

# *cca*news



---

New Life

---

Asia Sunday:  
Hope for New  
Life in East  
Timor

---

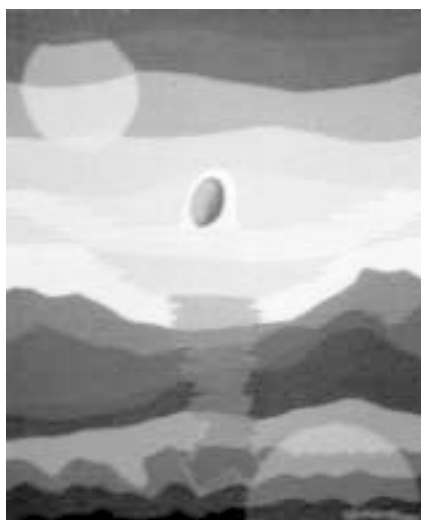
Challenged to  
Reconcile:  
Women Bring  
New Life

---

The War on  
Terror in Asia

---

# *New Life*



Cover: 'Peace', STM (Philippines)

*Our affirmation of 'New Life' becomes even more urgent in the light of the realities and challenges that we experience in Asia*

This edition of *CCA News* follows a theme that runs through various celebrations of the Christian Conference of Asia and the wider ecumenical movement: 'New Life'. Our Asia Sunday on 12 May focuses on 'Timor Lorosa'e: Hope for New Life'. Indeed, the CCA and its constituency stand in solidarity with the church of East Timor and hope for new life and fullness of life of all its people. The CCA especially prays for this youngest nation in Asia as it prepares to elect its president on 14 April and to inaugurate its independence on 20 May.

The month of March is also filled with the promise of 'New Life' as Easter brings renewed hope in the meaning of Christ's resurrection for our time. Also celebrated in March are two other important days: the World Day of Prayer and the International Women's Day. The World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical prayer movement that dates back to as early as 1812 and was begun by women as a way to be united in prayer and in action. This year, the World Day of Prayer has the theme, 'Challenged to Reconcile', again an indication of the hope for new life in this time of so much conflict and violence. International Women's Day, which is celebrated on 8 March each year, is a reminder that the women's movement for equality, justice, peace and genuine development is an ongoing call for 'new life' for women and all who are marginalised and dehumanised in society.

Our affirmation of 'New Life' becomes even more urgent in the light of the realities and challenges that we experience in Asia and all over the world. Our Asian region has experienced so much violence—from the time of colonisation, to the struggles for independence, and then to the more recent struggles for a decent life in the wake of the neocolonialist processes of globalisation, militarisation and terrorism that are affecting us.

As communities of faith, we rejoice in the signs of hope for 'New Life' through actions of conflict transformation, of just peace and of genuine reconciliation that are now visible in various parts of the region. That is why we are saddened by new developments that seem to challenge and threaten such hopeful signs. These negative developments of course include the processes of globalisation and militarisation—which as Asian analyst Ninan Koshy says in this issue of *CCA News*—are two sides of the same coin. The so-called war on terror that was hastened by the September 11 incidents in the US has now moved to Central Asia, to Southeast Asia and to Northeast Asia.

Therefore, more than ever, we must affirm and claim the 'New Life' that is promised to us by God—not by the powers that be. So we should not be disheartened. Let us carry on in faith, in hope and in love to claim and affirm God's will for 'New Life', which is God's gift of 'Fullness of Life For All'.

*Abn Jae Woong*

# Asia Sunday 2002—Timor Lorosa'e: Hope for New Life



*On Asia Sunday this year we learn about the remarkable story of East Timor and are called to support the work of the church there, especially for the education of the young generation*

28



## The War on Terror

*The War on Terror is a war in Asia. Ninan Koshy gives his view on what this war is really about*

20

## Addressing Violence against Women

4



*Asian women share their many stories of women's suffering*

## AIDS: A Challenge for Religious Response

14

### Asia Scene

Threat to Peace in Korea  
The Malino Declaration  
Afghan Refugees in Japan  
The Fountain of Life

### Global Currents

Towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development

### CCA in Focus

Youth Activities  
Dealing with Diverse Identities in a Changing Asia  
Meet the Presidents of CCA (2)—Anthony Row

### Reflections

6 A Turn Around—Ahn Jae Woong 21  
7 Ecumenical Theological Education in Asia—  
8 A. Wati Longchar 24  
9 Planting Feminist Theology in Hong Kong—  
Wong Wai-ching 26

### Newsbriefs

### Obituaries

12 Kim Kwan Suk 30  
16 Susanta Adhikari 30  
19 Angela Sollen 31

**cca**news

Volume 37 • Number 1 • March 2002

Editor-in-Chief  
Ahn Jae Woong

Editor  
Geoff Alves

Official publication of the Christian Conference of Asia

96, 2nd District, Pak Tin Village  
Mei Tin Road, Sha Tin, NT  
Hong Kong SAR, China  
Telephone + 852 2691 1068  
Fax + 852 2692 4378  
email cca@cca.org.hk  
www.cca.org.hk

### Editorial Committee

Mandy Tibbey  
Hope Antone  
Corazon Tabing-Reyes  
Daniel Thiagarajah  
Tony Waworuntu

# Addressing Violence against Women

*Seminar of people from Myanmar raises awareness of women's suffering*



An awareness-raising seminar-workshop for people from Burma on violence against women (VAW) was held recently. Participants included about forty women leaders, pastors and people from NGOs. There were also three men participants.

In the opening worship a church leader greeted the participants, encouraging them that all women and all church leaders (who are men) must know about the issue of violence against women. Women should expose cases, especially of domestic violence and violence in the church. Even with cultural or structural barriers, women must speak, tell the truth about women's issues and let God's justice roll. He said, 'God

works with us. God gives us wisdom which we can use.'

Fear paralyses. The people of Burma/Myanmar have known conflict for many generations—in pre-colonial times, under British colonialisation, during World War 2, during the struggle for independence in 1948, under the military rule starting in 1962 and made more rigid in 1988 with the establishment of martial law. There are many silenced stories of ongoing conflicts and the difficult situations that many people go through. When there is conflict, people suffer. But women and children suffer more, in different ways than men.

In the light of this background it was important to understand the participants' fears and efforts to come out of their fear.

For church women (with some men) gathering together on the issue of violence against women was already a courageous first step to break away from their paralysis.

The seminar-workshop used stories to reflect and share perspectives on VAW—a national situation of women, which focused on cases of wife battering, psychological violence, sex tourism and prostitution, coerced pregnancy, marital rape and rape in different parts of Myanmar—stories that were encountered in the presenter's ministry with families. More personal stories came out of the small group sharing. They named their experiences of verbal abuse and attempted rape in the home, sexual harassment in schools and workplaces and VAW in the



church and in refugee situations. They expressed feelings of anger, shame, fear, shock, mental disturbance and confusion. They shared their analysis of the root cause of VAW—patriarchy—and saw it in the home, in the school, in the church, in the state, everywhere. Experiences of women in conflict situations outside Myanmar—from Afghanistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Indonesia—provided them with a global exposure to VAW, making them affirm that ‘their story is our story’.

There were two Bible studies that helped participants to reflect on VAW—one as narrated in Judges 19, which helped them to include dangers that women face in state violence. The participants shared many stories of women’s suffering (see box).

The other Bible study the following day was on the story of the woman caught in adultery as compared to the story of Adam and Eve’s fall. Using dance and drama input and small-group discussion, the Bible study helped the participants reflect on Jesus’ liberating attitude towards women. The presentation on the legal rights of women discussed the legal status regarding VAW. The presenter reiterated the importance of education for women to overcome the barriers that hinder them from seeking justice when they are violated and abused. Many

of the laws however refer only to marriage and address domestic violence.

Being a woman is always a life of conflict. But there is hope! Reflecting on the exercise of conflict and transformation, the women tried to draw from their cultural heritage some ways by which conflict is handled or transformed, not evaded. In one minority area it is traditional to have a community gathering around food before the elders deal with a domestic or community problem.

Thinking about that session, there needs to be time to reflect some more on the cultural wisdom that we in Asia have that helps us find courage and strength to engage in conflict transformation. Colonisation has covered many layers on our ancestors’ wisdom.

Drawing inspiration from God’s voice and from each other’s creatively drawn vision of a world of harmony among women, men and creation, a world of sharing, a world of caring, the participants made their action plans and committed the implementation of these plans in the closing worship. One participant wryly observed, ‘In this seminar-workshop I did not have the time to sleep during the session!’ Yes, there is much to do, especially after the seminar-workshop!

## Many Stories of Women’s Suffering

- ‘In the border area, many soldiers are stationed because of the dispute between the Myanmar government and ethnic groups. The soldiers ask women from the villages to serve them—to cook and wash their clothes. If a woman is beautiful, she is asked to stay during the night.’
- ‘In some ethnic areas, when soldiers come to the village, men are asked to go to the hillside to gather wood. The women are raped.’
- ‘Women are raped. Some became pregnant. Some get HIV/AIDS from soldiers who rape them. Because of economic problems, they sell their bodies.’
- ‘Women serve as porters. Women porters have all kinds of disabilities. They have to go to land-mine areas and then legs are amputated.’
- ‘Always, men have the honour. Women have the shame!’

# Challenged to Reconcile

## *Malaysian women’s visits*

**T**he Women’s Work Committee of the Council of Churches of Malaysia organised a series of visits and workshops for women in various of its states recently.

The visits and workshops were conducted by Corazon Tabing-Reyes, joint executive secretary of CCA’s Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment program area.

Places visited were Klang Valley (the most urbanised part of Malaysia, where the Women’s Work Committee operates), the East Coast, and West Malaysia (the most

underdeveloped states, with majority populations of Malays and Muslims), then Trengganu and Kelantan (where a high incidence of incest is blamed on women having to work at night).

Cora preached during worship services, conducted workshops and visited with church women, students and faculty of the Seminary Theologi Malaysia.

She also visited the Asian Women’s Resource Centre for Culture and Theology, Malaysian Women in Ministry and Theology, a centre for young people with learning disabilities and a market run by women.

Preaching on the World Day of Prayer theme, ‘Challenged to Reconcile,’ Cora said: ‘Our faith resource teaches us that we are all called to be reconciled to God and to be agents of reconciliation, no longer to live in enmity, in macho ego and hatred but to live in love. We are called to plant the seeds of God’s peace in our personal lives, in our families, in our workplaces, in our church, in our country, in our world. And the power that we need is not of domination or ‘power over’. God teaches us a new understanding of power—the power to produce change for the sake of those who are weak.’

# Threat to Peace in Korea

## *The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea reacts to George Bush's 'axis of evil' statement*

**O**n 15 February, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) issued a strong statement against the reckless remarks made by US President Bush to Congress, which were seen as threatening the peace of the Korean peninsula. In his remarks, Mr Bush referred to North Korea as an 'axis of evil'. The Rev. Jong Moo Kim, general secretary of the PROK, is calling all its members to pray for peace in Korea and all over the world.

15 February 2002

President George W. Bush  
The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500, USA

Dear President George W. Bush,

We, the PROK, strongly denounce the reckless remarks made by US President George Bush, which threaten the peace on the Korean peninsula.

After proclaiming the year 2002 as 'the Year of War', US President Bush included North Korea in the 'axis of evil' in a speech at the US Congress, thereby inferring the possibility of a military containment offensive. Hence, a new crisis has been created and tension and fear have been rapidly spreading in all parts of the Korean peninsula.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), which has never stopped praying for reconciliation and the peaceful reunification of the nation since the division of the Korean peninsula by the great powers, is, together with all Koreans, astonished by the US's supremacy ideology, which ignores the peace of the Korean peninsula and the wellbeing of Korean citizens in order to pursue its own national interests.

The concept of a peace policy based on military power, in which a country declares, or effectively declares, war upon nations that it arbitrarily judges to be a threat, however small, to itself and says that it will eliminate them through force, is clearly an anti-peace policy that threatens world peace.

It cannot be denied that this is a revival of the spirit of imperialism that drove the world into an abyss of death and destruction during two world wars.

The 'axis of evil' statement by US President Bush regarding North Korea demonstrates extreme selfishness on the part of the US, ignoring, as it does, the ardent wish of the Korean nation for the peaceful reunification of South and North Korea through dialogue and exchanges. Clearly it is an action which

sets back these autonomous moves toward the reunification of Korea. Also, as reported in the press, President Bush intends to demand unilaterally the purchase, by South Korea, of US-made weapons and the globalisation of the new liberalism through the signing of a Korea-US investment agreement during his forthcoming visit to Korea.

We, the PROK, respect the spirit of the 15 June South-North Korea joint declaration announced during the South-North Korea summit and pray for the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula through mutual exchanges based on reconciliation and cooperation. We assert that the 'axis of evil' statement by President Bush regarding North Korea is an expression of the US-style supremacy ideology, which threatens peace on the Korean peninsula, and we strongly denounce it. Also, we strongly oppose the visit to Korea by a US president who does not apologise for or justify his statements to the Korean people, whose interests in peace they militate against.

If the United States truly thinks of itself as Korea's partner wanting peace on the Korean peninsula and throughout the world, it must revise its North Korea policy towards easing the tension on the Korean peninsula and achieving peaceful coexistence through unconditional dialogue with North Korea. As such, the PROK strongly urges the US to give up its peace policy based on a supremacy ideology led by its military force.

The PROK, which has prayed while dreaming of our people's tomorrow, in which there is no war but only peace on the Korean peninsula, in which brothers and sisters of South and North Korea live together harmoniously, a state desired both by God and all Koreans, will continue to pray with all its faith and power for the unity and reconciliation of our people while closely observing any actions America may take.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea  
Rev. Yoon, Ki-seok, Moderator of General Assembly  
Rev. Moon, Tae-gol, Chairman, Church and Society Committee  
Rev. Lee, Hae-hak, Chairman, Peaceful Reunification Committee

# The Malino Declaration

## *Christian and Muslim communities in Maluku make an agreement*

**T**he conflict in Maluku that has been going on for three years now and has caused thousands of victims, an enormous loss of property, suffering and difficulties for the population. It endangered the oneness of the Unitarian Nation of the Republic of Indonesia and clouded the future of the Moluccan population. Because of this, under the compassion of the Almighty, as Muslim and Christian communities of Maluku, in a spirit of openness and sincerity, and explicitly wanting to live with our diversity within the unity of our people, together with the government of the Republic of Indonesia, we agree on committing ourselves to vow on the following:

1. To end any form of conflict and violence.
2. To uphold the supremacy of law, in a righteous, firm, honest, impartial way, supported by the whole of the population. Therefore the law enforcing apparatus has to be professional in the execution of their task.
3. To refuse, counteract and take measures against any form of separatist movement (with among them RMS) which threatens the unity and sovereignty of the Unitarian Nation of the Republic of Indonesia
4. As a part of the Unitarian Nation of the Republic of Indonesia the people of Maluku have the right to be, work and do business in the whole of the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. This is the same the other way around, that other Indonesians may be, work and do business in the territory of the Maluku Province, lawfully and fairly, paying attention to and observing the local culture and watching security and order.
5. Any armed organisation, unit, group or laskar, who uses arms without authorisation in Maluku, is forbidden and has to hand over its arms, or be disarmed, and measures according to the prevailing laws should be taken against them. Parties from outside who disturb peace and order in Maluku, are obliged to leave Maluku.
6. To form an independent national enquiry team to execute a final investigation into the event of 19 January 1999 (the role of) FKM, RMS, RMS Christians, Laskar Jihad, Laskar Kristus, forced conversion, human rights abuse and the like, for the sake of the strengthening of (the rule of) law.
7. To bring back the refugees to the place where they came from without forcing them, and with all their civil rights, step by step, following the developments and the situation.
8. The government will help the people to overcome the mental, social, economic damage as well as the damage done to facilities (like educational, medical, religious facilities) and family houses, in order to allow a future of re-establishing welfare and overcoming difficulty for the whole of the Moluccan population.  
This includes the opening up of any restriction of movement, so that economic and social life can be resumed in the right way
9. In the effort to maintain order and security in the whole of the territory and the population, the unity or compactness and the firmness of military and police, according to their respective function and task, is decisive. In this respect several facilities for the TNI/POLRI have to be built, equipped and functioned.
10. To maintain harmonious relations within the whole of the religious oriented people in Maluku, any effort of dakwah and the spreading of religion has to uphold the ideal of diversity and observe local culture.
11. To support the rehabilitation of the Pattimura-University, based on the principal of joint development; therefore the system of recruitment and other policies have to be transparent and based on the principle of equity, in observance of established requirements of quality.

We made this agreement in real sincerity and determined to execute it consistently. Parties that break the agreement and do not want to execute it, will face juridical prosecution, based on prevailing laws.

The follow up of this agreement will be worked out and planned by the following:

1. Commission on Security and Law-enforcement.
2. Social-economic Commission.

The execution of this agenda and plan will be done by all the parties involved, monitored by a national monitoring team, and a provincial working group.

The agreement was made and signed in Malino on 12 February 2002.

# Afghan Refugees in Japan

## *NCCJ hosts program on detention of Afghan asylum seekers*

The National Christian Council in Japan hosted a WCC–CCA meeting on Peace and Security in North East Asia on 9–10 March at the Tokyo YMCA. The meeting was closely followed by a program on Afghan refugees in Japan and included a visit to a detention centre in Tokyo and separate meetings with Afghan refugees and the people responsible for refugees in the Ministry of Justice, as well as members of the national assembly and support groups. Ahn Jae Woong of CCA, Clement John of the WCC, Kenichi Otsu of the NCCJ

and other Christian leaders met senior immigration officials, parliamentarians, concerned Japanese groups and the Japanese media. They called for the release and recognition of refugee status of twenty-four Afghan asylum seekers. They also called for improved systems in Japan for recognition of refugees (noting that Japan has recognised an unusually small number of refugees for a rich, developed country) and urged that on no account should the asylum seekers be sent back to Afghanistan.

## The National Christian Council in Japan Calls on the Japanese Government to Release all Afghan Asylum Seekers and Grant Them Refugee Status

### Japan's Racist Refugee Policy

Even before the events of September 11, the Japanese government had been notorious for its racist and exclusionary refugee policy. In the last ten years the government has only recognised forty-nine refugees from around the world, the worst record among the G7 countries. After September 11, Japanese governmental policies for refugees has become more exclusionary and more harsh to the asylum seekers in Japan than ever.

### Escaped from Taliban, Detained in Japan

In 1998 and afterwards, when the Taliban had taken control of Mazar-e-Sharif and more than the half of northwest part of Afghanistan, the Hazara people, who are descendants of Ghengis Khan and Shiite Muslims, were made the targets of planned genocide. A lot of Hazaras escaped from their homelands and became refugees. Some of them travelled as far as Japan in their search for protection. Their number increased, particularly beginning in 2001, and most of them applied to Japanese government for recognition as refugees.

However, after September 11, the Japanese government began investigation of these Afghanistan asylum seekers on suspicion of their relation with the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda. On 3 October the Japanese Immigration Bureau and the police raided some places where Afghan asylum seekers lived and arrested nine of them. They were detained in the Immigration Detention Centre in Tokyo. When arrested, the asylum seekers were under investigation as to whether they would be recognised as refugees, and a decision had not yet been made. The police unit in charge of the detainees was armed with automatic rifles. (In Japan it is almost unheard of for police to carry automatic weapons.) Though these refugees were anti-Taliban

and had been persecuted by the Taliban, they were made objects of 'anti-terrorist measures'. However, when questioned, the Japanese government was unable to uncover any relationship with terrorists, and instead the government began to claim that they were actually 'foreign workers camouflaged as refugees'.

### Once Released, but ...

Some lawyers in Tokyo met the Afghan detainees and found that the detention was unlawful, that it was against the international covenant of refugees and other international standards of UNHCR. They organised a group of lawyers to save them, and legal action was started in order to end their detention. The action was successful, and the government's refugee policy was judged as being overly exclusionary. On 6 November the Tokyo District Court's third civil affairs section (Chief Judge Masayuki Fujiyama), which examined five of the nine Afghans, made a historic decision to release all five, and criticised Japanese governmental policy for refugees: 'The government's policy for refugees are exclusive enough to say that it is against international order and public welfare.'

The Japanese government, taken aback by this judgment, filed an appeal to the Tokyo High Court, and in an attempt to 'prove' that they were 'workers in camouflage', released personal information that had been collected by Japanese secret police. Later, the Tokyo High Court overturned the decision made by Tokyo District Court, and the five Afghans were detained again in the Detention Centre in Tokyo.

Furthermore, on 27 November the Japanese government decided to deport the asylum seekers to Afghanistan, and moved them to another detention facility in the northeast region of Japan, about three hours from Tokyo by train.



### Disregarding the Diagnosis of ATSD

Each of the nine people has been mentally affected as a result of being detained and/or beaten by the Taliban regime. The psychiatrist who examined them diagnosed them all as suffering from ATSD (acute traumatic stress disorder), and warned that keeping them in a detention centre could worsen their disease remarkably, and would violate their human rights. Their internment by the Japanese government continues, however, disregarding this warning.

### A Demand to the Japanese Government to Change Its Racist Policy Towards Refugees and Immigrants

At present, there are twenty-four refugee applicants from Afghanistan in Japanese government detention, including the nine mentioned above. Most of them are members of the Hazara eth-

nic group and it is clear that they cannot go back to present-day Afghanistan, as the interim government of the country mainly consists of Jamiyat-i Islami, a Mujahedin group of Tajiks that killed many Hazaras in the civil war era of 1993–96. The NCCJ says the Japanese government must release them immediately, and admit them as refugees, or at least give them appropriate residency status.

Moreover, the Japanese government should change its whole immigration policy to a democratic and tolerant one, discarding its racist refugee policy and expanding the acceptance of refugees.

We appeal for you, as people throughout the world who love freedom and peace, to speak out to stop the detention of the Afghanistan refugee applicants, and to call upon the Japanese government to abandon its racist immigration policy.



# The Fountain of Life

## *A joint statement for the 2002 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from the churches in Hong Kong*

‘For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.’ (NRSV) This verse from Psalm 36:9 shows God’s love for all his creatures and, in particular, humankind. God is the strength and the protector of humankind. God is the fountain from which humankind can drink of the waters of life.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, as we drink from this fountain of life, we broaden our vision and discover new and fresh ways to bear witness to Christ. We learn how to become instruments of healing and harmony as Christians and children of God. We begin to realise more deeply that life is a great gift from God, and we pledge ourselves to work for that healing and harmony which God wills.

Hong Kong is a diverse community of different races, religions, cultures and languages, all of which in various ways divide us socially. But as Christians we know we are called upon to walk the path of reconciliation and harmony, the path of peace and justice that marks the presence of the reign of God on earth. And yet, we ourselves as Christians have yet to find that path. Only through confidence, understanding and mutual care can we reach our goal. Let us pray fervently for the light to over-

come our disunity, for it is only God’s light that can make us appreciate more deeply our need for unity. In the past we may have celebrated our differences but we know that such a path in the future will never lead to the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:3: ‘Do all you can to preserve the unity of Spirit by the peace that binds you together.’ On the road to unity, we need God’s gift of wisdom and his joy. Only through such blessed gifts from God can we, the faithful along with other people of good will, praise and glorify God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As they are one, we too must strive to live in peace and unity with all our brothers and sisters who share our Christian discipleship. In our hearts we pray fervently, ‘O God remove the obstacles that divide us, put to rest all our anxieties. Let us taste your life and see your light forever.’ Amen.

*Diocesan Ecumenical Commission of the  
Hong Kong Catholic Church  
Church Unity and Relations Committee,  
Hong Kong Christian Council*

# Towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development

*Ten years after the World Summit on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, plans are under way for the Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), set for Johannesburg, South Africa, on 26 August – 4 September 2002. This is to be called the 'Johannesburg Summit 2002'*

Delegates representing states and governments, intergovernment organisations, businesses, and nongovernment organisations from around the world met in New York on 28 January – 8 February for the second session of the global preparatory committee for the summit.

Generally, 'nobody seems to be happy about how Rio's resolutions on environmental security and economic growth have been implemented by governments and the private sector. And everybody has an opinion about what should be done at Johannesburg to alleviate global poverty and protect natural resources,' reported the *Earth Times*.

Nevertheless, poverty alleviation and sustainable development are continuing prime concerns of all partners of the Johannesburg Summit. To combat poverty needs a comprehensive perspective. Three major interlinking pillars for sustainable development include economic growth and equity, conserving natural resources and environment, and social development.

'We live on one planet, connected in a delicate, intricate web of ecological, social, economic and cultural relationships that shape our lives. Achieving sustainable development will require greater responsibility—for ecosystems on which all life depends, for each other as a single human community and for the generations that will follow our own,' says Dr Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations.

He elaborated that 'sustainable development calls for improving the quality of life of all of the world's people without increas-

ing the use of our natural resources beyond the earth's carrying capacity'.

The World Council of Churches (WCC), in collaboration with regional churches and ecumenical organisations, set up an 'Ecumenical Team' (ET) to participate in the summit and attend the sessions of the preparatory committee. The task of the ET is twofold: to promote ethical and moral values in sustainable development and to develop guidelines for churches and religious communities in combating poverty and promoting sustainable livelihood.

Religious communities are very much concerned about the progress of the recommendations made at the Earth Summit, especially the Agenda 21, a global plan of action for sustainable development that contains over 2,500 wide-ranging recommendations for action. Still, according to the report of the UN Secretary General, about 1.2 billion (20 per cent of the world's population) live with an income less than US\$1 per day. Of the estimated 815 million people in the world who are undernourished, an estimated 777 million live in developing regions, 27 million in transition countries, and 11 million in industrialised countries.

The Ecumenical Team emphasised that what is required of churches and religious communities in our midst is

the development of life and hope. 'The challenge before us is to reverse the impact of a growth-driven development model that has brought about the worst environmental crisis and world poverty that we have ever witnessed and experienced.' Instead of referring to 'sustainable development', we need to work toward the building



of sustainable communities, which requires a just and moral economy where people are empowered to participate in decisions affecting their lives, where public and private institutions are held accountable for the social and environmental consequences of their operations, and where the earth is nurtured rather than exploited and degraded.

The religious communities attending the second WSSD Preparatory Committee (PrepCom 2) meeting urged all partners to take ethical and moral values as important components of sustainable development.

At the end of PrepCom 2, the chairperson of the Johannesburg Summit read the drafted paper, which contained a list of issues to be taken by heads of states and governments, such as poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing natural resources base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalising world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of small island developing states, and sustainable development initiatives for Africa.



Ecumenical team at the New York meeting with WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser

Toward the Johannesburg Summit there will be two more PrepCom meetings in New York (25 March – 5 April) and in Jakarta (27 May – 7 June).

—Prawate Khid-arn  
(a member of the Ecumenical Team, at left in photo)

## New Filipino Coalition against US Military Presence

More than a thousand representatives of political blocks, political parties, coalitions, people's organisations and individuals participated in the formal launching of the 'Gathering for Peace Coalition' at Ellinwood Church, Malate, Manila, in the Philippines, on 12 February.

Coming from various religious backgrounds and political persuasions, they expressed alarm that the Philippine government is not undertaking pro-Filipino reforms to stop the onslaught of the forces of globalisation, but has instead allowed the US to set up its Trojan horse of US military forces in the country. They named the presence of American combat forces in the country as USA's way of

controlling the Asia-Pacific region to 'further secure its own interests and huge investments in the region'. The group sees the involvement of the US troops in the anti-Abu Sayyaf operations as compounding, not hastening a solution of the problem.

The group affirmed a common commitment to defend Philippine national sovereignty against foreign intervention, and committed themselves to vigorously oppose the current US military operations and any form of intervention in Philippine affairs. The group asserted that 'the path to true and lasting peace is one that addresses poverty and the historical injustices against an oppressed people'.

### *NCCP: US Intervention is Travesty against God's Will*

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) strongly denounced the entry of US military troops in the country, purportedly for the latest round of 'Balikatan' exercises. In a statement jointly issued on behalf of the Council on 1 February by the Rev. Dr Domingo J. Diel, Jr, NCCP chairperson, and Ms Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, general secretary, the NCCP described the entry of American troops as an utter disregard of the country's sovereignty and a violation of constitutional provisions. The Philippine constitution bans the presence of foreign military troops following the abrogation of the RP-US Military Bases Agreement in 1991.

The NCCP believes that bombarding Mindanao with US and Filipino troops could worsen rather than solve the problem. The mere

presence of military forces will expose the people in their areas of operations to the danger of being caught in the crossfire. Displacement of civilians and divestment of property will be natural consequences, not to mention the other social costs to the women and children.

The NCCP criticised the Arroyo government for further enhancing a culture of dependency on foreign might, military strategies and weaponry instead of developing homegrown solutions to the problems besetting the people. 'As Christians, we affirm the admonition of the Psalmist thus: "The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save" (Psalm 33:17),' the NCCP statement concluded.

# Forthcoming Youth Activities

*The youth constituency of CCA looks forward to a number of programs lined up for the first half of the year*

## EASY Net National Coordinators Meeting

The EASY Net National Coordinators Meeting is scheduled for 2–9 May in Bangkok, Thailand. EASY Net stands for ecumenical student and youth groups network and is the outcome of the Asia Students and Youth Gathering in 2000. It seeks closer collaboration and mutual cooperation between the CCA Youth, WSCF-AP, Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, IMCS, IYCS, and YWCA.

The EASY Net functions through the National Ecumenical Teams (NET) of the national bodies of these organisations in countries where they are present. Each NET selects a national coordinator from their team.

The May meeting would be the first gathering of the national coordinators. It will be a time for sharing, training, and planning for closer networking and mutual cooperation of these organisations. Resource material will be produced, in the form of a manual, for the work of the national ecumenical teams and the national coordinators.

## Asia Youth Week 2002: Colonialism and Historical Grievances

Also scheduled in May this year is the planning meeting for this year's Asia Youth Week (AYW) observance. The AYW is a yearly campaign for youth concerns undertaken litur-

gically by providing Bible study and worship materials for the celebration in October each year. AYW aims to rally the youth of CCA member churches and councils and its network around a common theme. A small group of youth will be invited to plan the resource material.

It is hoped that Protestant, Catholic and Evangelical groups at local levels will jointly organise an ecumenical gathering in the form of a retreat, seminar, worship, forum or writing workshop relating to the theme of the year.

The theme suggested for 2002 is post-colonialism and the historical grievances created by the colonial powers. This is to address the issue of peace and reconcilia-

## New Youth Consultant

Beginning January 2002, and for a period of one year, the Christian Conference of Asia has a youth consultant for the program area on Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment in the person of Rakesh Peter Dass.

Rakesh hails from Nagpur, Maharashtra, India, and is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh.

He completed Bachelor of Commerce and Master of Commerce degrees at Nagpur University.

He also has an honour's diploma in network-centred computing and a postgraduate diploma in international trade. He is also near to completion of a Master in Business Administration in Human Resource Development and Management.

Rakesh has participated in management seminars, workshops on leadership skills, environmental and ecological discussions



Rakesh Peter Dass

and social, economic and religious conferences.

His ecumenical experiences include participation in NCCI-URM seminars for youth and organising the 'Seminar on Leadership Development Initiating Ecumenical Reformation (SOLDIER) 2000' with the NCCI General Secretariat, Youth Unit and Com-

munication Unit. He helped in coordinating the recent Asia Ecumenical Course of CCA in Kerala, India, in August–September 2001. He has also been part of the SCM and YMCA at the local level.

Rakesh has written and published articles and study papers on youth affairs, leadership and developmental issues.



tion by tracing the instituted conflicts that are rooted in and manifested by the colonial experiences of many countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

This year the AYW will be organised with the EASY Net partners as part of our commitment to increased networking among regional youth organisations. This will provide sharing of issues and distribution of the AYW materials to a larger network. The resources would also be shared by the EASY Net partners.

### **National Council Youth Secretaries Meeting, Korea**

The youth secretaries of the national councils of churches (NCCs) in the region will meet in June in Korea. This will be an occasion for fellowship, for sharing and updating on youth activities and concerns, and for strategising on how to integrate youth work and the youth movement towards achieving leadership development, ecumenical formation and movement building. Inputs on the global youth works will update the national secretaries on trends and issues and the global youth movement.

### **Internship**

Historically, CCA Youth has many positive experiences of internship as a method of ecumenical leadership development. Internships give young people some experiences in the wider ecumenical movement. By being placed in the CCA centre and interacting with the staff of CCA across the other program areas, interns deepen their knowledge and widen their thinking to encompass the ecumenical movement at the regional level. Care is exercised in the selection of interns and their guidance throughout their internship, and this is done by the Internship Committee and the youth staff.

This year one intern will be chosen to help in the compilation and publication of a resource material from the EASY Net National Coordinators Meeting, be part of the process of the Asia Youth Week 2002 and its publication, and help in other programs under this program cluster. The period of the internship will be from July 2002 to December 2002.

## *Meet the Youth Intern ... Before She Goes*



Renemsongla Ozukum

**R**enemsongla Ozukum, a young woman from Nagaland in India, served as youth intern at the Christian Conference of Asia, from July 2001 to March 2002.

A Baptist from the Ao ethnic group of Mokokchung, Nagaland, Ren graduated with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity degrees. Her Christian Youth Endeavour training in her church denomination was enriched by her involvement in the Student Christian Movement. She recalled how the patriarchal culture of her society has tended to look down on girl-children but that she did not allow it to deter her desire to serve in God's ministry.

Speaking of her CCA internship, she said she learned about this program at the WCC (World Council of Churches) and NCCI (National Council of Churches in India) youth empowerment training program in 2000. What motivated her to take up the challenge to enter the wider ecumenical circle? The painful realisation that due to lack of awareness, knowledge, modern technology and media, poor transport and communication facilities, her region of Northeast India has often been isolated from the ecumenical circle. Ren wanted to help break that isolation so she applied for internship.

Ren's internship began when she served as documenter of the School of Ecumenical Leadership Formation (SELF) in July–Au-

gust 2001, which ran for thirty-five days in Chiang Mai, Thailand. For six months, she was tasked to compile the proceedings of that program. Then from January to March she was assigned to continue the collection of materials for a Youth Worship Resourcebook, a work begun by another youth intern some time ago. The book is to be a sequel to the popular resourcebook, *Your Will Be Done*, produced by an early CCA Youth Desk.

'Being a woman of the Fourth World in a Third World country, I have numerous limitations,' she said with a laugh. 'But in spite of all that, CCA staff members have treated me with love and understanding. I felt the warmth of a family here and that is the best impression I have of this internship.' She added, 'My being here as a tribal woman enabled others to widen their worldview and in turn my exposures here strengthened my faith.'

She considered the time gap from an outgoing youth consultant to an incoming new one as most challenging for it raised the issue of supervision and the need to adjust to different leadership styles and perspectives. And what about after internship? 'Hmmm ... I'll try to fit in a movement for the people's struggle for selfhood along with the Ao Theological Association in my home country,' she said with a big smile.

—Hope S. Antone



# AIDS: A Challenge for Religious Response

*Statement from the CCA Consultation on HIV/AIDS in Thailand*

**W**e, the participants of the CCA 'Consultation on HIV/AIDS: A Challenge for Religious Response' held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 25–30 November 2001, having heard, discussed and deliberated on reports about the prevention, care and treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS from fourteen countries in the Asia-Pacific region, celebrate with joy:

- the solidarity, strength and support extended by the world community, especially the community-based organisations, religious institutions, non-government organisations and faith-based organisations, in addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis that threatens to be the most devastating disease of the twenty-first century,
- the encouraging signs of new drugs in the medical field that mitigate suffering and extend the lifespan of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA),
- the great strides made in the field of health care, hospitals, children's homes and awareness education by the increasing number of organisations, both secular and religious, committed to this cause,
- the indomitable spirit, courage, wisdom, foresight and timely action taken by some countries such as Thailand to combat HIV/AIDS.

Yet in spite of all these encouraging signs, we are appalled at the statistics, which remain staggering.

## An Affirmation of Faith

God created all and cares for everyone. The God we strive to follow is one who hears the cries of suffering people and inspires us to work for a better world. Jesus the great and beloved physician, the good shepherd,



the rock and the refuge, calls us to be the good and compassionate neighbours, the loyal and faithful friends who lowered their sick friend from the roof of the house.

Churches and faith-based organisations are challenged to follow in the footsteps of the Lord—

- who stood with people who were marginalised, discriminated against and stigmatised,
- who healed not only physical ailments but understood and healed the deep scars and wounds inflicted by society,
- who wept and empathised with human suffering.

## The Asian Situation

More than 15 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Asia. HIV/AIDS cuts across geographical boundaries, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicities and age groups. Though it has devastating influences in both rich and poor nations, it has spread more rapidly in poor and developing countries, further aggravating the economic conditions and its social consequences. The more affluent Asian countries, such as Australia, Japan and Taiwan, have the capacity to limit

the progress of HIV/AIDS infection, due to availability and affordability of anti-retroviral treatment and better comprehensive health care and support.

The epidemiological pattern of HIV varies in countries and within countries. Governments fear to recognise, accept and admit the existence of AIDS as they believe it would be detrimental to tourism and foreign investments. But countries such as Thailand that have dared to openly admit the existence of AIDS have succeeded in reducing the numbers affected as anticipated in the projections made by UNAIDS.

## Emerging Issues and Challenges

We view with concern the following emerging issues and challenges arising out of this ongoing crisis:

- Despite the encouraging developments PLWHA still face significant discrimination and stigmatisation and are denied the opportunity to fully participate in their communities. This stigma also extends to and affects other members of the families of PLWHA and can be especially traumatic for children.
- Many social and cultural practices and beliefs contribute to the escalation of HIV and are barriers to conveying effective HIV prevention messages. These practices also inhibit open and honest discussion of human sexuality, both in the church and in society.
- Women and children are placed at great risk of HIV because they have the least power to negotiate safe sex. Due to cultural and biological factors women and children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and HIV infection. In some countries, widows of HIV positive hus-

bands are denied the right to inheritance, leading to economic exploitation.

- HIV-positive children born to HIV positive parents may die within ten years. Children who are HIV negative continue to hear the stigma and are forced into situations or practices where they are exposed to HIV, such as injecting drugs or sex work, because of rejection by peers and society, or lack of love and hope, thus continuing the vicious cycle.
- The impact on families where parents have died or can no longer care for children and elderly people is enormous. Elderly people in turn have to care for their grandchildren when they themselves may be frail and in need of care. The loss of people who are in the productive age group of 19–44 has a huge social and economic impact.
- Market dynamics due to the World Trade Organisation Treaty and other financial instruments like patent rights and intellectual property rights have inflated the cost of treatment and drugs, putting these new drugs out of the reach of the majority of PLWHA who come from developing countries.
- Developing countries that are burdened with debt repayments find it difficult to allocate sufficient funds for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

## A Call to Action

HIV/AIDS is an ongoing crisis that requires a sustained and sustainable response at



Participants of the CCA consultation on AIDS at a centre during an exposure visit

multisectoral and multifaith levels. Therefore the church is called to be a healing community and to be a model of compassion and love for all.

The church at all levels, international, regional, national and local, has an important role to play in:

- challenging the negative, judgmental attitudes that still exist towards people with HIV/AIDS,
- decreasing fear and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS,
- providing accurate information about HIV/AIDS, including prevention information, and information about HIV services that may assist PLWHA,
- encouraging equal participation of PLWHA in planning and delivering HIV/AIDS programs and services,
- providing practical and pastoral support for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, especially to women and children,
- advocating for appropriate legislation and policies that address the needs and rights of PLWHA, which include access to treatment and

medicine and respect for the human rights of PLWHA,

- engaging in prayerful dialogue and networking with other churches, faith communities and secular organisations in order to encourage each other in the ongoing struggle to meet the challenge of HIV/AIDS.

We call on the governments of Asia:

- to affirm the human rights and dignity of all people, including those living with HIV/AIDS, especially women and children,
- to legislate against discrimination and stigmatisation by ensuring the basic rights of people with HIV/AIDS and their families to adequate health care, education and employment,
- to allocate adequate resources and provide programs that serve to decrease the incidence and impact of HIV/AIDS in the region.

## Conclusion

This then is the time:

- to heal,
- to care, not only by providing services but also by standing alongside with love,
- to build a community of belonging and acceptance,
- to transform prejudice into compassion, healing and understanding,
- to live with hope and die with dignity.



# Dealing with Diverse Identities in a Changing Asia

*A statement adopted by the participants of a consultation organised by  
CCA and the WCC, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 24–28 November 2001*



**W**e, the Christian and Muslim participants of the Consultation on 'Dealing with Diverse Identities in a Changing Asia' come from different Asian countries—Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines.

In an attempt to contribute to the ongoing reflection and action around the global process of the Decade to Overcome Violence, we have gathered here to reflect upon the phenomenal diversity that characterises Asian life, with a view to identifying possibilities and resources from our experience as one people with diverse identities living often in the midst of tension and conflicts.

## **An Overview of Some Significant Conflicts in Our Asian Life**

- The ethnic and religious conflicts between Christian and Muslim in Indonesia, particularly in Ambon, North Maluku, Sulawesi etc., have already displaced thousands of people internally. Assertion of religious identities has become a major source of violence in India, the Philippines and many other Asian countries. This assertion draws its energy from the realisation that arises out of marginalisation and unequal or unfair distribution of power within the structures of the society.

- The conflict situation in Sri Lanka is of ethnic origin and has its genesis in a long political history of marginalisation.
- Some of the major conflicts in the Philippines could be attributed to the impact of globalisation. The movement of migrant workers, trafficking of women, conversion of agricultural lands for the use of the TNCs, destruction of forests, the displacement of the indigenous people from other lands etc. have displaced people, destroyed community bonds, eroded social values and resulted in the commodification of identities.
- The conflict in Mindanao continues to be prolonged. The historic 1996 peace accord between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front has recently been broken, imperilling the ongoing peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front—the other Bangsa Moro group that has waged a struggle for an independent state in Muslim-dominated areas of Mindanao.
- The indigenous people in the Asia-Pacific region continue to struggle for their right to land and human settlement, right to self-determination, and right to culture, language and education.
- In the post-Cold War era, the continued division of North and South Korea is an anomaly that continues to cause suffering and instability for the people of the Korean peninsula.
- The political and economic marginalisation continues to create and sustain fear and suspicion among various ethnic communities that make up Myanmar.

## We Are Challenged

These hard realities that constitute our life in Asia pose crucial ethical challenges. We believe that this situation calls us to go through a process of introspection, sensitisation and involvement in the struggles of people for justice and human rights.

We affirm that our diverse identities, **which evolve and are being renewed**, are precious and distinct to the Asian life. We believe that attempts towards homogenisation of culture are destructive to the spirit of the people and to the communities. We recognise the need to explore the life-affirming and community-building myths, legends, proverbs and philosophical axioms in each culture of Asia which speak of overcoming the forces of ignorance, superstition, oppression, exclusion, and poverty.

We take note of the way the following factors use and portray diversity as negative terms rather than in the positive:

- The phenomenon of economic globalisation embodies in itself threats and possibilities to diminish the plurality of cultures in Asia today.
- The powerful among the religious communities use religion as an instrument in their struggles.
- Structural violence that certain communities are consistently subjected to is a breeding ground for more forms and expressions of violence.
- Media and technology deny, deride and impose identities that do not build people and communities.

Despite all these challenges ...

## We Have Reasons to Celebrate and Rejoice

- We celebrate our rich diversity of religions, cultures, languages, ethnicities and traditions that compel us to uphold the value of the community and the human being.
- We celebrate the irruption of the marginalised as they struggle for new structures of relationships based on justice, peace, unity and freedom.
- We affirm the aspirations for human dignity and 'fullness of life for all' in the face of globalisation which commodifies identities.

- We acknowledge the learning arising from the struggles of Minjung and Dalit peoples for identity and dignity. We recognise the creative possibilities in Minjung and Dalit theologies which recapture the centrality of justice and the poor in the affirmation of Christian faith.
- We rejoice over the experiences where, in times of crises, people of various faiths work hard together to rebuild communities in a spirit of goodwill and active cooperation.
- We celebrate the important spiritual and unifying values embodied in many festivals, practices, stories and symbols of various religious traditions in Asia. We call on the churches to welcome the resources that these offer.
- We affirm the life- and peace-affirming and community-building qualities of our religious traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and various traditional religions.

## Some Creative Possibilities for the Affirmation of Our Diversity

- A shared vision of justice to be a rallying point to bring the excluded people of diverse backgrounds.
- Active interreligious cooperation for justice and peace.
- Facilitating understanding and goodwill among communities in all diverse contexts.
- Shedding prejudices arising from identities that are diverse due to gender, race, HIV/AIDS status, caste, class, sexuality, religion, disability and other identities and respecting the identities others choose for themselves.
- The need to accept our multiple identities in different contexts (for example both as parent, worker, Dalit, woman). Understanding these alerts us to possible bases for common ac-

tion with others arising from shared identities at some points.

- Playing a transformative role. Appropriate the image of 'salt' for the cause of justice.
- Rereading and reinterpreting religious texts in the context of increasing fragmentation of life in the Asian context.
- Discovering new meanings of living faithfully in a context characterised by globalisation, fragmentation and polarisation.
- Developing liturgical and theological resources that affirm and celebrate diversity.
- Rethinking the denominational witness of the Asian churches, **in openness to God who reconciles and unites**.
- Actively getting involved in initiatives towards conflict transformation and responding committedly to the call to be in the ministry of reconciliation in all situations of conflict.
- As identity blooms only in relationships, the need to reflect further on the possibility of a theology of wholeness.
- Theologies based on justice, peace and human dignity to be developed across geographical boundaries.
- Searching for the affirmation of human identity to begin from the point of view of persons with bloodied identities, recognising that such violated persons may become engaged in justified violence.
- Ensuring legal justice to indigenous peoples in their struggles to reclaim their lands and rights.



# Wrestling with Change

*NCCI-URM staff meeting shares stories of pain, suffering, frustration, joy and hope in community*

A conference of the NCCI-URM staff and committee was held at the CSI Synod Centre in Chennai, India, 26–28 January. It was the first staff conference after the merger of URM with the NCCI in 1997. Present were fifty-seven participants representing about thirty grassroots level organisations/institutions. Josef P. Widyatmadja and Wati Longchar represented CCA. Josef shared some concerns of URM life and mission in light of the fast-changing Asian scenario, while Wati spoke on the indigenous people's struggle in Asia.

Each participant shared stories and experiences of pain, suffering, frustration, joy and hope in community. In those struggles, they recognised God's presence and active intervention. It was a time of rededication and recommitment to work for the cause of the marginalised people in society.

The participants also recognised that in the new millennium the URM has to continue wrestling with socioeconomic and political changes occurring nationally and

globally. In the face of many forces of dehumanisation, the URM is to act as channel to rekindle and affirm the people's hope for justice and liberation. The participants affirmed the role of the URM as the salt and the leaven in the various struggles of the people—especially the Dalits, indigenous people, and other toiling masses, both within the church and the wider society. This role can be expressed by being in solidarity with them, supporting and strengthening them. It can also be in confronting all forms of oppression, including state oppression, e.g. anti-people acts and draconian legislation that impinge on the civil liberties of Dalits, Tribals/Adivasis, women etc. It can also be in sharing their pain and joys as well as their hopes and aspirations towards the creation of a just and equitable society. It can also be in reaffirming faith in Jesus and reminding one another of his call for all to be his disciples and agents of the work of liberation. In the coming two years, the participants reaffirm to struggle with the

following issues:

- Tribal/Adivasis' struggle for the preservation of their life and culture.
- Dalits' struggles for self-identity and equal rights.
- Rights of minorities.
- Children's rights.
- Human rights.
- Rights of organised and unorganised workers.

The National Committee of the URM in India decided to continue being part of the NCCI, acknowledging the present relationship, autonomy and encouragement as important for effective functioning.

While in Chennai, Josef and Wati also visited the community project of the Lutheran Women's Centre. The centre is involved in serving children, refugees and women. The director of the centre is Ms V.R. Vidhya Rani, a member of the program area committee of FMU.

—Wati Longchar and  
Josef Widyatmadja





Anthony Row was born in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. As a young person he began working for the Youth Forum, and although brought up a Catholic, many of his friends were Methodists and he ended up worshipping in the Methodist church and marrying a young woman from the Methodist church.

As the eldest of five children he supported them through school and began working for the civil service for two years. All the while he was active in church work, especially in rural areas, teaching Sunday school, instructing in hygiene and helping people with social problems.

In his desire to know more about the scriptures Anthony went to India to study theology. He went to Union Bible Seminary in Yeotmal and was involved with the Tamil Conference of the Methodist Church. His grandfather had come from India, but Anthony's experience of that country, working with the poor and marginalised, was something of a cultural shock, but was also a highpoint in his understanding of interreligious dialogue, relating with people of many religions and different circumstances.

Back in Malaysia Anthony began working with his church as a resource person, when his wife received a scholarship to do a master's degree in library studies in Wales. By then the Rows had two boys, Adam and Shelton, and the whole family went to the UK. While there Anthony studied law.

## Anthony Row



Anthony also has qualifications in business administration.

In the mid-1980s following the family's return to Malaysia, Anthony once again became involved with the church. He maintains that 'all I am is because of the training I received in the church'. He became chairman of his local church's executive committee in the Tamil Methodist Church in Kuala Lumpur, and worked on various committees of the Council of Churches in Malaysia.

With the talents he has and with his financial background as manager of the local conference and in the secular world as managing director of Mitsubishi Electrical in Malaysia, Anthony had greatness thrust upon him when the 11th CCA General Assembly in Tomohon decided to bring in some new blood and elected him as one of its four presidents.

One of the mandates of the 11th General Assembly was to seek closer relationships and communication with Christian churches and bodies that are not part of CCA. Anthony has links with and is especially interested in relationships with Evangelical churches. He has been involved in discussions between CCA and the Asia Evangelical Fellowship on ways to develop a closer relationship between the two bodies, to discover what we can do working together in Asia.

Anthony Row feels that CCA needs to be revamped, especially in terms of its thinking. He considers we need to change CCA's mindset and develop new creative thinking. We cannot just maintain the status quo.

Another need is to build up new leaders with a vision for ecumenism. With his business background Anthony realises that this must be 'sold' to others. We need to market CCA more.

Anthony Row brings a fresh, new dynamic to CCA and an energy and enthusiasm for the organisation that must be to its benefit.

—Geoff Alves

## Scholarship for Women

The World Council of Churches has announced that the Sarah Chakko Theological Endowment Fund (SCTEF) is ready to provide scholarship grants for church women from the southern hemisphere and Central/Eastern Europe. Launched during the Ecumenical Decade Festival in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998, the fund was one of the festival's initiatives to continue support and advocacy for women of the church after ending the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–1998).

The fund is part of the work of churches together, the fellowships, the commitments and stewardships through the WCC. Initially, four female students from Nicaragua

will go to study at the Evangelical Seminary of Matanzas in Cuba.

SCTEF seeks to empower church women from the southern hemisphere and Central/Eastern Europe by providing sustainable financial supports for them to undertake theological studies in their home or neighbouring countries.

For more information, contact Elis Widen, Intern for SCTEF, Education and Ecumenical Formation/Ecumenical Theological Education, World Council of Churches, phone +41 22 791 6144, fax +41 22 791 0361 or email [ekw@wcc-coe.org](mailto:ekw@wcc-coe.org).

# The War on Terror

## The War on Terror—a War in Asia

It is likely that the present period of history may be called the period of the War on Terror. After the end of the Cold War commentators and historians were finding it difficult to give a name to the period of history and simply called it the post-Cold War period. Many Western leaders have stated that the War on Terror (WOT) may be as long as the Cold War.

President George W. Bush made two declarations of war. The first one was soon after the September 11 events. He declared a war on terrorism. He did not name the enemies. He said that the immediate aim of the war was to bring Osama bin Laden to justice or bring justice to him. But he added that it would not stop with that. The second declaration of war was made by the President in his State of the Union Address on 29 January when he spoke of the 'next stage' of the WOT against the 'axis of evil', including Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

For a body such as CCA, it is important to take into account the significance of all this for Asia. The first stage of the war was in Afghanistan, in Central Asia. It was followed by heavy military presence of the USA in Afghanistan, Pakistan and some Central Asian republics. This presence is likely to continue for a long time. The US military has moved into Southeast Asia, in the Philippines, re-establishing its presence in the region. By including North Korea in the 'axis of evil', justification is sought for reinforcement of a US military presence in Northeast Asia. Tensions have increased in all these regions of Asia. There has been heavy US military presence in West Asia for a long time.

There are other implications too. The WOT brought India and Pakistan almost to the brink of war. The continuing tension between these two countries possessing nuclear weapons is made use of by the USA, for intervention in the region. Russia and



## *Making the world safer for globalisation*

China gave support to the USA in the WOT mainly because of terrorism within their own borders. They were made to understand that the US military presence would not continue after the war against Afghanistan. Now they realise that the US military presence in the region will continue indefinitely. China is specially concerned about this.

It is most likely that the US had plans for intervention in Afghanistan for some time. The events of September 11 provided enough justification for these.

## Understanding September 11

The WOT is sought to be justified as a reaction to the events of September 11, 2001. The terrorist acts of that day in the USA have to be condemned in the strongest terms. There can be no justification whatsoever for taking the lives of innocent people and causing such destruction.

The events of that day have to be seen in a historical perspective and with a sense of proportion. The attacks were on carefully selected symbols of the economic strength and the military might of the USA. They were attacks on US soil. Security policies, threat perceptions, defence strategy and intelligence of the biggest military power failed. The events challenged many assumptions of

## Ninan Koshy

the New World Order. When the attacks occurred two claims were made. One was that it was an attack on justice, freedom and democracy all over the world. So the whole 'civilised' world had to respond. When something happened in the United States it was projected as a concern for all the world. But when atom bombs killed hundreds of thousands in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was a matter for the Japanese. The Rwanda genocide was a Rwandan affair. The East Timor massacres and pillage were only concerns for the East Timorese.

The universalist claims of events in the USA seem to suggest that the destinies and tragedies of other nations and peoples are insignificant. There are serious ethical issues involved in such claims. Every human life is precious and every nation is under God's judgement. No special claims have validity.

The other claim was that September 11 began a new era in international affairs. Yet, as Stanley Hoffman pointed out (*New York Review of Books*, November 1), this is misleading. It did not change power relations. It was used to reinforce the military superiority and hegemony of the USA.

## Who Are the Terrorists?

It is difficult to define terrorism or a terrorist. States revise their definitions of terrorism and the lists of terrorist organisations. The classical description that 'one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter' has a lot of truth in it. Former terrorists have become leaders of nations and some of them have joined the WOT. In 1985, when such organisations as the PLO and even the African National Congress were in the list of terrorist organisations of the US State Department, one morning a reception was given in the White House by President Reagan to a group of Afghan 'Mujahideen' leaders. Reagan described them as freedom fighters 'who uphold the

(continued on page 22)

# A Turn Around

Ahn Jae Woong

## The Myth of the Cave

In his classical work, *The Republic*, Plato likens the human condition to the situation of people who have been trapped since childhood in an underground cave. The story is a very famous one, known as the myth of the cave. Plato tells how the trapped people cannot turn around but can only look at a wall. Behind them a fire blazes and between them and the fire, men pass along behind a parapet, carrying objects, including statues and figures of animals. The objects cast shadows on the wall, just like puppets in a puppet show, which are illuminated from behind. The prisoners also hear echoes of the voices of those carrying the objects.

The point is that reality for them is constituted by shadows and echoes even though they are merely copies of the real thing. As a result, they can only have a vague idea of, say, what a horse was like, since they would have likely seen the flickering shadow of a crude model, and not a horse itself.

Plato goes on to show how difficult it would be for a prisoner who was released. The first thing he asks himself is where did all these shadows on the cave wall come from? What do you think happens when he turns around and sees the figures being held up above the wall? To begin with, he is dazzled by the sharp sunlight. He is also dazzled by the clarity of the figures because until now he has only seen their shadows. If he manages to climb over the wall and gets past the fire into the world outside, he will be even more dazzled. But after rubbing his eyes he will be struck by the beauty of everything. For the first time, he will see colours and clear shapes. He will see real animals and flowers that the cave shadows were only poor reflections of. Then he will see the sun in the sky and realise that this is what gives life to these flowers and animals, just as the fire makes the shadows visible. The now released cave-dweller can go on skipping away into the countryside, de-

lighting in his new-found freedom. But instead, he thinks of all the others who are still down in the cave. He goes back to convince the other cave-dwellers that the shadows on the cave wall are but flickering reflections of real things. But they don't believe him as that is all that they can see there is. There is, to Plato, the equivalent in the everyday world of the Form of the Good in the intelligible world. We are living in a similar situation just like the cave-dwellers.

## The Cave of Today

We are in a cave when we are trapped into believing certain things that the hegemonic power wants us to believe—such as to think that we are the good guys who are victims of terrorism while the perpetrators are the bad guys who must be sought and killed by all means. We are in a cave when we are trapped into thinking that national security is the most important thing in the world and military might is the way to ensure it. We are in a cave when we think that globalisation is the only way for this world to become one global village when we know how it has widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots of the world. We are in a cave if we do not know the truth of what is going on around us.

## What Is Happening outside the Cave?

The truth is we are equal participants in the processes of globalisation and terrorism going on in the world. There is no clear distinction between the bad guys and the good guys, or the victims and the perpetrators of terrorism. As long as we have participated in the injustices that breed rage and anger, and which then erupts into violence, we are also participants in the process of terrorism itself.

## Breaking the Myth

And so we need to break down the myth of the cave by understanding and analysing the

truth about this age of terror that we are in. We continue to experience the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, the Pentagon in Washington DC and in Philadelphia. According to Paul Kennedy, in his article 'Maintaining the American Power: From Injury to Recovery' in the book *The Age of Terror: America and the World after September 11* (2001), 'the major elements of American Grand Strategy is its military strength, its productive competitiveness and its diplomatic skills. Each element is vital, and all three are under pressure' (p. 61). However, the assumption of the American Grand Strategy is still the mentality of 'America as Number One'. After September 11, America turned around in order to protect its homeland security. It is very much like taking care of her megacave.

Along with the so-called 'New War on Terrorism', US President George W. Bush has identified what he calls the 'axis of evil', naming certain countries of the world, with the potential of pitting countries against each other.

Those of us who come from South Korea find this very threatening as naming North Korea part of the axis of evil poses a big threat to our still unstable relations on the Korean peninsula.

Of course there are other types of caves we inhabit and these are well protected by the walls of our ideologies, religions and traditions. We become blinded by our loyalty to such traditions that we cannot see the possibility of something other than what we know to be the truth.

The monopoly of information brought about by globalised media power supports the myth of the cave.

It is true that with the development of satellite and cable services and more liberal media regulation, the television markets are moving from a national to transnational scale. In fact CNN can bring you real-time access to news stories across

the world, such as we clearly experienced at the time of the Gulf War in 1991, the terrorist attacks on American soil and the American retaliation on to Afghanistan in 2001 and onwards. But the problem is that news coverage is too much laden with the perspective and agenda of the monopolising and hegemonic power that controls the information superhighway.

If we only try to hear or read between the lines, what we can see is a case of global frustration that manifests in genocide, terrorist attacks, crime against humanity, collective punishment or forced mass expulsion of people, environmental degradation and so on.

### A Turn Around

In the light of all this, what has our text to say to us? 'Simon Peter said to the others, "I am going fishing." "We will come with you," they told him. So they went out in a boat, but all that night they did not catch a thing.' (John 21:3)

It sounds just like what is happening to us in the ecumenical movement, in theological education, in church ministry. We are working as hard as ever but it seems that we have not achieved anything. And so we have a sense of hopelessness and frustration. Very often we claim that Jesus is standing in the heart of our life, but we sometimes lack the capacity to truly find and

experience him as real in our lives. Our only assurance, based on the gospel story, is that Jesus does not give up on us. Instead, he calls us to cast the net on the right side, the other side, of the boat. Jesus calls us to imagine and try new ways, to venture into the unfamiliar and unknown. I think this is what it takes to break down the myth of the cave and to truly understand the real life outside the cave.

A turn around means being attentive to what is going on around the world, not based on what actors of the hegemonic monopolising power would have us believe. A turn around means letting go of such brainwashing slogans as 'national security' and

## The War on Terror

(continued from page 20)

ideals of the founding fathers of the USA'. In 1986 the CIA supported an ISI (Pakistani intelligence) plan to bring Islamic militants from different parts of the world to be trained and armed to fight with the 'Mujahideen' against the Soviet Union. Osama bin Laden was one of those who came. The USA thus was responsible for the founding of the terrorist organisation which has now become its enemy No. 1. Terrorism in all forms should be condemned. It is an act of violence aimed primarily at unarmed civilians. Terrorism does not promote the cause of freedom or liberation. When reference is made to terrorism it is usually about organisations and individuals. But states also indulge in terrorism when they exceed the legitimate use of force. This is 'state terrorism'. In fact more acts of terror have been perpetrated by states than by organisations or individuals.

### How Did the WOT Become a War against Afghanistan?

The United States began bombing Afghanistan on 6 October. In an article in the *International Herald Tribune*, William Pfaff asked the question, 'How did the war against terror become a war against Afghanistan? Not a single Afghan was involved in the attacks against the US. Those listed by the FBI were all Saudi citizens. There was no claim

even by the US that they acted under instructions from the Taliban government. The USA says it invaded Afghanistan because the Afghan government refused to extradite bin Laden. After all, the declared aim of the war was to bring bin Laden to justice or bring justice to him. By the third week of October the aim became to dislodge the Taliban from power and install a new government in Afghanistan. The aims of the war were changed from time to time. This served two purposes. One was that success against al Qaeda could be claimed even when bin Laden was not caught and success against Taliban could be claimed even when its leader was at large. The other purpose was to hide the real aims of the WOT. Equating WOT with war on Afghanistan helped to simplify the issues. The US military can tackle Afghanistan. It cannot deal with terrorism or its root causes.

The US interest in oil and natural gas in the region is well known. America had no particular objection to Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan with the direct support of Pakistan. In fact it seriously considered recognising the Taliban regime. The US corporation UNOCAL had negotiations with the Taliban government regarding pipelines for oil and gas from Central Asian republics through Afghanistan. The US government was involved in these as well as other negotiations with the Taliban government. At that time UNOCAL and the US government thought that Taliban had

brought stability to Afghanistan. The situation changed with the attacks on US embassies in East Africa which the US believed were planned by bin Laden. Then it became necessary to replace Taliban with a pro-US government in Afghanistan. As was the case in the Gulf War the US eyes in the Afghanistan war were also on oil.

### The War, the United Nations and International Law

Important issues in international law have been raised by the WOT. There is nothing in the UN Charter or Security Council decisions that make the US war on Afghanistan legitimate. The claim of the right to self-defence under article 51 of the charter is not valid in the absence of any attack or threat of attack from Afghanistan. There were two Security Council resolutions on the September 11 events and terrorism. Neither mentions Afghanistan. The letter given by the US Ambassador to the UN on 7 October, the day after launching the attack on Afghanistan, said, 'We are at an early stage of our inquiry. If necessary, we will take an action against other organisations and countries.' This had nothing to do with self-defence. It was in open defiance of the UN and international law. Was there another route the US could have followed? Yes. The horrific attacks on September 11 were 'a crime against humanity'. If there was evidence that it was committed by bin Laden, he should have been brought to trial. A special inter-

'peace through military might'. A turn around means not just looking at ourselves and proudly claiming possession of the truth. A turn around means finding some truth and beauty about other civilisations, religions, and traditions. A turn around means being open to the beauty of the other side of the world, which may be far better than one's own imagination.

Our risen Lord Jesus is constantly calling on us to turn around from old habits, old beliefs, old customs, old thoughts, old traditions and old work patterns. The problem is that we have no capacity to hear his voice because we have become so accustomed to the old ways. What the Bible says

is true: 'They may look and look, yet not see; they may listen and listen, yet not understand.' (Mark 4:12)

As Plato indicated, the released prisoner had a hard time trying to convince others of his new found freedom and of his experience of the new world outside the cave. The other cave-dwellers could hardly believe and understand that they instead threatened to kill him.

It is exactly happening in Asia and the rest of the world. Those who are in the cave do not want to hear anything, and do not try to understand what other religions and cultures are all about. Let us not be like those cave-dwellers. Rather, let us dream

and work for freedom. And let us turn around to our neighbours in order to share that dream and work together to make it a reality. As the writer of the epistle to Ephesians wrote, 'Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of God is.' (Ephesians 5:17) We can understand God's will better if we are able to transcend the caves we inhabit and to will ourselves to freedom, to a life beyond the cave.

*This meditation was shared by Abn Jae Woong, CCA general secretary, at the chapel at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Francisco, California, on 25 February 2002.*

national criminal court could have been established by the Security Council. If Afghanistan refused to extradite bin Laden, the Security Council could have taken action against Afghanistan. The action could have extended from total sanctions to use of force. Even the US could have been authorised to use force. For all these of course evidence against bin Laden would have been required.

At one stage, the US Secretary of State said that the government would publish evidence against bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The next day it was 'clarified' that it would not be made public but only shared with allies. The only 'evidence' given in public was a document the British government placed before its Parliament in October. The 'evidence' had seventy clauses. Only nine of them related to the September 11 events. What was significant was the opening statement of the document. 'This evidence is not sufficient to bring Osama bin Laden to trial in a court of law.' Yet it was sufficient to go to war against a country, resulting in the deaths of at least 3,000 civilians. The US claimed that it could not release the evidence since it would endanger some of the agents who gave the information. The 'security' of a few agents was more important than the lives of thousands. This raises not only legal questions, but moral issues.

It was Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, who actually spelt out the broader aim of the WOT. In his speech to the Labour

Party Conference at the beginning of October, he said, 'The war on terror should be a war for a wider new world order.'

### **The WOT and the New World Order**

Tony Blair in his speech to the Chicago Economic Club in 1999 had explained his views on the new world order. In that speech he linked the war on Kosovo to economic changes in the world and stated that globalisation is not just about economics but also about politics and security. He defined security in terms of military security for globalisation to be provided by the US-led NATO. Consequently, NATO was extended to Eastern Europe as a guarantee of security for the big corporations that were moving in. Globalisation and militarisation are the two sides of the same coin. On one hand, globalisation creates conditions for unrest and war by promoting injustice, inequality and insecurity. On the other, bodies like the WTO, which allow massive subsidies for the weapons industry, facilitate the production of the instruments of war. The enormous growth in the arms industry in the US and several countries after the declaration of the WOT highlights this issue. The WOT is really about providing military security for globalisation.

Until the Kosovo crisis, globalisation was explained as a new form of colonialism without the conquest or even control of territories but with the capturing of the mar-

kets and the minds of the ruling elite. Kosovo showed that control of certain territories through US military presence was also necessary for globalisation. The war on Afghanistan has reinforced the territorial dimension of globalisation. It is significant to note that there are new doctrines justifying the 'occupation' or changing the regimes of some countries, to protect the interests of the US and big corporations.

From the time of the G8 Conference in Genoa, the proponents of globalisation want to claim that those who are opposed to economic globalisation are using violence. So when they say that globalisation needs security, they also mean that they will use force against those who oppose it. In the wake of September 11 events many countries have introduced new 'anti-terrorist' laws substantially curtailing civil liberties. The aim is to ensure the climate for investment through 'law and order'. The new measures in the name of WOT are meant to make the world safe for globalisation. Globalisation is the main project of the new world order. Tony Blair is right, 'The war against terror is a war for a wider new world order.'

*This article comes from a presentation at a CCA staff seminar on 20 February 2002. Dr Ninan Koshy is formerly Director, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches, and formerly Visiting Fellow, Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School.*



# *Ecumenical Theological Education in Asia*

## *Five issues that affect ecumenical theological education in Asia today*

A. Wati Longchar

The challenges we face in theological education in Asia are enormous. On one hand, our theological schools face problems related to finance, structure, administration, curriculum and pedagogy. On the other hand, we are also challenged by issues such as terrorism, economic injustice, religious intolerance, ecological destruction, mass poverty, child labour, gender injustice, political corruption, globalisation, identity problem, the HIV-AIDS pandemic. I would like to focus on five issues that affect ecumenical theological education in Asia today.

### **1 Financial Viability**

The present system of theological formation involves a high capital investment. Till today theological schools in many parts of Asia have been heavily dependent on external sources—mission agencies and evangelistic associations in the West and in North America. In many countries in Asia, the salary of teachers, construction of buildings and other infrastructure and the implementation of masteral and doctoral programs are still expected from external agencies. Now that assistance from partners is dwindling for various reasons, there is an acute financial crisis in most of our ecumenical schools. Many schools suffer from the ‘everybody’s baby but nobody’s baby’ syndrome. The initial enthusiasm of interdenominational ventures is slowly disappearing, leaving many schools without a proper owner. Several schools have now sprouted along the lines of their denominational affiliation. The other sad aspect is that Asian Christians have not been educated to support ecumenical formation. Many churches in Asia do have resources to support theological education, but many churches do not want to invest resources in theological education—they are more interested in ‘mission’. Besides, students, in-

cluding those who can afford to do so, do not pay for their education. People seem to have a notion that money for theological education should come from mission agencies. As a result of these wrong understandings, the role of principals/presidents in many theological schools in Asia has been reduced to that of fundraising. It is imperative that we educate our churches to invest money for theological education. The churches must also realise that ‘theological teaching and learning contribute significantly to their own viability’.\*

### **2 Federated Faculty**

Asians must be encouraged to study in Asia. There are hundreds of theological colleges. Without counting big cities like Seoul, Manila and Chennai, it is quite surprising to see dozens of theological schools even in a small town. Yet, there are very few advanced theological research centres. Resources are utterly divided. There are a few schools in Asia that offer master’s and PhD or DTh degrees in theology, but these have limitations. Library, human resources and other infrastructure are not adequate. Several schools admit just one or two doctoral candidates in an academic session. This cannot cater to the fast-growing demands of the churches and theological communities in Asia. Due to lack of advanced theological research centres, researchers are compelled to go to Europe and the US for theological training. Since the training there is very expensive, it puts more financial burden on ecumenical partners. The cost of one doctoral candidate in the US can support five doctoral students in India! On the other hand, the students undertake research that is not relevant to their own context. Students who excel in their studies often do not return to their countries. We do recognise the advantage of do-

ing theology abroad, but we must give equal importance to developing advanced theological research centres in Asia. Therefore, it is vital that theological schools come together and work out a ‘federated faculty’ for advanced theological research in different regions. This will promote not only quality leadership in the churches, but also promote ecumenism, reduce the financial burden and encourage contextual theologies.

### **3 The Church’s Involvement in Theological Education**

A common criticism that many theological schools face today is that graduates are alienated from the church and society. The churches often accuse theological institutions of elitism and tend to think that the kind of training received in theological schools is not suitable in the rural context and not helpful to the spiritual nurturing of congregations. Some even complain that theological graduates with BD, MDiv and MTh degrees cannot deliver a good sermon relevant to the people’s situation. The churches often criticise graduates as not being fully equipped to deal with crisis situations such as sickness, mental breakdown, family quarrels, HIV-AIDS problems and so on. On the other side, those leaders responsible for theological schools often express disappointment about the church leaders’ lack of commitment to theological education. Sometimes theological schools blame the churches for their irresponsible screening of candidates. All these problems show that there is not sufficient interaction between the church leadership and theological institutions. It is necessary that a mutual interaction between the church and theological schools takes place in terms of financial support, policy making and cur-

riculum formation. The church and theological schools are like two sides of one coin. However, both should play not only supportive roles, but also prophetic roles to each other in training future leaders in the church and society.

## 4 Curriculum–Faculty–Pedagogy

The all-round development of students depends not only on the curriculum but also the way the teachers make use of the curriculum. The effectiveness of the curriculum depends on both content and on the teachers. The central point becomes not 'what' is taught, but how it is taught and by whom it is taught.† Therefore, teachers matters much. In most of the schools in Asia, one is expected to teach after masteral or doctoral studies without having adequate exposure to appropriate teaching methods. That is why many teachers fail to address the needs of students. If theological education is to be effective, then the theological associations should give priority to initiating seminars and colloquia on teaching methodologies for theological teachers.

## 5 Perspective in Theological Education

An important area that theological educators have to face is the question of perspective in teaching theology. Considering today's complex realities in Asia, we need multiple hermeneutical principles for interpreting the Bible. The interpretation of the Bible should also move into new areas such as globalisation, the ecological crisis, genetic engineering and ethnicity—all these areas have been outside traditional schemes of biblical interpretation, though they all impinge on our lives and relationships. Many theological educators, pastors, missionaries and Christian ministers are ill-equipped to interpret the Word of God in the context of the challenges of new technology and cyberculture. A reading of the Bible without taking these issues into consideration will have no impact. We need to evolve a clear biblical methodology and perspective to address this fast-emerging challenge. In a context like Asia, theological educators have to wrestle with the following issues:

■ **A perspectival change**—For any reading of the Bible, we need to have a perspec-

tive. It matters what or whose perspective one has when reading the Bible. For too long, an elitist perspective has been dominant. The perspective of subaltern groups like indigenous people and women and their struggle for new life has been overlooked in our interpretation. A very clear scripturally directed perspective is the subaltern perspective. An addition of one subject like feminist theology or indigenous people's theology in the existing courses of theological schools is not sufficient. Neither is organising a few seminars and consultations sufficient. The study of gender justice must become a hermeneutical key to theology. Teaching theology from woman's perspective would help to challenge the present patriarchal culture and ideology in our religio-cultural, socio-political and economic structures. We should consciously integrate the perspective of the marginalised people in the whole process of biblical interpretation.

■ **An inter-disciplinary approach**—The present character of biblical interpretation is too monolithic. This is not sufficient in the Asian context. The reality of our experience is complex and we need a confluence of tools to unravel its significance. We need an interdisciplinary reading of the Bible. In this process, the cultural and religious traditions of Asia must be taken seriously. They are not just useful to supply an alternative vision of human bonding to one another and to earth alone, but they have to be taken seriously to support an alternative development paradigm.

■ **Global perspective of local issues**—Theological education should have a global perspective, without undermining the local needs and issues. The immediate context of a theologian is the local community. The theologian engages in the local context to discern God's purpose in life. However, the lives of the people are very much determined by what is going on globally. For example, the process of globalisation has no boundary, for it affects every local community. Local issues and global issues cannot be understood in isolation. Therefore, theological formation needs to engage the global perspective of the local context. The available local resources, history and culture need to be taken into account to meet their need. The purpose is not to provoke

regionalism, but to promote regional consciousness among students. This will enable students to face the challenges of their own immediate context.

■ **A transformative approach**—The Word of God should help us in the transformation of our lives. It is unfortunate that reading the Word of God has fallen into the trap set by the philosophy of the modern educational system. That is why biblical interpretation has been reduced to mere abstract intellectual exercise. We need to challenge this pattern of biblical interpretation. Interpretation of God's Word has to be directed towards transformation. Praxis-thinking challenges us that thinking that occurs apart from critical involvement ends up in construction of theories about existence that keep us away from the real world. We need rigorous theoretical reflection of the Word of God, but it should emerge from the practice that is directed to transformation. In order to do biblical praxis we need social and cultural analysis of our context. They should form an integral part of the biblical hermeneutics.

■ **Protection of diversity**—Plurality is an integral part of the Creator. No culture, no community is excluded from this, God's structure of creation. All are unique in their own ways and, therefore, no-one has the right to dominate and suppress the other. Life is protected and it can grow to its fullness only by affirmation of the beauty of diversity. Therefore, a perspectival change in our interpretation of the Bible to understand and appreciate the diverse religious and cultural resources of humankind as the common property of humanity becomes crucial. A positive approach, especially to the people of other faiths, culture and languages, can provide a new paradigm for understanding the Bible.

\* Lothar Engel, 'A Response', in *Towards Viable Theological Education*, ed. by John Pobee (Geneva: WCC, 1997), p. 99.

† Pratap Chandra Gine, 'The Curriculum and Pedagogy of Theological Education in India' in *Journal of Tribal Studies*, vol. V, no. 2, July–December 2001, p. 6.

*Dr A. Wati Longchar is a Baptist theologian from Nagaland, North east India. He is the Joint Ecumenical Theological Education consultant of the CAA and WCC.*

# *Planting Feminist Theology in Hong Kong*

Wong Wai-ching

From the perspective of the community, the understanding of feminist theology still remains very much at an initial stage. More people have heard about the term, I suppose, but that only means that more people misunderstand it. Barely any attention given by either the church or the theological institutions to further developing feminist theology. Has feminist theology failed entirely then to make its way into the Chinese church in Hong Kong? Is feminist theology, as many male theologians and church leaders say, so Western in its conception that it clashes with the Chinese traditional cultures lived out by local congregations?

A lack of sufficient space for discussion and exploration of feminist theology at the various levels of the life of the church is one crucial factor. To appreciate this difficulty, there is an ancient myth of China entitled 'Jingwei Tianhai' ('The Bird of Jingwei Fills the Sea'). This myth is about a mysterious bird named Jingwei, which was said originally to be the daughter of an ancient deity, Yendi (God of the Sun). This daughter of Yendi died of a tragic accident as she drowned one day while swimming in the Sea of the East. After her death, she was turned into a bird with a white beak and red feet. From this point onward, she has been carrying branches and rubble from the Western mountain to fill the Sea of the East. Despite its complex geological and anthropological makeup, this myth has been retold in Chinese literary tradition as a story

of double tragedies: first, a young woman died an untimely death; second, the futility of the act of a bird carrying tree branches and rubble for the filling of the sea.

Many times feminist theologians in Hong Kong are charged with being Western and betrayers of Chinese cultural traditions. They are either too 'radical' or too political, introducing only hostility and conflict

against their male counterparts and prove themselves worthy of their entrusted responsibility before male-dominated church councils and church hierarchies. The task of feminist theology to 'break into' this system is therefore as weighty, and sometimes as futile, as the task of the bird of Jingwei.

In a way, I am quite sympathetic with the anxiety in male authorities with the changing role of women in the present society. I am also sympathetic with the 'silent' women in the church who are undergoing double pressures as professional and educated women yet, at the same time, as mothers and wives with all kinds of traditional expectations. With so much change occurring already, it might be easier to just cope with only one thing at a time. No-one likes to wage daily battles at home, and no-one likes to fight for the right of naming God or naming a saviour Christ or how to interpret the Book of Faith in worship when one finds barely a breathing

space in daily life. With the cost everyone is paying for the economic 'success' of Hong Kong in the past two decades, there is, in fact, very little space left for reflecting and thinking about one's relationship with the community or members of the family or even oneself and, to say the least, one's relationship with God. Who cares whether God is a father or a mother as long as God is merciful and compassionate and is there as one wrestles with the various difficulties in life? Why all the hassle in developing a feminist theology?



into the relationship between the sexes. Despite the rapid changes that have taken place in gender roles in Hong Kong society, authorities of the church preach for restoration of the 'old' order in the church and family. Consequently, professional women are encouraged to forget about their public achievements and hide themselves behind their husbands and families in the church; educated women are told to humble themselves before the authoritative (male) interpretation of faith and the Bible; and women ministers are to be measured

Yet there is another aspect of the myth of Jingwei Tianshai that we may turn to. While the story of a bird trying to fill the sea tells of the futility of human efforts, it also projects a noble aspect of humanity in dreaming and hope. Similar to the more popular Chinese parable of 'Yugong Yishan' ('An Old Fool Transporting a Mountain'), the story of Jingwei also tells of a vision of hope fostered by unceasing efforts of trying. It says that hope does not rest with the present—it points to the future. This is how I find the present stage of feminist theology in Hong Kong.

Despite the stagnation found in the development of feminist theology in the church and the theological institutions of Hong Kong, the young people of the church are changing. They experience a society that seeks to provide equal opportunities to both men and women, that says that both are

capable of a great variety of tasks whether at home or at work, that does not demand that men always play a superior role and women always retreat to a subordinate position. There will soon be a time when the younger women more openly ask the relevance of a hierarchical interpretation of the Pauline family code in their lives and reflect on their intimate relationship with a God who can be called also a mother and a sister.

There will be a time when they will ask whether the Bible teaches the same kind of gender roles and relationships as the Chinese ancient classics and whether they are obliged only to follow the interpretation of the authority. There is certainly a growing demand for a theological response to the changing experiences of men and women, whether the church acknowledges it or not. Thus, the task of feminist theology will go

on unceasingly, not because some 'Westernised feminists' want to impose an agenda on the congregation, but, given a proper space for its reflection and expression, because feminist theology will arise from the life of the congregation in response to a vision of an egalitarian men-women partnership. The task of feminist theology today will therefore be like ploughing and planting, preparing the space for an in-depth theological reflection from the life and experience of women and men.

*This article first appeared in the HKCI Newsletter, issue 162 (March 2002). Wong Wai-ching, a CCA president, is a Hong Kong Christian Institute management committee member and an associate professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.*

## Newsbriefs

### Taiwan

The **Presbyterian Church in Taiwan** has scheduled its 48th Biennial General Assembly Meeting for 2–5 April 2002. This follows their practice of holding the meeting immediately following the Easter weekend. The venue is the Chang-Jung Girls' High School in southern Taiwan. The Assembly theme is 'Spiritual Renewal and a Life Dedicated to Serve', which is based on Ezekiel 36:26–27 and Colossians 1:28–29. Representatives from partner churches will have time to convey brief greetings to the assembly. They will also have an option between two special additional events: (a) the Pre-Assembly Gathering on Women, Students and Youth on 31 March – 2 April in Tainan, and (b) the 20th Anniversary of the Gi-Kong Presbyterian Church in Taipei City on 31 March – 1 April.

### Japan

The **Korean Christian Church in Japan** (KCCJ) celebrates this year its ninety-fourth anniversary as an established church. KCCJ's

new general secretary, Rev. Park Soo-Kil, hopes that as the 100 member churches work toward their 100th year celebration, they can indeed 'cut a way for a new history in following the Lord'. He also prays for reconciliation in the wake of the threat of military and economic power struggles, and hopes that all churches be connected in seeking God's reign and righteousness in the world.

\* \* \*

The Rev. **James Satoru Endo** was ordained and consecrated as bishop of the Diocese of Yokohama on 12 January 2002. The consecration was held at St Andrew's Cathedral of Yokohama, celebrated by Bishop John Jun'ichiro of Kobe and Primate of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai. Present were the former and current bishops of the province.

### India

The **National Council of Churches in India** (NCCI) Watch Desk is organising a program called 'Pivotal Challenges and Christian Response' from 25 May to 1 June

2002 in conjunction with the Youth Desk and the Orthodox Nectar for Young Christians (ONYX) in Kottayam, Kerala (South India). The program will include four residential days of seminar-type classes on Christian leadership and human rights (ecotourism, AIDS, women etc.) and four days of a 'Christian Heritage Tour' by coach. The program focus is on spirituality, culture and heritage of the Indian Orthodox Church and is meant to develop its younger of leadership.

### Indonesia

The **Kalimantan Evangelical Church** (Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis-Anggota PGI) in Indonesia held a Training of Trainers for Conflict Resolution on 14–18 January in Banjarmasin. There were forty-three participants, including students and representatives from religious groups (Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians) and civic organisations. The group felt the need for stronger networking and organising similar training in areas beset by conflict.

# Timor Lorosa'e:

Asia Sunday is not only a time to commemorate the founding of the Christian Conference of Asia (then the East Asian Christian Conference) on 24 May 1959. It is also a time to focus on a major concern of the regional ecumenical movement. This year, the focus is on the young church and nation of Timor Lorosa'e, or what is commonly known as East Timor.

The theme, 'Timor Lorosa'e: Hope for New Life', is an acknowledgment of the remarkable story of the people of East Timor. During the years of painful struggle for independence, the East Timor experienced a terrible loss of lives due to invasion, militarisation, crackdowns and massacres, as well as loss of shelter and public facilities. In the wake of so much suffering and terror, the people's hope and determination for life and freedom continue to burn. It is truly a hope that refuses to die.

The Christian Conference of Asia urges all member churches and national councils of churches to celebrate Asia

Sunday using our suggested liturgy and to express solidarity with the church in Timor Lorosa'e through

a special offering which will go towards the education of the young generation.

## A Brief History of East Timor

East Timor is part of the island of Timor at the southern edge of the Indonesian archipelago. During the colonial period, the western part of the island was controlled by the Dutch while the eastern part was a Portuguese colony for four centuries since 1520.

When Indonesia became independent in 1945, West Timor became part of the new nation. Portugal continued to hold on to the colony until July 1975 when it unilaterally withdrew from East Timor. On 28 November Fretilin declared East Timor independent. Nine days later on 7 December, Indonesian militia invaded East Timor. In July 1976, Indonesia's then President Suharto signed a bill annexing East Timor as Indonesia's twenty-seventh province, a claim which the United Nations did not recognise. Despite UN resolutions demanding its withdrawal, Indonesia continued to occupy East Timor.

As the people of East Timor expressed their desire for independence, Indonesia reacted with crackdowns and massacres. Thousands of East Timorese were killed immediately while resisting the invasion. Thousands were also hunted down and killed. Still thousands more died of starvation or diseases in camps—Indonesia's way to control the population in order to quell the resistance.

Suharto's successor, B.J. Habibie, offered to end the military occupation of East Timor and to grant it a degree of self-government as a province of Indonesia. In January 1999 Habibie announced that if the East Timorese rejected autonomy, they should move to independence. But the pro-Jakarta militia waged a campaign of terror.

However, during the UN-sponsored referendum on 30 August, 78.5 per cent of East Timorese chose independence. For rejecting the offer of autonomy within Indonesia, many were killed and many others were forced into trucks and ships to be dumped in squalid refugee camps in West Timor. By September, more than half of East Timor's 700,000 population had been forcibly removed from their homes, many of which were burned. Many Protestant and Catholic clergy were murdered, some for the simple act of defending refugees. Others fled with their people to the mountains or were forcibly transported to West Timor as refugees. Nearly all of East Timor's infrastructure was destroyed.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming vote for independence led to the naming of an United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAET) in October 1999 to administer East Timor until full independence. Under UN supervision, an 88-member Constituent Assembly was



Photos courtesy of the National Council of Churches in Australia



# Hope for New Life

elected, which approved a draft constitution on 9 February 2002. The constitution provides for a strong parliament and a largely symbolic president. The presidential election will be held on 14 April and with the inauguration of the president, East Timor will formally become an independent nation on 20 May. Even as Timor Lorosa'e gets on with life as an independent state, it will, for some time, have to deal with its painful past and to learn to live into the future, which includes living with Indonesia as a neighbour.

is the rediscovery of the culture almost destroyed during 450 years of Portuguese occupation and twenty-four years of Indonesian invasion.



## CCA's Youngest Member

The Igreja Protestante iha Timor Lorosa'e or IPTL (Protestant Church of East Timor) is one of the youngest church members of the Christian Conference of Asia. The CCA received the IPTL as member during its 11th General Assembly in Tomohon, Indonesia, in June 2000.

The Rev. Francisco de Vasconcelos, Moderator of the IPTL, sees reconstruction as the main need of the young country.

This includes physical reconstruction, which is the rebuilding of the country and all the facilities that were destroyed during the period of military atrocities. It also includes relational reconstruction, which is the rebuilding of relationships and reconciliation among the people. It also involves cultural reconstruction, which

The IPTL has thirteen districts and many congregations throughout Timor Lorosa'e. Its membership is about 17,000 people, many of whom are farmers and fisherfolk. Currently, church pastors work purely on a voluntary basis. Many of them need proper and additional training.

Among the ongoing programs and concerns of the IPTL are leadership training for pastors, educational scholarships for students since school fees are too expensive, building or rebuilding of churches and income-generating activities to help provide for pastors' salaries.

What is the relationship between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches in Timor Lorosa'e? Among church leaders, there are very close and friendly relations. There is still a need to overcome prejudices and promote better understanding among the grassroots people of the different church bodies.

With their independence as a nation, the East Timorese hope that the life of the people will be greatly improved—with better health services, better education facilities, with a stable economy and with a truly just and peaceful society.

## A Program on Human Rights in East Timor

The church in East Timor is a survivor church. It has been at the receiving end of countless battering from forces that trample on such human values as respect, justice and freedom, from 1974 to 1999. It was the safe haven that young people, widows and orphans ran to during these turbulent times. It was the voice of the silenced people speaking the truth amidst the babble of lies. It was the source of a cup of rice for the empty stomach. In a situation where crisis after crisis affected the people, the church was ready to be a part of the solution. Hence, the church has had its share of martyrs. The church was like a boat tossing and heaving in turbulent waters. The church has become a survivor—forgiving but not forgetting the past, remembering the past without anger and hatred.

In the newly independent environment, the church in East Timor is taking a much-needed breather. In this most challenging time of rebuilding the nation, the church in East Timor finds the time and space to look back and assess what

has been done, to gather lessons learned and to look to the future. It is in this context that the Ecumenical Movement of Young People has planned a Youth Leadership Training on Human Rights on 21–24 March in Dili, East Timor.

The conference will tackle the following topics: The Civil Society of East Timor in the Transition and Post-Independence, Human Rights in the East Timorese Constitution, Human Rights in the Perspective of the Social Doctrine of the Church, the Relationship of the Church and State and Human Rights and East Timorese Culture. The program aims to create social awareness on the fundamental rights of citizens. It also hopes to share this awareness with the far-flung villages through community and development training to be conducted by the participants (the would-be facilitators). The program also hopes to come up with a five-year strategic plan.

The program is organised by the Igreja Protestante Iha Timor Lorosa'e (IPTL) and supported by the Christian Conference of Asia.

# Remembering the Saints

## Kim Kwan Suk

**R**ev. Dr Kim Kwan Suk, a former general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea, passed away on 4 February. He was 80 years old.

Kim Kwan Suk was also a former president of the Christian Broadcasting System in Korea. An outstanding ecumenical leader, he served as moderator of the Communication Committee of the Christian Conference of Asia in 1981–85.

Kim Kwan Suk was a strong democratic leader, especially during the military dictatorship in Korea.

The Rev. Ron O'Grady, former Associate General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, remembers Rev. Kim as a friend and colleague: 'Kwan Suk was great

Korean patriot and a widely respected Christian leader. During the difficult days of the 1970s when the church stood against dictatorship he was one of the symbols of Christian hope, inspiring Christians in many parts of the world. As the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea he spoke fearlessly against all injustice in his country. Like many great Christian leaders in history he spent time in prison and this experience deepened his faith and his resolve. Always a quiet and gentle man he had treated his time in prison as a retreat, singing hymns, reading the Bible and experiencing the presence of God.'

Ron O'Grady adds: 'During that time I was Associate General Secretary of the

Christian Conference of Asia with some responsibility for human rights. I visited Korea several times and was present in the courtroom during the infamous trials of the Myong Dong protesters. I happened to be in Seoul on the day when Kwan Suk was released from prison and was one of the first to greet him at his home. As we wept and prayed together I drew strength from the remarkable faith of this man who had endured so much but had no bitterness—only hope for the future of his country.'

An ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, Rev. Kim also taught at Hanshin University in Seoul.

He is survived by wife Kim Ock Sil and their three married sons.

## Susanta Adhikari

**S**usanta Adhikari, President of Bangladesh Baptist Churches Sangha and Executive Director of the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), passed away on 22 February at his residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Mr Susanta Adhikari was one of the most prominent ecumenical leaders in Bangladesh. He was President of NCC Bangladesh until October last year.

He served on the Development and Service Program Committee of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) for two terms.

He was deeply committed to the cause of the poor and marginalised in Bangladesh. His integrity and commitment were widely appreciated by the people in Bangladesh and ecumenical partners.

Ever since the inception of CCDB in 1970 Susanta has been associated with CCDB and

later he became its executive director. The CCDB has grown as one of the largest rural

development organisations in Bangladesh under his able and charismatic leadership.



Susanta Adhikari, president of NCC-Bangladesh, 1999–2001, addressing the annual meeting of NCCB

# Sr Angela Sollen, CSC

**S**r Angela, an Australian Anglican Franciscan sister, was a wonderful ecumenist, welcoming those of all denominations, faiths and even without any faith to the community at Stroud for rest, reflection, counselling, walking in the bush, saying the offices and silent prayer in the mudbrick chapel. The beautiful Dances of Peace were incorporated into the liturgy for a time, allowing participants to dance their worship to God.

A feminist sculptor, she transformed a closed community from England into an order struggling to be authentically Australian. In her darkest hours, considering breaking with the English order, she felt accompanied by a bird that would fly into a small chapel. Ordained as a priest in 1992, she was able to celebrate holy communion for her community and others.

Open to wisdom from all sources, Sr Angela encouraged Christians not to fear the

*'God is a circle, and a circle is endless; whom God loves, he loves to the end; not only their own end, but his end, and his end is this: that he may love them still.'*—John Donne

exploration of ideas. She introduced mixed community, allowed novices from other church traditions, enjoying the company of Roman Catholic sisters and Aboriginal friends and influenced many in Australia and beyond. Two Filipino Franciscan Catholic sisters were warmly welcomed at the community and many other overseas guests found nourishment there.

The prayers of the community incorporated the issues of the day and individuals in need could ring and talk to the sisters, seeking their prayers. Believing that church and society urgently needed women's contribution, she supported many women and also men. Australia's most famous writer,

Patrick White, died with a 'holding cross' made at Stroud and asked for Sr Angela when nearing death. Retreatants enjoyed making the beautiful 'holding crosses', of a single piece of wood, sandpapered smooth, whilst sharing cups of tea and companionable chats. In times of trouble these aids to prayer, held in the hand, were a reminder of the closest presence of God. The little John Donne verse, quoted above, available at the monastery, was tucked into many a wallet.

Having built the monastery of mudbricks from the property, with the aid of people from everywhere, she was able to leave it when she felt called to move on. After living with cancer for over twenty years, she died in the US, where she had been sculpting and ministering. Her examples of hospitality, openness to life and new thought will long be remembered.

—Mandy Tibbey

## *Program for Asian Women in NGO Work*

A unique form of theological education is being planned for Asian women working with nongovernment organisations in Asia. The program is sponsored by the Ewha Institute for Women's Theological Studies (with Prof. Kyung Mi Park as director) at the Ewha Womans University in Korea and the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia through the Asian Christian Higher Education Institute (with Dr David Kwang-sun Suh as executive director).

The program will cover four semesters of intensive course work and field education, two weeks at a time, in Ewha University. Assignments, which will include reading, conducting case studies and writing preparatory papers, will be done before and after each semester in the participants' own contexts. The program will begin in June this year.

The purposes of the program are:

- to develop Asian women's religious thinking in the twenty-first century,
- to build networking among Asian NGO women leaders,
- to provide resources for Asian women in the NGOs.

The topics include the following:

### **First Semester**

- Asian History and Asian Realities
- Women's Herstory and Women's Movement in Asia

### **Second Semester**

- Asian Religions and Cultures
- Women, Religions and Cultures in Asia

### **Third Semester**

- Ethical Responses to Asian Realities in the Context of Globalisation
- Women and Globalization

### **Fourth Semester**

- Women and NGO in Asia: Participation and Solidarity
- Plan of Work and Action

For further information, please contact Prof. Kyung Mi Park, director of the Ewha Institute for Women's Theological Studies, email: EIWTS@mm.ewha.ac.kr.

## Opportunities

### *Workshop on Music and Worship*

The **Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music (AILM)**, the centre for training church musicians in Asia, will conduct a workshop on music and worship for the Asia-Pacific region at the Cathedral Heights in Quezon City, Philippines, on 7–18 November 2002.

The workshop will feature lectures from selected resource persons from Asia, America and Europe, workshops with established artists in music and text writing, dance for worship, the visual arts, choral music and cantorship. Several sessions will be devoted to a free exchange of ideas on developing music and other art materials for worship, hymnal production and sharing liturgical experiences. Country presentations will include updates on the church music scene in various Asian

countries. The participation fee of US\$400 includes full board and lodging for thirteen days, local transportation, including airport transfers, entrance fees and tickets to cultural performances, and a one-day out-of-town trip. Meanwhile, the AILM is offering additional scholarship slots to Asian church workers and students who intend to devote time to studies in church music and liturgy for the academic year 2002–2003.

Those interested may contact the AILM by email: [fffsamba@pacific.net.ph](mailto:fffsamba@pacific.net.ph) or postal mail to Workshop on Music and Worship Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music PO Box 10533 Broadway, 1141 Quezon City Philippines.

### *Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, 2002–2003*

The **Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies** provides an intensive period of study, research and community life at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey. It is primarily for young theologians and pastors and for students of other disciplines with a suitable level of theological literacy.

Applications are now open for the spring 2003 session with a deadline of 31 July 2002. Application forms may be obtained from the institute or downloaded from the Bossey webpage. Application must be accompanied by certified copies of secondary school, bachelor's degree and theological studies certificates.

The theme of the spring session is 'Mission and Healing in a Broken and Suffering World' (3 February – 23 May 2003). This 54th session will focus on the healing components of mission: communal, physical, social and

spiritual. The approach will be multidisciplinary—from the perspective of the Bible, medicine, social ethics and theology. There will be analysis of past and present endeavours of churches in the field of health and healing. Focusing on present realities, the role of churches in facing the HIV/AIDS pandemic and in bringing healing and reconciliation to people in communities will be examined.

For more information, contact  
Ecumenical Institute  
Chateau de Bossey  
Chemin Cheneviere 2  
Bogis-Bossey  
CH-1298 Celigny  
Switzerland  
Email: [bossey@wcc-coe.org](mailto:bossey@wcc-coe.org).

### *Asia-Pacific Leadership Program*

The **East-West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii**, is offering an education program on the Asia-Pacific Leadership, which is an innovative certificate program designed to meet new educational and human resource needs during a time of increasing regional interdependence. The program will create a network of leaderships from the United States, Asia and the Pacific who are familiar with the issues and cultures of the region and trained to exercise leadership toward the well-being of the countries and peoples of the region.

The program invites applications from:

- outstanding young professionals,
- recent bachelor degree recipients,
- current enrolled graduate students.

The fall 2002/spring 2003 program will feature a core seminar, a leadership seminar, group projects and experiential learning, a field study, and internships as available. The application deadline is 31 March 2002. More detailed information and application materials are now available from the website at [www.eastwestcenter.org/edu-sp.asp](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/edu-sp.asp).