents of gang rape that happened on many Asian streets. Most of the targets have been women and children, which reflects the dominance of the patriarchal culture in our societies. We do, however, warmly welcome the democratisation process that has been flourishing in Myanmar since 2012. Yet, we are concerned with growing communal conflicts along ethnic and religious lines, which have slowed down the promising development in Myanmar. Thousands of Rohingyas have fled the Rakhine state, where their ancestors have lived for over a hundred years. Neighbouring countries, like Thailand, have hosted some Myanmar refugees due to ethnic conflicts but are cautious about the increasing arrival of refugees. People of different faiths in Indonesia are pushing the government to open their hearts to provide humanitarian assistance and receive the thousands of stranded boats carrying the Rohingyas. The discrimination and ill-treatment towards so-called religious minorities continue to be of great concern in Asia. This has been experienced not only by Christians in Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Bangladesh, but also by other religious minority groups, such as the Ahmadiyah, who are considered a Muslim sect. The misuse of the blasphemy law in Pakistan continues to be a major ecumenical concern. Asian people are still struggling with the issue of religious freedom as an integral part of human rights.

4. Peace and Security

Asian realities are not disconnected from the rest of the world. The changing situation in the world affects Asia tremendously. At the same time, the role of Asia on the emerging global socio, political and economic scene cannot be ignored. The world continues to pay attention to the development in Asia, particularly due to the long-standing divided Korean peninsula, the cross-strait tensions, the presence of foreign military bases, the politicisation of religion and the role of religion in the political arena domestically and internationally. At the same time, what happens in Asia has impacts on the rest of the world. Today, Asia as a region and Asian countries individually and collectively have gradually become—what my predecessor, Dr Feliciano Carino in his General Secretary Report to the CCA Assembly in 2000 said—the “players” and not only the “playgrounds” of international politics. In the midst of escalating community conflicts in Asia, there have been efforts during the past few years to resolve conflicts through peace talks and negotiations

in places like the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Papua in Indonesia. The churches in those areas in one way or another have been actively involved in the peace process. This process often faces ups and downs in negotiation and, therefore requires commitment and patience from all the parties involved. We notice with great concern many forms of suppression in communities in the name of national security. However, the denial of personal security, in terms of the availability of basic needs for each and every one and the protection of human rights of the people will not lead our society to enjoy peace with justice, which is the main feature of living together in the household of God.

5. People on the Move

One of the immediate implications of the unbearable economic problems, the increase of ecological disasters and the intensifying of communal conflicts, is the rise of people on the move; either as migrant workers, internally displaced people or refugees crossing borders. According to statistics, Asia and the Pacific house 7.7 million refugees, including internally displaced people and stateless people. A majority of those refugees come from Afghanistan and Myanmar. The increasing number of migrant workers is noticeable. Unfortunately, the lack of proper protection have turned them into victims of human trafficking. In addition, we notice with great concern the rising refusal of the local people and governments to accept incoming refugees into their area. Presently the people in the southern part of Thailand refuse the government's proposal to provide shelter for Rohingyas in response to the human trafficking against this community. We are impressed by the efforts of the churches in Australia to respond critically to the policy of their government that restricted boat people to land in their country. Similar refusals, either from the people or respective governments, have become prevalent in Europe, with regard to the refugees from Africa and Middle East, and in other parts of the world. We need to revive one of the themes of the CCA some years ago, namely how to become the Church of the strangers, the Church without walls that are able to overcome prejudices and welcome strangers.

Five Years in the Life of CCA

It is clear that the challenges we faced in the past five years, which emerged from the changing situation in Asia are enormous. They are fertile ground for our ecumenical engagement and work. We

are conscious that such heavy tasks may push us to reflect on our situation and the direction for our future ministry.

Mandate of the 2010 Assembly

Not very long after the General Assembly, the Executive Committee met in August 2010 and prepared the draft of the articulation of the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the CCA for the coming five years that were derived from the mandate of the Assembly. The General Committee met in March 2011 and adopted the Vision of the CCA for 2011–2015, namely: “Life together in common witness to God’s love through transforming mission,” with the Mission “to encourage, equip, accompany and share with churches in Asia to engage in prophetic, compassionate, healing and reconciling ministries for the realisation of justice and equality for all.” Based on this direction, the CCA programmes for 2011–2015 were put in a plan and the budget was developed accordingly.

One of the documents presented to the GA in Kuala Lumpur in 2010 was the Report on the CCA Review. This Report is the result of the evaluation of the life and ministry of the CCA for 50 years since its founding. While the Assembly did not have enough time to discuss this document in depth, it “received the report of the CCA Review Team with appreciation, and mandated the incoming General Committee to: a) ensure that the principles and proposals be implemented by all committees, programmes, and projects with the highest priority; b) immediately implement the proposals that enhance the effectiveness of CCA’s ministry; and, c) study further, in consultation with member churches and councils, the proposals that have structural and constitutional implications and bring proposals to the next General Assembly” (GA 2010:7). Some of the proposals from that Report were already reflected in the Strategies and Methodologies of the CCA Programme Plan for 2011–2015.

The Programme Area Committees (PAC) appointed by the General Assembly 2010, which met at different times in 2011, discussed and planned CCA’s programmes for 2011–2015. However, the PAC immediately realised that the programme plan could not be easily implemented as the CCA has been facing a serious problem of financial resources. For instance, the joint meeting of the PAC of various programme clusters (Faith, Mission, and Unity or FMU; Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice, and Youth Empowerment or

EGY; Justice, International Affairs, and Development and Service, JID, and General Secretariat) that were conducted in the past in order to facilitate the collaboration and coordination of the works among different PACs, is not possible anymore due to financial constraints. Thus, the PAC met separately in conjunction with a programme of each respective programme cluster. One observation was made in the past five years, namely a decreased participation of the members of the Programme Area Committee. In the future, we need people with strong commitment, experience, and skills to support the work of the CCA.

Financial Situation

The accumulated yearly deficit for the past few years alarmed the General Committee in its first meeting in March 2011, and they suggested that new ways of operating need to be explored and implemented in order to avoid further deficit. I shall not go into the details as this matter will be reported by the Honorary Treasurer later. The crucial and painful decision was made by the General Committee 2011 to cut the number of staff (programme and supporting staff) up to 50 percent. Each programme cluster, FMU, EGY, JID that used to have two Executive Secretaries (ES) was reduced to only 1 ES; this has been one of the great challenges faced in the past five years. When the CCA faced a financial crisis in 1996, a few generous partners were able to provide “bail out” resources that enabled the CCA to come out of the deficit. However, such support was no longer available. Many ecumenical partners, who faithfully provided financial support for our programmes in the past, are also facing their own financial difficulties which have had implications on their structures and caused staff cuts. In such a situation, they cannot support us any longer at the level that they used to. The financial concern continues. While we hand over a balanced budget, it is nevertheless a meagre one and our financial situation remains fragile. In other words, new sources, especially from within our own means need to be found as old sources recede.

It is my sincere hope that we will consider this crisis as a challenge and an opportunity in our ecumenical work in Asia today. It challenges us to work within the limited resources that we have, without sacrificing the quality of our work or losing our sense of direction. It urges us to develop effective policies and strategies that can enhance our efforts to accompany churches in responding to

Asian struggles. It encourages us to consistently act upon what we say. It pushes us to take painful decisions for the sake of the CCA. It requires us to be more flexible and realistic about what we can and cannot do. At the same time, it provides us with opportunities to build and strengthen networks and collaborations with those who share our priorities. Above all, this crisis, in my view, once again reminds us to bring our ecumenical endeavours through the CCA to the centre of the life of Asian churches. Maybe in the past, we consciously or unconsciously left our constituency far behind us – for whatever reasons. When ecumenical partners provided enough to cover most of the expenses of our programmes, we tended to forget to urge our constituency to also put in their resources. We are lamenting that the churches are not interested in the ecumenical movement. If this is true, why so? Perhaps, we are all responsible for our present situation. So our call now is: To let the Asian churches own the CCA.

Programme Implementation and Activities

The Report “From Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta” provides a more detailed account of a wide range of programme activities conducted over the past five years. This Report will be a major source of input for the discussion on programme review, and will offer us lessons to learn from in order to move ahead to reach the objectives of the CCA in more effective ways. I would like, however, to share a number of general remarks in the areas of programme implementation and activities, which again, can provide inputs to the Assembly discussion, especially on programme review.

To Fulfil the Mandate of Kuala Lumpur

We have tried our best to fulfil the mandate of the Kuala Lumpur Assembly, despite limited financial and human resources. We continue to develop and strengthen the relationship with CCA’s members, strengthen the ecumenical network, and build relationships with people from other faiths. Leadership development programmes through activities, such as the Asia Ecumenical Course, and human rights training, continue to be a priority of CCA’s programmes. Through the JID programmes, we have endeavoured to address the issues of human dignity, including the concerns related to human rights issues, peace advocacy, and religious freedoms. Through the EGY programmes, we continue to give special attention to youth

and women concerns, and address the issue of gender justice by promoting programmes on man-woman partnerships. The FMU programmes facilitate the Asian contextual theologising and discussion on holistic mission in the context of Asian plurality, as well as intra-faith and interfaith cooperation. The HIV and AIDS is a special programme that continues to assist Asian churches in building and strengthening HIV-competent churches and communities.

It is important to note here that although specific concerns are assigned to specific programme clusters, nevertheless in its implementation they can be handled by staff-in-charge of other programme clusters. In other words, the limited number of staff pushed us to work more closely as a staff team and develop collaboration beyond the existing arrangement of programme clusters. It is appropriate for the Assembly, through programme review groups, to assess in which ways we can do our work better in the areas we consider crucial, especially in the context of resource limitations. Based on this assessment, it is hoped that the Assembly will come up with creative ideas as to how we can organise our work in the future which is faithful to the mandate of the Assembly, yet realistic and manageable.

New Initiatives

Some of the programmes in the past are continued, however, the strategy of implementing them may be shifted as the result of our reflections on the ongoing evaluation of respective programmes. With the issue of gender justice, for example, the programme is not only limited to women leadership development or addressing women concerns by women, but also strengthening the partnership of men and women. This reflects the understanding that the issue of gender justice is a human issue, which involves women and men, and therefore cannot be resolved by women alone. The programmes on HIV and AIDS continue to focus on building the competence of Asian churches to respond to HIV and AIDS concerns. However, for the past five years, the programme underlines the crucial role of theological institutions in training pastors who are aware of and committed to address the issue of HIV and AIDS. Similarly, the interfaith collaboration in dealing with this concern has been underlined which has led to the formation of the HIV and AIDS interfaith network in different countries. For youth leadership development, the role of the youth in promoting peace with justice has been underscored.

As we face escalating violence against children, the CCA has taken a new initiative to develop a child protection policy which is expected to stimulate conversations in Asian churches to address the predicaments of children in the life of family, church, and society.

In order to involve member churches and councils in CCA's programmes, a map of member participation has been developed. In the past, we often recruited participants representing different countries or regions. However, we need to constantly remember that the members of CCA are churches and councils, and the number of CCA members in each country or region varies.

A collaboration with the FABC continues, although it was not as extensive as it used to be, as both institutions have faced financial constraints. However, in 2013, the CCA and FABC made a special effort to hold a conference of Muslim and Christian Religious Leaders in Jakarta from 25 February–1 March, 2013 which was attended by 141 participants from sixteen Asian countries/regions in Asia, including Afghanistan. For many years, the CCA and FABC have committed to facilitate three joint programmes namely: Seminar on Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU), Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) and Asian Conference of Theological Students (ACTS). In this sense, the conference of Muslim-Christian religious leaders is a new initiative emerging from the urgent concern for interreligious engagement amidst growing interreligious conflicts.

The Impact of the Programmes

We have made special attempts to select priorities among priorities, which reduces the number of programmes. However, this helps us to follow closely the impacts of the programmes on the lives of the churches and people in Asia. The programme on HIV and AIDS, for instance, has been focused on selected countries/regions in order to facilitate the sustainability of the programme in a particular place or context. Similarly, in implementing the programme focus on child protection, selected places have been identified to focus upon in the programme. It is encouraging to see the cooperation of Christians and Muslims in Indonesia in organising the conference of Muslim-Christian religious leaders in 2013. The host Committee consisted of representatives of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), Indonesia Catholic Bishops' Conferences (KWI), and International Conference of Muslim Scholars (ICIS). This collaboration itself was

a special outcome even before the conference took place, a matter that was worthy of consideration in planning the future program.

New Spaces

One of CCA's goals for this quadrennium is to promote ecumenical partnership, solidarity, and advocacy between Christian communities and other faith communities and civil society groups, for the protection, preservation and care of God's creation. Since 2006, the CCA, in collaboration with Asia-Pacific YMCA and Brot fur die Welt (BfW), have jointly organised the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF). This program, which has its major programme called 'school for peace' aims to promote peace with justice among young people in interreligious settings, where the participants have different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Deepening and Broadening Relationships

The ecumenical movement is a matter of relationships that need to be continuously cultivated with a deep sense of ecumenical respect, acceptance and discipline so that they can uphold the unity of the body of Christ, which promotes justice and peace for all. I will only mention a few of these endeavours here.

One of the major concerns which have been raised for quite some time is on CCA's relationship with its member churches and councils. Considering the nature of the CCA as a fellowship of member churches and councils in Asia, it sounds strange that there is an issue of relationships between the CCA with its own members. Yet, in the Report of the CCA Review (2010) there is a strong suggestion that CCA needs to strengthen links with member churches and councils. What does this mean? In the meeting with the ecumenical partners in March 2011, our partners reminded us that this matter is crucial for the sustainability of CCA's future. In listing their expectations, one of the challenges they put in front of us was that they would like to see "a strategy and work plans for membership building and ownership which is action oriented and concrete." In responding to this suggestion, the General Committee had specifically discussed a proposal for "building and strengthening the sustainability of the CCA."

With these remarks, it is clear to me that we need to spend some time to reflect on this issue as it is central to the CCA being a

fellowship of Asian churches. Our reflections, I believe, will guide our understanding on the role of the CCA in the life and ministry of its members and our way of implementing programmes inspired by the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the CCA in a particular time.

It is my belief that building relationships with member churches and councils will not be enough only through correspondences. There are some ways through which close and collaborative relationships with CCA's members can be built, among others:

- Be present in the life of the members through visiting programmes.
- Accompany the members in their journeys, especially in challenging situations.
- Collaborate with member churches and councils in implementing CCA programmes.
- Consult member churches and councils in participants' recruitment.

As mandated by the Kuala Lumpur Assembly, in the past five years, the CCA has been committed to accompanying the younger churches in areas such as Nepal, Bhutan, Timor Leste, and Laos, especially on ecumenical leadership development. Similarly, we have also developed relationships with churches in the Asian region that are not yet members of the CCA. In a mission conference of the churches in ASEAN countries in 2014, which was held in response to the emerging ASEAN Economic Community, we warmly welcomed representatives of churches from Vietnam and Brunei Darussalam.

One of the highlights of the ecumenical visit during this period of service is the visit of a small team to the China Christian Council in 2012 and 2014. We rejoice the presence of the representatives of churches from mainland China for the first time in a CCA Assembly after many years. We warmly welcome the Vice President/General Secretary of the China Christian Council, Rev. Baoping Kan and Associate General Secretary of the Three Self Movement of the Protestant Church in China, Mr Fu Mengfei in this Assembly and their willingness to be part of the celebration of the fellowship of Asian churches as the body of Christ beyond various differences. We do hope that the relationships and collaboration of the churches in mainland China, with the rest of the churches in Asia, will continue to grow, especially in response to the common concerns in Asia and the increasing role of China in the Asian society and beyond.

In addition to building and strengthening relationships with CCA's members, maintaining and developing relationships with other ecumenical organisations and beyond are just as crucial. There are at least two factors here, firstly, the issues we are facing now are more complex and interrelated; we need common efforts to address these challenges. Secondly, in the midst of shrinking financial resources that are faced by many organisations, it is timely for us to strengthen our common efforts for resource sharing.

It becomes obvious that our present ecumenical work is set in the context of vast changes that are happening in the economic, religious and political life of the world and of our region. The demand for our ecumenical responses are often too big and urgent, given the fact that our financial and staff capacities are decreasing. This urges us to work closely with member constituencies and other ecumenical organisations. Another pressing concern is that we all need to work hard to increase a "sense of ownership" of our member constituencies. How we do this, will hopefully be addressed by this Assembly. It becomes clearer that the issue of "relationships" is a central dimension of ecumenical life and therefore, should be a priority in programme implementation.

We have to admit that in the past, Asian ecumenical organisations, such as the CCA, have depended too much on the financial support of its ecumenical partners from the North, and tend to neglect the building up of financial support of its member churches and councils. This partly explains why it is hard to receive regular contributions or annual fees from the member churches and councils. We will hear more about this concern in the Finance Report later. While our relationship and collaboration with our ecumenical partners around the world need to be strengthened as we all face the impacts of globalisation, we have realised that we can no longer rely heavily on the financial support of our ecumenical partners from the North. We need to rethink ways to move forward, especially in terms of designing CCA's programme structure and ways of operation, which reflect the needs and the capacities of our member churches and councils. We deeply appreciate the commitment and support of our ecumenical partners to the ministry of the CCA. At the same time, we need to underscore that the CCA must be "rooted" in the life of Asian churches, not only spiritually and theologically, but also in financial support.

Towards the New Structure

The 2010 General Assembly adopted the proposal of the Report on the CCA Review after 50 years of the CCA ministry. Some of the proposals cannot be implemented immediately as they require constitutional change. It is in this light that the General Committee 2011 formed the Constitutional and Structural Review Committee (CSRC) with the task to review the existing CCA Constitution, particularly in response to the recommendations of the Report on CCA Review and the changing situation of the CCA. The Committee was expected to propose a financially viable governing and programme structure of the CCA, especially in view of the financial challenges that are faced by the CCA in the present context. The CSRC presented its Report at the General and Executive Committee meetings that took place in 2011–2014, and this was also circulated to member churches and councils for their feedback. The General Committee 2014 adopted the proposed constitutional changes, which were also circulated to member churches and councils for discussions at the Extra-Ordinary General Assembly. I do hope that the EOGA will adopt favourably this proposal that has been widely discussed among CCA's member constituencies.

Concluding Remarks

It is with a deep sense of gratitude and humility that we, first of all, thank God who faithfully accompanied us in our five-year journey from Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta. We have faced many challenges, especially financial ones. But, by the grace of God, that difficult time has been turned into a sacred moment of reflection upon what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ in a time of mounting problems in Asia. For me “being the Church in Asia” in the midst of fragmentations and many signs of death in society is the challenging ecumenical task for all churches in Asia. It is my sincere hope that in this Assembly we will further contemplate on our self-understanding as a regional ecumenical organisation and on a possible working structure that is viable yet responsible to the call churches to work together and with people of good will to promote ‘living together in the household of God.’

As my term as General Secretary of the CCA ends soon after this Assembly, let me use this opportunity to thank you all, CCA members, for entrusting me with the responsibility of serving the CCA for the

past five years. It is a challenging task, yet full of rich experiences for which I am grateful to God. I have been able to undertake this task with your support: CCA member churches and councils, officers, General Committee members, ecumenical partners, staff colleagues all of whom have enabled me to undertake this responsibility and do it to the best of my capabilities. My gratitude to the churches in Indonesia for their continuous support to my ministry at the CCA and for welcoming me back to join the ministry of the churches in Indonesia through the Communion of Churches in Indonesia.

I warmly welcome Dr Mathews George Chunakara, the incoming General Secretary, who brings with him his rich ecumenical experience at the national, regional, and international levels. May God continue to bless him in his new assignment.

Last but not least, I place on record my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Church of Christ Thailand for having hosted the CCA in Thailand and to the CCA Thailand Foundation for having stood by us in all our official requirements, such as visa, reports to the Government and all other formalities. I value very much my friendship with our friends at the CCT and the Payap University that has been my home congregation while being in Chiang Mai. We look forward to your continuous support in the years to come.

Once more wishing you all a warm welcome. Thank you.

Henriette Hutabarat Lebang
General Secretary, CCA

Report of the Treasurer: How to Move Together Towards Self-Sufficiency

Honourable members of the Presidium, the General Secretary, members of the General Committee, delegates from member churches and councils, distinguished guests, speakers, and observers:

First of all, as the CCA Honorary Treasurer, I take this privilege to express my heartfelt thanks and profound gratitude to you all from the bottom my heart for electing me as Honorary Treasurer for a term of five years in the last Assembly (Kuala Lumpur) of the CCA.

Introduction

I was quite new in the leadership of the CCA, but the members of the Executive Committee and all staff members helped and encouraged me to continue my responsibilities smoothly. I never thought that I can do anything alone, but we can do many great things as a group together.

These five years have gone quickly. While five years is not a long time in the life cycle of the CCA, these five years have, however, seen significant changes. When the 13th Assembly of the CCA ended, it was not the end but the beginning for a new leadership with a new vision, ideas, hopes, and aspirations.

Today, we are assembling at a time when the entire world is feeling the impact of the financial crisis, religious and minority conflicts, terrorism and fundamentalism. Most member churches and councils are not immune to it. Many governments, organisations, and financial institutions are also forced to cut down on spending and lending due to the global financial crisis. We have been receiving letters from several ecumenical partners saying that they are forced to reduce what they give to the CCA. One partner has stated that while they are not able to support us financially, their journey with us will continue. We were expecting this and therefore, it is no surprise

to us, in fact, it is a call to rethink the way we spend our money and to reflect on the way we want to be an institutionalised presence of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

I am aware that my task is to present the financial status of the CCA as we are gathered here after five years. However, I know that an Assembly of this nature is not just about finance. Certainly, finance is very important but finance should not become the pre-occupation of all our deliberations. We, the member churches and councils, in our respective countries are concerned about sharing resources with the CCA to support and enhance the work of the ecumenical movement. We should serve the CCA and show our solidarity with the ecumenical movement. We are co-workers with God to work towards the realisation of kingdom values such as justice, peace, and reconciliation to overcome violence, to avoid religious conflict, to show mercy and to act in compassion to free captives. Therefore, all of us as mutual partners must walk together in solidarity and witness to Jesus Christ, who is amidst and within us by word and action. With these introductory remarks, I want to reflect on the audited financial statements of the last five years, especially from 2010 - 2014 with the next financial budget.

Financial Status and Brief Reflection of Financial Statements of Last Seven Years

We kept a close watch on the recurring trends of deficit every year during 2008–2010, particularly on the core budget. During 2011–2014, we have been able to slowly improve the yearly surplus, which has helped us maintain our cash flow. However, we should note that this is only possible because of a tight control over expenditure, including postponing the appointment of executive and support staff. We continue to struggle on revitalising the financial condition of the CCA for its future sustainability. After the 13th Assembly of the CCA in April 2010, the new committee has taken effective steps to overcome the financial crisis of the CCA. Actually, our turning point was in 2011 owing mainly to our making some crucial though painful decisions:

- Reducing the number of executive and support staff.
- Improving CCA's financial management and internal check and control system through:
 - Exercising a tight budgetary control.
 - Minimising expenses.

- Reviewing the existing internal check and control system.
- Reviewing the financial statement quarterly.
- Increasing the financial support of CCA's Member Churches and Councils.
- Converting facilities and in-kind support into monetary terms provided by Member Churches and Councils.
- Preparing a realistic budget and reviewing it from time to time.

The above steps and decisions helped us to:

- Strengthen collaborations with CCA's member Churches and Councils in implementing programmes;
- Improve upon joint ecumenical programmes with other partners, especially NCCs, the WCC and other ecumenical organisations, confessional bodies and different faith communities;
- Increase the overall contribution from member churches and councils of the CCA, in spite of financial fluctuations in the last seven years.

In this light, we can say in faith that this is a time of grace. Our financial challenges have pushed us to reflect on the identity of the CCA as an ecumenical fellowship of member churches and councils, and to continue to strengthen our commitment to pray, walk and work together in promoting the fullness of life for all.

In the beginning of our office term, we noticed with great concern the trend of yearly deficits during 2008–2010 in the core budget or General Fund (GF). The Audited Financial Report of the CCA review presented to the General Assembly in 2010 underlined the importance of improving the financial management of the CCA. The new leadership of the CCA realised that unless a significant management decision was made, the CCA could suffer a serious liquidity crisis. The yearly deficit was slowly eating into the accumulated surplus during the years 2008 and 2010.

Generally, the CCA operates with two types of funds: namely, the General Fund (GF) and the Designated Fund (DF). The General Fund, which is also known as the core budget, covering administrative costs, which include capacity-building, maintaining ecumenical relationships, salaries of staff, as well as general office expenses. The

Designated Fund is the fund designated for specific programmes or projects. For many years, our ecumenical partners (EP) had largely supported both the GF and the DF, but the contributions from the ecumenical partners are gradually declining every year both for GF and DF. Generally, the financial support of member churches and councils are relatively small. A significant number of churches and councils do not pay their annual contribution; with a few paying but doing so irregularly, with only a small number who pay it regularly. The picture of income, expenses, surplus/deficit and the self-sufficiency rate of the CCA over a period of seven years is stated as:

INCOME

Particular Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Contribution from member churches and councils	64,694	70,744	70,888	124,899	134,786	155,207	88,455
Contribution from Ecumenical Partners	635,255	48,9115	462,369	430,679	395,230	404,893	348,408
Other Income	20,319	7,946	45,629	56,800	82,208	69,782	40,175
Exchange gain and gain on investment in securities (non-cash)	2,321	1,105	63,076	5,902	87,777	_____	43,395
Total Income US\$	722,589	568,910	641,962	618,280	700,001	629,882	520,433

EXPENDITURE

General Secretariat	497,347	452,283	382,531	241,247	364,569	363,321	292,504
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Expense for support & executive staff for EGY, FMU & JID	291,472	289,720	266,926	266,236	151,418	126,013	121,839
Other expenses	6,182	5,905	5,532	5,536	5,548	5,739	5544
Exchange loss and loss on investment in securities and fixed assets written off	40,944	12,958	24,278	90,967	4,938	48,511	59,313
Total expenses USD	835,945	760,866	679,267	603,986	526,473	543,584	479,200
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(133,356)	(191,956)	(37,305)	14,294	173,528	86,298	41,233
Self-sufficiency rate	86%	75%	95%	102%	133%	116%	109%
	-14%	-25%	-05%	2%	33%	16%	9%

The above table reveals that from 2008–2010, the self-sufficiency rate was negative. This clearly means that the income was lower than the expenditure and from 2011–2014, the self-sufficiency rate was positive, indicating an increase in income over expenditure. We need to bear in mind that item exchange gains/losses, gains/losses on investment in securities and fixed assets written off are still on paper, not in cash. The overall financial performance over a period of seven years has been presented separately through multiple bar-diagrams. The charts presented through PowerPoint presentation indicate the following:

- Chart A shows yearly (deficit)/surplus during 2008–2014.
- Chart B shows the total contribution from member churches, councils, and Asian churches and the projected income.
- Chart C represents the contribution from member churches, councils, and Asian churches separately.
- Chart D shows the support of the ecumenical partners for the General Fund (GF) and the projected income.
- Chart E represents the support of ecumenical partners for the Designated Fund (DF) and the projected income.
- Chart F represents the comparison between the support

of member churches, councils, Asian churches, and ecumenical partners.

- Chart G shows the total income and total expenditure of General Fund.
- Chart H shows the total income and total expenditure of the Designated Fund.

The ratio between the contribution from EPs and the contribution from CCA’s members and achievements under the broad head of GF are as follows:

YEAR	EP	ACHIEVEMENT OF BUDGET	CCA MEMBERS	ACHIEVEMENT OF BUDGET
2008	90%	91%	10%	32%
2009	88%	70%	12%	47%
2010	85%	66%	15%	20%
2011	71%	105%	29%	156%
2012	66%	99%	34%	135%
2013	62%	101%	38%	124%
2014	75%	100%	25%	52%

The support of the ecumenical partners has been declining year after year, conversely, contributions from member churches and councils have been increasing, but they are still small and fluctuate often. According to the schedule of contributions from CCA’s member churches and councils, it shows that 41 member churches out of 106 churches (almost 40 percent) did not pay annual contribution and five member councils out of seventeen councils (almost 30 percent) did not pay their annual contribution in the last five years, despite appeals and reminder notices being sent to them. In the 2011 Roundtable meeting, the ecumenical partners expected us to raise the contribution from Asian Churches up to 30 percent of the total income within three years. We understand this proposal as a challenge for the CCA and its member churches and councils to move gradually to self-sufficiency. We should look into this matter seriously.

Proposed Budget for 2015

Now we present to you the budget for 2015, with information on the annexed separate page. This budget has been approved by the General Committee meeting held from 9–12 February 2015 in

Thailand. In preparing the budget, we tried our best to be realistic. We budgeted the contribution of CCA's member churches, councils and other Asian churches slightly higher, hoping that CCA's members will respond positively to our special appeal to pay their annual contribution before or during the Assembly.

How to Move Together Towards Self-Sufficiency

In order to move towards CCA's self-reliance, CCA's members need to review their commitment to continue our journey together in responding to the ecumenical challenges in Asia today. The CCA was born in Parapat in 1957 and the "concept of life together" and "coming together" emerged, as D.T. Niles said "life together demands that Churches in East Asia accept that they belong to one another and we are increasingly willing to live a shared life."

It is a challenge for us, as members of the CCA, especially in this General Assembly 2015. We have to seriously discuss how we can move together towards the self-sufficiency of the CCA. How can we encourage CCA's members, especially in our respective context, to send in their annual contributions regularly? The only way to move together towards self-sufficiency by increasing members' annual contributions, helping in hosting programmes, meetings, individual travel costs, contributions to local expenses as a sign of sharing life and resources like labour, talents, money and facilities to enhance CCA's ministry. The offer of the HKBP to host the CCA Assembly 2015 is a clear example. This is one of the practical strategies, ways and means to attain financial self-sufficiency. Now, I would like to propose a few possible ways and means to attain financial self-sufficiency and reduce dependence on our ecumenical partners.

That the General Assembly affirm:

- Preparing an action plan for raising funds for the CCA and increase the involvement of member churches and councils.
- Greater involvement of NCCs in each country.
- Requesting churches to host more programmes and meetings, and share resources.
- Building strong relationships with member churches, councils, confessional bodies, and world ecumenical organisations.
- Ecumenical relationships, partnerships and solidarity

have to be re-visited in the light of these realities and affirmed, nurtured, empowered and encouraged.

- Membership fees to be increased to more than what they are now. This has to be addressed by writing letters regularly to remind member churches and councils of their obligations and then followed up with personal visits to member churches.
- Investing the available CCA resources, endowment fund and reserve fund in the highest profitable investment scheme.
- US One Cent Theory: It is my personal thought and idea. This one cent theory may be applied for achieving self-sufficiency of the CCA. The thought and idea of US one cent theory is how much we will get if each member contribute one cent per annum. We are talking of a membership of 55-60 million Christians, so numerically it is very easy to calculate that it amounts to USD 550,000–600,000. USD 550,000-600,000 which will almost cover up the total cost of general and administrative expenses against the present budget of USD 621,349 of the General Fund (GF) in 2015 and the surplus amount if any may be utilised for the programmes and activities of the CCA. This idea is put forward to encourage you to think that we need a practical strategy to collect money from Christians in Asia.

Our hope and aspiration is to achieve self-sufficiency of the churches and of the CCA in our Asian context. Now is the time to take steps and initiatives to achieve self-sufficiency of the CCA within the next seven years (2015–2021) and at the same time, to gradually reduce our dependency on our ecumenical partners, otherwise the partners will ask critical questions like: when will the Asian Churches take responsibility for the ecumenical movement or how long will the ecumenical partners or European Churches need to support the CCA and Asian churches? The sun greets the world with love and care. We, the people of Asia, will rely on the power of God which empowers us through our relationships with people and the nature around us and examine deeply the realities of our churches and societies. Hence, I would like to invite all of you to participate actively in our movement for achieving self-reliance of our member churches and councils in Asia and of the CCA.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, the General Secretary, for her full cooperation and continuous support to me for performing my responsibilities smoothly. I thank the members of the Finance Committee, Executive Committee and all members of the General Committee for their confidence in me and their encouragement to do the work entrusted to me as the Honorary Treasurer of the CCA.

Last but not least, I also thank Rosanna So who works for the CCA from Hong Kong, all finance staff and executive secretaries for their cooperation and continuous support in different ways. Thank you all members of this Assembly, observers, volunteers, guests, and speakers for your patience.

Peace and blessings to all participants of this Assembly.

Augustine Dipak Karmakar
Honorary Treasurer, CCA

Programme Reviews

General Secretariat

Review of Content and Relevance of Programmes for Asia

Moderator Bishop Jeffrey opened the group meeting with prayer.

He made a short introduction of the meeting with the following two main points as the main purpose of the group meeting:

- to review the secretariat programmes; and,
- to review the financial management of the CCA.

The group worked through the General Secretariat section Report in the book, 'From Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta – Living Together in the Household of God'.

Then, the General Secretary informed the Review Group that with the review of the Secretariat programmes and financial management, the CCA needs some effective suggestions and directions to run more effectively in the future.

Rev. Pradit mentioned that after moving CCA from Hong Kong to Thailand it has seen improved relationships.

He also mentioned that CCA's activities stand on two levels: (a) Executive Secretary, who ensures the implementation of all programmes, and (b) Support Staff.

There was a strong view offered that the dependency on external funds for the Programme Budget needs to be minimised with a corresponding emphasis on raising funds from within the CCA for the programmes. Every member church needs to face the responsibility of its own contribution towards the financial sustainability of the CCA. Financial support raising efforts have been increased not only for the Executive Staff, who travel a lot but also for the members for different Programme Area Committees, which has been a burden for the organisation. It was felt that one way to ease this burden was

to more formally recognise the “contribution-in-kind” of churches.

The question was asked: ‘How has the CCA responded to disasters that have happened in any of her member constituencies?’

In response, the General Secretary pointed out that the CCA formed a fund to procedurally respond during natural calamities. Sometimes, the CCA also encouraged local churches to raise funds for responding to disasters. On Nepal’s devastating earthquake, the CCA has already collected some funds for the victims.

Archbishop Jeffrey pointed out that with its limited capacity, the CCA could not be a major provider of direct relief, but that it has a crucial role in networking and communication, particularly through the digital media. Mr Paul Raj pointed out that as the financial capacity of the CCA has not been strong enough, some measures should be taken to prioritise its financial operation, like minimising the number of staff, encouraging the utilisation of local funds and resources of member constituencies, etc. He also urged to build a prompt communicating network among its members around Asia.

Bishop Iraneus pointed out that the CCA must always circulate very specific and clear instructions during any deadly natural disaster to all its member churches and councils.

Mr Paulraj made a query regarding the present funding and partners’ position, while he emphasised the need to build better relationships with all its partners and that CCA should explore new partners as well.

In response to his statement, General Secretary Rev. Dr Henriette stated that in the past several years, the CCA experienced fluctuating funding from the partners, with an impact on operations. She stressed once more that it was important for member churches to make funding commitments to ensure that the CCA receives 30 percent of the funding from within.

She also emphasised the need to develop a second mechanism to ensure the process of collecting the yearly membership fees of member churches/councils.

On this matter, CCA Treasurer Mr Augustine Dipak Karmakar pointed out that for some countries sending membership fees is really difficult as they need the government’s permission to send money

abroad. But we must work on it so that we receive the membership fees regularly. It was pointed out that arrangements could be made for use of funds for CCA's programmes within that country, thus enabling a contribution. This needed to be better communicated.

It was also suggested that a key to obtaining better financial support, particularly through the young, would be better communication about programmes and programme outcomes. People in this era are less motivated to contribute to organisations, but can be strongly motivated to support initiatives or programmes if the value of the programme is well communicated. This would suggest that a key goal going forward might be a more dynamic website, focused on programme outcomes and also a more effective use of other forms of digital media. This would not only serve the CCA well in times of natural disasters, etc., but could also enhance the perception of the CCA as relevant and thus, increase supporter base.

Archbishop Jeffery pointed out that the finance report was long and complex, as it covered a number of years, which necessitated a long presentation in the Assembly. He suggested that members might be helped and business assisted if a brief "executive summary" of perhaps two pages were attached to the front.

Mr Paulraj asked for clarification on two points:

- What was the actual price of selling CCA's Hong Kong property and how has it been utilised, and how much remains of it at present?
- Have we carried out a review on the operational finance system after shifting from Hong Kong with the current difficulties and constraints? Did we make a study to explore other options?

The Moderator said that it was important that these questions be noted, but that they were subject to further inquiry.

Faith, Mission, and Unity (FMU)

Review of Content and Relevance of Programmes for Asia

The program review on Faith, Mission, and Unity involved much discussion from those who were present. The presence of participants from many different countries and churches provided a diverse group from which ideas and feedback were able to come

forth. There was an attitude of generosity within the participants who honestly desired to understand the work of the CCA in this area.

While discussions such as these are limited greatly by time and much time is spent attempting to understand the current programmes better, some very positive discussions were held on the subject.

Following is a summary of the discussions during the review time:

- The question of budget was discussed. With the CCA managing an increasingly smaller budget it was noted that many FMU activities take place only in locations where a partner church is able to provide funds to cover a majority of the local costs. While this allows the CCA to have a greater number of events, it also decreases the number of locations in which these activities can be possibly held. It was noted that some of these activities were held in cities which were not the cities in which many Christians lived and some people were unaware of the fact that these activities were occurring.
- There was a concern that only the people able to attend events are truly able to benefit from them, it was suggested that it would be good if more papers were published and made available to the wider CCA so that the entire body might benefit from the insights made during these events.
- Many participants expressed a desire to have more contact between theological students in and around Asia in order to help students to better understand ecumenism during their most formative period. It was pointed out that this does happen, though it would be good if it were able to happen on a wider scale. A delegate from Australia pointed out that many theological students in Australia are much older than the students in Asia and that these events, therefore, do not seem to appeal to them.
- It was pointed out that many of the programmes which have been running during the past five years have been running for a long time, the group was encouraged to think more creatively regarding the activities of the FMU. Representatives from the WCC asked that these

programmes continue as they believe that Asia has much to offer the rest of the world with regard to interfaith dialogue and the education of emerging churches in ecumenical conversations. It was pointed out that while we have been doing this for a while in Asia it is important that we continue as the rest of the world sees much that they can learn from Asia in these areas.

- The role of the CCA in FMU activities was pointed out to be supporting and encouraging the churches rather than doing all of this for them. It is important that the churches invite the CCA to be part of the events which they organise themselves rather than waiting for the CCA to always do things for them. The importance of the CCA being an example, but not necessarily doing everything, was highlighted.
- An argument was made for the gathering of theologians and theological students in order to better think through Asian theologies. It was pointed out that we should be speaking of Asian theologies rather than of Asian theology. There is a need for different theologies to be discussed and considered rather than each becoming a silo in itself.
- The question of the social media's presence in making known the FMU activities of the CCA was raised. Can the CCA have a better online presence in order to promote discussion and its activities and events?

Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice, and Youth Empowerment (EGY)

Review of Content and Relevance of Programmes for Asia

- The Report is comprehensive.
- Pay tribute to different participants.
- Focus representation on youth and women.
- As successful outcome in Sri Lanka, they adopted the child protection policy in their context inside their churches.
- Formed primary network among the participants.
- Good pick of resource persons.

Insights for Future Programme Direction

- To address the right of children to education.
- To address LGBTQ dialogue.
- To have national mission camps hosted by youth.
- To address sexual ethics training.
- To have safe homes for unmarried mothers.
- To have networking system through the CCA website in order to share Asian Youth Theological ideas and update community news.
- To have interfaith dialogue on the local level.
- To have a CCA youth desk.
- Invitation should be sent to headquarters and youth representatives.
- To have a youth council in each member group.
- Youth program should be hosted by youth and for youth.

Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID)

Review of Content and Relevance of Programmes for Asia

Given financial constraints and staff limitations, the JID programme area of CCA did reasonably good work (from the Report “from Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta”).

The above programmes were reviewed on the barriers of Goal #2 and #3 found in the above Report.

The JID programmes were focused on six priorities:

- Peace Building
- Human Rights
- Ecological Justice and Sustainable Development
- Ecumenical Partnership, Solidarity, and Advocacy
- Internship Programme
- Networking

It was observed that in the last four years there has been no programme executive, and instead consultants in JID, which may have affected efficiency.

If the CCA–JID is mandated to intervene in humanitarian assistance,

it should work through the ACT Alliance and Northeast Asian Forum.

CCA's relationship with the CSOs/NGOs HR commission were vibrant. This needs to be strengthened.

CCA–JID's MER system needs to be strengthened and objectives specified, expected outcome indicators, etc., need to be presented in the Report in order to review the programme effectively.

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are to be used in Report.

The CCA is not just the secretariat/staff. We, the churches, own the CCA. Therefore, the review of the CCA–JID is in a sense a review of the churches. Therefore, the churches need to be pro-active with the CCA in addressing their issues.

HIV and AIDS

Review of Content and Relevance of Programmes for Asia

HIV and AIDS is a significant health issue across Asia. However, it is also a significant personal, social, economic, and human rights issue. It is therefore highly relevant that the CCA, with its commitment to inclusion and justice should participate in advocacy, education, and support to combat HIV and AIDS.

The particular programmes offered over the last four years connect with issues of importance for the churches in Asia: building HIV-comforting churches, encouraging, ecumenical, and interfaith cooperation and the capacity-building of religion and lay leaders.

Programmes were especially relevant where they stimulated local churches in these areas; or reinforced learning and local actions or complemented what was happening in the churches. Particular examples of these include assisting connections and collaboration between churches and local and international NGOs and government agencies, stimulating new working relationships with these groups; producing World Aids Day liturgies, connecting with seminaries and providing a context that allows interfaith cooperation.

Questions were raised about whether programmes focused more on protecting against HIV and AIDS or on the support for people suffering from it, and whether the balance is right. What are the sources used to develop the programmes? The programme should

have a focus on the empowerment of HIV and AIDS persons by voicing their experiences so that they can find a voice and their place in church and the community. Is it possible to develop models that assist churches with addressing prejudices among children? A gender perspective approach is vital to empowering women so what is being done in the programmes to affirm the rights of women to have control over their bodies so that they may better protect themselves from infection?

The programme and its approach was strongly affirmed while some guidance was provided on ways to make it more effective.

Insights for Future Programme Direction

It was acknowledged that for this program to be effective it is essential that the church leaders have a compassionate theological framework and commitment to see these issues as major issues of justice, healing and pastoral care. This is not universally the case in churches and communities across Asia. Therefore, there is an essential role for the CCA, member churches and councils and individual Christians to challenge the churches of Asia to commit to addressing HIV and AIDS.

Negotiations between the CCA and churches that might host programmes and deliver them need to separate the issues of HIV and AIDS from taboos around sexual orientation, gender, identity, and attitudes to LGBT people. HIV and AIDS affect a much wider section of the community and views on the “taboo” issues should not prevent resources being delivered for all.

Programmes are most effective when they connect with the priorities of churches and consolidate what they are doing. Programmes should be negotiated to match the plans of local churches. For the full value of programmes to be realised it is important to build on and maintain the capacity that has been established. Follow-ups on projects and assessments of their impact are strongly encouraged.

The importance of these programmes in challenging existing views in churches and communities should not be understated. There is a legitimate role for these programmes to break new ground in churches and to encourage new growth. They also serve as an ally to parts of a Church which might be isolated on HIV and AIDS issues so the CCA is encouraged to look for partners in churches even if they are not in the mainstream of their church.

Programme Directions

Group 1 **Mission and Witness in a Multi-Religious Asia**

Moderator: Rev. Prince Devanandan

Rapporteur: Ms Shunila Ruth

Summary, Issues Identified, and Recommendations

The group reiterated that the unity of the Church is imperative for God's mission. The group looked at the reports that came from the Sarasehan groups and presented the following seven areas for mission and witness in a multi-religious context:

- Asia Mission Conference: The group very strongly reiterated that the Asia Mission Conference is imperative for the CCA.
- Healing of the wounded.
- Marginalisation of indigenous and vulnerable communities in Asia.
- Migration and human trafficking.
- Victims of domestic violence.
- Plight of indigenous people.
- Mental health.
- Extra judicial killings.
- Refugees.
- Violation of human rights.
- Migrant workers.
- Victims of injustices.
- Alternative methods of tourism and eco-tourism.
- Mission to promote pilgrimage over tourism.
- Measures to prevent victimisation due to human trafficking.
- Interfaith dialogue: a need exists to continue this aspect

of the mission at all levels.

- New and emerging ways of being a Church in a multi-religious context: Openness in crises or disaster situations to accept people of other churches; providing hospitality, for example, Christchurch after the earthquake in New Zealand and the civil war situation in Sri Lanka; but the hospitality that emerges out of conflict and disaster situations must be followed in normal circumstances. Openness towards other Christians and people of other religions is an important aspect of the mission.
- Children's rights: Protection and nurturing.
- Aggressive conversion and its impacts on the Church in a multi-religious Asia.

Group 2

Ecumenical Formation and Theological Education

Moderator: Rev. Dr Yoon-Jae Chang

Rapporteur: Rev. Dr Hermen Shastri

Group 2 consisted of 25 participants who shared with great enthusiasm their involvement in Theological Education in their respective contexts in Asia. The youth participants shared their testimonies of being involved in ecumenical gatherings at the level of the WCC and CCA.

There was a general affirmation that theologising in the Asian context should reflect the richness of Asian culture and history. It should also bring churches together in the ecumenical spirit to manifest unity among the churches.

Summary

- An Asian Forum may be initiated to enable dialogue among various Asian theologies. The multi-religious context of Asia is a unique gift of God. The Asian Christian theologies are various attempts in the process towards finding an authentic Asian Christian identity. A dialogue among Asian Christian theologies not only helps theologians to clarify methods and perceptions but also expresses uniquely Asian Christian understandings in relation to religions and cultures. It will also help in communicating

the same in an innovative and imaginative Asian way, using the pedagogy of stories.

- Many theological seminaries throughout the region have shown an interest in having courses in Asian theology and ecumenism, and have made attempts to enhance the content of such courses. There is a great need to accompany theological educators in this effort. There should be opportunities for networking and the sharing of resources.
- An indispensable component of ecumenical formation is to provide opportunities of encounter, reflection, and worship celebration that reflect the Asian reality. The group affirmed the important role that ACTS, CATS, AEC, and AMCU are playing in this regard. Young people shared their invaluable insights gained by participating in ecumenical gatherings at different levels; nationally, regionally, and globally.
- A mention was made of the rich worship life of the Assembly, however, the liturgy, music and prayers used at ecumenical gatherings are seldom experienced in local churches. Worship resources should be readily available on the internet to aid churches to access them.
- In our fast changing world the internet has provided a platform for networking and sharing of resources. It is to be noted that there does not exist an active website for ecumenical formation and Asian resources of theology.
- Theology in Asia should not be restricted to scholarly works but should also connect to communities that use oral traditions to share the faith. More efforts should be made to highlight story-telling as a resourceful component of doing theology in Asia.
- In view of the emerging issues in Asia like religious fundamentalism, terrorism, migrants and refugees. It is crucial that such aspects be included in ecumenical formation courses.

Recommendations

- Programmes like CATS, ACTS, AEC, and AMCU continue and be enhanced.
- Greater efforts be undertaken to network among theological schools and to provide resources for theological educators to conduct courses in ecumenism.

- Create a database of ecumenical educators throughout Asia so that churches and theological schools can access them for their work.
- To offer more opportunities for young people to participate in ecumenical activities.
- Also create a website where the experiences of young people may be shared.
- Create more opportunities of student exchange programmes for young seminarians.
- Conduct special workshops to equip worship leaders in the use of Asian music, songs, and prayers and develop liturgies.
- Asia Ecumenical Courses be held sub-regionally.
- An urgent need to create an e-library.
- Can the CCA explore the possibility of developing something in line of “Bossey” of the WCC?

Group 3

Prophetic Diakonia and Ecumenical Advocacy

Moderator: Mr Victor Wan Chi

Rapporteur: Dr George K. Alex

The Moderator of the group explained the primary objectives and the group discussed the objectives in detail. The objectives were:

- Empower churches in humanitarian interventions within the Church and society.
- Ensure faith-based actions for the overall development of the society.

Summary

The group discussed the various issues which are affecting Asian countries in general. Ecological destruction, human trafficking, child labour, LGBT issues, manual scavenging, and the growing militarisation of Asian countries were the key issues presented in the group.

Rev. Yesudoss Moses presented the case of manual scavenging workers in India. He said Dalits and Tribal communities were forced to clean human excreta manually in many states of the country. The CCA should play an active role in campaigning for the eradication of this inhuman practice in India. Dr K. B. Rokaya, pointed out that

National Council of Churches has to play a greater role to address the issues at local and national levels.

Mr Dinesh Suna and Mr Ayoob raised the issues of ecological destruction, water scarcity, and sanitation. The growing destruction of nature demands the churches' prophetic intervention for the protection of ecology. Ecological justice should be a prime concern of the state. A just and equitable distribution of natural resources and rights of the marginalised communities over natural resources should be ensured. Dr George K. Alex raised the issues of the marketisation and capitalisation of ecological resources. He pointed out that the state and central governments are implementing policies for the privatisation of natural resources all over Asia, which is a grave threat to the existence of vulnerable communities.

Prof. Mammen Varkey raised the issue of the Indian government's new policy on child labour. He said the government's permission to allow children to carry out domestic works naturally leads to the violation of child rights.

Eunice Jumalon placed the issues of LGBT communities. She appealed churches to take a positive role in empowering LGBT people.

Moderator Mr Victor Wan Chi placed the issue of the militarisation of Asian states and strategic issues in the region. The claims of China and Japan over islands and the claims for strategic areas are considered as a growing threat to peace.

Issues Identified

- Continuing practice of manual scavenging in India.
- Interfaith clashes.
- Ecological destruction.
- Water and sanitation problems.
- Growing militarisation.
- Child labour.
- LGBT issues.

Recommendations

- Appealing to churches to pressurise the Indian government to eliminate manual scavenging and to support the manual scavengers' struggle for restoring their human dignity and basic human rights.
- Urging the CCA to facilitate processes of mutual learning and sharing of strategic experiences and the capacity-

building of vulnerable communities, such as the manual scavengers in India and the Burakumins in Japan.

- Start advocacy programmes for the protection of the rights of the Dalits and gender minorities.
- Strengthen existing diakonia activities of the churches in the fields of gender, ecology, and human rights.
- Launch interfaith forums among the youth as an education programme to combat communalism.
- Set up a conflict resolution forum and strategic issue-based dialogue among South Asian countries to promote perpetual peace in the region.

Group 4

Moving Beyond Conflict and Building Peace with Justice

Moderator: Rev. W.P. Ebenezer Joseph

Rapporteur: Daisy Roy

Summary

- In order to address the problem effectively, we need to find the roots of the problem.
- We are aware of the conflicts that exist in many countries which can be addressed but in order to do that we need to identify the real roots.
- Inter and Intra-faith dialogues must be organised to equip people to have a better understanding about other religions and denominations.
- It is very easy to speak about peace but too difficult to practice. It is quite controversial to see that sometimes Christians themselves are responsible for the chaos in society.
- Human trafficking is one of the most prominent issues in many of Asian countries. To provide effective care and support to the victims is the need of the hour.
- Sadly, we remain silent spectators witnessing these heart-breaking realities.
- The persecution and discrimination of religious minorities in many countries is often a hindrance for effective help and dialogue.
- Issues like the Rohingyas in Myanmar and Bangladesh, the militarisation in many countries, etc., are some of

the serious issues that exist today and the Church has increasing responsibility to attend to these issues.

Recommendations

- The Council of Churches in various nations should be willing to share the information about the human right violations occurring in their countries. This enables other countries and councils to offer a hand of help to the victims.
- Documented information, stories, and reflection should be shared among member churches.
- The CCA should encourage countries and their councils to share information with other countries, especially in situations of conflict, child abuse, human trafficking, etc.
- Facilitate healing of trauma and reconciliation.
- Advocacy should be an important role to be taken by the CCA especially for the oppressed, discriminated, etc.

Group 5

Health and Healing: New Imperatives for Ecumenical Action

The group adopted the discussion from the Sarasehan on this topic:

- To explore ways to strengthen health security and preparedness.
- To focus on ecumenical responses to healing and caring in times of vulnerability.
- To ensure a sustained effort to fight discrimination and stigmatisation.
- To increase accessibility and affordability of drugs, and other medical treatment.
- To enable pastoral care and counselling that will help in the mental, psychological, and emotional health of people.

Summary of Recommendations

HIV and AIDS

- Needs to continue to be a focus for the CCA as it is still on the rise in Asian countries, encourage churches to make

prophetic conversations around such issues as gender marginalisation, sexuality, isolation.

- Funding and cooperation with other organisations if possible.
- Engage more on education and other opportunities in uplifting the conditions of women, youth, and children, especially around high risks group - prostitutes and prostitute users, gay and bisexual men, intravenous drug abusers, and sex traffickers.
- Encourage churches to have ministries with women, youth, and children and develop spaces that are more caring, nurturing, and loving for the restoration of their well-being.

Mental Health and Healing

- The CCA has an important role to play in community and relationship building, support, and capacity-building.
- Call to the churches to promote health and well-being for all. Pastoral care and counselling in response to trauma as result of disasters, violence, political or economic tension, religious tensions, mental and physical stress, long working hours, bad working conditions, disproportionate economic affluence of the privileged few in the midst of poverty, unemployment, etc.
- To commit the churches to theological reflection, Bible Study sessions, listening to stories of the sick, caring and counselling in the treatment of trauma.
- The CCA should practically develop ecumenical advocacy addressing health and healing issues.

Disability (Mental and Physical Disability)

- The CCA needs to engage in the treatment, understanding and knowing the situation of mentally and physically challenged people.
- The Church must continue advocating for support for the mentally and physically challenged persons.
- Ensure a sustained effort to fight the discrimination and stigmatisation against the mentally and physically challenged people in the Church and society.

Drug Addiction

- The CCA needs to support the victims of drug addiction by networking, counselling, and medical treatment.
- The churches need to engage with families of drugs users for counselling and healing.

Violence Against Women, Youth, and Children

- The churches need to study the causes of violence against women, youth and children.
- The churches should create policies on sexual harassment and violence.

Palliative Care and Counselling

- The Church creates ministries for the sick and their families.
- The Church needs to organise conversations and seminars on life and dying.

Ecological Awareness Initiatives

- The Church engages in studies on ecological destruction.
- The Church creates policies on waste disposal, and protective measures.

Group 6

Communication Within the Fellowship and Beyond

Moderator: Rev. Dr Albert Jebanesan

Rapporteur: Rev. Dr Solomon Rongpi

There were eighteen participants in the discussion on “Communication Within the Fellowship and Beyond”. The task given to us was to bring proposals for effective communication to the Assembly. The discussion focused on the following questions:

- How are we going to ensure the communication of what is happening in the CCA to all member churches and partners?
- The CCA is already sharing information but is there anything we could do better?

Summary

- In the discussion, some important points were noted, including the lack of proper communication from the CCA.

- The CCA website has not been updated for a long time and therefore, the need to develop and revitalise the website is important. On the website, the names and email addresses of member bodies be provided. There should also be a space provided for member churches to upload information/files onto the CCA website, including a space for sharing Asian theological articles.
- Social media could be used as a tool for communication and every available resource be used to make sure that it reaches the rural communities also.
- The CCA webpage has to be more formally organised with Bible Study, prayer request, sharing of research materials, etc. However, within the fellowship, the social media could also be used for informal communication. It is proposed that the CCA website create a link with the websites of all member churches and partners. The CCA needs to maintain the website after receiving detailed information of member churches, national councils, and partners.
- On certain issues, the CCA can make use of available communication tools, such as Skype and video conferencing in order to use time and financial resources effectively.
- The CCA needs to have a communication strategy acceptable and owned by all member churches. If member churches accept the strategy, it can then be filtered down to local churches.
- As of now, we have come to know that the information reaches member churches after two or three months of what has happened in the CCA. A timely sending of news is another concern expressed.
- One practical difficulty expressed by participants was that for some cases, decisions can be made only after a meeting of the member body is convened. Therefore, it takes time to reply.
- A regular e-news Bulletin may be circulated among CCA members.
- As a strategy, the CCA is to gather stories and share with its member churches. In the same way, member churches are expected to send their stories to the CCA.
- Recruiting communication officers to handle the above

mentioned suggestions in NCCs and member bodies is important.

- It is desirable that information on the CCA website is given in multiple languages.
- Delegates from member churches could be given the responsibility to take back the information of the Assembly and that they may be nominated by the Assembly. The national councils in respective countries could be given the responsibility to share the information to their local congregations.
- A concern was expressed that some countries, such as Myanmar have limited access to internet and therefore, a hard copy is still very relevant in such cases.

Recommendations

- Develop and revitalise the website of the CCA and update it regularly.
- Develop and utilise available social media, such as Facebook or Twitter and WhatsApp.
- A mechanism be created in such a way that the communication gets directly transmitted from the CCA to the national bodies/local congregations.
- The national bodies take the responsibility to convey the message of the CCA Assembly to all local congregations.
- A debriefing session of all the delegates be organised and the Report be shared with all congregations in their respective countries.

Group 7

Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management

Moderator: Bishop Taranath Sagar

Rapporteur: Dr Fransina Yoteni

The Moderator introduced the session by discussing CCA's Financial Profile and Current Trends from the Assembly Handbook, "Cooperation is better than coercion". The Moderator summarised the Report and its implications for the future of the CCA.

A speaker noted that the debate surrounding the constitutional

changes in the Extra-ordinary Meeting was fundamentally related to the financial limitations that the CCA have been facing in recent years. Reductions in leadership/committee membership/staff cuts, etc., are indicative of this fact.

He further proposed that the CCA set up a Committee to look into further changes needed, i.e., the location of the CCA office, etc.

A discussion regarding visa requirements identified related issues.

Summary

- Financial Sustainability (how can we strengthen our finances).
- Relocation of Office.
- Related Questions: What are the primary sources of CCA funding?
- We need to prepare a budget (the Finance Committee informs the Programme Committee on what can be resourced and what must be reduced or deleted).

Main Sources of Funding and Related Questions

- Contribution from member churches and councils: USD 88,000.
- Ecumenical Partners: USD 348,000.
- What is CCA's fundraising strategy?
- Do we have an investment strategy? If there is a Finance Committee, is there also an Investment Committee, and does it have any policies?
- Can the funds raised on Asia Sunday be forwarded to the CCA?
- How much money do we need to resource our programmes/projects? What comes first, programme needs or required funding?

Issues Discussed

- The General Secretary needs to focus on this as a priority in terms of a strategic vision. The CCA's prophetic needs require advocacy with our principal donors. How can we be more efficient?
- Member Churches and Councils need to take full ownership of the CCA, in particular of the entire financial operation. Look at the cost of travel/programme costs.

- The CCA can no longer rely on donors.
- What really happened at the last CCA Assembly with regard to the offer from the CCT for “free” space for the administration/office, etc.? We need to revisit our relationship with the CCT to discuss it more seriously. Efforts have begun to this end with serious dialogue with the new leadership of the CCT.
- We receive donations because we convince the donors that the programmes are important.
- More vision needed. Communication needs improvement.
- Are our programmes of a sufficient standard to maintain the funding from partners?
- The global financial/economic crisis has put pressure and constraints on the donors.
- What is the reason behind the income declining?
- Where is our budget for the next 5 years?
- Increase membership subscription. Only certain members are paying the subscription.
- Funding of all programme should be prioritised and needs to be evaluated /a quality review for future funding.
- Has there been a programme audit/financial audit? How can programmes be reduced according to costs, for e.g. should certain programmes be delivered in countries that can help with resources as a host country/member? Should clusters be established to assist in resourcing, hosting, and delivering programmes? The CCA can provide resource persons, etc., at minimal cost.
- What is the minimum staff requirement for the CCA? Can host countries assist with staffing in certain programmes?
- Maintenance costs? Is Chiang Mai now as expensive as Hong Kong? What is the view of the donors? Are CCA staff being paid the same as their WCC counterparts? (The answer seems to be no but the cost for associated expenses are higher).

Questions Related to Increasing Income

- Should the membership subscription be increased? Should the office be relocated?
- Should the operation be refined to meet the demands/needs? What number of staff numbers is required?

- What/which programmes will our ecumenical partners be more likely to fund? Are they looking for more accountability or more creativity or innovation? How will we convince them of our need for further and continued funding?
- How do we increase the sense of ownership, awareness of the CCA by the member churches and councils?
- How do we gain a greater degree of transparency and financial accountability? How do we receive a five-year operational budget?

Recommendations

- That the Executive Committee be asked to investigate the viability and sustainability of the current location of the CCA office.
- That the Executive Committee be requested to set the membership contribution at USD 1000 per member church. (Note: Member churches are encouraged to partner with other member churches).
- That the Executive Committee develop a new travel policy in line with the WCC.
- That the Executive Committee establish a Communications desk to improve communications with members and donors on a regular basis.
- That the Executive Committee consider the appointment of a qualified accountant for the position of Treasurer.

Pre-Assembly Statements

CCA Pre-Assembly Women's Forum Statement

“Equal and Fuller Participation of Women, Children, and Gender Minorities in the Household of God”

We, sisters and brothers, as one in Christ, gathered together at the Pre-Assembly Women's Forum representing thirteen countries, twenty-six member churches/councils and ecumenical partners, in Bandung, Indonesia from 17–20 May 2015. After the fatal earthquake in Nepal and India, we, the participants, of the Pre-Assembly Women's Forum, express our deep sorrow, prayers, and support for the victims.

We celebrated our diversity of nationality, caste, class, age, sex, race, ethnicity, language, denomination, and gender identities. We shared our reflections for the need to live together in the household of God.

Being aware of the patriarchal connotation of the term 'household', we would like to reclaim the household of God as an equal and mutual space with sharing of power, affirming human dignity, and living in harmony with nature.

In Asia, many people are subjugated to sexual, economic, cultural, and political discrimination and gender-based oppression. We affirm that the liberation of women, children, and gender minorities from the shackles of oppression, violence, war, and terror is the liberation of all humanity. Gender justice is a pertinent call for the manifestation of the “Household of God” in the midst of rampant economic globalisation, escalating religious fundamentalism and ecological degradation at a global level.

- Today, increasing global capitalism, imperialism, and privatisation is creating a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Many people in Asia are vulnerable to extreme poverty. The feminisation of poverty has

increased gender-based violence and threatens the very existence of women and children in all spheres of life. The inhuman and harsh working conditions of women labourers damage their dignity and integrity. National governments fail to provide and implement policies to alleviate poverty, welfare policies and adequate legal protection for female and child workers.

- In Asia, a large number of workers, especially women and children, are forced to migrate to other countries due to extreme poverty and limited opportunities of survival in their homelands. The rampant increase in human trafficking forces these vulnerable women and children into prostitution, sex industries, labour trafficking, and other forms of modern slavery.
- Home, a place of love for different forms of family, has increasingly become a place of domestic violence, including marital rape, incest, and other kinds of sexual and psychological abuse. The Domestic Violence Prevention Acts in many countries are not enforced due to political, religious, and cultural reasons. The prevalence of child marriages further complicates the issue.
- The lack of equal gender participation in political and religious space is a significant issue in Asian societies. It must be acknowledged that churches in Asia unfortunately have a hand in perpetuating gender-based discrimination and violence in many forms. The sacred texts are often interpreted as providing licence to oppress and marginalise women and children in church and society. This leads to limited opportunities for women in leadership and decision-making spheres, and for the acknowledgement of their contributions in church and society.
- Gender identity and sexual orientation is not biologically given but self-determined, culturally constituted and politically manifested. The needs and rights of such minorities have been neglected and they are subjugated to discrimination and exclusion.
- Conflict and war threatens life in many Asian countries. People are being forced to flee their homelands due to political, religious, ethnic, and military persecution and

conflicts. The plight of these stateless, landless, and displaced refugees needs to be addressed by churches in Asia.

- People living with HIV and AIDS are stigmatised and discriminated against. Their access to health services is inadequate. The need of the hour is prevention and not condemnation.
- Human greed, capitalism, consumerism, and natural and man-made disasters have led to an ecological crisis. The worst victims of these are indigenous people, especially the women and children among them. A holistic perspective of nature and mother earth is essential for the sustenance and maintenance of the integrity of creation.
- The realisation of gender justice and equality in the household of God demands full and creative participation of women and children in social, economic, cultural, religious and political spaces.

We recommend that the churches and their ecumenical bodies take revolutionary actions of transformation:

- To practice a zero-tolerance approach towards violence against women, children and marginalised groups in Church and society. To develop and reinforce existing policies to prevent violence against women and children in the Church.
- To commit to gender mainstreaming and sensitisation in the churches and wider communities in order to create space for women leadership formation and decision-making participation.
- To reclaim the liberating message of the Bible and integrate contextual, feminist post-colonial theology and spirituality in the everyday life of faith communities to ensure justice, equality and fullness of life for women and children.
- To provide platforms to critically address the norms and ethos of masculinity in order to dismantle patriarchy.
- To build an inclusive community, the Church needs to initiate and develop dialogue on the rights and dignity of gender minorities (LGBTQI) and their participation in the Church and society.

- To engage in interreligious dialogue to promote gender justice.
- To facilitate programmes of trauma recovery, healing memories of pain and protection for victims/survivors of human rights violation, conflicts and wars, and of natural disasters.
- To analyse and overcome the root causes of human trafficking and forced migration. The Church should journey with the victims/survivors in the empowerment process for liberation and restoration.
- To ensure that churches acquire competency to provide services to people living with HIV and AIDS and engage in advocacy at all levels.
- To develop programmes to tackle extreme poverty at the grass root level to ensure the fullness of life.
- To promote eco-justice perspectives and practices towards the nurturing and caring of our earth.
- To take ownership of CCA's programmes and allocate a budget for the Gender Justice Programme and promote gender auditing.

CCA Pre-Assembly Youth's Forum Statement "In the Household of God"

Lyrics: Sora Enomoto

Music: Mak Chi Lap, Paul

In the household of God, people are crucified
In the household of God, people are crying
In the household of God, nature is mourning

Open our eyes so that we can see what you see
Open our ears so that we can listen to what you listen
Let's be in solidarity with our people
With their memories and with their hope

In the household of God, people are rejoicing
In the household of God, people are celebrating
In the household of God, the whole creation is singing

CCA Pre-Assembly Asia Ecumenical Course (AEC) Statement

“Equal and Fuller Participation of Women, Children, and Gender Minorities in the Household of God”

The voice of St Paul the Apostle still echoes loud and appears to be most appealing to the 21st century society, wherein his words, “He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.” (Ephesians 2:17–20)

We, the youth, from fourteen countries, representing different churches, national councils, enriched by our own cultures and realities, met together for the two-week long Asia Ecumenical Course, with the theme of the 14th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia ‘Living Together in the Household of God’ at the Jakarta Theological Seminary and Mercure Convention Centre, Ancol, Jakarta, from 16–26 May 2015.

Here we were brought face-to-face with the existential realities persistent in the world, marred by voices and echoes of people and nature who are often ‘sinned against’. The groaning earth and the oppressed and marginalised brothers and sisters in Christ are suffering because of the injustice and inequality that prevails in the world, in the form of impoverishment, unemployment, environmental degradation, human rights violation, lack of education, discrimination, migration, and terrorism.

The course enlightened us to realise our responsibility as the beacons of that great light in the brokenness of the world. We were empowered to take up the challenge in the renewal of the Church and society by fulfilling our prophetic role to be agents of justice, peace, and reconciliation. We are also in acceptance of our inability, inaction, and apathy with regard to the situation of the marginalised; and by our silence we end up often becoming a source of support to oppressors.

The course helped us broaden our horizons and instilled in us a vigour and spirit of pursuing the spirit of humanness, oneness, and amity amongst us by removing the parochialism that divides us.

The triune God places before us the model for 'unity in diversity'. The strength when sisters and brothers coexist in peace and justice in an egalitarian society is the manifestation of the divine. Finding unity amidst the distinctiveness of life, we were imbued with the thought that being united confers the strength to be the agents of 'Missio Dei'. This we can do only by becoming co-sufferers and co-sojourners in the pain and afflictions of our fellow beings and by attributing to them a life of dignity and worth from womb to tomb.

Nominations Committee Report

Moderator: Dr K.B. Rokaya

Presenter: Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah

Voting Delegates present: 150

For – 82; Against – 4; Abstentions – 0

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report of the Nominations Committee.

The General Assembly elected the following as Officers of the CCA for now until the next CCA Assembly:

Moderator: Archbishop William T.P. Simarmata HKBP, Indonesia (Southeast Asia)	Male	Clergy
Vice Moderator: Rev. Diana Tana	Female	Clergy
Te Runnga Whakawhanunga Inga, New Zealand (Australasia)		
Treasurer: Mr. Augustine Dipak Karmakar Church of Bangladesh (South Asia)	Male	Lay
Chair Person, Program Committee: Rev. Kim Kyrie Anglican Church, Korea (Northeast Asia)	Female	Clergy

The General Assembly appointed the following people to the Executive Committee:

1	Rev. Terence Corkin	Male	Clergy	Uniting Church in Australia
2	Rev. Moises Antonio Da Silva	Male	Clergy	IPTL, Timor Leste

3	Rev Arshad Gill	Male	Clergy	Presbyterian Church, Pakistan
4	Ms. Huang Shi-Yi (Cindy Huang)	Female	Lay/ Youth	Presbyterian Church, Taiwan
5	Rev. Kim Jong Goo	Male	Clergy	Methodist Church, Korea
6	Ms. Ithrana Lawrence	Female	Lay/ Youth	CCM, Malaysia
7	Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza	Male	Clergy	United Church, Philippines
8	Bishop Taranath Sagar	Male	Clergy	NCC, India,
9	Mr. Za Uk Sang	Male	Lay/ Youth	Baptist Church, Myanmar
10	Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian	Male	Clergy	Armenian Orthodox Church, Iran
11	Rev. Aminaka Shoko	Female	Clergy	NCC, Japan
12	Sunil Babu Shretha	Male	Lay Youth	NCC, Nepal
13	Rev. Dr D.S. Solomon	Male	Clergy	NCC, Sri Lanka
14	Rev. Kingpet Thammavoe	Male	Clergy	Lao Evangelical Church (Independent), Laos
15	Dr Tong Wing-Sze	Female	Lay	Hong Kong Christian Council, Hong Kong
16	Ms SUpaporn Yarnasarn	Female	Lay	Church of Christ in Thailand, Thailand

The General Assembly noted the following summary of representation in the elected positions:

Position	Male	Female	Clergy	Lay	Youth	Nominated
Moderator	04	Nil	03	01	Nil	Male/Clergy
Vice Moderator	02	03	02	03	Nil	Female/Clergy
Treasurer	03	nil	02	01	Nil	Male/Lay
Executive Committee	23	12	22	13	06	Male 11 Female 05 Clergy 10 Lay 06 Youth 04
Program Committee Chairperson	03	02	04	01	Nil	Female/Clergy
Total (20)						Male 13 Female 07 Clergy 13 Lay 07 Youth 04
Percentage	65%	35%	65%	35%	20%	[from 20]

Assembly Statements

Programme Directions

The Assembly received reports presented by seven groups that discussed Future Programme Directions of the CCA in the post-Assembly period. The Assembly mandated the Executive Committee and the General Secretary to undertake follow-up actions, while prioritising future programme directions in the following areas:

- Advocacy on Asian issues; Health and Healing; Human rights; Human Trafficking; Rights of persecuted religious minorities; Interfaith Dialogue; Dignity of Children; Elimination of manual scavenging; Discriminated Burakumins in Japan and Rohingyas in Myanmar; Violence against women; Eco-justice, Overcoming stigmatisation of the mentally and physically challenged persons;
- Develop ecumenical resources for spirituality, based on Asian liturgical worship traditions, a systematic course in ecumenical formation and leadership development; program to combat HIV/AIDS;
- Develop a communication strategy acceptable to and owned by the member churches/councils and use the social media to communicate CCA's programmes and activities.

The Assembly received the Report and adopted the recommendations to improve Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management of the CCA. In this regard, the Assembly decided to mandate the Executive Committee:

- To encourage Member Churches and Councils to take full ownership of the CCA, particularly in supporting the CCA for all financial operations, especially bearing cost of travel/programme costs;
- To increase the current level of membership subscriptions by member churches and councils in the CCA. It was noted that, as of now, only very few members are paying membership contributions;
- To set up a policy for a minimum annual membership contribution of US \$1000 per member church/council

as the CCA can no longer rely fully on non-Asian donors in the future due to shrinking financial resources in the West;

- To encourage member Churches from economically developed countries to partner with member Churches and Councils in other countries, in case certain churches and councils are unable to pay the membership contributions;
- To develop a new travel subsidy policy in the CCA, in line with the WCC policies, for the participation of members of governing boards and advisory committees;
- To establish a system to improve regular communications with member churches, councils and ecumenical partners;
- To appointment a qualified accountant in the CCA;
- To review the viability and sustainability of the current location of CCA's headquarters in Chiang Mai;
- To initiate an improved relationship with the sponsor of the CCA in Thailand, the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) and discuss seriously with the leadership of the CCT for better cooperation and regular assistance to the CCA in future.

Recommendations on Public Issues

The Christian Conference of Asia gathered in Jakarta for its 14th Assembly from 20–27 May 2015. The Assembly invited all to affirm that they are 'Living Together in the Household of God'. Participants listened to each other, shared their burdens and struggles, celebrated each other's joys, and gave voice to their pressing and mounting concerns, recommending courses of action in advocacy, awareness building, and programmatic directions to address these public issues.

The list is not an exhaustive listing of the issues being faced in Asia today, but are heartfelt concerns and point to the reality that not all people live in the joy and justice of the Household of God. The Assembly affirmed the prophetic voice of the member churches and councils of the CCA, which should not remain silent. God calls his people to listen, watch and speak and so be responsive to the concerns listed out and those that will be identified in the future.

The Assembly focused on the Suffering of People, Peace and Security in the Asia Region and on the Commitment to Climate Justice. The sub-topics discussed and the recommendations made are specified as follows:

1. The Suffering of People

The delegates considered the escalating sufferings of people in the region, specially due to Human Trafficking; Forced Migration; Marketing of Motherhood; Organ Trafficking; Violence Against Women, Youth, Children and Gender Minorities; Armenian Genocide; Refugees and Displaced people across the Asia-Pacific region and the victims of the Nepal Earthquake. The recommendations were that the CCA:

- Gives priority to addressing human trafficking in the next five years as part of Living Together in the Household of God. The church must focus on liberating victims physically, mentally and spiritually.
- Develops education and awareness programmes providing information to churches and communities about human trafficking, bonded labour, manual scavenging, prostitution and slave labour in each country.
- Adopts a policy of purchasing as many fair trade products as possible and be part of decreasing the ability of traffickers to profit from forced labour in the manufacturing of chocolate and coffee products.
- Engages in lobbying through international and national networks to ensure that governments and their political and legal judicial systems address all forms of human trafficking.
- Provides forums and venues so that the voices and stories of victims of trafficking may be heard, their hidden oppression revealed and their dignity affirmed and supported.
- Continues to address the issue of human trafficking through continued research into hidden forms of trafficking, marketing of motherhood, forced and exploitative child labour practices. Education is needed on human rights, gender justice and on building structures and policies towards the elimination of violence.
- Facilitates ways for its members to cooperate in support of victims who have been trafficked within Asia across

our national borders—similar to the efforts of the Philippines and Indonesian churches in the case of Mary Jane Veloso.

- Names and addresses the intrusion of negative forces, systems and structures that perpetrate violence against the peoples of Asia.
- Encourages Churches and Councils to implement policies that reflect our understanding that all are made in the image of God and so help to eliminate violence against women, youth, children, Dalits (victims of the caste system) and gender minorities and societies and so uphold their basic human rights.

2. Peace and Security in the Asia-Pacific

Noting that the geopolitical and military developments in Asia-Pacific, over recent years, have seen significant changes and alarming developments in the regional military and security situation, the Assembly considered the issues of Militarisation in North and Southeast Asia; Peace and Justice in Myanmar; Peace and Human Rights for West Papuans; The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism and Violence; and recommended that the CCA:

- Calls on the US government and its allies to stop the building of a major naval base in Jeju Island, South Korea, and, similarly, in Henoko, Okinawa; deplore plans to build another base in Kyoto, Japan; stop the war games near the waters of North Korea, and withdraw from similar activities in the region.
- Commemorates the 70th year of the end of World War II in the Asia-Pacific and the beginning of the division of the Korean nation into North and South, enjoin churches and faith communities and support the campaign of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) for the making of a Peace Treaty that will replace the Armistice of 1953. We also ask all member churches of the CCA to observe the week closest to 15 August, the Independence day of Korea (9–15 August 2015), as a joint prayer week for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula.
- Invites all CCA members to join the struggles of the NCC Japan as they are consolidating their efforts to keep the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution intact.

- Supports in practical ways the churches and Christian Council of Myanmar and commits itself to prayerfully encourage the work of the churches in Myanmar for peace and justice and plans a pastoral visit to Myanmar to encourage and support the churches in their peace-making work and to inform the CCA in its advocacy on behalf of our sisters and brothers in Myanmar.
- Expresses our solidarity and concern for our sisters and brothers in settings where religious fundamentalism is on the rise. We will be in prayer for and with them.
- Plans a pastoral visit to those settings where Christians are persecuted in order to show the solidarity of all Asian churches.
- Supports the planned dialogue between the Indonesian authorities and West Papua so that Papuans can live with justice, peace, dignity and security.

3. Commitment to Climate Justice

The changing patterns of climate continue to have detrimental impacts on many Asian countries. Increase in natural disasters, such as droughts, floods and cyclones, shortage of food and water, increased pollution, water-related diseases, melting of glaciers and snow, and change in eco-systems, are exacerbated by climate change. Taking into account the vulnerability of farmers, and those whose houses are near oceans or in areas prone to flooding; and the negative effect of climate change on flora and fauna in Asia, the Assembly recommended that the CCA:

- Develops practical resources to support churches and people in taking practical and personal action to address environmental degradation in their local settings.
- Continues to study and address the impact of climate change and engages with the World Council of Churches in preparation for the United Nations 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris and to be active in working with Asian governments to set realistic targets for reductions in greenhouse gases and to initiate and support disaster risk reduction strategies.
- In conclusion, the Assembly foregrounded the public issues that need immediate attention and came out with their recommendations as they emerged from

their own vision and understanding of what it means to live together in the Household of God in the prayerful expectation that these recommendations would be taken seriously.

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.”

Ephesians 2:19–20

List of Assembly Participants

Voting Delegates

CCA Member Councils

Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Indonesia)

1. Rev. Gomar Gultom
2. Rev. Dr Bambang Wijaya
3. Rev. Retno Ratih Suryaning Handayani
4. Mr Ayub Pongrekun

Council of Churches in Malaysia

5. Archbishop Bolly Lapok
6. Rev. Hermen Shastri
7. Ms Mary Thomas Mathew
8. Ms Ithrana Lawrence

Hong Kong Christian Council

9. Rev. Po Kam Cheong
10. Rev. Phyllis Mei-fung Wong
11. Dr Tong Wing-Sze
12. Ms Hiu-tung (Jessica) Tso

Maori Council of Churches in New Zealand (Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga i Nga Nahi O Aotearoa)

13. Rev. Diana Tana

Myanmar Council of Churches

14. Rev. Major Win Si
15. Mr Saw Patrick Loo Nee
16. Ms Nant Aye Mu Mu Aung
17. Ms Khin Thazin Aung

National Christian Council in Japan

18. Rev. Shoko Aminaka
(replaced by Rev. Hiroko Ueda after she left early)

National Council of Churches in Australia

19. Sr. Elizabeth Delaney SGS
20. Ms Elizabeth Stone

National Council of Churches in Bangladesh

21. Bishop Paul Shishir Sarkar
22. Rev. David Anirudha Das
23. Ms Nandita Biswas
24. Ms Daisy Roy

National Council of Churches in India

25. Bishop Taranath S. Sagar
26. Mr Suman Biswas
27. Ms Martha Mary Marwein

National Council of Churches in Korea

28. Rev. Dr Kim Young-ju
29. Mr Kim Young Jin
(replaced by Rev. Shin So Min after he left early)
30. Rev. Bo Hyun Hwang
31. Mr Sunghun Cho

National Council of Churches in Nepal

32. Mr Aiman Singh Gurung
33. Ms Ashtha Maya Lama
34. Mr Sunil Babu Sreshtha

National Council of Churches in Pakistan

35. Mr Kanwal Pardeek Isaacs
36. Mr Victor Azariah
37. Ms Ayra Inderyas
38. Ms Reena Jerald

National Council of Churches in the Philippines

39. Rev. Rex Reyes Jr.
40. Dn. Emma Cantor

National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka

41. Rev. W.P. Ebenezer Joseph
42. Rev. Dr D.S. Solomon
43. Mr Chamil Fernando
44. Ms Hettiyakandage Surathni Savidya Nonis

National Council of Churches in Taiwan

- 45. Rev. Pei-Yi Chen
- 46. Mr Victor Wan Chi Hsu
- 47. Rev. Ibu Kamnudan

CCA Member Churches

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia

- 48. Rt. Rev. Te Kitohi Pikaahu
- 49. Mr Neill Harrols Ballantyne
- 50. Rev. Anne Therese Mills

Anglican Church of Australia

- 51. Archbishop Jeffrey Driver

Anglican Church in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui)

- 52. Rev. Chun Ho Samson Jeremiah Fan

Anglican Church in Korea

- 53. Rev. Kyrie Kim

Armenian Orthodox Church of Iran

- 54. Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian
- 55. Ms Ani Christy Manvelian
- 56. Dr Vachik Hairapetian

Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha

- 57. Mr Joyanta Adhikari

Baptist Sangamaya in Sri Lanka

- 58. Rev. Priyantha Wijegoonawardena

Batak Protestant Christian Church in Indonesia (Huria Kristen Batak Protestan)

- 59. Bishop Willem T.P. Simarmata
- 60. Ms Mery Simarmata
- 61. Mr Johannes Manurung

Christian Church of Eastern Java (Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan)

- 62. Rev. Abednego Adinugroho
- 63. Rev. Nicky Widyaningrum

**Christian Churches of Java in Indonesia
(Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa)**

- 64. Rev. Wahyu Purwaningtyas
- 65. Rev. Yoshua Budiman Harahap

**Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa in Indonesia
(Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa)**

- 66. Rev. Henny W.B. Sumakul
- 67. Ms Meita Wala
- 68. Mr Toar U. Pangkey

**Christian Protestant Angkola Church
(Gereja Kristen Protestan Angkola)**

- 69. Rev. Togar Satria Simatupang

**Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia
(Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia)**

- 70. Bishop Patut Sipahutar

Church of Bangladesh

- 71. Rev. Billiom Sarder

Church of Ceylon, Diocese of Colombo

- 72. Bishop Dhiloraj Canagasabey

Church of Christ in Thailand

- 73. Dr Prawate Khidarn
- 74. Ms Supaporn Yarnasarn
- 75. Ms Wallapa Benjakul

Church of Jesus Christ in Indonesia (Gereja Isa Almasih)

- 76. Minggu Minarto
- 77. Rev. Samuel Budi Prasetya

Church of North India

- 78. Bishop Probal Kanto Dutta

Church of the Province of Myanmar

- 79. Rev. Canon Dr Saw Maung Doe

Church of South India

- 80. Rev. Dr Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda
- 81. Mr Robert Bruce Chellapan Nadar
- 82. Ms Sangeetha Sowndarya Vadapalli

Church of Pakistan

- 83. Bishop Samuel Azariah
- 84. Ms Shunila Ruth
- 85. Ms Sunita Salamat

Churches of Christ in Australia

- 86. Rev. John Charles Gilmore

Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc.

- 87. Rev. Dr Jerson Narciso
- 88. Mr Carl Dela Pena

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India

- 89. Rev. Dr Solomon Rongpi

Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera in Indonesia (Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera)

- 90. Rev. Demianus Ice
- 91. Rev. Anton Piga

Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua)

- 92. Mr Misere Mawene
- 93. Dr Fransina Yoteni
- 94. Rev. Jemima J. Krey

Evangelical Church in Bolaang Mongondow in Indonesia (Gereja Masehi Injili di Bolaang Mongondow)

- 95. Ms Christina Pangulimang

Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud in Indonesia (Gereja Masehi Injili Sangihe Talaud)

- 96. Rev. Welmi Bogar Salindeho

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore

- 97. Rev. Babyington Wellington

Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines (Iglesia Evangelical Metodista en Las Islas Filipinas)

98. Rev. Elben V. Rodriguez

Evangelical Protestant Church of Timor in Indonesia (Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor)

99. Welmintje Kameli-Maleng

Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

100. Rev. Betsy Ng

Indonesia Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Indonesia)

101. Rev. Untari Setyowati

Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India in Sri Lanka

102. Rt. Rev. Dr Daniel Selvaratnam Thiagarajah

Kalimantan Evangelical Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis)

103. Rev. John Asihua

Karo Batak Protestant Church in Indonesia (Gereja Batak Karo Protestan)

104. Mr Micael Andepa Pinem

105. Rev. Erick Johnson Barus

106. Rev. Rosmalia Barus

Korean Christian Church in Japan

107. Rev. Young-Ja Park

Korean Methodist Church

108. Rev. Kim Jong-goo

109. Mr Ha Seongung

110. Ms Lee Youn Joung

Lao Evangelical Church

111. Rev. Kingphet Thammavong

Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church in India

112. Metropolitan H.G. Joseph Mor Gregorios

113. Dr Susan Thomas

114. Mr Siby Varghese

Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India

- 115. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas
- 116. Prof. George Alex
- 117. Ms Simi Thambi

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in India

- 118. Metropolitan H.G. Yakob Mar Irenios
- 119. Ms Neethu Susan Abraham
- 120. Dn. Aashu Alexander

Mara Evangelical Church

- 121. Rev. Boi Tling

Methodist Church of Hong Kong

- 122. Rev. Yan-Ming Yu

Methodist Church in India

- 123. Bishop Philip Silas Masih
- 124. Ms Vinaysheela Mekala
- 125. Mr Vineeth Methusaleh

Methodist Church of Indonesia (Gereja Methodist Indonesia)

- 126. Rev. Dr Sahat Tobing

Methodist Church of Lower Myanmar

- 127. Rev. Myat San

Methodist Church of New Zealand (Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa)

- 128. Rev. Prince Devanandan

Methodist Church of Sri Lanka

- 129. Rev. Dr Albert Jebanesan

Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar

- 130. Rev. Lawmsanga

Muria Christian Church of Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia)

- 131. Rev. Rudiyanto

Myanmar Baptist Convention

- 132. Rev. Dr Zaw Win
- 133. Ms Myaung Paw
- 134. Mr Za Uk Sang

Nias Protestant Christian Church in Indonesia (Banua Niha Keriso Protestan)

- 135. Rev. Dorkas Orienti Daeli
- 136. Rev. Dr Tuhoni Telaumbanua

Oikoumene Christian Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Oikoumene di Indonesia)

- 137. Rev. Daniel Zacharias
- 138. Rev. Geraldine Zacharias

Pasundan Christian Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Pasundan)

- 139. Rev. Supriatno Supriatno

Philippine Independent Church (Iglesia Filipina Independiente)

- 140. Bishop Joselito Perpetuo Cruz
- 141. Mr Jun Vincent Alaye Aye
- 142. Maria T.P. Mozalia

Presbyterian Church in India

- 143. Rev. Giron Samely Lyttan
- 144. Mr Daminot Sun
- 145. Mrs Lalpianthangi Hrahsel

Presbyterian Church of Korea

- 146. Rev. Dr Chang Yoon-Jae
- 147. Rev. Kyung In Kim
- 148. Ms Yu Huseon

Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

- 149. Rev. Khin Hla

Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

- 150. Rev. Andrew Norton

Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

- 151. Rev. Arshad Gill
- 152. Rev. Shiraz Sharif
- 153. Ms Milka Hanook

Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

- 154. Rev. Taejin Bae
- 155. Rev. Dr Min Heui Cheon
- 156. Ms Esther Jina Kang

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

- 157. Rev. Dr Kong-Hi Lo
- 158. Ms Shin-Yi Huang

Protestant Christian Church in Bali in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali)

- 159. Bishop Dr Ketut Waspada

Protestant Church in Maluku in Indonesia (Gereja Protestan Maluku)

- 160. Rev. Dr Johny Christian Ruhulesin
- 161. Rev. Elfes Maspaitella
- 162. Ms Rosa Pentury

Protestant Church in Southeast Sulawesi in Indonesia (Gereja Protestan di Sulawesi Tenggara)

- 163. Mr Vence Samuel Tumanan

Protestant Church in Timor Leste (Igreja Protestante Iha Timor Lorosa'e)

- 164. Mr Moises Antonio da Silva

Protestant Church in Western Part of Indonesia (Gereja Protestan di Indonesia Bagian Barat)

- 165. Rev. Adriaan Pitoy
- 166. Rev. Yuanita Mentang
- 167. Mr Johan Tumanduk

Salvation Army in Korea

- 168. Lieutenant-Colonel Dong Jin Kim

Simalungun Protestant Christian Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun)

- 169. Bishop Jaharianson Saragih Sumbayak

Toraja Church in Indonesia (Gereja Toraja)

- 170. Rev. Arsiati Kabangnga
- 171. Ms Katarina Tombi
- 172. Mr Andhy Richard

United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan)

- 173. Rev. Makoto Kato

United Church of Christ in the Philippines

- 174. Bishop Reuel Norman O. Marigza
- 175. Mr Pio Bacong
- 176. Ms Eunice Jumalon

United Methodist Church in the Philippines

- 177. Ms Marie Sol Villalon
- 178. Mr Thomas Jerico Jumalon
- 179. Rev. Liberato Bautista

Uniting Church in Australia

- 180. Ms Sally Andrews
- 181. Rev. Terence Corkin

CCA Presidium

- 182. Dr K.B. Rokaya
- 183. Ms Van Arun Rasmey
- 184. Rev. Retno Ngapon

CCA Honorary Treasurer

- 185. Mr Augustine Dipak Karmakar

CCA General Secretary

- 186. Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang

Non-Voting Delegates

CCA General Secretary-Elect

- 187. Dr Mathews George Chunakara

CCA General Committee Members (Outgoing)

- 188. Mr Sok Phally
- 189. Bishop Philip Phembuar Marandih

190. Rev. Gomar Gultom
191. Rev. Hiroko Ueda
192. Rev. Saw Shwe Lin
193. Ms Devashrie de Silva
194. Dr Natalie (Ming-Chu) Lin
195. Dr Penpilai Rithakatanone
196. Rev. Dr Pradit Takerngrangsarit

CCA Staff and Interns

197. Rev. Jung Eun Grace Moon
198. Ms Sunila Ammar
199. Ms Susan Jacob
200. Dr Alphinus Kambodji
201. Ms Rosanna So
202. Ms Khajeerat Duang Suwan
203. Ms Patchayotai Boontama
204. Mr Akrapol Chamras
205. Ms Arpa Yaichid
206. Mr Wittaya Makasuk
207. Rev. Newton Yesuwadian
208. Ms Seo Young Kim
209. Ms Hanna Santillan

CCA Co-opted Staff

210. Ms Janejinda Pawadee
211. Mr Boonyarid Prom Suttipong (Ling)
212. Rev. Vinod Victor
213. Mr Benson Samuel
214. Mr Bruce Wan Whooris
215. Mr Ismael Fisco
216. Ms Ester Pudjo
217. Ms Ruth Kadarmanto
218. Mr John Mathew
219. Mr Rommel Linatoc
220. Mr M.J. Nashir
221. Mr T. Tasmoyo
222. Ms Winny Malo
223. Rev. Krise Gosal
224. Mr Abdiel Fort
225. Ms Le Ngoc Bich Ly
226. Ms Tithin Gultom
227. Rev. Mery Koliman
228. Rev. Tara Curlewis

Ecumenical Partners and Related Organisations
All African Council of Churches

229. Rev. Dr Andrea Karmaga

Asian Church Women's Conference

230. Rev. Moon-Sook Lee

Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concerns in Asia

231. Dr P. Jagadish Gandhi

Association of Protestant Churches and Mission (EMW) in Germany

232. Rev. Martin Krieg

Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College

233. Rev. Dr Mohan Larbeer Paulraj

Church of Scotland

234. Mr Alexander Moffat (Sandy) Sneddon

Church of Sweden

235. Mr Anders Salomonsson

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

236. Ms Christine Elliott

Conference of European Churches

237. Rev. Dr Guy Liagre

East Asia in World Mission of Presbyterian Church in the USA

238. Rev. Mienda Uriarte

239. Rev. Choon Lim

Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network in Nairobi

240. Dr Samuel Kabue

241. Ms Anjelina Okola

242. Dr Tabita Christiani

243. Me Ye Ja Li

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

244. Rev. Dr Risto Juhani Jukko

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences

245. Fr. William LaRousse

Interfaith Cooperation Forum

246. Mr Norman Max Ediger

Kerk in Actie in Netherlands

247. Ms Maaïke Wigboldus

Methodist Church in Britain

248. Mr Steve Pearce

Pacific Conference of Churches

249. Rev. Francois Pihaatae

Programme for Theology and Culture in Asia

250. Rev. Dr Huang Po Ho

United Church of Canada

251. Ms Patti Talbot

United Evangelical Mission in Germany

252. Rev. Petrus Sugito

World Communion of Reformed Churches

253. Rev. Christopher Ferguson

World Council of Churches

254. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri

255. Ms Natasha Klukach

256. Rev. Dr Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar

257. Mr Dinesh Suna

258. Mr Claus Grue

World Student Christian Federation Asia-Pacific

259. Ms Sunita Suna

260. Ms Gifliyani Krisna Nayoan

Delegated Observers

Anglican Church of Australia

261. Ms Christine Capper

Anglican Church in Korea

262. Rev. Si-kyung Yoo

Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha

263. Rev. Ashim Kumar Baroi

Christian Churches of Java in Indonesia (Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa)

264. Rev. Johan Kristiantara

Christian Protestant Angkola Church (Gereja Kristen Protestan Angkola)

265. Rev. Joseph Parlaungan Matondang

Church of Ceylon, Diocese of Colombo

266. Mr Israel Paulraj

Church of Christ in Thailand

267. Mr Taweechai Termkunanon

Church of the Province of Myanmar

268. Rev. Sanda Aung

Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja Indonesia)

269. Rev. Dr Zakaria Ngelow

Convention of Philippines Baptist Churches

270. Atty. Doriedel G. Lozanes

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India

271. Rev. Vitako Shiko

Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera in Indonesia (Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera)

272. Rev. Ferry Kabarey

Kalimantan Evangelical Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis)

273. Mr Dominic Petrus Jarob

Korean Christian Church in Japan

274. Rev. Wonjung Lee

Korean Methodist Church

275. Rev. Shin Bo-Hyun

Lao Evangelical Church

276. Rev. Dethsacda Aphayamath

Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India

277. Mr Anoop C. John

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in India

278. Fr. Aswin Fernandis

Methodist Church in India

279. Rev. Daniel Munnangi

National Council of Churches in India

280. Ms Aleyamma Thomas

National Council of Churches in Taiwan

281. Rev. Ching-His Lin

Pasundan Christian Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Pasundan)

282. Rev. Paulus Wijono

Presbyterian Church of Korea

283. Rev. Chang Bae Byun

Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

284. Rev. Kyoung Gyun Han

Protestant Christian Church in Bali in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali)

285. Dr Luh Debora Moerthy

Protestant Church in Maluku in Indonesia (Gereja Protestan Maluku)

286. Ms Francy Anne Parinussa

Protestant Church in Western Part of Indonesia (Gereja Protestan di Indonesia Bagian Barat)

287. Mr Ronny Hendrik Wayong

Toraja Church in Indonesia (Gereja Toraja)

288. Rev. Alfred Anggui

Uniting Church in Australia

289. Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney

Observers

Armenian Orthodox Church of Iran

290. Mr Joseph Manvelian

291. Ms Shakeh Yahyamasih

Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha

292. Rev. John Karmakar

Christian Churches of Java in Indonesia (Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa)

293. Dr Bambang Subandrijo

CISRS

294. Dr Vincent Rajkumar

Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja Indonesia)

295. Rev. Dr Lintje H. Pellu

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India

296. Mr P.V. Jacob

Methodist Church of New Zealand

297. Ms Akinihi Keita Hotere

298. Ms Alison Ranui

299. Rev. Kalo Kaisa
300. Rev. Rex Edward Francis Nathan

National Council of Churches in India – AICCW

301. Ms Moumita Biswas
302. Dr Saramma Varghese

National Council of Churches in Korea

303. Rev. Seung-min Shin
304. Rev. Huh Chun Jung

Protestant Christian Church in Bali

305. Mr Prasyudyo
306. Rev. Rudy Immanuel Ririhena
307. Rev. Marthinus Tetelepta

United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan)

308. Mr Nobuko Imahashi
309. Ms Kasuko Honda

Uniting Church in Australia

310. Rev. Dr Ji Zhang
311. Re. Dr Christopher Channon Walker

312. Mr Solomon David
313. Dr Margaretha Hendriks
314. Rev. Dr Martin Sinaga
315. Bishop Dr Kuriakose Mor Theophilose
316. Rev. Dr Ipe Joseph
317. Ms Eunika Trikayasuddhi
318. Ms Esther G.N. Telaumbanua
319. Rev. Happy Seviana Undas

Visitors

320. Mr Dong Jin Lee
321. Rev. Se Wook Han
322. Ms So-Hyeong Kim
323. Ms Ae Ji Choi
324. Ms Bock Ki Young
325. Rev. Yoon Young Ho
326. Rev. Yun Shin Young

- 327. Rev. Dr Lee Kyu Dae
- 328. Rev. Lee Dae Hun
- 329. Mr Kim Dong Gil
- 330. Ms Rhee Hanbeet
- 331. Rev. Dr Kim Dong Chan
- 332. Rev. Dr Nam Myoung Hyun
- 333. Ms Kim Mo Young
- 334. Rev. Song Kwang Ok
- 335. Ms Lee Jin Ok
- 336. Rev. Dr Choi Sang Do
- 337. Ms Cindy Cecilia Tumbelaka
- 338. Ms Margaretha Cynthia
- 339. Rev. Marleen Tuhusula Talakua

Special Guests

- 340. Dr Yap Kim Hao
- 341. Prof. U Kyaw Than
- 342. Dr Soritua Nababan
- 343. His Beatitude Dr Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan
- 344. His Holiness Swami Isa
- 345. Dr M.R. Thampan
- 346. Ven. Banagala Upatissa Nayaka Thero
- 347. Prof. Dr Musdah Mulia
- 348. Rev. Bo Ping Kan
- 349. Mr Fu Mengfei

Guests

- 350. Dr Theresa Carino
- 351. Ms Gigi Mathews
- 352. Ms Imalia Komalo
- 353. Rev. Joseph Widyatmadja

Resource Persons for *Sarasehan* Ecumenical Dialogue Sessions

- 354. Rev. A. Elga Joan
- 355. Rev. Dr Albert Sundaraj Walters
- 356. Ms Reiko Harima
- 357. Ms Pranika Kuyo
- 358. Bishop Philip Huggins
- 359. Dr Erlinda Senturias
- 360. Dr Sigit Wajayanta
- 361. Rev. Dr Andreas A. Yewangoe

- 362. Dr Margaretha Hendriks
- 363. Rev. Dr Martin Sinaga
- 364. Mr Ahmad Taufan Damanik
- 365. Dr Lizette Galima Tapia Raquel
- 366. Rev. Dr Y. Moses

Accredited Media

- 367. Hisahi Yukomoto
- 368. Prof. Dr Mammen Varkey **Assembly Local Team**
- 369. Markus Saragih
- 370. Irma Simajuntak
- 371. Rainy Hutabarat
- 372. Vesto Proklamanto
- 373. Bahrudin Silaen
- 374. Jupiter Sirait
- 375. Suriya Samudera
- 376. Kristono

Stewards (International)

- 377. Mr Abraham Eapen
- 378. Ms Aleshia Lawson
- 379. Ms Benya Sahara
- 380. Ms Clare Malakar
- 381. Mr Dilan David
- 382. Mr Ernest Bisana
- 383. Ms Harasa Patirage Dona
- 384. Ms Jihye Ham
- 385. Mr Julio Da Costa
- 386. Mr Ka Cheung Li
- 387. Ms Karuna Pitakton
- 388. Mr Mebin George Matthew
- 389. Ms Nant Myat Noe Aein
- 390. Ms Naw Maria Mu Kupaw
- 391. Mr Nicholas Adhikary
- 392. Ms Shuk Lam Chan
- 393. Mr Sovannarong Keom
- 394. Ms Wan Yu Tseng

Asia Ecumenical Course

- 395. Dcn. Abin Philip Jacob
- 396. Rev. Ahn Hyun Ah
- 397. Mr Albart Diponkar Biswas

398. Rev. Albert Naibaho
399. Ms Casey Lita Lupe Moana Fa'au
400. Ms Chiquita Elrica Masengi
401. Mr Dhanushka Dilshan
402. Ms Gul Mahak Younis
403. Rev. U Nyoman Djepun
404. Ms Jimarie Snap T. Mabanta
405. Ms Khun Dalis
406. Mr Mak Chi Lap
407. Ms Maria Elisa Tulangouw
408. Ms Maria Teofilina Losaria Morales
409. Rev. Meilanny Risamasu
410. Rev. Nehemia Sulistiyanto
411. Ms Nirmala Gurung
412. Rev. Obednego Mauri
413. Rev. Paul Solomon Jaganath
414. Ms Pheba Elizabeth Thomas
415. Mr Sora Enomoto
416. Mr Steven Didide
417. Rev. Sung Eun Yun
418. Mr Thant Zin Myo
419. Ms Tyas Amalia
420. Ms Vanphone Vongsa
421. Mr Withaya Phuttharaksa
422. Rev. Yuliet

An overview of Assembly Participants in various categories:

Voting Delegates	
CCA Member Councils and Churches	181
CCA Officers	5
Non-Voting	
CCA General Secretary-Elect	1
CCA Outgoing General Committee Members	9
CCA Staff and Interns, Co-opted Staff	32
Ecumenical Partners and Related Organisations	32
Delegated Observers	29
Observers and Visitors	50
Special Guests	13
Guests	6
Resource Persons for <i>Sarasehan</i> Ecumenical Dialogue Sessions	13
Accredited Media	2
Assembly Local Media Team	8
Stewards (International and Local)	44
Asia Ecumenical Course Students	27
Total	452

Minutes

Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary General Assembly

21 May 2015

I. Opening Worship

The Extra-ordinary CCA General Assembly (EOGA) began with an act of worship in the morning of Thursday, 21 May 2015, led by members of the EOGA.

II. Opening Session

Moderator: Rev. Rex Reyes Jr.

On behalf of the Presidium, Rev. Rex Reyes welcomes the Extra-ordinary Assembly's participants

a. Roll Call

The Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, CCA General Secretary, led the roll call of the member churches and councils.

b. Adoption of Standing Orders

EOGA 2015: 01

The Assembly adopted the Standing Orders (Document EOGA 2015/03) presented by the General Secretary.

c. Appointments

EOGA 2015: 02

The Extra-ordinary Assembly confirmed the appointment of the following:

Minutes Secretaries:

Mrs Supaporn Yarnasarn (Thailand)

Ms Marisol Villalon (Philippines)

Dr Vincent Rajkumar (CCA Co-opted Staff, India)

Rev. Tara Curlewis (CCA Co-opted Staff, Australia)

Credentials Committee:

Rev. Kyung In Kim (Moderator, Korea)

Rev. Retno Ratih (Indonesia)

Rev. Po Kam Chong (Hong Kong)

Dn. Aashu Alexander (India)

Rev. Terence Corkin (Australia)

Panel of Moderators:

Bishop Dr Taranath Sagar (India)

Minutes Reading Team:

Rev. David Das (Bangladesh)

Ms Milka Hanook (Pakistan)

Tellers/Scrutineers:

Ms Martha Mary Marwein (India)

Mr Siby Varghese (India)

Rev. Rosemalia Barus (Indonesia)

d. Report of the Credentials Committee

EOGA 2015: 03

The EOGA received the Report of the Credentials Committee nothing that 154 voting delegates had registered, and identified the following problems to be addressed:

Youth Members: Three churches had nominated as youth delegates persons who were over 30 years old. These persons cannot be voting delegates but can be included as observers.

No Youth Delegate: One NCC needs to identify their three voting delegates. The fourth will be an observer.

Gender Balance: One church's delegation comprised of a clergy and a youth but both were male. For gender balance, one needed to be a woman. One will now be an observer.

e. Proposed Constitutional Amendments

The Rev. Prince Devanandan introduced the constitutional amendments, initially giving an overview of the formation of the constitution, revisions, and changes that have been made to respond to required structural and financial changes. The process to develop the proposed revision of the CCA Constitution was presented along with the identification of several typographical changes

EOGA 2015: 04

Resolved that the Extra-ordinary Assembly received the Report on the proposed amendments to the CCA Constitution as corrected.

Moderator: Dr K.B. Rokaya

Dr K.B. Rokaya welcomed Bishop Sagar to facilitate the discussion on the proposed amendments to the CCA Constitution.

The EOGA considered the proposed changes one page at a time with questions, points of clarification, some discussion, and the following additional amendments.

Proposed Amendments

- i. Please change “17” to “22” members on the basis of one representative from each country. The Chairperson of the Programme Committee will be additional.
For — 11, Against — 89, Abstain — 0. Amendment not carried.
- ii. 4.3.b and 5.2.b: insert comprising members based on one member per one country principle, plus one from youth pre-assembly and one from women pre-assembly
For — 0, Against — 92, Abstain — 0. Amendment not carried.
- iii. In the event, General Assembly fails to elect a youth or woman among the elected officers and the seventeen members, the Executive Committee shall be empowered to co-opt Youth or Woman with full rights of an elected member.
For — 3, Against — 88, Abstain — 4. Amendment not carried.
- iv. We need to have another Vice Moderator to represent youth.
For — 16, Against — 91, Abstain — 7. Amendment not carried.

After discussion, Mr Israel Paulraj expressed concern that a response to the proposed amendments to the Constitution from the National Council of Churches of Sri Lanka was not received by the CRSC and concerns raised in that response would be submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration in the future.

Discussion took place concerning adding the words “should preferably be a person competent in finance” before “Treasurer” on Page 17, 6.c. “The Treasurer shall...”. The EOGA did not vote on this matter so it lapsed.

EOGA 2015: 05 (*Procedural Motion*)

Resolved that the Assembly vote for the proposed amendments to the CCA Constitution in total.

When the discussions concluded, the Facilitator noted that 140 voting delegates were present and in accordance with the Constitution, 94 votes in favour are required.

Prior to the vote, Archbishop Jeffrey Driver prayed for the EOGA as they prepared to vote.

EOGA 2015: 06

Moved: Rev. Prince Devanandan

Seconded: Rev. Terence Corkin

Carried: For — 129, Against — 3, Abstain — 3.

The EOGA resolved that the proposed Constitution together with the Rules and Regulations be adopted by the Assembly as presented and debated, including:

- Page 7: 4.2. “Functions” — add new point:
e) “To do any other function that may become necessary to be performed to achieve the objectives.”
- Page 18: 6.3. “Powers of the Officers” — remove the word “Honorary” before Treasurer.
“The General Secretary together with the Moderator and Vice Moderator and the Treasurer will hold the Power of Attorney on behalf of the CCA.”
- Page 18: 7. “General Secretary” — amended to:
“The General Secretary shall be elected by the Executive Committee for a period of five years to serve as the full-time officer of the CCA. The term of office of the General Secretary may be extended for a further period of up to five years, subject to the Rules and Regulations.”
(RR 8a and c): The General Secretary shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the CCA.
- Page 30: 13 “Transitional Provisions” — b) replace all words after “existing” with “leadership until the end of the Assembly”
“The adoption and coming into operation of this Constitution shall not in any way affect existing leadership until the end of the Assembly.”
- Page 53: 10.4 “Appropriation of Funds” — remove “Finance”
“The Executive Staff shall present detailed estimates to the General Secretary before funds can be released.”

At the conclusion of the vote, the EOGA responded singing Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Bishop Sagar thanked the participants for support during this session.

III. Moderators' Remarks

Moderator: Rev. Retno Ngapon

Rev. Retno Ngapon thanked the CRSC members Dr Rokaya, Rev. Terence Corkin, Rev. Kyung In Kim, Rev. Prince Devanandan, the resource persons. Dr Mathews George Chunakara, and Dr Soritua Nababan and staff support provided by Ms Susan Jacob for their work in preparing the new Constitution.

The EOGA closed in prayer at 17:45 PM.

Minutes

Minutes of the 14th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia

20–27 May 2015 | Jakarta, Indonesia

DAY 1

I. Opening Worship

The CCA General Assembly (GA) began with an act of worship in the evening of Thursday, 21 May 2015, led by members of the Asian Ecumenical Course and a sermon delivered by Rev. Willem T.P. Simarmata, M.A Ephorus of Huria Kristen Batak Protestan.

DAY 2

II. Morning Worship and Bible Study

The Worship was led by participants from the 2015 Asia Ecumenical Course (AEC) including remembrance for friends and colleagues of CCA who have passed (p.98 in the Assembly Handbook). The Worship included a participatory Bible Study, “Witnessing Together as Asian Churches”, written by Metropolitan Dr Kuriakose Mor Theophilose on John 17:20–23 (Living Together in the Household of God – Bible Studies, p.9–15).

III. Business Session – 1

Moderator: Rev. Rex Reyes Jr.

On behalf of the Presidium, Rev. Rex Reyes welcomed the Assembly participants.

a. Roll Call

Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, CCA General Secretary, led the roll call of the member churches and councils.

b. Declaration of the Opening of the 14th General Assembly

Rev. Rex Reyes declared the 14th CCA General Assembly open.

c. Recognition of the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide

The centennial commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on 24 April 2015 has been observed worldwide. In honour of this historic event, during the opening worship of the 14th General Assembly, Dr Nababan prayed for the memory of Armenian Martyrs. In the opening session, Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian thanked the General Secretary and acknowledged the genocide. The Armenian people were the first Christian nation to pass through such difficult times, when in 1915 the “Young Turks” government of the Ottoman Empire deported and killed 1.5 million Armenians in order to accomplish its political aims. The Assembly then stood in silence for one minute in remembrance of the Armenian Martyrs.

d. Greetings

Greetings were received from the following:

- Conference of European Churches — Rev. Dr Guy Liagre
- All African Council of Churches — Rev. Dr Andre Karamanga
- Pacific Conference of Churches — Rev. Francois Pihaatae
- World Council of Churches — Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri

e. Adoption of Standing Orders

GA 2015: 01

The Assembly adopted the Standing Orders (Document GA 2015/11) presented by the General Secretary.

f. Appointments

GA 2015: 02

The Assembly confirmed the appointment of the following:

Minutes Secretaries:

Ms Supaporn Yarnasarn (Thailand)

Ms Mariesol Villalon (Philippines)

Dr Vincent Rajkumar (CCA Co-opted Staff, India)

Rev. Tara Curlewis (CCA Co-opted Staff, Australia)

Minutes Reading Team:

Rev. David Das (Bangladesh)

Ms Milka Hanook (Pakistan)

Steering Committee:

CCA Officers

Members of the General Committee present at the Assembly

President of the Local Arrangement Committee (LAC)

Convenors of the Credential Committee, Public Issues Committee, and Nomination Committee

Public Issues Committee: (five voting delegates)

Rev. John Gilmore, Church of Christ in Australia (Convenor/
Moderator)

Ms Simi Thambi, Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India

Ms Shin-Yi Huang, Presbyterian Church of Taiwan

Rev. Dr Chang Yoon-Jae, Presbyterian Church of Korea

Deaconess Emma Cantor, National Council of Churches in
the Philippines

(Composition of the Public Issues Committee: Men — 2,
Women — 3, Youth — 2, Clergy — 3, Lay — 2)

*Credentials Committee: (five voting delegates and the
General Secretary or their nominee)*

Rev. Kyung In Kim, Korea

Rev. Retno Ratih, Indonesia

Rev. Po Kam Cheong, Hong Kong

Dn. Aashu Alexander, India

Rev. Terence Corkin, Australia

*Nominations Committee: (eight voting delegates and a
Convenor)*

Sr. Elizabeth Delaney SGS, National Council of Churches in
Australia

Mr Patrick Loo Nee, Myanmar Council of Churches

Dr Kuriakose Mar Theophilose, Malankara Jacobite Syrian
Orthodox Church in India

Rev. Gomar Gultom, Communion of Churches in Indonesia

Ms Ayra Inderyar, National Council of Churches in Pakistan

Ms Esther Jina Kang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of
Korea

Ms Eunice Jumalon, United Church of Christ in the Philippines

Rev. Po Kam Cheong, Hong Kong Christian Council

Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah, Jaffna Diocese of Church of South in Sri Lanka
(Composition of the Nominations Committee: Men — 5, Women — 4, Youth — 2, Clergy — 5, Lay — 2. Southeast Asia — 3, Northeast Asia — 3, South Asia — 4)

Programme Review Committee — Moderators and Rapporteurs:

General Secretariat

Moderator: Archbishop Jeffrey Driver, Anglican Church of Australia

Rapporteur: Rev. David Das, Council of Churches of Bangladesh

Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice, and Youth Empowerment

Moderator: Dr Susan Thomas, Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church in India

Rapporteur: Rev. Kingphet Thammavong, Lao Evangelical Church

Justice, International Affairs, and Development and Service

Moderator: Bishop Sammy Azariah, Church of Pakistan

Rapporteur: Rev. Anne Teresa Mills, Anglican Church of New Zealand

Faith, Mission, and Unity

Moderator: Archbishop Bolly Lapok, Council of Churches in Malaysia

Rapporteur: Rev. Christy Copper, Anglican Church of Australia

HIV and AIDS

Moderator: Rev. Phyllis Wong, Hong Kong Christian Council

Rapporteur: Rev. Terence Corkin, Uniting Church in Australia

Programme Direction — Moderators and Rapporteurs

Mission and Witness in the Multi-Religious Asia

Moderator: Rev. Prince Devanandan, Methodist Church of New Zealand

Rapporteur: Ms Sunila Ruth, Church of Pakistan

Ecumenical Formation and Theological Education

Moderator: Rev. Dr Yoon-Jae Chang, Presbyterian Church of Korea

Rapporteur: Rev. Herman Shastri, Council of Churches in Malaysia

Prophetic Diakonia and Ecumenical Advocacy

Moderator: Mr Victor Wan Chi, National Council of Churches in Taiwan

Rapporteur: Prof. George Alex, Mar Thoma Syrian Church

Moving Beyond Conflict and Building Peace with Justice

Moderator: Rev. W.P. Ebenezer Joseph, Sri Lanka

Rapporteur: Ms Daisy Roy, Bangladesh

Health and Healing, New Imperatives for Ecumenical Actions

Moderator: Rev. Betsy Ng, Church of Christ in China in Hong Kong

Rapporteur: Rev. Major Win Si, Hong Kong Council of Churches

Communicating Within the Fellowship and Beyond

Moderator: Rev. Dr Albert Jebanesan, Methodist Church in Sri Lanka

Rapporteur: Rev. Solomon Rongpi, Council of Baptist Churches in North East India

Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management of CCA

Moderator: Bishop Taranath Sugnanam Sagar, National Council of Churches in India

Rapporteur: Dr Franscina Yoteni, Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua in Indonesia

A point was raised with respect to the representation on the committees that the breadth of the member churches in India was not fully reflected.

IV. Business Session – 2

Moderator: Dr K.B. Rokaya

a. Report of the Presidium

Rev. Retno Ngapon presented the Report on behalf of the Presidium. They acknowledged the significant challenges of the past five years including the review of the constitution, finances, and reduced staffing.

b. Report of the General Secretary

The General Secretary, Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang presented the Report on the last five years. Appreciation

was expressed for the Report and particularly engagement with interfaith relations and West Papua. A request was made to identify the relationship between Global Christian Forum and the CCA. The need for CCA and churches together to develop platforms that address dialogue with other faiths, responding to human trafficking, and religious fundamentalism.

c. Report of the Treasurer

Mr Augustine Dipak Karmakar presented the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement covering the period from 2010–2014. Comments acknowledged the improved financial status since the Kuala Lumpur Assembly. Discussions focused on the fluctuations in income from the member churches and councils. The US one cent per person from each member church was suggested as one form of increasing support from Christians across Asia.

GA 2015: 03

The reports of the Presidium, the General Secretary, and the Treasurer that have been read and deliberated be adopted.

d. Report of the Credentials Committee

GA 2015: 04

The GA received the Report of the Credentials Committee noting that 186 voting delegates had registered, and identified the following problems to be addressed:

Youth members: Three churches had nominated as youth delegates persons who were over 30 years old. These people could not be voting delegates but can be included as observers.

No youth delegate: One NCC needs to identify their three voting delegates. The fourth will be an observer.

Gender balance: One church's delegation comprised a clergy and youth but both are male. For gender balance one needed to be a woman. One will now be an observer.

e. Registration of Public Issues

Assembly members suggested several matters to be considered by the Public Issues Committee. Matters identified are Armenian Genocide, religious minorities in India, blasphemy law in Pakistan, West Papua, human trafficking in Bangladesh, and Rohingya crisis.

f. D.T. Niles Memorial Lecture

“Together in the Household of God: A Theological Reflection” was delivered by Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, Associate General Secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia, World Council of Churches, as the D.T. Niles Memorial Lecture. A lively discussion followed.

V. Evening Prayer

The Worship Team and the youth led the evening prayer on the theme, “Witnessing Together as Asian Churches”, including reflections from the Youth Pre-Assembly. The service was held outside just after the sun set.

DAY 3

VI. Morning Worship and Bible Study

The Worship was led by participants from the Assembly Worship using the theme “Household of God: Moving Beyond the Boundaries of Church”, John 4:1–40. The participatory Bible Study reflection was prepared by Rev. Dr Jeaneth Harris Fallor.

VII. General Session

Moderator: Ms Van Arun Rasmey

a. Report of the Nominations Committee

Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah, Convenor of the Nominations Committee, invited nominations for the following positions:

- Moderator
- Vice Moderator
- Treasurer
- Moderator of the Programme Committee
- Executive Committee

Nomination forms were available and needed to be received in the Secretariat Office. Nominations would close at 4 PM on Saturday.

b. Theme Presentation – Geopolitical Perspective

Facilitator: Dr Mathews George Chunakara

Welcomed and introduced Dr Leonard Hutabaret, PhD., Acting Director, Centre for Policy Analysis, Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia.

Dr Leonard Hutabaret highlighted how four notions of geopolitics, power relationships, competing interests, perceptions, and spheres of influences may create conflicts and violence.

These are very pertinent to the theme of the Assembly. Dr Hutabaret gave an overview of geopolitics in Asia and the interaction between economic reasoning and strategic reasoning. After a brief overview of the major actors and their interests, he concluded with the role of Indonesia.

A significant question posed for the Assembly to consider: “Where does the church stand within these areas as the Household of God?”

c. Greetings

China Christian Council – Rev. Baoping Kam.

Rev. Baoping Kam presented a gift to CCA at the end of the greeting.

d. Minutes Reading Committee

The Minutes Reading Committee identified the need to reprint and circulate the Minutes at a later time.

VIII. Sarasehan: Dialogue on Asian Issues and Ecumenical Responses

Twelve topics were identified and discussed over two sessions.

1. Called to be united in witness and mission in a multi-religious Asia
2. Towards an authentic Asian theological undergirding for renewed ecumenical impetus
3. Interreligious cooperation for communal harmony amidst religious intolerance and politicisation of religions in Asia
4. Migration and human trafficking: Challenges to Asian churches
5. Moving beyond conflicts and building peace with justice in Asia
6. Militarisation, nuclearisation and arms race in Asia: Towards and ecumenical advocacy for peace building in

Asia

7. Health and Healing: Imperatives for ecumenical advocacy initiatives in Asia
8. Marginalisation of indigenous and other vulnerable communities in Asia
9. Upholding the dignity and rights of children in Asia
10. Overcoming discrimination and violence against women: Role of Asian Churches
11. Economic justice, eco-justice and sustainability amidst Asia's economic Development
12. Diakonia and prophetic witness in Asia: Towards a coherent ecumenical approach

IX. Programme Review in Sections

The Assembly divided into five groups to review the work of CCA over the previous five years. The sections were: General Secretariat and Finance (GS), Faith, Mission, and Unity (FMU), Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice, and Youth Empowerment (EGY), Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID), and HIV and AIDS Special Programme.

X. Evening Prayer

The Worship Team and representatives from the Women Pre-Assembly led the evening prayer on the theme, "Household of God: Moving Beyond the Boundaries of the Church", including reflections from the Women Pre-Assembly and a reading of the statement "Equal and Fuller Participation of Women, Children, and Gender Minorities in the Household of God".

DAY 4

XI. Worship with Local Congregations

In the morning, the Assembly participants worshipped in local congregations across Jakarta.

XII. PGI 65th Anniversary Celebration

The PGI celebrated their 65th anniversary with a service of thanksgiving and a time of celebration.

All Assembly participants were invited to attend. The offering was presented to the CCA delegates from Nepal to support areas affected

by the recent earthquake.

DAY 5

XIII. Morning Worship and Bible Study

The Worship was led by participants from the Assembly, the AEC–2015, and the Worship Team. The theme was “Household of God: Managing with Responsibility”, from Matthew 25:31–40. The participatory Bible Study reflection “To Preach” was prepared by Rev. Supina Nakaisulan.

XIV. General Session

Moderator: Rev. Retno Ngapon

a. Minutes Reading Committee

The Minutes Reading Committee presented the Report on the Minutes from the EOGA, GA Thursday/Friday, and GA Saturday/Sunday. Being reviewed, it was found to be accurate records of the meeting.

GA 2015: 05

The Assembly resolved that the Minutes of the EOGA 21 May 2015 be received as an accurate record.

GA 2015: 06

The Assembly resolved that the Minutes of the GA 21–22 May 2015 be received as an accurate record.

GA 2015: 07

The Assembly resolved that the Minutes of the GA 23–24 May 2015 be received as an accurate record.

b. Theme Presentation – Interfaith Perspectives

Facilitator: Rev. Elga Sarapung

Rev. Sarapung welcomed and introduced the panel comprising Prof. Musdah Mulia (Islam), Ven. Bengala Upatiss Nayake Thero (Buddhism), H.H. Jagad Guru Swami Isa (Hinduism), and Dr Tong Wing-Sze (Christianity).

From their interfaith work, each gave a presentation on “Living Together in the Household of God”. The unity found in our common humanity was mentioned by each presented

as being important. They also shared their religious perspective on the need to work together.

c. Greetings

- World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) – Rev. Christopher Ferguson
- Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) – Fr. William LaRousse
- Council for World Mission (CWM) – Rev. Kyung In Kim
- The Methodist Church in Britain – Mr Steven Pearce
- Lutheran World Federation – Rev. Stephen Lawrence

d. Programme Future Direction in Groups

The Assembly met in seven groups to identify future directions for CCA. Each group focused on developing programmatic priorities of the CCA for the next five years. Dr Mathew George Chunakara explained that the Sarasehan material is to be included in considering the future directions in each area. He also highlighted matters relating to specific groups to be considered.

1. Mission and Witness in Multi-Religious Asia
2. Ecumenical Formation and Theological Education
3. Prophetic Diakonia and Ecumenical Advocacy
4. Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace with Justice
5. Health and Healing: New Imperatives for Ecumenical Actions
6. Communicating within the Fellowship and Beyond
7. Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management

e. Nominations Committee Report

Moderator: Dr K.B. Rokaya

Voting delegates present – 150

Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah presented the Report of the Nominations Committee.

GA 2015: 08

The Assembly voted for the Report to be referred back to the Nominations Committee for reconsideration, taking into account the concerns raised by the delegates.

f. Pastoral Announcement

The Assembly was informed of the passing of Ms Sriyangani Fernando, from the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka, on 25 May 2015. She had been a delegate at the 13th CCA General Assembly and a member of the Constitution and Structure Review Committee (CSRC). The Assembly concluded in a time of prayer giving thanks for her life.

XV. Evening Prayer

The Worship Team and representatives from the Asian Ecumenical Course (AEC) led the evening prayer on the theme “Household of God: Managing with Responsibility”, including reflections from the AEC.

DAY 6

XVI. Morning Worship and Bible Study

The Worship was led by participants from the Assembly, the AEC–2015, and the Worship Team. The theme was “Sustaining God’s Creation” based on Genesis 2:4–10, 15, 18–22. The participatory Bible Study reflection was prepared by Dr Haskarlianus Pasang.

XIV. General Session

Moderator: Rev. Retno Ngapon

a. Greetings

United Church of Canada – Ms Patti Talbot. An indigenous plaque was presented to the CCA.

Moderator: Ms Van Arun Rasmey

b. Minutes Reading Committee

The Minutes Reading Committee presented the Report on the Minutes from the GA on Monday, which was reviewed and found to be accurate records of the meeting.

GA 2015: 09

The Assembly resolved that the Minutes of the GA 25 May 2015 be received as an accurate record.

Moderator: Dr K.B. Rokaya

c. Reports – Programme Future Direction

Mission and Witness in a Multi-Religious Asia

GA 2015: 10

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Mission and Witness in a Multi-Religious Asia” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

Ecumenical Formation and Theological Education

The Assembly noted that this Report needed to be modified to include objectives, summary of discussion, and specific recommendations.

The discussion also noted additional suggestions:

- Developing a list of theological colleges in all Asian countries.
- Identifying scholarships available in the region.
- Developing an Asian Theological desk and Asian Theological Forum.

GA 2015: 11

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Ecumenical Formation and Theological Education” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

Prophetic Diakonia and Ecumenical Advocacy

GA 2015: 12

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Prophetic Diakonia and Ecumenical Advocacy” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace with Justice

GA 2015: 13

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace with Justice” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

Moderator: Rev. Rex Reyes Jr.

Health and Healing: New Imperatives for Ecumenical Action

GA 2015: 14

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Health and Healing: New Imperatives for Ecumenical Actions” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

Communicating Within the Fellowship and Beyond

Discussion suggested the formation of a group known as the CCA family in each country.

GA 2015: 15

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Communicating within the Fellowship and Beyond” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management

GA 2015: 16

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report from the “Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management” group and referred the mandates to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary for appropriate action.

d. Assembly Mandates on Future Programme Directions

The Assembly mandated the Executive Committee and the General Secretary to undertake the following actions while prioritising future programme directions in the following areas:

- Advocacy on Asian issues; Health and Healing; Human rights; Human Trafficking; Rights of persecuted religious minorities; Interfaith Dialogue; Dignity of Children; Elimination of manual

scavenging; Discriminated Burakumin in Japan and Rohingya in Myanmar; Violence against women; Eco-justice; Overcoming stigmatisation of the mentally and physically challenged persons;

- Develop ecumenical resources for spirituality based on Asian liturgical worship traditions; a systematic course in ecumenical formation and leadership development; program to combat HIV and AIDS;
- Develop a communication strategy acceptable to and owned by the member churches/councils; use Social media to communicate CCA programmes and activities.

The Assembly received the Report and adopted the recommendations to improve the Financial Sustainability and Organisational Management of the CCA. In this regard, the Assembly decided to mandate the Executive Committee to:

- Encourage member churches and councils to take full ownership of the CCA, particularly in supporting the CCA for the whole financial operations, especially bearing the cost of travel/programme costs;
- Increase the current level of membership subscriptions by member churches and councils in the CCA—it was noted that as of now, only very few members were paying the membership contributions;
- Set up a policy for minimum annual membership contributions of USD 1000 per member church/council, as the CCA could no longer rely fully on non-Asian donors due to shrinking financial resources in the West;
- Encourage member churches from economically developed countries to partner with member churches and councils in other countries, in case certain churches and councils were unable to pay the membership contributions;
- Develop a new travel subsidy policy in the CCA in line with the WCC policies, for participation of members of governing boards and advisory committees;
- Establish a system to improve regular communications with member churches, councils, and ecumenical partners;
- Appoint a qualified accountant in the CCA;

- Review the viability and sustainability of the current location of the CCA headquarters in Chiang Mai;
- Initiate an improved relationship with the sponsor of the CCA in Thailand, the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), and discuss seriously with the leadership of CCT for better cooperation and regular assistance to CCA in the future.

XV. Report – Public Issues Committee

Moderator: Rev. Rex Reyes Jr.

Rev. John Gilmore, Ms Simi Thambi, Ms Shin-Yi Huang, and Dcn. Emma Cantor presented the Report of the Public Issues Committee. It covered three broad areas with issues identified as follows:

1. The Suffering of the People
Human Trafficking; Forced Migration; Marketing of Motherhood; Organ Trafficking; Violence against Women, Youth, and Children, and vulnerable communities; Armenian Genocide; Refugees and Displaced people across the Asia-Pacific region; bonded labour.
2. Peace and Security in Asia-Pacific
Militarisation of North and Southeast Asia; Peace and Justice in Myanmar; Peace and Human Rights for West Papuans; the Rise of Religious Fundamentalism and Violence; Solidarity with countries experiencing conflict and security issues.
3. Commitment to Climate Justice

GA 2015: 17

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report of the Public Issues Committee with the inclusion of matters raised through the discussion.

XV. Report – Nominations Committee (Closed Session)

Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah presented the Report of the Nominations Committee.

GA 2015: 18

The Assembly resolved to receive the Report of the Nominations Committee.

For – 82; Against – 4. Carried.

GA 2015: 19

The General Assembly appointed the following Officers of the CCA:

Moderator			
Archbishop Willem T.P. Simarmata	Male	Clergy	Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), Indonesia / Southeast Asia
Vice Moderator			
Rev. Diana Anna Tana	Female	Clergy	Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga I Nga Nahi O Aotearoa, New Zealand / Australasia
Treasurer			
Mr Augustine Dipak Karmakar	Male	Lay	Church of Bangladesh / South Asia

GA 2015: 20

The General Assembly appointed the following person as the Chairperson of the Programme Committee:

Chairperson, Programme Committee			
Rev. Kim Kyrie	Female	Clergy	Anglican Church in Korea / Northeast Asia

GA 2015: 21

The General Assembly appointed the following people to the Executive Committee:

Rev. Aminaka Shoko	Female	Clergy	National Council of Churches in Japan
Rev. Arshad Gill	Male	Clergy	Church of Pakistan
Rev. Dr D.S. Solomon	Male	Clergy	National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka

Ms Huang Shin-Yi	Female	Lay/ Youth	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Ithrana Lawrence	Female	Lay/ Youth	Council of Churches in Malaysia
Rev. Kim Jong-goo	Male	Clergy	Korean Methodist Church
Rev. Kingphet Tham- mavong	Male	Clergy	Lao Evangelical Church
Rev. Moises Antonio da Silva	Male	Clergy	Protestant Church in Timor Leste
Rt. Rev. Reuel Norman Marigza	Male	Clergy	United Church of Christ in the Philip- pines
Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian	Male	Clergy	Armenian Orthodox Church in Iran
Mr Sunil Babu Sreshtha	Male	Lay/ Youth	National Council of Churches in Nepal
Ms Supaporn Yarnasarn	Female	Lay	Church of Christ in Thailand
Bishop Taranath Sagar	Male	Clergy	National Council of Churches in India
Rev. Terence Corkin	Male	Clergy	Uniting Church in Australia
Dr Tong Wing-Sze	Female	Lay	Hong Kong Christian Council
Mr Za Uk Sang	Male	Lay/ Youth	Myanmar Baptist Convention

The General Assembly noted the following summary of representation in the elected positions:

Position	Male	Female	Clergy	Lay	Youth	Nominated
Moderator	4	–	3	1	–	Male/ Clergy
Vice Moderator	2	3	2	3	–	Female/ Clergy
Treasurer	3	–	2	1	–	Male/Lay

Executive Committee	23	12	22	13	6	Male – 11 Female – 5 Clergy – 10 Lay – 6 Youth – 4
Programme Committee Chairperson	3	2	4	1	–	Female/ Clergy
Total (20)						Male – 13 Female – 7 Clergy – 13 Lay – 7 Youth – 4
Percentage	65%	35%	65%	35%	20%	(from 20)

XVI. Review – Nominations Process

GA 2015: 22

The General Assembly resolved to request the Executive Committee to review the nominations and election process in ways consistent with the CCA Constitution to produce the highest levels of clarity, accessibility of process, and transparency.

It was noted that the discussion identified the need for the Executive Committee to consider in the nomination process:

- Conflicts of Interest
- Brief Information about Skills of Nominees

XVII. Appreciation

Thanks and appreciation was expressed to the PGI, HKBP, and the local Committee for hosting the 14th CCA General Assembly. Appreciation and thanks was given to the Presidium, the General Secretary, the Treasurer, and the General Committee for their leadership over the last five years. Thanks was extended to the composers of songs and music, the Worship Team, the designer of the Assembly logo, and the Stewards.

The General Secretary expressed her appreciation to the CCA staff, co-opted staff, resource persons, all moderators and rapporteurs, and the Minutes secretaries, as well as the staff of Mercure Ancol

and the police.

The Assembly welcomed the incoming General Secretary, incoming Officers, and Executive Committee.

XVIII. Closing Worship

The Worship team and representatives from the Assembly led the closing worship. Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza delivered the sermon “Living Together in the Household of God”. A significant part of the service was the induction of the incoming CCA Officers and the Executive Committee. The offering from the closing worship was given to the Nepal Earthquake Appeal.

Abbreviations

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
ACT	Action of Churches Together
ACTS	Asian Conference of Theological Students
ACWC	Asian Christian Women's Council
AEC	Asia Ecumenical Course
AGAPE	Alternative Globalisation Addressing Peoples and Earth
AMCU	Asian Movement for Christian Unity
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BfW	Brot fur die Welt
CATS	Congress of Asian Theologians
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CSRC	Constitutional and Structural Review Committee
DF	Designated Fund
EACC	East Asia Christian Conference
EAS	East Asia Summit
EDAN	Ecumenical Disable Advocacy Network
EGY	Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice, and Youth
EOGA	Extra-Ordinary General Assembly of the CCA
EP	Ecumenical Partners
ES	Executive Secretaries
FABC	Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences
FMU	Faith, Mission, and Unity
FPIC	Free, prior, and informed consent
GA	General Assembly
GF	General Fund
ICF	Interfaith Cooperation Forum
ICRP	Indonesian Conference on Religion for Peace
LAC	Local Arrangement Committee
PAC	Programme Area Committees
ULMWP	United Liberation Movement for West Papua
WCC	World Council of Churches

Appendix – Constitutional History of the CCA

Constitutional History of Christian Conference of Asia

Mathews George Chunakara¹

The present Constitution of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is the metamorphosis of several rounds of revisions of respective Constitutions of CCA. The first Constitution of the forerunner of the CCA, the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) was adopted in 1959, which was, in fact a skeleton Constitution, especially when it is compared to the present one. The first Constitution was drafted in such a way to accommodate the decisions and proposals of the Parapat Conference in 1957 which was first convened jointly by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the International Missionary Council. Precisely, this was the reason that several proposals in the light of the organisational interests of these international bodies reflected as part of the first Constitution, which is not relevant in today's Asian contexts. An Interim Committee constituted at the Parapat Conference to initiate the EACC and its organisational structure as well as preparation of the first Assembly, was mainly responsible for working out the first draft of the Constitution.

As EACC/CCA was the first regional ecumenical organisation formed in the world, especially against the wish and reservations by both International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, the newly constituted EACC's Constitution tried to accommodate various concerns that were expressed at the Parapat Conference. When the EACC was formed there were no other ecumenical or secular organisations operating at the regional level in Asia. This was the reason that Dr Charles W. Ranson, General Secretary of the IMC, had raised a question at the Parapat Conference: "Is there any regional organisation in Asia in the secular field? The Answer was

¹ Dr Mathews George Chunakara was the Director of the WCC's Commission on International Affairs and was an Executive Secretary of the CCA from 1993–2000 in Hong Kong. He assisted the Constitutional Review Process of the CCA between Colombo and Tomohon Assemblies, as well as the revision of the Articles of Association of the CCA Company and its registration in Hong Kong in 1997.

NO.” He further added, “Therefore, we may be the pioneers in such an action and it may be of great historic significance if we set up a Christian organisation in Asia. As there is great creativity to form a regional Christian body, such creativity should not be frustrated by overloaded machinery and any organisational structure should provide for freedom and flexibility and should demonstrate in action the calling of the Church.” The period of the formation of the EACC was at the peak of the discussions on the integration of the IMC with the WCC. The developments of such initiative and the proposals for IMC’s integration with WCC was to be discussed at the forthcoming IMC Assembly in Ghana by the end of 1957 and those details also were shared at the Parapat Conference. Those discussions and sharing gave way to the strong emphasis that an Asian ecumenical organisation formed in the near future should also emphasise the same level of the integration in its organisational membership and structure. In other words, another strong reason for such a structure to be envisaged was on the principle that while Churches are units of the WCC, it is clear that the National Councils, originally it was National Missionary Councils, which were members of the IMC should be considered important to the life and witness of the Church. The other consideration that influenced the thinking also was based on the principle that “Mission is not a subsidiary” but it is “integral to the life of the Church.” When the Parapat Conference was focused on the theme of “the Common Evangelistic Task of the Churches in East Asia,” all those proposals discussed became more pertinent.

The Parapat Conference resolved to constitute the EACC as a permanent organisation of the Churches and Christian Councils in East Asia. The “Plan of Future Action” adopted by the Parapat Conference gave several guidelines for EACC’s future structure and thus it became the basis for the first Constitution of the EACC (Ref: Preamble, Sections I, II, III, and IV of Plan of Future Action). The Interim Committee appointed at the end of the Conference which took the responsibility of drafting the first Constitution converted or transmitted several of those plans in the draft Constitution that was presented and adopted in Kuala Lumpur. It was at this constitution that a provision was outlined that the Continuation Committee (which was equal to today’s General Committee) was composed of the Officers and at least one representative from each country. A provision for balance of confessions to be ensured in the composition

of committees also was outlined in this constitution. Another provision included was that the general secretaries of the IMC and the WCC were ex-officio members of the Continuation Committee and the Working Committee. When we look back today that those two committees were responsible for policy and administrative structures of the organisation, and the membership of two general secretaries of IMC and WCC in those committees, one can interpret the real reason for that—either making the new organisation as again a global body or the financial assistance provided by both organisations? However, the relationship of the EACC with the IMC and the WCC was carefully defined in this constitution.

The Second Assembly of 1964 in Bangkok amended the first Constitution and Rules and Procedures for Programme of Work also was added. Several significant changes were made in areas such as election of Officers and Continuation Committee. The composition of Officers was an Honorary President, a Chairperson, two Vice Chairpersons, and a Treasurer. As per the revised Constitution, the General Secretaries of WCC and IMC no longer became the ex-officio members. It is interesting to note that there were no provisions in the Constitutions or in the Rules how a General Secretary should be elected or how staff members were selected. In the Bangkok Assembly, D.T. Niles announced his retirement and just proposed the name of U Kyaw Than as the next General Secretary and few others as staff in various positions.

A fully revised Constitution was adopted at the 1973 Assembly in Singapore, where the name was changed from EACC to CCA. A Presidium of four to replace the Chairman and Vice Chairmen was added in this constitution. The Continuation Committee became General Committee and the Working Committee became Executive Committee. However, still there were strong voices at the Singapore Assembly to revise certain areas in the proposed Constitution. Following the 1973 Singapore Assembly, the Executive Committee which met in Auckland in March 1974, and the Officers meeting in Singapore, November 1974, gave consideration to the necessary changes and commissioned the staff to prepare a working paper. This working paper was presented to the General Committee meeting in March 1975 in Singapore, and several amendments to the 1973 Constitution were made and those were ratified by the 1977 Penang Assembly. Meanwhile the Rules, Programmes, and Procedures also

were amended by the General Committee meeting in March 1975. A new programme structure with three programme committees and a programme policy committee was introduced in the new Rules adopted at the Singapore General Committee in 1975.

To facilitate the election process, new rules were passed at the Penang Assembly. In this amended Constitution a provision was made to make it possible for the members of the Presidium to share in the chairing of meetings at the Assembly and the General and Executive Committees. In the past one member of the Presidium was chosen to chair all meetings. Again certain amendments were made to the Constitution at the 1981 Bangalore Assembly. This was mainly in the area of the procedure of the election of the General Secretary. The new amendment gave provisions that “the General Secretary shall be elected by the Assembly on the recommendation of the General Committee which shall submit at least two names.” This is the time that the programme structure also was streamlined with nine programme committees.

The need for a new Constitution became an urgent need at the time of the Manila Assembly as CCA was expelled from Singapore and staff members and programmes were located in different countries. The Manila Assembly in 1990 recognised the urgent need to examine the Constitution of CCA and revise it. It took almost five years to complete the process and adopt a new Constitution for CCA. A Constitutional Review Committee was appointed by the General Committee, that worked almost five years to revise and almost a new constitution was finally adopted in an Extra-Ordinary General Assembly held in Colombo, just prior to the Ninth Assembly in 1995. A long process of consultations at various levels, with the General Committee, member churches, national councils etc., took place prior to the adoption of the new constitution. Although a revised constitution was needed at that stage for CCA to be operational in the context of the expulsion of CCA from Singapore in 1987, ultimately the motivating factor for a fully revised constitution was mainly due to the reason that the existing Constitution from the Singapore days and the Rules and Procedures were redundant and mostly tied to the past especially the era of 1970s. In that context it was necessary for a new Constitution that will reflect the new vision in the Asian context. The most significant changes made at this Constitution were especially those of the provision for the election

of the General Secretary at the General Committee, instead of the General Committee. The registration of the CCA under Hong Kong law and legal entity in Hong Kong for CCA, so that it can own property in Hong Kong, etc., also were another major provision added in the 1995 Constitution. The other new features added were: an enlarged version of Statement of Purpose and objectives; a statement of the promotion and strengthening of the unity of the Church in Asia—the ecumenical vision for Asia; the need to develop closer relationships with the persons of other faiths in Asia; the protection of human dignity and care for the environment; equal participation of men, women and youth, ordained and lay persons; age limit of youth from 27 to 30; two consecutive terms for anyone to serve in the General Committee; a Public Issue Committee for the Assembly; a more inclusive steering committee during the Assembly, etc. A Memorandum of Articles was adopted with the aim to register CCA in Hong Kong as a Company was another feature. After the expulsion of CCA from Singapore, CCA did not have a proper legal entity for its existence and operation and it was through the assistance of the Hong Kong Christian Council that CCA's functions and staff visas, etc., were facilitated in Hong Kong. So a totally new Constitution became necessary to ensure a legal framework for CCA and its existence in Asia with a new mission and vision thrusts.

Although Colombo Assembly adopted a new Constitution, the programme structure that existed since the Penang Assembly in 1977 was retained in the same form. It became more evident in mid 1990s that this programme structure was no longer viable and relevant especially in the context of shrinking financial resources. The General Committee meeting in 1997 appointed a sub-Committee to review the programme structure and make necessary changes. Subsequently it was decided to revise certain articles and clauses in the Constitution and the Rules and Regulations. In the 11th General Assembly in Tomohon, Indonesia in 2000, the major change particularly related to the programme structure of CCA was made. One of the main considerations at that time to change the programme structure was due to the decline of CCA financial resources. The constitutionally mandated nine programme desks started since the Penang Assembly was clubbed in to three programme clusters. In fact, the restructuring of the programmes was not an artificially created one, but with substantial reflections and discussions at various levels within the framework of “Towards New Thrusts and a New Structure

for the CCA". This document was discussed at the Extra-Ordinary General Assembly which was convened to discuss only about the Constitutional changes. The new programme structure introduced and adopted through the Constitutional changes at the Tomhon Assembly tried to introduce a new programme profile and priorities in the context of receding financial situation at the same time greater clarity for programme priorities, especially avoiding duplications, do less and do well, minimise the staff costs, and proper accountability. An amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution (1995 Colombo) and its three subsections and amendments to Article 12.1 and related provisions of the Rules and Regulations were finally adopted at the Tomohon Assembly. Whether this was implemented effectively since the Tomohon era is another question that we need to examine. Probably that kind of a close examination and review was reflected in the Organisational Review of CCA, which was presented at the Kuala Lumpur Assembly in 2010.

While retaining the Constitution without any changes, the 12th General Assembly in Chiang Mai, in 2005 and 13th General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur in 2010 made certain changes in the Rules and Regulations concerning the voting delegates of member churches and councils to the Assembly and changes concerning the order of the rotation of the country representation in the Presidium.

Still, the Constitution which is currently operational is the one which was thoroughly revised and adopted at the Colombo Assembly in 1995, although certain amendments were made to the 1995 Constitution in the Tomohon 2000 Assembly. Fifty-two years have passed since CCA has first adopted its Constitution. Another 17 years have passed since CCA has revised its Constitution at the Colombo Assembly. The ecumenical and ecclesiastical landscape and Asian realities have changed over the past several decades. There were concerns expressed for some time that CCA should be more relevant and practical in the emerging Asian context. If CCA is now determined to move forward and demonstrate its ecumenical leadership in a more relevant way, it needs to undertake the task of an organisational and programmatic restructuring, and this will ultimately lead to a process of further changes in its existing Constitution, Rules and Regulations, as well as the By-laws on the Assets and Funds of CCA.

14th General Assembly Daily Schedule

20 May 2015, Wednesday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 18:00 | **Arrival of Participants and Registration**
- 18:00 – 20:00 | *Welcome Dinner*

21 May 2015, Thursday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 09:00 | **Opening of the EOGA**
- 09:00 – 10:30 | **Business Session 1**
 - EOGA Opening Session
- 10:30 – 11:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 11:00 – 12:30 | **Business Session 2**
 - EOGA Constitutional Amendment
- 12:30 – 14:00 | *Lunch*
- 14:00 – 15:30 | **Business Session 3**
 - EOGA Constitutional Amendment
- 15:30 – 16:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 16:00 – 17:00 | **Business Session 4**
 - EOGA Constitutional Amendment
 - Closing of EOGA
- 17:00 – 18:00 | *Dinner*
- 18:00 – 19:30 | **Opening Worship of the 14th CCA General Assembly**
- 19:30 – 21:00 | **Celebrative Inauguration of the 14th CCA General Assembly**

22 May 2015, Friday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 09:15 | **Worship and Bible Study**
- 09:15 – 10:30 | **Business Session 1**
 - Roll Call
 - Declaration of the Opening of 14th CCA General Assembly
 - Greetings
 - Appointment of Assembly Committees and Leadership of Assembly Working Groups on Programme Reviews and Future Directions
 - Report of the Presidium
- 10:30 – 11:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 11:00 – 12:30 | **Business Session 2**

- Report of the General Secretary
- Report of the Treasurer
- Discussion on Reports
- Report of Credentials Committee
- Registration of Public Issues
- 12:30 – 14:00 | *Lunch*
- 14:00 – 15:30 | **Business Session 3**
 - Discussion on Reports (contd.)
- 15:30 – 16:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 16:00 – 17:30 | **General Session 1**
 - Theme Presentation 1: Biblical/Theological Perspectives (D.T. Niles Memorial Lecture)
 - Greetings
- 17:30 – 18:00 | **Evening Worship**
 - Testimony from Youth Pre-Assembly Forum
- 18:00 – 18:30 | *Free Time*
- 18:30 – 20:00 | *Dinner*
- 20:00 – 21:00 | **Meeting of Assembly Committees**

23 May 2015, Saturday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 09:15 | **Worship and Bible Study**
- 09:15 – 09:30 | **Minutes of the Previous Day**
- 09:30 – 10:30 | **General Session 2**
 - Theme Presentation 2: Geopolitical Perspective
 - Greetings
- 10:30 – 11:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 11:00 – 12:30 | **Deliberative Session 1**
 - Sarasehan: Dialogue on emerging issues in Asia and Ecumenical Responses (in groups)
- 12:30 – 14:00 | *Lunch*
- 14:00 – 15:30 | **Deliberative Session 2**
 - Sarasehan: Dialogue on emerging issues in Asia and Ecumenical Responses (in groups)
- 15:30 – 16:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 16:00 – 18:00 | **Deliberative Session 3**
 - Programme Review (in groups)
- 18:00 – 18:30 | **Evening Worship**
 - Testimony from Women's Pre-Assembly Forum

- 18:30 – 20:00 | *Dinner*
- 20:00 – 21:00 | **Meeting of Assembly Committees**

24 May 2015, Sunday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 15:00 | **Worship at Local Congregations**
- 15:00 – 15:30 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 16:00 – 17:00 | **Preparation and Travel to Celebration of PGI's 65th Anniversary**
- 17:00 – 21:00 | **Celebration of PGI's 65th Anniversary**

25 May 2015, Monday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 09:15 | **Worship and Bible Study**
- 09:15 – 09:30 | **Minutes of the Previous Day**
- 09:30 – 10:30 | **General Session 3**
 - Theme Presentation 3: Interfaith Perspective
- 10:30 – 11:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 11:00 – 12:30 | **General Session 4**
 - Theme Presentation 3: Interfaith Perspective (contd.)
- 12:30 – 14:00 | *Lunch*
- 14:00 – 15:30 | **Deliberative Session 4**
 - Programme Direction (in groups)
- 15:30 – 16:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 16:00 – 17:00 | **Deliberative Session 5**
 - Programme Direction (in groups) (contd.)
- 17:00 – 18:00 | **Business Session 4**
 - First Report of the Nominations Committee
- 18:00 – 18:30 | **Evening Worship**
 - Testimony from Asian Ecumenical Course
- 18:30 – 21:00 | *Dinner and Cultural Night*

26 May 2015, Tuesday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 08:00 – 09:15 | **Worship and Bible Study**
- 09:15 – 09:30 | **Minutes of the Previous Day**

- 09:30 – 10:30 | **Business Session 5**
 - Reports on Future Programme Directions from Groups
 - Discussion
- 10:30 – 11:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 11:00 – 12:30 | **Business Session 6**
 - Reports on Future Programme Directions from Groups (contd.)
 - Discussion (contd.)
- 12:30 – 14:00 | *Lunch*
- 14:00 – 15:30 | **Business Session 7**
 - Report of the Public Issues Committee
 - Report of the Nomination Committee
- 15:30 – 16:00 | *Coffee/Tea Break*
- 16:00 – 17:00 | **Business Session 8**
 - Reports (contd.)
 - Closing Acts
- 17:00 – 17:30 | **Preparation for Closing Worship**
- 17:00 – 19:00 | **Closing Worship**
- 19:00 – 21:00 | *Farewell Dinner*

27 May 2015, Wednesday

- 07:00 – 08:00 | *Breakfast*
- 12:00 – 18:00 | **Check-out from Hotel and Departure**

Date/Time	20 May 2015 <i>Wednesday</i>	21 May 2015 <i>Thursday</i>	22 May 2015 <i>Friday</i>	23 May 2015 <i>Saturday</i>	24 May 2015 <i>Sunday</i>	25 May 2015 <i>Monday</i>	26 May 2015 <i>Tuesday</i>	27 May 2015 <i>Wednesday</i>
07:00 – 08:00	<i>Breakfast</i>							
08:00 – 09:00	Arrival of Participants and Registration	Opening of the EOGA	Worship and Bible Study	Worship and Bible Study	Worship at Local Congregations	Worship and Bible Study	Worship and Bible Study	Check-out from Hotel and Departure
09:00 – 10:00		Business Session 1	Business Session 1	Minutes Review General Session 2		Minutes Review General Session 3	Minutes Review Business Session 5	
10:00 – 11:00	<i>Coffee/Tea Break</i>							
11:00 – 12:00	Arrival of Participants and Registration	Business Session 2	Business Session 2	Deliberative Session 1	Worship at Local Congregations	General Session 4	Business Session 6	Check-out from Hotel and Departure
12:00 – 13:00				Business Session 1				
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>							

14:00 – 15:00	Arrival of Participants and Registration	Business Session 3	Deliberative Session 2	Worship at Local Congregations	Deliberative Session 4	Business Session 7	Check-out from Hotel and Departure
15:00 – 16:00							
<i>Coffee/Tea Break</i>							
16:00 – 17:00	Arrival of Participants and Registration	Business Session 4	Deliberative Session 3	Preparation for PGI Anniversary	Deliberative Session 5	Business Session 8	Check-out from Hotel and Departure
17:00 – 18:00		<i>Dinner</i>					
18:00 – 19:00	<i>Welcome Dinner</i>	Opening Worship of 14 th CCA General Assembly	Evening Worship	Celebration of PGI 65 th Anniversary	Evening Worship	Closing Worship	Check-out from Hotel and Departure
19:00 – 20:00		<i>Dinner</i>	Free Time				
20:00 – 21:00		Celebrative Inauguration of 14 th CCA General Assembly	Meeting of Assembly Committees			<i>Farewell Dinner</i>	

“The General Assembly, which is the supreme decision-making body of the Christian Conference of Asia, convenes every five years and offers the opportunity for CCA’s member churches, council, and other related organisations in the wider ecumenical family in Asia and around the world to celebrate life and witness in fellowship. It is also a period to biblically and theologically reflect on Asian situations and what it means to be the faithful Church of Jesus Christ amidst challenges and opportunities posed by Asia’s rapidly changing pluralistic societies.

This Report Book contains reports on plenary sessions, dialogue sessions, and the summary of discussions on various issues and themes related to Asian realities, and also identifies the programmatic priorities for the ensuing five years.”

Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA



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