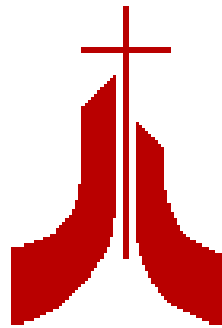


PROGRAM REPORT

January to June 2009



CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA

Chiang Mai, Thailand

CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Program and Activities Schedule	4
General Secretariat	8
Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice Youth Empowerment (EGY)	17
Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU)	23
Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID)	30
SPECIAL PROGRAMS	45
HIV and AIDS Concerns	45
CCA-UN/ESCAP Joint Project	51

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the **January to June 2009 Program Report** of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). The contents capture the broad range of work done by CCA in the first half of 2009.

The focus and direction of our programs have been shaped in light of the theme, “Building Communities of Peace for All”. Emphasis was given to developing and strengthening the three Program Areas’ capabilities in achieving program objectives and goals set out for each area in the *2009 Programs and Funding Request*.

It is our hope that in the months (and years) to come, CCA will utilize its resources - human, material and finance - to generate more effective and efficient programs and to make CCA more visible in responding to the emerging realities and needs of Asia.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all who contributed resources, comments and suggestions, and continued to accompany CCA in its ecumenical journey. For this partnership, we are able to take the message to many more people than we could have done on our own.

Prawate Khid-arn
General Secretary

Program and Activities Schedule

**Christian Conference of Asia
January to March, 2009**

Date	Activity	Venue	Program Area
JANUARY			
7 - 8	Asian Network of Ecumenical Women Meeting with WEAVE Networking with ACWC	Bangkok, THAILAND	EGY
9 - 10	Preparatory Meeting for Public Hearing on the Rights of Migrant Workers	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	JID
11-15	EASY Net Co-Team Meeting	Manila, PHILIPPINES	EGY
14	Cambodia National Workshop on “Strengthening Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behavior”	Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA	UN-ESCAP
15 - 17	Myanmar Relief Activity Review Committee Meeting	Yangon, MYANMAR	JID
28 - 30	Visit to Lao Evangelical Church (LEC)	Vientiane, LAOS	GS
FEBRUARY			
	Visit to the NCC Philippines and meet heads of CCA member churches, to introduce the <i>CCA Pastoral Guidelines on HIV and AIDS</i>	Manila, PHILIPPINES	HIV&AIDS
6	Ecumenical Lectures on “Gender and Ethics”	Iloilo, PHILIPPINES	FMU
8 - 14	Sixth Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS VI)	Iloilo, PHILIPPINES	FMU
12 - 14	National Consultation on Ecology	Church of South India / INDIA	JID
23 - 24	Visit to Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC)	Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA	GS
25 - 28	Planning Meeting, Tozanso 25th Anniversary	Seoul, KOREA	JID
26 Feb to 2 Mar	Personnel Exchange Program on HIV&AIDS	CHINA	MEPP

MARCH			
1 - 8	Networking with Swiss agencies involved in HIV and AIDS	Geneva, SWITZERLAND	HIV&AIDS
9 -12	CCA Round Table Meeting with Asian Church Leaders, Exposure Program	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	GS
9 - 12	HIV and AIDS Strategy Group Meeting with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance	Cartigny, SWITZERLAND	HIV&AIDS
11 - 13	CCA Round Table Meeting with Asian Church Leaders	Bangkok, THAILAND	GS
5 - 6	Sub-regional Concluding Workshop on “Strengthening Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behavior”	Bangkok, THAILAND	UN-ESCAP
5 - 9	EGY Program Area Committee Meeting; and Consultation on “Reviving Ecumenism in the 21 st Century: Role of Women and Youth”	Kathmandu, NEPAL	EGY
8	International Women’s Day Celebration	Kathmandu, NEPAL	EGY
6 - 8	Women’s Capacity Enhancement Training - WEAVE	East Timor	EGY
13 - 14	Program Area Committee Meeting	Bangkok, THAILAND	JID
14 - 15	CCA-WSCF Joint Consultation Meeting	Bangkok, THAILAND	EGY
15 - 21	Ecumenical Enablers' Training	Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA	FMU
20 - 24	Global Ecumenical Conference on Dalit Liberation	Bangkok, THAILAND	JID
APRIL			
5 - 11	Ecumenical Enablers’ Training	Kathmandu, NEPAL	FMU
26 - 30	Myanmar Relief Project Visit	MYANMAR	JID
29 Apr to May 02	ETE Evaluation and Grant Giving Meeting	Bossey, SWITZERLAND	FMU
MAY			
1 to Dec	Indigenous/Dalit Women's Internship Program	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	EGY
3	CCA Personnel Committee Meeting	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	GS
4 - 6	CCA Executive Committee Meeting	Chiang Mai, THAILAND	GS

18 - 19	Inter-Religious Consultation on Religion for Peace	Pattani, THAILAND	GS
21 - 22	Article 2 International Working Group Meeting	Tokyo, JAPAN	JID
23 - 24	Meeting of the North East Asia Working Group on Peace and Security	Tokyo, JAPAN	JID
May 28 to June 1	Working Group on Climate Change and Water Programme Meeting	Bad Boll, GERMANY	JID
May 28 to June 8	Mekong Church Leaders and Personnel Exchange Program	KOREA	MEPP
JUNE			
2 - 5	Regional Solidarity Fund Meeting	(to be arranged)	FMU
9 to 15	Grassroots women Leaders and Activists Training	KOREA	EGY
21 - 22	Global Ecumenical Network on Migration Meeting	Bangkok, THAILAND	JID
24 - 25	Public Hearing on the Rights of Asian Migrant Workers	Bangkok, THAILAND	JID
26 - 27	Ecumenical Church Leaders Meeting	Bangkok, THAILAND	JID
June 28 to July 1	WCC/CCA Ecumenical Officers Consultation	Cipayung, INDONESIA	GS



13TH CCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14-21 April 2010
Grand Season Hotel
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The General Assembly is the supreme policy-making body of CCA. It meets once in five years to celebrate God's blessings, to share on God's mission in the life of member churches and councils, to envisage a new vision and direction in the midst of new challenges, and to elect its new leaders.

Theme: *Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal*

Logo: The orange figure with outstretched and embracing arms symbolises the act of reaching out to heal and to reconcile. The grey wave at the bottom is the breath of God symbolizing God's call to prophesy. Taken together, the logo presents the assembly's theme: *Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal*.

Venue: The Grand Season Hotel
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Events

- Pre-assemblies - Women, Youth, People's Forum and People Living with HIV and Aids (April 7-10)
- General Committee Meeting (April 12-13)
- General Assembly (April 14-21).

Programs

- Worship and Bible Studies
- D.T. Niles Memorial Lectures
- Discussions on emerging issues and challenges
- Program Review
- Program Directions Setting

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary
Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, Associate General Secretary
Dr. Liza Lamis, Communications Consultant

CCA Asian Round Table Meeting (ART)

March 12-13, 2009
 Bangkok, Thailand

The spirit of CCA since 1957 is “life together” which was the meaning of the birthplace of CCA, “parapet” (Parapat) in Indonesia. “Life together demands that the churches in Asia accept that they belong to one another and are willing increasingly to live a shared life,” Dr. D.T. Niles told the assembly in 1957.

For this purpose, The CCA Asia Round Table Meeting (ART) with Church Leaders was convened on March 12-13, 2009 at the Bangkok Christian Guest House in Bangkok, Thailand. Twenty-two (22) church leaders from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand met together with the CCA executive secretaries and consultants took part in the meeting

The ART was another landmark in the ecumenical journey of CCA and of Asian churches. It is another historical moment as Asian churches promote greater awareness of sharing - sharing ideas, sharing the blessings of God, sharing concerns, sharing life and sharing resources to each other.

The meeting had two main goals, namely: to enhance and cultivate the relationship between CCA and the member churches, and to discuss our financial needs with Partner Churches and Councils and find ways to meet those needs.

With the diversity and richness of Asian cultural heritage and the considerable talents of our people, the roundtable meeting encouraged cultural exchanges and promoted people-to-people contact among national churches and national councils.

The meeting concluded with the following commitments and suggestions made:

- To increase the CCA membership contributions to 25-50% of current amount. CCA should write a letter to all member churches.
- To increase the number of local hosting or hospitalities. Particular offers came from Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the GMIM, Indonesia to jointly host at least two events in each country. They said “it is easier to support programs than a secretariat”.

- To put up the ‘CCA Emergency Fund’ to respond to emergency situations. If it is a permanent or a long-term plan, CCA should discuss with ACT International to avoid duplication and to promote mutual understanding and closer cooperation.
- Member churches need to understand CCA’s financial plan, e.g. what it is it wants to do next three years
- CCA should visit member churches to share concerns and programs.

Asian church leaders appreciated this initiative. They suggested that the RT meeting should continue and more church leaders will be invited. The round table meeting is relatively new to Asian churches, and different from the round table meeting with ecumenical organizations from Europe and North America. Asian churches are generally keen to give “in-kind” support rather than “cash”.

CCA Staff Planning Workshop

April 27-28

Chiang Mai, Thailand

An annual CCA Staff Planning Workshop (2009) was held at the Paradornparp International House, Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand on April 27-28, 2009. Along with the executive secretaries and consultants, the administrative staff also participated in the workshop.

The workshop aimed to increase understanding of program cluster and coordination; to analyze and identify key issues and challenges; to review of past activities; and, to design future programs and activities for 2010.

It was expected that as soon as possible, a final copy of the “Programs and Funding Request 2010” will be ready to be presented for possible funding to partners prior to the CCA Round Table Meeting with Ecumenical Organizations which will be held in July, 2010.

Mr. Charlie Ocampo, joint executive secretary for JID facilitated the workshop.

The participants identified contexts and challenges in which CCA works included, among others:

- A. **Economic Realities.** (Impact of economic meltdown (global recession) on churches in Asia; Increased poverty; Lay offs and unemployment; Relation and displacement; Decreased health and social services)
- B. **Political realities.** (Ideological conflict, counter-culturalism and separatism; unstable democracies and dictatorships; Civil wars/ethnic conflicts; Volatile and violent conflicts; New ‘Empires’, e.g. China, India; Governance; Disarmament/peace resolution)

- C. **Socio-Cultural/Religious Realities.** (Church embraces sin and worldly priorities; Crisis/ distorted identities; diminished social concerns; Prophetic voice – New ecclesia; Marginalization of youth participation; Nepotism / cronyism; Increased substance abuse and dependency; Women’s health and reproductive health rights; Human sexuality; Applied intercultural interaction; Care of the aging population; Rise of religious fundamentalism)
- D. **New challenges.** (Impact of the global economic meltdown; Peace and Conflict transformation; Good governance; Promoting sustainable development/capacity building of the marginalized communities; Prophetic Ministry, Reconciliation and Healing)

The second day was devoted to program evaluation, reflection and identifying focus issues for 2009 and beyond. Following concerns were identified for particular program areas:

General Secretariat (**GS**)

- Relationship with member churches, councils and ecumenical organisations
- Interfaith and Intra-faith Dialogue and Cooperation

Faith, Mission and Unity (**FMU**)

- Asian theologies (theological roundtable)
- Ecumenical theological education
- Mission in the new global and Asian contexts: Theological Workshop/Reflection on Migrants and Migrant Workers, etc.

Ecumenical Formation, Genera Justice and Youth Empowerment (**EGY**)

- Gender sensitivity
- Capacity and leadership development for women and youth - Interfaith Cooperation for Conflict Transformation and Violence Against Women; Asian School for Ecumenical Formation and Gender Justice; capacity enhancement for young leaders; EASYNET Regional Coordinators’ Training; Workshop on Sexual Identities

Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (**JID**)

- The Rights of Migrant Workers
- Alternatives to Globalization; Economic injustice and Peoples’ Movements
- Human Rights Courses
- Peace and Conflict Resolution - NEA Peace and Security Issues, Small Arms Trading, Solidarity and Accompaniment
- Impact of natural disasters
- Need for climate change consciousness
- Poverty and Water rights
- HIV and AIDS Program - HIV and AIDS Policy Development for NCCs/Awareness and Capacity Building of AIDS Workers

Consultation on Peace in Southern Thailand

18-19 May, 2009

Pattani, Thailand

The continued tension and violence in the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat in Southern Thailand, have resulted to the loss of over 3000 lives since 2004. The situation has been more complex with inter-related causes including historical, economic, political, identity and cultural ones. The problem is further compounded by other factors such as corruption, illegal trade and mistrust between Buddhist and Muslim villagers, and between Muslim villagers and local officials.

On May 18-19, 2009, over 200 participants representing Buddhist, Islam, Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities took part in the inter-religious leaders' consultation to promote harmony and peace in Southern Thailand. The consultation was jointly organized by the World Conference of Religions for peace (WCRP), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), Research Center for Peace Building of Mahidol University, Religions for Peace (Thailand) and World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), in Pattani Province.

Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary together with Rev. Dr. Pradit Tagernrangsarit, CCA General Committee member, Rev. Dr. Sung Kook Park, joint executive secretary for FMU attended the consultation. The participants were able to visit two villages where the Muslims and the Buddhists live harmoniously and peacefully.

Christian communities are a minority in Southern Thailand. There are three Protestant churches in Yala Province and one church in Pattani Province. The Catholic Church and school have existed longer in Yala Province. They live peacefully in a predominantly Muslim community.

It was strongly recommended that the religious leaders regularly meet, exchange ideas and hold joint activities to strengthen trust and mutual understanding and cooperation between the people of different faiths.

In order to continue to promote peace in Southern Thailand, an "Inter-religious Council for Peace in Southern Thailand" has been formed. The council comprises of the "working team (7 members)" and the advisory committee (25 from local communities and 15 from out side the Southern provinces).

WCC-CCA-PGI Joint Asian Ecumenical Officers Meeting

June 30-July 2, 2009

Cipayung, Indonesia

Amidst Asian socio-cultural, economic and political diversity and conflict, fifty ecumenical leaders took part in the discussion on "Unity, Dialogue and Peace: Ecumenical Challenges in Asia Today". The meeting was organized by the World

Council of Churches in collaboration with Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) on 30 June to 2 July 2009 at Pondok Remaja PGI, Cipayung, Indonesia.

The call for this meeting came from the ecumenical officers from Asia, gathered with ecumenical officers from other regions in Geneva in May 2008. The objectives of the meeting were to strengthen the fellowship of WCC and CCA member churches in Asia by bringing ecumenical leaders together for prayer and discussion, and thus also to strengthen regular contact between member churches and the WCC and CCA in striving for unity and common witness and service in the Asian context.

Ecumenical officers are persons within the fellowship of the WCC and the Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REOs) who have a specific ongoing responsibility for ecumenical relations work. In most churches the General Secretary is responsible for this work. In some churches an executive has been appointed for the work.

Ephorus Soritua Nababan, in his opening sermon on John 17:21 and Isaiah 2.4, refreshed the participants' understanding of unity as the gift we receive of God's own life and love. Participants also studied the Bible together in small group discussions on Mark 5.25 to Mark 6.6 and on Mark 6.7-13; 30-34, on the basis of notes prepared by Bishop Philip Huggins.

“Asian churches have been called to express our theology in ways that are relevant to our Asian society and to our common Asian calling” Dr. James Haire, a keynote speaker challenged.

Dr. Ahmad Suaedy, Director of the Wahid Institute, presented a case study on religious pluralism in Indonesia. He identified critical threats to religious pluralism and the need to protect the freedom of religious beliefs and practices of all citizens. Social groups with pluralism, enforcement of human rights, and promotion of inter-religious dialogue must continue their efforts to disperse inter- or intra-religious tensions.

During the meeting, delegates have shared stories and other information about the churches that they represent, including the particular struggles of churches in situations of conflict and difficulty; long-term oppression and suffering; currently in critical transitions and the appeals of those churches for prayer and expression of oneness in Christ in the face of these challenges.

The ecumenical officers committed to seek ways of innovation for the strengthening the ecumenical movement; urge churches to recognize the importance of peace-building through dialogue and working together with other partners; continue to work together, despite barriers and differences, in the pursuit of unity and peace through dialogue; and to bringing this into the life of our churches at all levels; Call on the churches to recognize afresh God's gift of unity and peace for all people; Ask all Christians to pray for more visible unity in our efforts to serve the mission of God in the world; so that we may receive the strength of God through the Holy Spirit and so be built more fully into the body of Christ.

Some observations

There is different practice on “ecumenical relations” among Asian churches. Some churches have a so-called “ecumenical officer” e.g. CCT (Thailand), PROK and PCK (Korea) while some others, ecumenical relationship is automatically part of the responsibility of the General Secretary.

It is an urgent need to promote more Asian ecumenical movement at sub-regional and national levels.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

January 14 -18

Visit to Myanmar

Objectives:

1. To visit member churches and the Myanmar Council
2. To visit the people who have become victims of cyclone Nargis and to observe the work done by MCC

The Associate General Secretary, Rev. Dr Rienzie Perera met leaders from the following:

- a. Myanmar Baptist Convention
- b. Archbishop and Primate of the Church of the Province of Myanmar
- c. Head of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
- d. General Secretary of the Myanmar Council of Churches
- e. Member of the General Committee

Dr Perera had the opportunity to discuss the importance of ecumenism, to find out ways to equip them in their task to be in mission in their own situation, and to discuss about the membership fees and their responsibility to be co-workers with CCA.

The visit to the villages being re-built by the MCC after the cyclone Nargis was a moving experience. It was an opportunity to accompany the churches and the council involved in the work of rehabilitation. The visit was together with the Executive Secretary of Development and Service of JID.

January 28-30

Visit to Laos

Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, together with Rev. Huh Chung Jung and Ms. Janejinda Pawadee of the Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program (MEPP) visited the Lao Evangelical Church (LEC) in Vientiane.

In Vientiane, Rev. Khamphone Kounthapanya, the President of Lao Evangelical Church (LEC) and also one of the CCA Presidents, arranged the courtesy visit to H.E. Mr. Kantha Gongboonmee, Director of the Office of Religious Affairs. A small gift, a basket

of fruits was presented to His Excellency to express CCA's gratitude and thanks for his warm hospitality.

Rev. Khamphone said that the number of Christians in Lao is rapidly increasing in the past years. The LEC alone has now almost 200,000 individual members. Lao PDR has a total population of around 6.7 million (2008) and 80 per cent of them live in rural areas.

The team visited two Water Projects supported by the Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program (MEPP). Ten water projects were approved. The projects are successful and the villagers are happy and grateful for having enough drinking water especially during the peak of summer. The team also visited the LEC - Rural Integrated Training Center where various training activities are held - fish ponds, pig, frog and crickets raising, mushroom cultivation and vegetable gardening.

February 11-12

Meeting with church leaders in Manila

Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary, visited Manila last February 11-12 for a series of meetings with local heads of churches and ecumenical organizations. Church leaders were updated on CCA's concerns and activities, and exchanged concerns and challenges regarding church unity, neo-ecumenism and the ecumenical movement in Asia.

The sharing from the NCCP Youth Desk especially on youth internship and exchange program was impressive. CCA is being challenged to facilitate more youth exchange programs among Asian churches.

In preparation for the WCC-CCA joint conference on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology" to be held in November, 2009, the General Secretary met with the IBON, a research and data bank outfit doing a research on the theme. The research moves forward well and the first draft will be submitted to the organizers in June, 2009. Before leaving Manila, he took part in a press conference organized by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) on the abduction of Pastor Edwin Egar on Feb. 11 by armed men. Fortunately, Pastor Egar was released that same night.

February 23-24

Visit to Cambodia

The General Secretary visited Phnom Penh for two days to meet the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) officers to help deal with some internal difficulties, and to discuss capacity building programs for the KCC staff as well as for its committee members.

He was also able to meet ecumenical partners, the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC), the Church World Service (CWS), and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

KCC graciously arranged a courtesy visit to His Excellency, Min Khin, Minister of Culture and Religions. "Religious freedom is a basic right of the people in Cambodia

guaranteed by the national Constitution,” His Excellency said. He also thanked CCA for the courtesy visit as well as its consistent support to KCC, and invited CCA to increase its support not only in terms of religious activities but also of community development programs.

February 22-25, 2009

Visit to Hong Kong

Objectives

1. To meet the Treasurer and the Auditor
2. To meet with leaders of member churches and council

Dr Perera met with the Treasurer, Auditor and leaders of member churches and councils of CCA. Matters related to finance of CCA were sorted out and the meeting with the heads of member churches and friends of CCA went well. The visit ended with a dinner hosted by CCA for the representatives of member churches and friends of CCA. It was an opportunity to discuss the work of CCA and to seek their support to accompany CCA in its work.

February 25-27

Tozanso Preparatory Meeting in Hong Kong

The General Secretary together with Mr. Charlie Ocampo, Joint Executive Secretary for JID visited Hong Kong for the preparatory meeting of the 25th Tozanso Anniversary Celebration, to be held in Hong Kong in October 21-24, 2009.

The General Secretary also met CCA’s church leaders in Hong Kong to update CCA’s events and to strengthen relationship between CCA and member churches in Hong Kong.

March 6-8

Visit to Nepal

The General Secretary was in Kathmandu, Nepal from March 6-8, 2009 to attend the CCA-EGY Consultation on Reviving Prophetic Ecumenism: Role of Women and Youth and the CCA-EGY Program Area Committee (PAC) meeting at the at the Greenwich Village Hotel.

On March 8th, the PAC members together with the consultation participants joined thousands of women, including the ambassadors and diplomats, NGOs and women’s organizations in a **Solidarity March with Women** to mark the 99th International Women’s Day. The presence of CCA and Christian groups and organizations in the rally after the march was impressive. One of the reporters expressed appreciation saying, “I am very pleased to see Christian organizations in this rally. It shows your solidarity and support to the civil society in my country (Nepal).”

While in Nepal, Dr. K. B. Rokaya, General Secretary of the NCC-Nepal and the general secretary of the Inter-religious Council (IRC) arranged a CCA meeting with religious

leaders. The General Secretary met eight religious leaders, all of them members of the IRC, from Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Bahai religions to discuss and exchange of ideas and experiences on ways to strengthen relationships and to design future inter-religious events to promote peace and sustainable development in Nepal.

The religious leaders agreed to the idea of organizing a national inter-religious conference on the role of religions to promote peace, security and unity. They welcomed CCA and ecumenical organizations' support and willingness to work with them.

March 24-18

Visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Objective: To meet with the members of the Assembly preparatory committee in Malaysia

Dr Perera was able discuss the plans for the Assembly and to decide who will be responsible for particular tasks. A chart was drawn up to indicate the shared responsibilities. Also discussed was the need to keep the Malaysian government informed of this big event, and at the right time to seek an opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister of Malaysia to explain the purpose of the Assembly, seek the government's support for security, and obtain visas to enter Malaysia without a problem.

The visit was together with the General Secretary, Prof. James Haire and Ms. Lu Yueh Wen, members of the Executive Committee. All expenses were met by the Assembly fund of CCA.

April 11-15

Visit to Taiwan

Objectives

1. To bring greetings to the Assembly of Presbyterian Church
2. To visit member churches, CCA members on the Presidium and the General Committee
3. To visit theological seminaries

Dr Perera a wonderful opportunity to meet the representatives of the Presbyterian Church in large numbers as they met for annual business of the Presbyterian Church. The visitors were well taken care of and the hospitality was rich in quality.

He also met over a meal Very Rev. Samuel Lin Ying Chiu, a member of the General Committee and Ms. Lu Yueh Wen, a member of the Presidium. He also visited the Tainan Theological Seminary and the Chang Jung Christian University in Tainan. All costs for this visit were met from the Relationships budget.

May 8-15, 2009

Uppsala, Sweden and Geneva, Switzerland

Dr Perera was invited to Geneva to attend a conference and read a paper on theology, ecumenism and finance. It was a well attended meeting organized by the General Secretariat of WCC. He read a paper on “The Role of the Ecumenical Movement in Advocating for Ethical Principles”. He made a stop over in Uppsala and visited the Headquarters of the Church of Sweden, had a conversation with Johan Hesselgren and negotiated with him for a block grant for the work of CCA. Mr Hesselgren agreed to consider CCA’s request favorably.

May 21-23, 2009

Chennai, India

The Associate General Secretary attended the preparatory meeting for the planning of the Edinburgh 2010 to be held in India, at the CSI Center, with a group of theologians, including the General Secretary of NCCI.

May 19- June 19, 2009

Home Leave

While on home leave, Dr Perera conducted and preached at various churches, with his sermons topic on the theme of the 2009 Asia Sunday. He also conducted a workshop in the diocese of Kurunegalla with the representatives of the Episcopal Churches Relief Department on the topic of Development.

He took the opportunity to visit Mr. Shanta Fernando, NCC Executive staff person in charge of Justice and Peace work, who is held by the Police and kept under their custody.

June 26

CCA-MCD Joint Asia Sunday Celebration

To promote Asia Sunday 2010, CCA and the McGilvary College of Divinity (MCD), Payap University organized a special service. It was held at the MCD Chapel on June 26, 2009. the General Secretary delivered a sermon on “Being Living Stones in Asia Today” based on Mathew 5:9, 1 Peter 2:4-5.

Excerpts from the homily:

The letter of Peter will guide us and wherefore we will find that:

As living stones, we allow God to use us to love others as we love ourselves.

As living stones, we allow God to use us to prepare a place for those who feel estranged and lonely.

As living stones, we allow God to use us to tell to the poor and hungry that they will have food to eat today and for the coming days.

As living stones, we allow God to use us to tell to the drop-out school children and street-children that they will have access to education.

As living stones, we allow God to use us to protect the natural environment and creation as being responsible stewards of God's creation.

As living stones, we allow God to use us to protect the rights of vulnerable people - the domestic helpers, the migrant workers, the peasants, the women, youth and children, the people living with HIV and AIDS and other marginalized and neglected people of society.

As living stones, we allow God to use us to build the communities of peace for all.

ECUMENICAL FORMATION, GENDER JUSTICE AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

*Ms Moumita Biswas, Joint Executive Secretary
Mr Adam Anand Row, Consultant – Youth*

National Consultation on Overcoming Violence against Women and Children

Date: March 5, 2009

Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal

Rationale

Increasing violence on women and children is one of Nepal's major problems today. A situation analysis conducted by SAATHI in 1997 on violence against women in Nepal reveals that 93% were exposed to mental and emotional torture, 82% were beaten, 30% were raped, 28% were forced into prostitution, and 64% reported polygamy. A study conducted by them among 300 mothers of hospital deliveries and 50 mothers who delivered in the communities showed that domestic violence was a frequent phenomenon during pregnancy. Dalit (lower caste community) women are extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation in Nepal. They are not only subject to discrimination by the high caste in Nepali society but also victims of violence within their own community. Human trafficking of women and children is also increasing. This is also true in many countries in Asia.

EGY organized a National Consultation in Katmandu, Nepal in patnership with YWCA Nepal on March 5, 2009, with the theme, 'Overcoming Violence Against Women and Children'. Forty-five local women leaders from churches, faith-based organizations and non-governmental organizations attended the consultation.

Objectives:

- To enhance and strengthen CCA's networking with women leaders in Nepal.
- To assist Nepali women create a platform for dialogue about their work, and to promote gender justice and peace.
- To discuss action plans on how EGY can work together with Church women in Nepal and other leaders on pertinent contextual issues.

Outcomes:

- Forty-five Nepali women church leaders participated in the program
- Strengthening of church women's ecumenical networking
- Concrete action plans for creating awareness among women regarding their human rights, especially in the process of framing Nepal's constitution where women's rights should be promoted and protected
- Keen interest among women leaders to become part of the ecumenical movement and getting involved in CCA activities to promote gender justice in Nepal.

Celebrating International Women's Day across Asia

A synergy of effective advocacy

CCA plays a crucial role in encouraging Asian Christian women to mark International Women's Day (IWD) every March 8th of the year in meaningful ways while retaining its human rights essence. Believing in the power of prayer and women's solidarity work, the CCA Program Area on Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment (EGY) requested the CCA members to share their advocacy and prayer concerns for women as part of the 2009 IWD celebration. Various prayer requests and news of IWD activities from around Asia were received by EGY, a modest sign that says there is a synergy of effective women's advocacy going on.

Nepal

Realizing the importance of a consolidated effort for synergy and effective advocacy, the CCA Program Area on EGY Committee members joined the 1,500 women strong rally to celebrate the 99th International Women's Day on March 8, 2009 in Kathmandu, Nepal, along with some men. The rally was organized by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC), Federation of Woman Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal (FWEAN), Tewa (a non-profit and philanthropic organization), and the Association of St. Mary's Alumnae Nepal (ASMAN). Social activists, professionals, entrepreneurs, NGOs and thought-leaders across sectors joined the rally, together with women from other South Asian countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, and Bhutan.

The rally bannered the theme, 'Solidarity of South Asian Women for Peace, Prosperity and Progressive Society'. March 8th was an opportunity for women from all the seven SARCC countries to come together as a unified force to celebrate past achievements and to work towards the achievement of the U.N. declared Millennium Development Goals for 2015.

East Timor

Through the Women's Ecumenical Accompaniment for Vision and Empowerment or WEAVE, EGY initiated an IWD celebration in East Timor. Part of the WEAVE program and in collaboration with IPTL (Igreja Protestante Iha Timor Loro Sae), the celebration was held at the Hosanna Church. The local church women organized and facilitated the IWD worship with help from Dominica Lagat-Faurillo, CCA ecumenical accompanier,

and Nina Naoyan, intern of the Student Christian Movement. A background of the IWD celebration was shared to the congregation, as well as part of the United Nations General Secretary IWD message urging people to unite to stop violence against women in all forms.

Philippines

Filipina women of faith bonded together under the Ecumenical Women's Forum (EWF), a consortium of church women advocating for peace, justice and abundant life in celebrating International Women's Day on March 4, 2009. It was held at the Library of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City, with the theme, 'Women of Faith: Drawing Strength from our Wellspring of Hope Amidst Crisis'.

(shared by Melinda Grace Aoanan)

Bangladesh

The Women's Desk of the National Council of Churches in Bangladesh in partnership with South Asian Ecumenical Partnership Program (SAEP) for the first time organized a consultation attended by more than 100 indigenous women to commemorate IWD on March 19-21, 2009, with the theme, 'Solidarity with Indigenous Women'. The EGY Workshop participants on 'Women Human Rights and Advocacy Skills' in Delhi in November 2008 were involved in the organizing and facilitation of the gathering. (shared by Gloria Kolpona Sirkar)

Australia

As IWD was celebrated globally, we remembered the indigenous people and the aboriginal women and children of Australia. Many Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia live in poverty. Their average life expectancy is seventeen years less than non-Indigenous Australians. There are many areas where there is an urgent need for work to improve the situation for Indigenous peoples, especially in education and health. However, one area that causes great concern is the high level of violence experienced by many. Indigenous women are forty-four times more likely to be hospitalized for assault than non-Indigenous women. Deaths from assault are also higher.

Depending on the location in Australia the homicide rate in Indigenous populations is five to fifteen times higher than the non-Indigenous population. The rates are higher in all remote areas than in major cities. In the Northern Territory the leading cause of death for Aboriginal women is homicide (Bell in a speech to HREOC forum 16/09/2005). Most homicides are a result of domestic altercation.

(shared by Gabrielle Russell-Mundine)

Pakistan

We prayed for and still keep in our prayers the Talitha Kumi Welfare Society, an organization engaged in empowering women to overcome violence perpetrated on them. We continue to pray for women like Aysha who was kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and raped and tortured; the Staff of Talitha Kumi Welfare Society, who apart from the threats and risks stands with women victims of violence; the future support, sustainability of Talitha Kumi Welfare Society; the women of tribal area of Pakistan, who are under the growing talibanization, denied education, health and freedom; and, for the

need of affirmative initiatives by the government against atrocious customs in Pakistan, e.g. KaroKari, Vani, forced marriage, Sawara.
(shared by Shunila Ruth)

Reviving Prophetic Ecumenism: Role of Women and Youth in Asia

Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal

Date: March 6 – 9. 2009

Rationale:

The Asian ecumenical movement is facing serious challenges in the post modern era of globalization and neo-colonization. The culture of violence has increased in leaps and bounds in the present context and has fragmented Asian society and communities. Such violence has had an adverse impact on youth, children and women in Asia. In fact, women and children especially are the most vulnerable victims of such violence. The Asian ecumenical movement within this context however, has many times failed to promote and nurture the prophetic voice of Asian women and youth in building communities of peace for all. Moreover, there is a lack of consciousness of the praxis of gender justice in the life of the Church and society. Gender justice is often regarded by many Church leaders as an agenda for and of women only. In order to promote a prophetic ministry among the youth and women in Asia, the Program Area Committee of EGY met to strategize, give directions to program thrusts and make concrete action plans and recommendations.

Objectives:

- To critically analyze the work and activities of EGY in building communities of peace from 2006 - 2009.
- To map out critical issues in the different sub-regions, eroding gender justice and violating the rights of women and youth.
- To strategize to equip youth and women in churches in Asia for the task of reviving a prophetic ministry that is revitalizing to the Asian ecumenical movement.
- To evolve concrete action plans to promote gender justice, women's ecumenical leadership development and youth empowerment in Asia.

Outcomes:

- Action plans for strengthened ecumenical youth and women's movement in Asia.
- Concrete strategies to promote gender justice in church and society.
- Participatory planning about women and youth capacity enhancement in ecumenical leadership and peace building skills

- Strengthening of the ecumenical and youth network
- Clear directions and concrete recommendations for the CCA Women's Pre-assembly gathering.

Grassroots Church Women Leaders and Activists Ecumenical Leadership Development Program

Venue: Seoul, South Korea

Date: June 8 – 15, 2009

Rationale of the Project:

Christian women leaders and activists working among grassroots people play a very crucial role in building communities of peace. However, often their contributions are overlooked or not recognized by society and even the Church. Their leadership qualities and contributions to be agents of transformation are not only disregarded by mainstream society as they are from the grassroots but also because they are women. Very often, grassroots women activists and leaders do not get opportunities for their capacity enhancement and ecumenical formation. In the present context, the ecumenical movement sometimes tends to be elitist, where leadership in decision making bodies mainly comprised by male ecclesiastical heads. However, the Asian ecumenical movement has its roots in the continuing ecumenical journey of the grassroots people.

It is in this context this 'Training the Trainers' program was organized in partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Korea, to enhance ecumenical formation and leadership skills of grassroots Church women leaders and activists who work among migrant workers and urban slum communities.

Objectives:

- To equip grassroots women Church leaders and activists with feminist strategies for organizing people and theologizing skills as tools for empowerment of people in local communities.
- To promote ecumenical formation and leadership development of grassroots women Church Leaders and activists to overcome violence and discrimination against women and children migrant workers in Asia.
- To support grassroots Church leaders and activists empowerment initiatives and networking efforts for advocacy and campaign to promote human rights for women and children migrant workers, refugees, and urban slum dwellers in Asia.
- To enhance grassroots women activists and Church leaders participation in decision making processes in church and society to effect transformation.

Outcomes:

- Fifteen participants from Nepal, Bangladesh, Korea, Cambodia, Loa, Indonesia, Pakistan, India participated in this training
- Inter-generational sharing, learning and networking among grassroots women activists and leaders.
- Increased awareness in local churches and communities for advocacy, campaign, and protection of rights of life and dignity of women and children migrant workers.
- Member Churches' solidarity and ownership of CCA programs. For example, this training was a partnership program with PCK. PCK hosted and took active part in the planning and implementation.

Faith, Mission and Unity

Dr Hope S. Antone, Joint Executive Secretary
Rev. Dr. Sungkook Park, Joint Executive Secretary

Ecumenical Lectures (Philippines)

Venue: Central Philippine University, Iloilo City, Philippines

Date: 6 February 2009

Objective/s:

- (a) To promote wider ecumenism among CCA constituency, especially the church-related seminaries of CCA member churches.
- (b) To share feminist critique of Christian Ethics as it has been traditionally taught;
- (c) To show how feminism can be mainstreamed in the teaching of Christian Ethics; and
- (d) To share some ethical challenges related to some Asian issues – e.g. the rights of minority groups, sexual abuse in the church, etc.

The holding of ecumenical lectures on “gender and ethics” just before the start of the Sixth Congress of Asian Theologians was specially requested by the Rev. Dr. Limuel Equina, dean of the College of Theology of Central Philippine University. The lectures were open to the general population of the university, especially those taking religion and ethics, social work and theology. Indeed, the University Chapel, with a capacity of more than 1000, was filled with students and their faculty.

Main resource persons and facilitators were Dr. Hope S. Antone of CCA-FMU who spoke on mainstreaming gender perspective in Christian Ethics and Dr. Anna May Chain of Myanmar Institute of Theology, who spoke on gender and ethnic minority rights. However, during the open forum, most of the questions from the audience were on the issue of homosexuality – e.g., Can gays and lesbians go to heaven? How do we deal with passages in the Bible that speak against homosexuality? Do violence and sexual abuse really happen in the churches?

It was very clear that gender and sexuality are very important issues for CPU students, majority of whom come from Catholic or Baptist backgrounds. By opening the discourse on homosexuality in the university, students felt encouraged to continue their discussion also in their churches and homes. There was no formal evaluation done following the lectures but through the active participation of the students, through their many questions, both written and spoken, we could tell that they were very much engaged.

Sixth Congress of Asian Theologians (Philippines)

Venue: Central Philippine University, Iloilo City, Philippines

Date: 8 - 12 February 2009

Objective/s:

- a) To provide participants with the opportunity for critical analysis of Western mission, exchange and sharing of academic/pastoral information and to work out an Asian understanding and theology of mission, and set forth the themes of "Edinburgh 2010" from an Asian perspective;
- b) To provide participants with an opportunity to set up a network to work on and follow through the development of an Asian theological agenda on mission.

Around 120 participants and guests gathered at Central Philippine University to work on critical reflection and seek for a new paradigm of mission. Great interest and active participation in discussions and buzz groups reflected the immediate need to reflect and work on a new paradigm on mission from the perspective of Asia. Three theme presentations were delivered: (1) "Critical Historical Review of Mission since 1910" (Rev. Dr. M.P. Joseph, Tainan Theological College / Seminary, Tainan / Taiwan); (2) "Biblical-Theological Reflection on Doing Mission from the Underside" (Rev. Dr. Anna May, Myanmar Institute of Theology); (3) "Contemporary Challenges in Doing Mission" (Rev. Dr. Hermen Shastri, General Secretary, Council of Churches of Malaysia). There were panels on various issues, to reflect critically on mission from the perspectives of indigenous people, economically deprived, women, people living with HIV/AIDS, ecology, human rights and dignity.

A one-day forum on gender issues was organized, where women and men gathered in their respective gender groups to discuss on the given theme from the perspective of women / men.

Small group discussions according to interests and disciplines / interdisciplinary interests were also held. At the end a statement was offered ("Iloilo Declaration") and the venue for next CATS (CATS VII) was decided to be in Korea.

The goal to form a wider platform for professional exchange along with voices from the 'Underside' was regarded to be satisfied, since there were many interactions between academic theological discourses and experiences from activists and less benefitted people. The theme was well expressed and timely in the view of the Edinburgh 2010 process and Asia Mission Conference 2010. All the participants and sending institutions became more actively involved in the process of critical (self-) reflection on mission since 1910.

The organizers of CATS VI carefully balanced the participation. Women and young (emerging) theologians and new comers to CATS were invited with higher priority.

Ecumenical Enablers' Training (Cambodia)

Venue: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Date: 15-21 March 2009

Objective/s:

- (a) To complete the theological training of the second batch of pastors and teachers as well as youth leaders of KCC;
- (b) To equip them with skills in reading the Bible contextually and critically, in doing contextual theologizing, and in the practical ways of doing the ministry of the church.

This Ecumenical Enablers' Training is part of CCA-FMU's commitment to accompany young or new members of CCA, by equipping their pastors and church leaders who may not have access to ecumenical theological education. The first batch of trainees in Cambodia graduated in 2007. This training was for the second batch of 28 people who already started their training in 2007. However, due to health and schedule problems, only 5 of the second batch could return for the training. Still churches sent other persons for the training so there were 25 participants in total, 7 of which were women and a good number were young people (30 years old and below).

Main resource persons were Dr. A Wati Longchar (former consultant for CCA-WCC Ecumenical Theological Education) and Dr. Hope S. Antone of CCA-FMU. Although we already had a module for the training we revised it in view of the nature of this new group. Topics included the following: (a) Bible and Ministry; (b) How the Bible Came to Us; (c) Use and Misuse of the Bible; (d) Jesus' Approaches to the Bible; (e) Contextual Reading of the Bible; (f) Life and Ministry of the Church – which included community, liturgy, teaching, proclamation, and service/outreach. We also invited two Asian missionaries – Rev. Wati Longkumer and Rev. Dr. Romeo del Rosario, with Phnom Penh Bible School and Methodist Bible School, respectively, to connect KCC with the Bible schools in Cambodia.

The strength of this training lies in the consistency of our ecumenical and contextual perspective which under-girds the modules. We have also been flexible in our approach – paying attention always to the needs and suggestions of the participants. Our hope is that we have been able to broaden the minds of around 50 Khmer pastors, youth and women leaders. Though we may not be able to see the immediate result, but at least we have planted the seeds. One of the weaknesses of this training is our reliance on translation and sometimes theological terminology can be so difficult to translate into a local language or dialect.

Ecumenical Enablers' Training (Nepal)

Venue: Staff College, Lalitpur, Nepal

Date: 5-11 April 2009

Objectives:

- (a) To train selected 25-30 church and lay leaders from churches in Nepal in the wider ecumenical vision and in Asian contextual theologizing;
- (b) To accompany the work of the young National Council of Churches of Nepal (NCCN) through this ecumenical training.
- (c) To help dispel negative perceptions of ecumenism and the ecumenical movement which have kept the Christians divided in Nepal.

The Ecumenical Enablers' Training for Nepal started in April 2009 in Lalitpur with 28 participants (5 women), including pastors, youth committee members, and women's committee members of local churches. Rev. Dr. John V. John (from Bishop's College), Rev. Dr. A. Wati Longchar (from Serampore University), and Dr. Hope S. Antone (from CCA-FMU) were the main resource persons. Inputs were on ecumenism and ecumenical vision, and reading the Bible from various perspectives – health and healing, disability, Dalit, people, ecological, consumerism, women, interfaith and reading Jesus' parables today.

Responses from participants included the following: *“I have attended a similar training before but I have learned much more from this training. I have also read the Bible many times before but this training gave me a new way of reading the Bible. The presentation on ecumenism based on Genesis 1 was impressive and unforgettable – now I will look at creation differently and see myself as part of God's creation. I hope that CCA can continue to support us so we can hold trainings like this in other parts of Nepal.”* [Birbahadur Tamang, a pastor from Chitwan district and a BTh second year student in Kathmandu]

Thank you so much for the teaching you have given us about Ecumenism. I was so much blessed from that training. Actually this kind of program is the most important in the Nepali Christian society in this moment. And this important role is played by CCA and NCCN. I thank the Lord because God is working through the CCA and NCCN in Nepal in such a vital role. I hope in the future CCA and NCCN will organize the program which can help the Nepali Church to grow. [Nar Bahadur Pulami James, graduating student at Maranatha Mission College, Kathmandu, Nepal]

There is so much hunger for knowledge in Nepal. Comments from those studying in Bible schools reveal that they have learned a lot from this training and how they wished that similar trainings could be held in key areas of the regions outside Kathmandu. I believe that through this training we were able to dispel some misconceptions of ecumenism. The methodology of the training was also appealing to the participants – approaching various life issues with the Bible as the starting point.

Ecumenical Theological Education – executive and staff meetings in Bossey

Venue: Bossey, Switzerland

Date: 13-17 January 2009 and 29 April- 2 May 2009

Since March 2008, the joint WCC-CCA consultancy for Ecumenical Theological Education in Asia was lodged with the Faith, Mission and Unity program area and assigned to Dr. Hope S. Antone. During the first half of the year 2009, she attended two meetings in Bossey, Switzerland.

In January, the meeting was of the whole Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation (P 5), to which regional consultants for ETE were also invited. A panel sharing on the work on ETE by the regional consultants of Asia, Africa and Latin America was part of that meeting. It was in this meeting that the impact of the financial situation of WCC on the ETE work came to the fore. With a need for WCC to restrict program spending in the present financial situation, the contracts for ETE consultants would not be continued. But the commission welcomed suggestions from the present team for other possible arrangements for a new way of carrying out the ETE work.

In April, the meeting was of the core group of EEF Executive + ETE staff (including regional consultants) and the major ecumenical partners supporting ETE (i.e. EMW and FTESEA). A major activity of the meeting was the regional grant giving for 2009 for Africa, Middle East, Latin America, Asia, Eastern and Central Europe. Evaluation reports on the ETE were also shared by the regional consultants of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

On 1st May, an enlarged meeting was organized involving the EEF executive group, ETE consultants, ecumenical partners, staff of WCC, and two representatives from World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI). The conclusions of this meeting are the following: “5.1 WCC affirms its commitment to ETE and at the same time recognizes its financial constraints to maintain the present infrastructure and therefore looks for new ways of moving forward; 5.2 WOCATI affirms the possible working relationships with WCC-ETE and at the same time sees the need for time for transition and preparation for new ways of functioning and tasks ahead. This involves some specific resources, both human and financial; 5.3 EMW wants to assure the quality of ETE in the regions. It has been supporting programs and the infrastructures in Geneva up to now. It commits itself to support new infrastructures that aim at strengthening the regional ownership of ETE.” The group was concerned about the continuity of the work especially the grant giving process – which involves communication, review and screening of proposals from the regions, preparing the list and budget, etc. – that they proposed to extend the contracts of the existing regional consultants until the end of December 2009.

Preparatory Meeting for CATS VII

Venue: Mokwon University, Taejon, Korea

Date: June 10-13, 2009

Objectives:

- a) To meet with the host and co-moderator of CATS VII and visit the venue.
- b) To meet with theologians/pastors/church leaders to discuss possible themes of CATS VII.

The meeting with the host committee of CATS VII and visit to the venue was to formalize agreement on the conditions of hosting proposed by the local host committee. Leaders of the host committee (Rev. Dr. Ahn Jae-Woong, Rev. Dr. Park Jong-Wha, Dr. Kim Heup-Young, Rev. Dr. Kim Heung-Soo, Rev. Dr. Daniel Dongsong Kim) gathered to discuss the hosting conditions for CATS VII. Along with discussion on technical matters the local committee suggested a more in-depth discussion on the theme for CATS VII, which is already in the discussion process among the Continuation Committee members. It was proposed to have a preparatory committee meeting before the end of this year to set certain goals for the local (Korea) side of supporting CATS VII and reflecting on its result.

The host committee had a meeting with the president of Mokwon University (proposed venue for CATS VII) and got the official approval of hosting CATS VII. It was greatly appreciated by both sides that CATS VII will be held in Korea in 2011. Mokwon University (President Lee, Yo-Han Ph.D. & D. Min.) approved not only the proposed conditions of hosting, but assured additional support if needed.

Great expectations were expressed from the host committee to invite Asian theologians to Korea, which is expected to cause a wider and deep impact on the theological landscape of North-East Asia and especially Korea.

As further recommendation the host committee proposed to have a meeting / workshop on the theme for CATS VII, coordinated by the chair of the host committee (co-moderator of CATS VII) and the organizing officer (CCA staff in-charge). The local coordination team will be reinforced by staffs of the Mokwon University office of the president and office of planning.

At several hosted meetings with church leaders, the issue of migration and multi-cultural life became a hot topic. For future follow-up meetings this issue shall be included.

Preparatory Meeting for “Asia Mission Conference 2010”

Venue: CSI Centre, Chennai (Madras), India

Date: May 22-23, 2009

Objectives:

- a) To select venue.
- b) To discuss the proposed schedule.

- c) To discuss and finalize the theme and sub-themes of the conference.
- d) To fix the local hosting arrangements.

The planned “Asia Mission Conference 2010” in India is a counter-conference to “Edinburgh 2010”. However, it shall not be a mere ‘critique’ to the western missionaries and mission strategies since 1910. It will include self-critical reflections on mission in Asia. The meeting came up with a revised schedule and proposed names of resource persons.

Preparatory Meeting for “Sub-Regional Theological Workshop in North-East Asia”

Venue: Office of The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Date: June 24, 2009

Objectives:

- a) To plan for the Sub-Regional Theological Workshop in North-East Asia, which PCT is offering to host.
- b) To discuss details of hosting conditions.
- c) To discuss the concept of the Workshop.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), represented by Rev. Stephen Hsu and Rev. Hu Hung-Chi, assured to host the Sub-regional Theological Workshop for North-East Asia. Since the two ecumenical officers are working together in a transition period before Rev. Stephen Hsu finishes his term, the meeting was greatly appreciated by all. Conditions for hosting were accepted without any problems or questions. The responsible staff in-charge was warmly welcomed by the ecumenical officer of PCT along with the successor.

The meeting ended with concrete conclusion on the planned theological workshop for North-East Asia, including setting the dates for 9-14 Sep. 2009 in Taipei.

Along with several sessions for discussions on the General Assembly theme of CCA (“Called to Prophecy, Reconcile and Heal”), specific theological issues are going to be proposed by the sub-regional participants.

Before organizing a hosted program in other countries, visits based on courtesy and solidarity should be strongly recommended. As an opinion of the staff in-charge of CCA, emails can be much more efficient for planning - especially cost effective! However, for occasions like this (transition, etc.) meeting face-to-face can be very helpful to strengthen the ties.

JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

*Mr Carlos Ocampo, Joint Executive Secretary
Rev. Freddy de Alwis, Joint Executive Secretary*

Preparatory Meeting for the Public Hearing on the Rights of Asian Migrants

Venue: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Date: 10 January 2009

Attendance:

1. M.P. Joseph (Taiwan)
2. Lakshan Dias (Sri Lanka)
3. Aaron Ceradoy (Hong Kong)
4. Janejinda Pawadee (Thailand)
5. Rienzie Perera (CCA, Thailand)
6. Charlie Ocampo (CCA, Thailand)
7. Rev. Freddy de Alwis (CCA, Thailand)

Participants to the Workshop on Asian Migrants organized by the CCA and the National Council of Churches in Pakistan (NCCP) held in Lahore, Pakistan on November 2008, resolved to conduct a Public Hearing on the Rights of Asian Migrants this year to further highlight the situation of migrant workers in Asia, and to come up with plans of action to address the concerns of migrants.

The objectives of the Hearing are:

1. To situate migration and migration processes in the current economic, political, social and cultural condition and discuss its impact particularly on the humanity and dignity of migrant workers
2. To raise the level of awareness of churches and the ecumenical movement on the various dimensions of migration
3. To encourage churches and the ecumenical movement to formulate actions and programs in the national, regional and international level to respond to the needs and condition of migrants
4. To provide a venue for grassroots migrants to voice out their concerns to sending governments, host governments and inter-governmental bodies
5. To strengthen cooperation among the ecumenical movement, NGOs and the grassroot migrants on migrants' concerns

The Public Hearing on the Rights of Asian Migrant Workers shall be composed of two aspects, namely: 1) inputs on important concepts on migration, and 2) testimonies from grassroots migrants on their situation and the major issues they face.

Experts both from NGOs and organizations of grassroots migrants shall be invited to give presentations on three major topics, namely: **a.** the economic impacts of migration; **b.** political dimensions of migration, and **c.** challenges to and responses of churches and the ecumenical movement. Each of the major topics will have three speakers.

Testimonies from grassroots migrants will mainly be delivered live or, if needed, by video feed. The testimonies will revolve around: **a)** cases of abuses in the workplace; **b)** policies that violate the rights of migrants; **c)** situation of hopelessness that forces people to migrate, and; **d)** social impact of forced migration with focus on families.

A panel of judges to be composed by leaders of the ecumenical movement, respected NGOs, advocates and grassroots migrants will be invited to hear the presentations of speakers and the testimonies. Their verdict will be delivered at the end of the hearing and will also be subjected to the ‘people’s vote’ for affirmation. The judges will be composed of around seven (7) persons.

In order to ensure that a concrete plan of actions will come out from the hearing, a listening group will be constituted. This said group will draft recommendations of action that will be discussed by the churches, NGOs and grassroots migrants present in the hearing. Around 100 people are expected to participate in the hearing. The proposed date was June 24-26, 2009, in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Media work will be an important component in promoting the hearing and its results. Further plans will be made to design media strategies. Some of the suggestions that came out from the meeting were: **a)** possible media attractions like cultural events, and possibly a rally; **b)** handing out the results and recommendations to selected embassies or inviting representatives from different embassies to hear the testimonies; **c)** assigning a spokesperson for the event; **d)** requesting the media and inviting government representatives to be in the People’s Vote and to be handed out the results.

The next Meeting of the Preparatory Group is on March 5-6, in Bangkok.

Project Review Visit to Myanmar

Date: January 14 – 18, 2009

The ecumenical visit to Myanmar on 15 – 17 January 2009 organized by CCA in cooperation with the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) observed the rehabilitation work being done by the victims of cyclone Nargis themselves.

The Myanmar Solidarity Committee, composed of partners in CCA’s rehabilitation work with the Nargis victims, visited several rehabilitation projects together with local partners

in Myanmar. The visit is part of CCA's ministry of accompaniment, particularly with the people of Myanmar as they struggle to rise from the ruins of Nargis.

Although the different rehabilitation projects are carried out in fifty-two villages, the visiting team was able to go to only a few due to lack of time. As the villages are far and scattered the team had to take risky, dusty and tedious travel. Although the journey was rough and tough the team members were happy to meet the people and the people were happy to meet them too.

Reflections on the Visit

Nargis had taken away what they had to call 'theirs' and today they are left with 'nothing'. Although the Nargis victims and survivors did not express this sentiment in words, the team felt and saw in their faces the pain and sense of being abandoned. Personally, my experience made me realize the contemporary meaning of the cross which carries with it brokenness and abandonment of people created in God's image. In that sense the cross which is central to the Christian faith is not a past incident but an ever present reality.

The image of the crucified Christ is here right in our midst. In the Myanmar context, the crucified Christ is incarnate among and within the Nargis victims and survivors. That is the reason why we who claim to be the Church (Body of Christ) is called by God and set apart by God to accompany these people and to identify with them. This is what it means to be in mission, and to be Church.

It is sad to note that the government has failed to serve the people in the hour of their need and has abdicated their responsibilities.

The government's adamant attitude is not changing, and it is compelling the people to go back to their ruined villages. This is especially to indicate to the outside world, that the regime is capable of handling their catastrophes and affairs internally. Outsiders better stay away. The government may also have another hidden fear, that foreigners entering Myanmar with assistance may expose the real face of the disaster, or serve as spies.

Information on disaster situations and its aftereffects usually fall into confidential or incomplete hidden information for some political and economic reasons. Myanmar is no exception in this case. Nargis has brought devastating consequences to the people of Myanmar. Consequently, the country's socio-economic life suffered tremendously and its policies shifted beyond description. This situation needs to be addressed immediately and in a sustained manner.

The members of the Myanmar Solidarity Committee were satisfied with the reporting done by the people responsible for the implementation of the rehabilitation program. The verbal reports were supported by written documents and these were reliable.

The ecumenical team visitors were Po Kam Cheong, Rienzie Perera, Jung Hae-Sun, Jung Hae-Jun, Lee Sung-Youl, Shwe Lin, Ja Naw, Ma Kay Thi Min Din, Tar Ma Lar Gay, and Naw Dora.

The response of the people was encouraging as they were more than happy for CCA's commitment to be with them and to walk with them. CCA and its member churches and councils will be with them as an accompanying presence as long as they want.

National Consultation on Global Warming In India

Venue: CSI Centre, Chennai, India

Date: 12 – 14 February 2009,

Global warming and other environmental problems are issues that the world grapples today, and churches are called to be ecologically accountable.

A National Consultation on Global Warming on February 12 – 14, 2009 organized by the Church of South India (CSI) in association with the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and the South Asia Ecumenical Partnership Program (SAEPP) urged the churches in India to incorporate eco-concerns in its mission agenda.

The consultation is a follow up to an international ecumenical consultation held in Korea in May 2008 on the theme, *Ecology, Economy and Accountability* organized by CCA.

The earth's water is fast depleting. Currently twenty countries with over 150 million people have less than 1000 cubic meters of water annually per capita. At present twenty-five nations will be similarly displaced by 2050 and a total global population so deprived would rise to 2.5 billion i.e. 5/12ths of the present world population. In Beijing, the water table has dropped to thirty-seven meters in the past forty years.

According to Dr. Sudhir Chella Rajan from the Department of Humanities and Social Science of the Indian Institute of Technology:

- Per capita water availability will decline by over 30%, primarily as a result of Himalayan glacier melt
- Substantial reductions in the yields of wheat and maize
- Increase in the incidence of disease (typhoid, malaria)
- Flooding in some areas and drought in others
- Potentially serious disruptions of the entire monsoon cycle
- Rising sea level

“Rates for sea-level rise of up to five metre per century are documented, and these probably do not represent an upper limit. Thus climate history shows that a much more rapid rise than that expected by the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) for the 21st century is possible. (WBGU, 2006)

Mr. Sudhir cited the following are some of the vulnerable communities in India that have to migrate in 2100:

- West Bengal 10 million
- Coastal Maharashtra (around Mumbai) 10 – 12 million.
- Coastal Andhra Pradesh 6 million.
- Gujarat 5.5 million
- Coastal Orissa 4 million.
- Western Rajasthan 1.4 million.
- Northern Karnataka 1.3 million

Other adverse effects include:

- a) The most vulnerable communities will include those having maximum exposure to the stresses as well as those with the least capacity to respond and ability to recover.
- b) The physical changes will themselves take place in abrupt, non-linear ways as thresholds are crossed.
- c) In turn, the least resilient communities (e.g. those dependent on subsistence fishing) will be the first to experience ‘tipping points’ in their life systems, so that the only livelihood option available to them will be to abandon their homes and search for better prospects elsewhere.
- d) As ever larger numbers of these people pass thresholds in terms of their ability to cope, societal tipping points will be crossed, resulting in the sudden mass movements of entire villages, towns and even cities in coastal regions towards safety.
- e) Migration will likely take place to regions with pre-existing family or community contacts, job opportunities and cultural affinity.
- f) More often than not, the largest recipients of migrants tend to be urban areas, either within or outside the country’s borders.
- g) Frequently, the bulk of early migrants tend to be relatively young, which creates additional stresses in the remaining populations, thus increasing the likelihood of ever larger waves of migrants leaving the vulnerable regions

In the context of global warming, depletion of scarce ground water and rising of the sea water level, the challenge is to change our values and life styles, and to rethink and redefine our understanding of development, our attitude towards nature, human freedom and accountability to one another and to God’s creation.

A statement issued by participants called upon all concerned to address the grave issue of global warming with due urgency, since it is key to our global survival and relationship

dynamics. The statement affirmed that evidently global warming causes profound climate changes affecting the very survival of God's creation. A recommended mission agenda for churches to follow are:

- Promote ecumenical green movements
- Adopt alternative energy sources
- Create awareness at all levels
- Review vision and mission statements from an eco-perspective
- View environmental problems from a victims' perspective
- Engage proactively on Climate Justice
- Ensure the rights of the vulnerable communities
- Associate with other faiths and religions to address ecological issues
- Liaison with government and network with movements to combat practices that perpetuate global warming, and
- Mobilise and influence public opinion on relevant policy changes

Bishop Rev Thomas Samuel, chair of the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee stressed that concerns on climatic changes should have a matching action plan in a time-bound manner, apart from evolving a global and inter-religious perspective.

CCA encourages churches to tackle the issue of global warming and to use our spiritual resources in the task of transforming the world to become a place free from violence, greed and craving for material goods in the name of globalization and modernization.

Nargis Rehabilitation Project Review Report

March 31 - April 03, 2009

The Nargis Rehabilitation Project has been coordinated by the MCC with the Self-supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society (SSKBMS), Twantay Kayin Baptist Churches, and the Church of the Province of Myanmar (Anglican Church). The main objective of this project is to rehabilitate the people affected by Cyclone Nargis. There was a slight delay to complete the activities as planned because of the rainy weather.

Activities of Twantay Kayin Baptist Churches

Twantay Kayin Baptist Churches. Twantay Kayin Baptist Churches is located in Twantay Township, about two and half hour away from Yangon city. These churches are actively working for Nargis-affected villages within the township to develop their livelihood. The main activities supported through MCC are summarized as follows and the visited areas are highlighted:

No.	Village Name	Household			Distributed Item No.
		Beetle Leaf Plantation	Pig Raising	Housing	No. of Pig

1.	Ma Yan Gone	-	10	-	20
2.	Po Ta	-	10	-	20
3.	Own Pin Chaung	-	10	-	20
4.	Auk Kyun	-	7	-	14
5.	Than Aing	5	6	-	12
6.	Nant Yay Twin	5	7	-	14
7.	Bant Bway Aing	5	7	-	14
8.	Ahgatt Dan	5	5	2	10
9.	20 Miles	5	5	1	10
10.	Dagundai	5	5	1	10
11.	Shwe Pauk Daw	-	-	1	-
12.	Kywe Lan	-	9	-	18
13.	Kyun Taw	-	7	1	14
14.	A-Htet Kyun	10	-	-	-
15.	Shwe Pyi Tha	-	12	4	12
	Total	40	100	10	188

(SSKBMS) Self-Supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society. Self-Supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society is working in the following villages of Pan Tanaw Township. It is about two hour drive from Yangon city. Because of the poor road conditions we were taken on motorcycles.

No.	Village Name	Household		Distributed Item No.		
		Paddy Plantation	Pig Raising	No. of Tube Well	No. of Acre	No. of Pig
1.	Taw Gyi	37	30	1	200	90

2.	Muhtaw Gay		30	1		90
3.	Gyo Chaung		30	1		90
4.	Kawt Gyi Gone		30	-		90
5.	Yone Taw		30	1		90
6.	Kyone Tha Naung			1		
	Total	37	150	5	200	450

Anglican Church of Myanmar (Church of Province of Myanmar). Due to the distance from the city of Yangon and the difficulty to obtain clearance from the government authority, we were not able to visit the Churches in the Province of Myanmar. Based on the MCC project progress report they will be receiving funds in January 2009 for constructing 40 houses with 40 toilets. Each month they plan to construct 10 – 15 houses.

Reflections on the Visit

Although the rehabilitation work is carried out in several places we were able to visit only a few due to lack of time. The visit was an eye opener and a challenge to all those who participated in the accompaniment visit. As the villages are far and scattered we had to take risky, dusty and tedious travel. Although the journey was rough and tough the members were happy to meet the people and the people were happy to meet us. In fact they were waiting for us and when they saw us they were glad in spite of the fact that they lived in broken and painful conditions. Nargis had taken away what they had to call “theirs” and today they are left with “nothing”. Although they did not express this in words, I felt and saw in their faces the pain and sense of being abandoned. My experience made me realize the contemporary meaning of the cross which carries with it brokenness and abandonment of people created in God’s image. In that sense the cross which is central to the Christian faith is not a past incident but an ever present reality. Therefore, the image of the crucified God is here right in our midst. In the Myanmar context the crucified God is re-incarnated amidst and within the Nargis victims. That is the reason we who claim to be the Church (Body of Christ) is called by God and set apart by God to accompany these people and to accompany them by being and identifying with them. This is the call to be in mission and the true meaning of being Church.

The response of the MCC is encouraging and they are more than happy for CCA’s commitment to be with them and to walk with them. We will be with them with resources as far as we can manage and as an accompanying presence as long as they want. It is sad to note that the government has failed to serve the people in the hour of their need and abdicated their responsibilities.

MCC faces problems in relation to this project. One of these was to get the money as soon as possible, and the concern of CCA was how to find the right channel to transfer

the money. The members of the committee were happy with the reporting done by the people who were responsible to implement for the project. The verbal reports were supported by written documents and these were reliable.

Some observations

1. Seasonal crop farmers encountered low market price for their crops. Some areas are faced with the possibility of swine flu, consequently the market price is low and not profitable.
2. Some areas faced scarcity of water. In some places water has to be transported by boat, which is costly.
3. SSKBMS changed chicken raising to cow raising activities due to bird flu. That is expensive for some farmers and some did not have the land to raise cattle.

Work plan for April to May 2009

Partners	Activity	No. of HH/unit
Twantay Kayin Baptist Churches	Construction of Houses	18
	Pig Raising	18
	Surface Well	7
	Toilet Construction	19
Self-Supporting Kayin Baptist Missionary Society	Raising of Ox	20
	Tube Well	4
The Church of Province of Myanmar	Construction of Houses	27
	Toilet Construction	27
MCC	Coordination Meeting	

WCC Working Group on Climate Change Meeting

29 – 31, May 2009

Venue: Bad Boll, Germany

The WCC Working Group on Climate Change met in Bad Boll, on May 29-31, 2009. Twenty five people, representatives of churches, specialized ministries and ecumenical organizations came from Asia, Europe, North and South America and the Pacific.

The meeting had three complementary purposes:

1. to discuss on the ecumenical vision on Climate Change beyond Copenhagen;
2. to share information and strategize together on advocacy at COP 15 in Copenhagen;
3. to get to know more about each other's initiatives

The ecumenical vision on Climate Change beyond Copenhagen

No matter what will happen in Copenhagen (either it is a big success or a big failure), climate change will continue and its consequences will continue to affect the most vulnerable communities. There was a sense that the WCC should especially look beyond Copenhagen and enhance the responses of the churches to the challenges posed by climate change.

The group discussed a very helpful draft presented by Christiaan Hogenhuis, “Sharing the planet” which builds on the previous discussion paper, “Moving beyond Kyoto with equity, justice and solidarity” (November 2004). Different subgroups were formed, focusing on adaptation, ethical and theological considerations, equity and practical steps towards and beyond COP 15.

The presentation on **ecumenical initiatives on climate change** includes the following:

1. Bernhard Walter, Bread for the World, on the report of “Sustainable Germany”
2. Jobst Kraus, Protestant Academy, Bad Boll, on the sustainable management of the Academy, the environmental agenda at the German Protestant Kirchentag and the “Sunny times for the WCC” project
3. Ilkka Sipilainen, Lutheran Church of Finland, on the climate change programme “Gratitude, respect, moderation” of his church
4. Freddy De Alwis, Christian Conference of Asia on recent CCA initiatives on climate change and global warming
5. Nafisa D’Souza, Laya, India, on Decentralized Energy Options; Larisa Skuratovskaya on recent developments of climate change in Russia and mainstreaming gender issues into the climate change debate
6. Peter Emberson, Pacific Conference of Churches, on the recent meeting of Pacific church leaders addressing resettlement because of climate change
7. Marijke van Duin and Henrik Grape, from the European Christian Environmental Network, on recent ECEN activities on the topic
8. Michael Slaby, from the Earth Charter on religion and the Earth Charter.

The General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Fei Tevi, kindly offered to host the 2010 meeting of the WCC Working Group on Climate Change in the Pacific in a date to be confirmed later (probably May 2010). The meeting will have as main topic the assessment of COP15.

The evaluation of the meeting among other comments highlighted the richness of having “old-timers” as well as new participants in the WG, and expressed highest appreciation for the witness of the Bad Boll Academy on its sustainable management and Jobst Kraus, for the warmest hospitality.

Ecumenical Visit to Sri Lanka

Date: February 9-14 , 2009

The visit was envisaged to discuss with the Sri Lankan churches the conflict situation in Sri Lanka and its impact on the internally-displaced population and the work of the churches in Sri Lanka in preparation for a South Asian Consultation on Peace, Security and Development with a focus on Sri Lanka.

Group meetings with Sri Lankan ecumenical leaders were held:

- 1) A meeting with the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation, a network of members of the Christian clergy, Buddhist monks, and leaders of NGOs and the wider civil society. I met fifteen (15) representatives of IRPF on 10th February where the current situation in the Wannai Region of conflict, the situation of people fleeing the conflict zone and the internally displaced were discussed. Roman Catholic nuns described the extent of need and the continuing threat on the lives and security of the population trapped in the conflict zone. Methodist and Anglican clergy present shared their plans for a humanitarian response when conditions in the region will allow emergency and social services to be delivered to the victims trapped in a 24-square kilometer firing zone. They also suggested possible intervention from the UN, the World Council of Churches and the international community.
- 2) On 12th July, the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka convened a meeting of heads of member churches and their representatives to discuss plans for the forthcoming South Asia Consultation, which was following up from the mutual visits of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, WCC General Secretary to Sri Lanka and that of the Rev. Dr. Jayasiri Peiris, NCC-SL General Secretary to the WCC Headquarters in Geneva. While Sri Lanka is the major focus, the Consultation will address peace, security and development issues in the whole South Asia Region. The general direction and format of the Consultation was discussed based on information from the WCC. The Rev. Ebenezer Joseph, President of the Methodist Church and NCC-SL, the Rev. Jayasiri Peiris, NCC-SL General Secretary, The Rt. Rev. Kumara Illangasinghe, Anglican Bishop of Kurunegala, and Mrs. Edna Manel Nanayakara, representing the Baptist Church of Sri Lanka were present at the meeting.
- 3) The JID Executive Secretary also met with leaders of opposition political party leaders and ecumenical friends including Ms Nimalka Fernando, Mr. Vidjaya Vidyasagara, and Mr. Sarath Fernando who shared their perspectives of the conflict.
- 4) On 13th July, Mr. Rohan Edrisinha, Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, convened a meeting of NGO leaders who have conducted a fact-finding survey of the needs of the internally displaced and the dire situation in the government-run camps. They also presented future scenarios based on the final stage of the conflict will develop

Assessment and Follow-Up

The Sri Lankan participation at the South Asian Consultation held in Bangalore was very timely and substantial, which was crucial to the outcome and recommendations from the Consultation.

On his way to the Bangalore Meeting, Mr. Santha Fernando, NCC-SL Executive Secretary, Commission on Justice and Peace, was arrested at the Colombo Airport. Mr. Fernando has been in detention for almost four months to date.

The Rajapaksa Government has defeated the LTTE in the 30-year conflict with the death of Prabhakaran, which decimated the LTTE leadership. The struggle of Tamils for equal rights and participation in Sri Lanka will not end with the end of the war.

Asian Board Meeting, CoNGO (Conference of NGOs with UN Consultative Status)

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Date: 23-24 February 2009

The Conference of NGOS with UN Consultative Status is an international network of NGOs that meet regularly. On the invitation of Mr. Liberato Bautista, CoNGO President, CCA attended the Asian Board Meeting in Bangkok held at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). The agenda of the meeting included: reports from the regional and global representatives seated in the Board of CoNGO, updates on organization and programs, and future projections to utilize its gathering capacity and its link with the UN in addressing the global financial crisis, climate change and technological advances in energy consumption.

Planning for the 25th Anniversary of the Tozanso Process

Venue: Seoul, Korea

Date: February 25-26, 2009

Meeting with Hong Kong church leaders – 27 February 2009

The Tozanso Ecumenical Process commenced with the first Conference held in Tozanso, Japan in 2004. Several meetings were held almost on a yearly basis, with the latest meeting held at Arnoldsheim, Germany.

The year 2009 will mark the 25 years of continuing ecumenical dialogue and solidarity among Korean Christians in the North and South and the wider ecumenical movement represented by the World Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia and churches in Europe and North America.

Two meetings were held in Seoul attended by Matthews George Chunakara from the WCC and Charlie Ocampo from CCA and hosted by the National Christian Council in

Korea. The first meeting was with Korean ecumenical leaders who played a leading role at the Tozanso meeting in 1984, who emphasized the continuing role and support by the WCC, CCA and the churches in accompanying the Korean Christians in their journey towards re-unification.

The second meeting in Seoul was with the Reunification Committee chairs from the NCCCK member churches who emphasized the need for more youth involvement in the 25th anniversary celebrations for the future of the reunification movement. It was decided to hold the Conference in Hong Kong to ensure active participation by the Korean Christian Forum from the North. Position papers will be presented by representatives from the churches in the South and the Korean Christian Forum. The venue will be the Golf Country Club in Kowloon, Hong Kong and the Conference will be held on 20-23 October 2009.

Dalit Global Solidarity Conference

Venue: Royal River Hotel, Bangkok

Date: March 20-24, 2009

The Dalit Global Conference was jointly planned and organized by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, and the CCA was invited to host the event in Thailand.

Objectives of the Conference were:

- 1) To reiterate the solidarity of the global ecumenical movement with the national and international Dalit movements and initiatives committed to the cause of justice to the Dalits;
- 2) To link with the Durban Review process, as an occasion for drawing international attention to the situation of Dalits and similarly excluded groups;
- 3) To update the members of the governing bodies of global and major regional Christian organisations about the ongoing efforts for Dalit liberation, and to encourage them and churches around the world to extend their partnership;
- 4) To identify ways in which the Dalit experience of discrimination and exclusion informs ecumenical social thought and action; and
- 5) To promote support for the Indian churches as they confront the evil of caste-based discrimination and untouchability.
- 6) To provide support for efforts to confront untouchability and caste based-discrimination, and to promote Dalit human rights, through the UN human rights mechanisms.

Ninety-five delegates from churches in India, Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Latin America attended the Conference that highlighted stories of discrimination and 'untouchability' that have kept the Dalit outcast and oppressed for centuries. There are 23.4 million Dalit Christians who are daily suffering from more than 140 forms of discrimination, forced labour, undignified jobs, exclusion, segregation, and

impunity. There were very powerful and participatory bible studies that emphasized the Dalits' need for liberation including in their churches.

A panel of Listening Group has helped put together the "Bangkok Declaration and Call" (for solidarity), which include a confession of guilt and a strong expression of solidarity for the cause of the Dalits.

Assessment and Follow-Up:

The Dalit Conference was another opportunity for CCA to work in close collaboration with the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. The active participation of Dalit Christians was very encouraging, particularly for the churches in India and the rest of Asia, which can contribute significantly in the prophetic mission of the church and strengthen solidarity among Asian churches through CCA.

A website has been set up for the regular and organized sharing of stories and information among the Dalit communities and the churches.

International Consultation "Towards, Peace, Security and Development in South Asia"

Venue: Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, India

Date: March 31 - April 2, 2009

The international consultation was jointly planned and organized by the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia, following reciprocal ecumenical visits of Dr. Sam Kobia, WCC General Secretary to Sri Lanka and the Rev. Jayasiri Peiris, NCC-SL General Secretary in Geneva. One of the main focus of the Consultation was the conflict in Sri Lanka and how the churches can effectively respond from the South Asian region and beyond.

In his keynote presentation, Dr. Ninan Koshy, former Director for International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, emphasized the changing geopolitical realities in South Asia and the role of global political interests that have exacerbated the growing religious fundamentalism and violence. He challenged the churches to re-define peace and security from the perspective of the oppressed and powerless and to strengthen democratic institutions.

Biblical reflections dealing with shalom, reconciliation and people's security were presented by the Rev. Fr. Joseph Pathrapankal of the Anugraha Renewal Centre and the Rev. Dr. KC Abraham, former director of the ECC. Country situations from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka were also presented. Sri Lankan ecumenical leaders took turns in reporting on the state of the conflict, the conditions of the IDPs, and ecumenical initiatives that help mitigate the impact of the war on the vulnerable sections of the population. The Philippine ecumenical initiatives on peace were also presented as a particular model of responding to conflicts and generating international support.

Mr. B. Rahman, retired National Security Adviser in Sri Lanka presented his views on the impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Asia from the perspective of the war being waged between the Rajapaksa Government and the LTTE Tamil rebels.

A number of recommendations were made at the final plenary session, including the role which churches in India can play in fostering peace and reconciliation and strengthening inter-faith dialogue and cooperation by organizing pastoral visits, dialogues with local government officials, and in increasing peace-related initiatives for young people and communities in Sri Lanka. A Working Group was elected to follow up and find ways of prioritizing and implementing the recommendations from the Consultation, made up of Bishop Taranath Sagar (WCC Central Committee member and President of the NCCI); Bishop Samuel Azariah (WCC Central Committee member and Moderator of the Church of Pakistan); the Rev. Ebenezer Joseph (WCC Central Committee member and President of NCC Sri Lanka); Dr. KB Rokaya (CCA General Committee member and General Secretary of NCC Nepal); Rev. Dr. Jayasiri Peiris (CCA General Committee member and General Secretary of NCC Sri Lanka); Ms Susan Jacob (CCA General Committee member); Mr. Joyanta Adhikari (President, NCC Bangladesh); and Matthews George Chunakara (WCC) and Charlie Ocampo (CCA) as joint Facilitators.

Assessment and Follow-Up:

The South Asia Working Group has set a meeting to finalise the follow-up of the Consultation and to assist in strengthening the collaboration among members of the South Asia Council of Churches.

The situation has since changed when the Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE militant forces ending a 30-year war. Efforts at humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for the victims of the war are now being initiated by the NCC Sri Lanka and its member churches. CCA can play a role vis-à-vis Action by Churches Together and ecumenical aid agencies in support of humanitarian programs.

Article 9 Working Group

Church Forum on Northeast Asia Working Group

Venue: Korean YMCA, Tokyo, Japan

Date: May 21-24, 2009

- 1) The Article 9 Working Group, which got its mandate from the Article 9 Inter-Faith Conference in 2007 and the Follow-Up Meeting in October 2008, met to share activities following the two Meetings, to finalize its Vision and Mission Statement, and to plan for the 2nd Article 9 Conference in 2009.

The Meeting acknowledged the work of the Buddhist monks in asserting the need for peace and security and in opposing wars and militarism in Japan, taking up the mandates from the Article 9 meetings. The Meeting also received a communiqué from the Ecumenical Bishops Forum in the Philippines entitled, “From bows to plowshares, from spears to pruning hooks”, signed by fourteen

Catholic and Protestant bishops, four members of the Philippine Congress, and twenty-five clergy and ecumenical leaders.

Plans were discussed for the 2nd Article 9 Conference to be hosted by the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) at the PROK Academy House on 1-3 December 2009, preceded by an exposure visit to the Demilitarized Zone and the American Air Force Base close to Seoul, Korea.

- 2) The Church Forum on Northeast Asia met in its annual meeting to share common programs, to finalize its Terms of Reference, and to elect a moderator and convenor for 2009 and 2010.

Programs being planned include a Peace Camp for Children, the School of Peace Training for Northeast Asia, a Women's Gathering, and the development of a website. The Rev. Po Kam Cheong was elected Moderator, and I was elected as Coordinator for 2009-2010.

- 3) St. Paul Lutheran Church in Tokyo was the venue of Asia Sunday, which was held at 3:00 pm on Sunday, 24th May. I was invited to preach a sermon on Peace, based on Luke 19:41-44, "Blessed are the Peacemakers". A forum on Sri Lanka followed the service.

Planning Meeting on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Asian Consultation

Venue: CCA Office, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Date: May 28-29, 2009

An Asia-Pacific Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Consultation meeting was hosted by CCA, and Athena Peralta and Stanley Williams, WCC Consultants came to meet with CCA.

The methodology, process, venue and hosting were discussed, and a team from CCA composed of Charlie Ocampo, Moumita Biswas and Adam Row was identified to assist in organizing the Consultation. Based on the AGAPE Call, the consultation will gather women, youth and indigenous community leaders in a dialogue with representatives from the state, the business sector and the churches on the impact of wealth creation on the poor and vulnerable sections of the population.

The Consultation will gather 60 participants for five days of exposure visits, section hearings and plenary on the theme of Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. The proposed venue is Chiang Mai, where field programs of the Church of Christ in Thailand will be visited for the exposure part of the Consultation, and the proposed dates for the Consultation are 2-6 November 2009.

Meeting and Hand-Over of the Inter-Faith Cooperation Forum (ICF)

Venue: Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Date: July 13-14, 2009

A meeting was held in Hong Kong, hosted by the Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs to discuss the plans and programs of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) and to hand-over project holder role from CCA to APAY, represented by Mr. Kohei Yamada.

In particular, the discussion centred on the developments with the School of Peace and the responsibilities of the project holder, including reporting, signing agreements, bookkeeping, communication and audit between ICF and EED.

The CCA contingent composed of Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, Charlie Ocampo and Beng Seng Chan also met with Hong Kong-based regional NGOs on collaboration on common issues and programs. One particular matter discussed is the continued detention of Mr. Santha Fernando in Sri Lanka.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

HIV AND AIDS CONCERNS

Dr Erlinda Senturias, Consultant

Introduction

My appointment as Consultant on HIV and AIDS states that I am expected to plan, develop and conduct the HIV and AIDS program in accordance with the goals and thrust of CCA, maintain correspondence with Councils of Churches and Member Churches on the status of their AIDS program, network with UN, Christian and Donor Agencies, fund raise for the CCA's HIV and AIDS program, ensure that Asian voices are heard in international and regional conferences such as the International AIDS Conference and the International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, encourage and support faith-based groups and serve as ex officio member of the steering committee of the Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA).

International Membership

Upon the nomination of the CCA General Secretary, I was selected as member of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) HIV and AIDS Strategy Group (HIVSG) for 2009-2012. The strategy group meets twice a year in Geneva (March and October for 2009).

Before joining CCA, I have been chosen by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) as member of the Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation (CEEF) since November 2006 and for the period around the General Assembly in Porto Alegre, I was Interim Board Member of Bossey Institute. The CEEF meets every eighteen (18) months mostly in Bossey Institute. The second meeting of the CEEF was on January 11-17, 2000. In January, I spent time in meeting with international organizations involved in HIV and AIDS – the United Nations Joint Program on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) new coordinator on HIV and AIDS.

Activities of the HIV and AIDS Concerns from January 2009– June 2009

<p>Goal 1: To strengthen Christian faith and spiritualities and promote Asian Christian theologies to build communities of peace for all.</p>

There are two programs under this goal:

1. The development of liturgical resource materials for AIDS Sunday intended for distribution to all Member Churches and Councils of Churches for use during the Sunday nearest to World AIDS Day, December 1. The theme for this year's World AIDS Day is "Universal Access and Human Rights."
2. Asian Ecumenical Workshop on Theologies of HIV and AIDS will be undertaken in coordination with the Faith, Mission and Unity. There is no definite date and venue for the meeting.

Goal 2 – To develop human resources for social development and sustainability of life to build communities of peace for all.

A National HIV and AIDS Awareness Workshop is planned for the Protestant Church in East Timor on August 10-13.

A Strategic Direction for the HIV and AIDS program was held in The Church of Christ in Thailand AIDS Ministry Office on May 2-5. Dr. Elma M. Neyra was invited to facilitate the meeting. The result of the meeting was a project proposal on "Building HIV-Competent Churches in the Mekong Region". This will be a strategic partnership of CCA with The Church of Christ in Thailand AIDS Ministry (CAM) and the Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program. The project proposal is now with EED. Mr. Heiner Knauss has discussed this with the health consultant, Dr. Sonja Weinreich.

To prepare for 2010, CCA and CAM started the exploratory visit and gave the first orientation program on building HIV Competent Churches in the 16th District of The Church of Christ in Thailand in Sankhlaburi, Kanchanaburi, Thailand, close to the border with Burma. This Thai-Burma border is one of those hit by the HIV epidemic. We gathered the leaders of the 16th District of The Church of Christ in Thailand at the start of our mission. We attended the worship service in the Kwai River Christian Hospital and interviewed the Hospital Administrator. We also interviewed the other Church-related organizations such as the Saha Christian Suksa School, the Hostel for pupils of the school, the Gethsemane Bible School and the programs of Micah and Safe House. We also learned that there are many agencies such as the Thai Burma Border Consortium, the American Refugee Camp, the Christian Children's Fund, the Candle Light, God's Kid, Interserv, the Mission Program of the Coptic Church of Egypt and the World Vision. The Kwai River Christian Hospital TB Clinic is a recipient of the Global Fund. We also learned that the incidence of HIV associated with tuberculosis was very high especially for the Burmese on the border who are able to cross the border to get treatment. We also saw that Buddhist monks come to the Kwai River Christian Hospital for treatment and admission. There is an expressed danger of transferring the hospital and school under the care of the government as the CCT finds it difficult to maintain these former missionary programs. The pastors are overburdened to take on added responsibilities but they were open to inviting July (Toe Toe) who is working for the Micah Project and a possible exposure to the Safe House program that cares for thirty seven (37) patients, 9 of whom are living with HIV. The Safe House is run by Paw Lu Lu. As mother of the program,

she runs a livelihood program such as weaving and tailoring at the Safe House, provides food and housing for the patients.

Follow up Activities for the other half of this year:

1. Link up with the Myanmar Council of Churches to find out how the Churches can have the capacity to provide services in the border areas with Thailand.
2. Meet with the new leadership of Amity Foundation in Nanjing, Peoples' Republic of China on follow up of the program on HIV and AIDS undertaken together with CCA in June 2004.
3. Visit Laos Evangelical Church and Kampuchea Council of Churches together with the Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program.
4. Join the Consortium of HIV and AIDS Program in the Mekong Region upon the invitation of Tear Fund (UK).
5. Raise the counterpart support for EED's commitment to give CCA Euro 200,000.00 (2010-2011 for the project from the Ecumenical Partners who will be coming for the Round Table.

Goal 3 – To enhance advocacy, ecumenical networking and relationship within the Christian communities, and with other faiths, and to build communities of peace for all.

As member of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance HIV Strategy Group, we had a meeting Cartigny in Geneva on March 9-12 to draft the EAA Strategy on HIV and AIDS which has just been approved in the May meeting of the Board of EAA.

The Consultant represented CCA in the Civil Society Forum on Justice, Equity and Health at Webster University on May 15-16 and as member of the WCC delegation to the General Assembly of the World Health Organization. Two issues addressed in that assembly were the renewed call for Primary Health Care and the approval of the Social Determinants of Health. H1N1 had a special emphasis among the government delegation and kept the meeting two day short of the usual assemblies. Safe Motherhood such as the prevention of Maternal Mortality was also addressed in the plenary. In a special meeting with various UN agencies, the leaders also pledged to give emphasis on the prevention of vertical transmission of HIV.

CCA is actively engaged in interfaith collaboration with the Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA). We are helping in the preparation for the interfaith skills building workshop in Bali on August 6-9 and the production and publication of "A Handbook on HIV and AIDS: Guidelines for an Interfaith Response". The total budget for the book is Baht 300,000.00. The World Council of Churches is donating half of the fund. The book will be distributed during the round table conference and will be launched in Bali on August 8, 2009.

Goal 4 – To strengthen CCA’s organizational capacity and enhance the sense of ownership by the constituents of its vision, mission and goals.

Preparations are underway to revisit the Pastoral Guidelines on HIV and AIDS at Hotel Dhyana Pura, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. The members of the Executive Committee has been named as the Special Committee to revisit the guidelines and to propose an HIV and AIDS policy of CCA during the General Committee on 29 September to 2 October. This will also include participation in the interfaith skills building workshop. The total budget for this activity is US \$25,000.00.

I have also submitted one article for CCA News that was published in the June 2009 issue. It is about camping with children living with HIV and AIDS upon the invitation of CAM in a mountain resort in Chiang Mai on May 6-7, 2009.

I also participated in my first executive committee meeting on May 3-5, 2009.

CCA-UN/ESCAP Joint Project

Rev. Emmanuel Ilagan, Consultant

The CCA-UN/ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific) partnership has been going on for over 20 years now. The program is unique in that it is conducted in partnership with respective governments, NGOs and religious organizations in identified countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It is undertaken as a joint collaborative effort involving CCA and UN/ESCAP. With primary focus on youth participation in development in the Asia and Pacific region, the program is undertaken through research, training of government, religious leaders, NGOs and community based organizations who work with youth.

The current project with funding support came from EED (Church Development Service) of Germany is entitled 'Strengthening life skills for positive youth health behavior' is implemented in four countries. The project is based on the recognition of the threat of HIV and AIDS especially for the poor, out of school and disadvantaged youth of Asia.

Hence, there is an urgent need for life skills training to enhance the physical and mental well being of young people living under socially and economically disadvantaged circumstances. Life skills training not only helps minimize high-risk behavior, but also builds young people's confidence for engaging in creative problem-solving and enables them to have tools for getting out of the poverty cycle.

The overall project goal was to see disadvantaged young people, in particular, adolescent girls and young women, empowered and equipped with essential life skills so that they are better able to protect themselves from the threat of HIV and AIDS, drugs and other threats to their growth and development. .

When Ms. Shirley Susan, who was in charge of implementing the project left CCA to join UNICEF, I took over the remaining portion of the four-year project. This was in February 2008.

While there were lessons from the project that we could gather I would like to highlight three important learning points: 1) life skills training as an effective tool for youth empowerment; 2) the role of faith-based organizations in development work; and, 3) linkage with already existing related national programs to enhance sustainability.

1. Life skills training as an effective tool for youth empowerment

It is recognized that the skills needed by young people goes beyond training in literacy and numeracy. It is important that they are able to go through and cope with life with other skills.

The 10 generic life skills (as defined by World Health Organization –WHO) are: self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, effective communication, managing emotion, managing stress, decision making and problem solving.

Specific problem-solving skills include those for tackling peer pressure on drug use and negotiation for safe sex. The project made effective use of training young people themselves as advocates and trainers and through peer education, reached out to other disadvantaged youth in the target communities. Peer education approach proved to be a very effective strategy.

2. Role of Faith-based Organization in helping the youth

In the Philippines, the national counterpart organization was under the city mayor's office, but the personnel were very much involved in their own churches. The passion to help and care for the disadvantaged youth in the community was definitely there. Christian values permeated the entire project. In the end, the project became an instrument not just for behavioral skills but also for spiritual transformation of the youth.

3. Linkage with already existing related government or NGO programs for sustainability

As in many projects of this kind, sustainability is always a concern. We found that linking the project with existing programs in health of government agencies as well as NGOs was an effective way of enhancing the chances that the project will be sustained after the external funding support has stopped.

This was certainly true in the Philippines where the project was linked to a self-help job placement project; in Sri Lanka where the project was tied up with the national counterpart organization's existing development programs; in China where the project is tied up with the larger youth programs of the community funded by Global fund for AIDS. In Cambodia the plan is to tie up the project with the national authority for fighting against HIV and AIDS and STD and national authority for Fighting Against Drugs.

All in all it is my hope that the momentum started by the project in these countries will continue with the same passion and commitment demonstrated in the past four years.