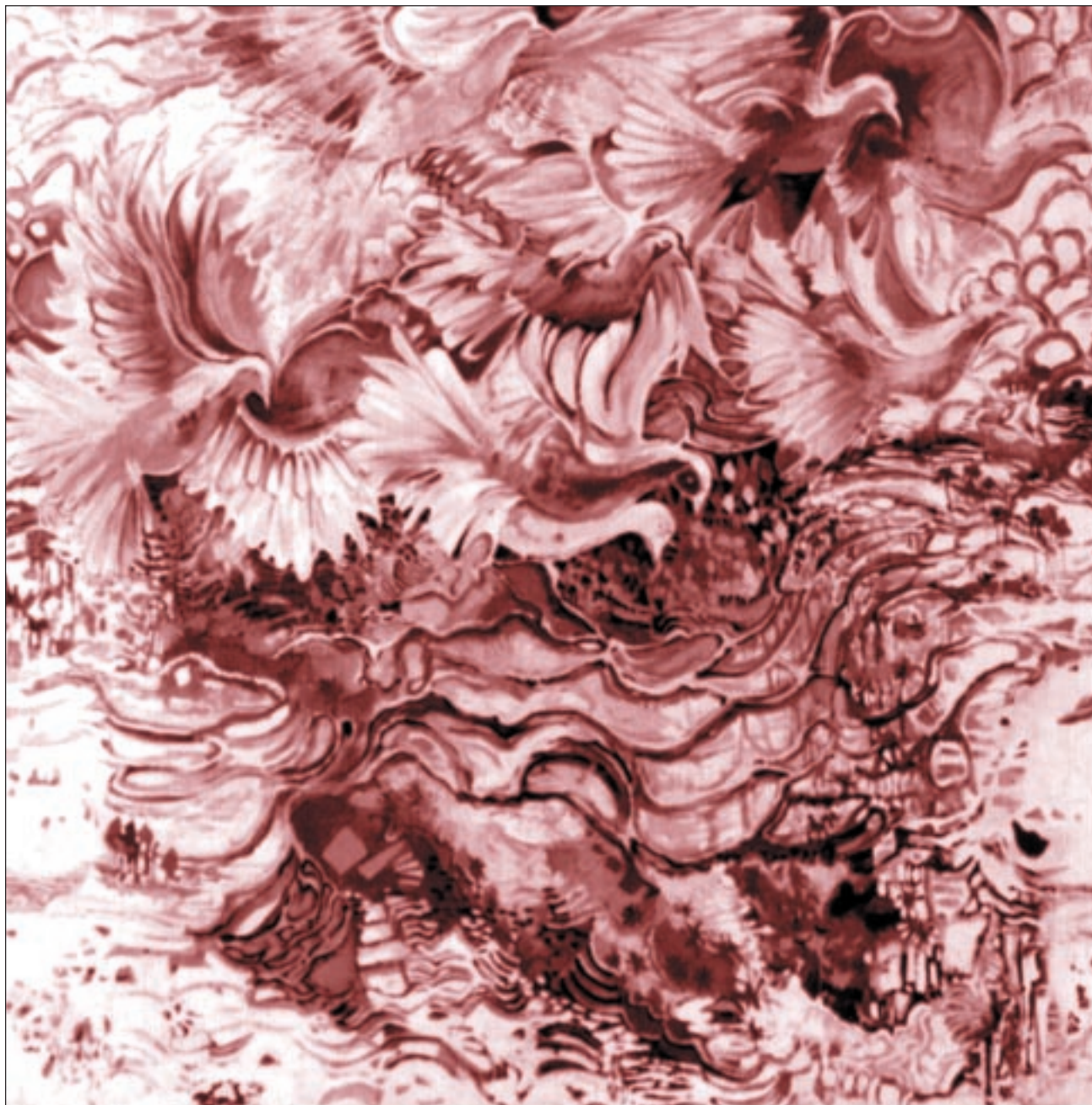


VOLUME 34 • NUMBER 2

JUNE 1999

cca news



A Call for Prayer: Concern for the People of Asia

East Timor • Middle East Council of Churches • Bukit Inspirasi

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EDITORIAL

In an unforeseen and unintended but exhilarating and challenging way, some of the key events in the program of CCA during this term will take place in the last half of this year and in the early part of 2000. In terms of program intensity there are not many periods in the history of CCA comparable to the few months leading to the year 2000.

It starts in August when up to 140 Asian theologians are anticipated to converge on the Ecumenical Christian Centre in Bangalore, India, for the Second Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS II). CATS II will meet around the theme 'Celebrating Life in Asia'.

The Asia Conference on Church and Society will follow in September. Hosted by Australian churches, the conference expects fifty theologians and social scientists to gather in Darwin, NT, Australia, to discuss issues and challenges for the churches towards the twenty-first century around the theme 'Faith and Life in Contemporary Asian Realities'.

A mission roundtable to probe the frontiers of Christian mission towards the twenty-first century will meet in Hong Kong in November. Forty top-flight mission practitioners and missiologists from Asia and around the world are being gathered to discuss and explore issues and concerns of mission and missiology as the church enters a new millennium and faces the challenges of an emerging new age. Of importance is the anticipated participation of Evangelical, Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians in the roundtable.

In December, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the Asia Ecumenical Committee (AEC) and the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU), which are the joint bodies set up by the CCA and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) for joint work between them, will gather for the third time during the term to continue their discussion issues and the common concerns of CCA and FABC relations.

A gathering of youth and students will take place in January 2000 in Taiwan. CCA Youth will sponsor this event, along with a number of ecumenical youth and student organisations such as the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the Asia Alliance of YMCAs and the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS).

All of these, along with the ongoing programs of the various units of CCA, will feed into the 11th Assembly of CCA, which is now scheduled to be held 1-6 June 2000 in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

The energy-sapping work that lies ahead has been minimised by the infusion of new executive staff into the workforce of CCA. The Executive Committee at its meeting in May this year appointed the Rev. Josef P. Widyatmadja of Indonesia to assume the position of Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission (URM) and Pastor Cora Tabing-Reyes of the Philippines to assume the position of Executive Secretary for Women's Concerns. The coming of these two very capable colleagues in June 1999 not only filled positions that had been vacant for some time but also underscored the sense of confidence that has been achieved over the past year concerning our strengthening financial condition.

Feliciano V. Cariño

A Call for Prayer

Concern for the People of Asia

The following statement was issued by the Officers of the Christian Conference of Asia in May 1999

Asia is passing through a delicate and crucial period of its history. Several Asian countries are devastated by economic and political crises and are faced with their worst financial crisis in more than three decades. The roots of Asia's many problems today lie in its shattered economy, which has resulted in food shortages, high inflation, unemployment and social unrest. Political uncertainty is looming in several Asian countries and democratic principles are in shambles. Ethnic conflicts and communal violence have spread in several countries. Deep mistrust and frustration exist in society, leading to a situation of ethnic conflicts and communal violence. Whereas indigenous communities and religious groups have been able to live together peacefully for generations in many parts of Asia, the recent tensions amongst different religious and ethnic groups intensify conflict.

In countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan, religious fundamentalism is growing and a culture of intolerance persists. The minority religious communities in these countries are experiencing discrimination and persecution. In Indonesia economic and political crises and religious conflicts still threaten the unity and long-nurtured culture of religious tolerance. The situation in East Timor has been deteriorating rapidly ever since the Indonesian government announced independence for East Timor. The people of East Timor, enduring extreme hardship in a situation of constant intimidation, now face terror and worse—cold-blooded massacres. A large number of East Timorese were forced to abandon their homes and belongings and flee from threat and violence. Although the tentative ceasefire signed between the warring parties is encouraging, the negotiation between Indonesia and Portugal to arrange a vote on autonomy is yet to bear fruit in order to achieve a peaceful solution. In Sri Lanka, ethnic conflicts and civil war continue with a heavy human toll. In India, political uncertainty threatens democratic principles. Malaysia has been witnessing unprecedented political turmoil. Territorial disputes create havoc and threaten peace and stability in different countries. A frantic race towards nuclear conflagration has started in South Asia.

East Asia also has been on the brink of a nuclear threat. The emerging balance of power configurations and strategic security alliances bring anxiety and uneasiness to the minds of East Asian people. Small arms and light weapons intensify ethnic and communal conflicts in South East Asia.

As we recognise the fact that these hostilities and disdainful disunities are marring and maiming the fullness of life in Asia, it is with a deep sense of pastoral responsibility that we, the officers of the Christian Conference of Asia, express our deepest concern for the people all over Asia and call on Christians all over the world to uphold the people of Asia in their prayers.

While affirming the fact that the Christians should take the initiative in breaking the dividing wall of hostility in order to make peace and reconciliation, we believe that God calls and compels Christians and churches in Asia to make every effort to overcome division and bring about shalom.

Let us pray that God may help the people to realise that despite the fact that certain Asian countries are moving towards democratic reforms and political governance, they must actualise the important task of promoting a culture of nonviolence and reconciliation as they respond to emerging situations when they try to build up a new political system.

We appeal to Christians around the world, especially member churches and councils of CCA, to pray for the ceasing of conflicts and violence that are taking place in different countries, especially in Indonesia and in East Timor. We urge them to pray for a peaceful atmosphere in Indonesia and East Timor, especially at this time of a democratic general election that will take place in Indonesia on 7 June after thirty-two years, and also the autonomy referendum that will be held in East Timor on 8 August.

We urge the churches in Asia to uphold victims of ethnic conflicts, communal violence and human rights violations in our intercessions. We recall the fundamentals of Biblical truth that human beings who exist in enmity are alienated from God and from one another and that God wills to overcome this enmity.

While affirming the truth that reconciliation is part of the ongoing mission of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and is part of the Church's mission and the ministry of every Christian, we beseech God's guidance upon us to fulfill the ministry of reconciliation in a time such as this when ethnic tensions and communal violence are more visible than ever before in Asia.

We call upon all Asian Christians to stand together with other religious communities in a spirit of servanthood and offer our prayers and supplications to God seeking to be faithful in our calling to be peacemakers and reconcilers and bring hope for all.

We hope for the day when people of the troubled nations in Asia can say with John of Patmos, 'Now the dwelling of God is with all, and God will live with them. They will be God's people, and God will be with them and be their God. God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' (Revelation 21:3-4).

We call on all people of goodwill to reach out to one another across the walls that divide us in Asia. May we all be bearers of good news of peace, joy and love in our society.

Rt Rev. Bishop Kenneth M. Fernando (President)

Prof. Yotora Konaka (President)

Deaconess Margaret Rodgers (President)

Ms Aye Mo Tin (President)

Ms Susan Li-Shu Chang (Treasurer)

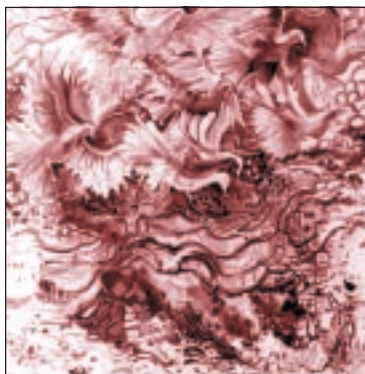
Dr Feliciano V. Cariño (General Secretary)

Cover: 'Damai di Bumi' ('Peace on Earth') by the Indonesian Artist Gunawan Handjaja.

It was the fiftieth day after Easter—Pentecost. A new era had begun. Jesus had ascended into heaven to be with the Father. His action in the world was of a new kind. He was there as spirit. He appeared in a special way—once in the history of the world. He appeared as flames of fire, scattered among the disciples and alighting on them, filling them with courage. It caused them to witness in a miraculous way. They declared Jesus was the person from Nazareth who was crucified and is both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)

Jesus, who formerly worked among them, now, through the Holy Spirit, was in them. Our hearts must be open, our spirits must receive him. He wants to change us. We must be reborn as children of God (Romans 8:4, 17).

Those flames of fire, which also resembled wings, descended upon human beings only one time. In our minds



usually we can picture most images in the Bible: The Holy Spirit takes on the form of a dove. This is a symbol that is generally recognised by everyone, the bird, which carries the message of peace. It carries hope, like the hope of Noah (Genesis 8), hope that helps during fear and uncertainty, hope that will build a new world.

The dove helps us learn about belief and hope, about amazement and thanking God. The Holy Spirit delivers witnesses to spread the news of the church. He calls people out, so that faith and love can be held in high esteem, throughout the regions that he has determined. The world has always needed obvious signs: See, that really is the Spirit of Christ at work. The world will not be allowed to disappear. There is a power, which cannot be seen, guiding the community of believers.

Yatma Pramana

(Courtesy of *Many Faces of Christian Art in Indonesia*, Communion of Churches in Indonesia, 1993)

Local Churches Respond to the Suffering of the People of East Timor

The regional Communion of Churches in East Nusa Tenggara and East Timor organised a consultation on the suffering of the people of East Timor and its impact on East Nusa Tenggara (West Timor). It was held on 17–18 June 1999 in Soe, approximately three hours drive from Kupang.

Thousands of East Timorese have taken refuge along the border of East Nusa Tenggara and the agony they have been forced to encounter is truly a defect of our civilisation said Ms Ria Rumata Aritonang, the Secretary of the Board of the Akademi Leimena of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia—the co-sponsor of the consultation.

The objective of the consultation was twofold. First, to share information both on the current situation in East Timor

and the condition of refugees in East Nusa Tenggara. Secondly, to study the problem, suggest possible solutions on how to help both the East Timorese and the people of Nusa Tenggara and how to convey the actual situation to the awareness of the Indonesian government, Indonesian churches and beyond and the United Nations.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the churches in East Timor, East Nusa Tenggara and the Communion of the Churches in Indonesia as well as delegates of international church communities. In addition, some representatives from related NGOs, experts from universities and Akademi Leimena and resource persons on the current situation in East Timor and the condition of refugees, were also invited. *Akademi Leimena PGI*

Statement of Concern for the Suffering of the People of East Timor

The Conference on Church and Society of the Regional Communion of Churches of East Nusa Tenggara and East Timor, in cooperation with the Leimena Institute, was held 15–18 May in Kupang, West Timor.

After studying the current situation in East Timor, and in solidarity with the people of East Timor, we express our deepest concern at the suffering they are currently experiencing.

The reality of East Timor today is marked by terror, murder, revenge, and a reign of violence that verges on anarchy as a result of the continuing political conflict over the status of that territory.

We are convinced that the people of East Timor could solve their own problems if only they were not pitted against one another by a third party. By this we mean the role of the Indonesian military in creating and supporting pro-integrationist paramilitary groups. The tragic result of the current escalation of violence is that the very structure of society, the economy, health, and education is in danger of destruction. As a result, a large number of refugees, both Indonesian migrants and indigenous East Timorese, have fled the territory. Several thousand are currently seeking shelter in West Timor. Taken as a whole, the current situa-

tion in East Timor is so grave as to put in question the very possibility of the promised act of free choice scheduled for 8 August.

In the light of these developments, the Conference on Church and Society of the Regional Communion of Churches of East Nusa Tenggara and East Timor urges the following:

- We ask that the people of East Timor approach their act of free choice as an act of faith in the providence of God, which they have known in their own history, in the present time of trouble, and will surely know in the time to come. It is an act of faith because it is an existential choice that will determine the future of the people of East Timor for generations to come.
- In full knowledge of the difficulty of their situation, we urge the people of East Timor to refrain from all acts of

violence and to work together to create an atmosphere of peace.

- We urge the security forces to cease their acts of violence, to take immediate steps to disarm all groups that are forbidden by law to bear

arms, and to provide protection to the people of East Timor.

- If conditions of safety and peace cannot be immediately established, we urge the deployment of a substantial peacekeeping force under

the auspices of the United Nations as quickly as possible in order to assure that the referendum on East Timor's future can be held as scheduled.

Rev. Dr B. Fobia, Moderator

Australian Churches to Host Asia Conference on Church and Society

Australian churches, through the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) and the Council of Churches in the Northern Territory (CCNT), will host the forthcoming Asia Conference on Church and Society, organised by CCA Theological Concerns. To be held 23–30 September 1999, the venue of the conference will be the Northern Territory University in Darwin, NT, Australia. The conference expects up to fifty theologians and social scientists from Asia and other parts of the world to participate and explore issues and challenges on church and society towards the twenty-first century.

Called to meet around the theme 'Faith and Life in Contemporary Asian Realities', participants will discuss presentations and make recommenda-

tions for study and action by the churches on the following subthemes:

- Asian Societies in the Age of Globalisation: Dilemmas, Issues and Opportunities
- Civil Society and Democratisation in Asia
- Biotechnology and Biocolonisation
- Religions, Cultures and Politics in Asia: Understanding and Cooperation in a Pluralistic World
- The New World of Communication and its Challenges to the Churches and the Ecumenical Movement
- Faith and Economic life in the Age of the Global Economy
- Migration and Uprooted People: A Moment of Choice for the Churches and the Ecumenical Movement.

Background papers on 'A Survey of Ecumenical Thought on Church and

Society over the Last Fifty Years' and 'The Changing Ideological Climate of Church and Society towards the Twenty-first Century' are in process of preparation for discussion.

Invited leaders of the conference include Dr Park Sang Jung and Dr Kang Moon-kyu of Korea, Dr Albert van den Heuvel, president of the World Association of Christian Communication (WACC), Dr Vandana Shiva of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology in New Delhi, Dr Sayid Aril Shiraj of Indonesia and Dr Manuel F. Montes of the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Dr Paul Abrecht, formerly of the World Council of Churches, and Dr Charles C. West of Princeton Theological Seminary are preparing background papers.

Pope Plans to Visit Asia in 1999 Following Synod for Asia

Pope John Paul II is planning to visit a number of Asian countries this year to present the post-synodal exhortation for last year's Synod for Asia. Places under consideration include India, Macao and Hong Kong. A visit to Indonesia would depend on political developments and the Philippines is also a possibility. South Korean bishops would like the

Holy Father to visit their country too. A long-awaited visit to Vietnam will come in due course but seems unlikely to take place in 1999. The dialogue between the Holy See and Vietnam is progressing well but still needs time.

The Holy Father wants to make the trip this year because his Jubilee 2000 program is already heavily booked. Foreign trips will be very few in the

jubilee year, and could even be reduced to one much-anticipated visit to the Holy Land. Since becoming pope in October 1978, Pope John Paul has made 86 foreign trips, six of them to Asia. He has visited Pakistan, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Singapore, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, East Timor and Sri Lanka.

Consultation on Mission in the New Millennium

From 23 to 27 May 1999 the Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea hosted an international consultation which it called in order to bring together representatives of those who have been involved in Korean missionary work: the member churches of the Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea, churches that have sent missionaries to Korea in the past and churches in countries to which Korean missionaries have been sent. The consultation took place at the Academy House in Seoul.

Koreans have long been gripped by the mission and commission of Jesus and a zeal for evangelistic outreach. Out of the struggles of the Korean church under Japanese colonial rule and the recent military dictatorship there has arisen a powerful movement of church growth and missionary

outreach. It began in 1910 with an outreach to the Korean diaspora in China, Siberia and Japan, was extended in the 1950s to neighbouring Asian countries, such as the Philippines and Taiwan, and culminated in recent decades in widespread interest in sending missionaries overseas.

Very large numbers of Korean missionaries have been sent out all over the world. Women missionaries are prominent and lay missionaries are increasing in number.

Given the rapid growth of the Korean worldwide missionary engagement over a short time-span, it is not surprising that a number of problems have emerged. These have included a lack of policy formation, planning and coordination, inadequate preparation, a lack of cultural sensitivity, a lack of capacity to link effectively with exist-

ing national churches and a tendency to exacerbate the problem of division among Christian churches.

After considering the new directions mission might take in the future (overcoming divisions) and 'reading together the signs of the times' (modern technology, globalisation) some practical proposals were given to Presbyterian churches and councils in Korea and to Reformed churches worldwide.

These included the development of a comprehensive mission policy and guidelines, ensuring missionaries have clear objectives and a firm grasp of God's call, avoiding duplication, transparent funding, cooperation in training, management and pastoral care of missionaries, and working together with other churches, both in Korea and overseas.



Seventh General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches

The Middle East Council of Churches held its 7th General Assembly in Lebanon on 27–31 April 1999. Thus it was that, after a hiatus of twenty-two years, the council convened a general assembly in the location of its head office, which it did not abandon despite the painful events Lebanon has experienced. Indeed, the MECC's activity increased there as it strove to assist in the country's reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The assembly was held at Dar Sayyidat al-Jabal, a monastery of the Maronite Catholic Church, located in the mountain of Fatka, north of Bei-

rut, under the theme 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever' (Hebrew 13:8).

Representing twenty-eight churches and more than 15 million Christians in the Middle East and North Africa, from Algeria to Iran, ninety-six official delegates and at least an equal number of guests and observers from the region and beyond attended the assembly. The member churches of MECC come from four Christian families: Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox (Chalcedonian), Catholic and Evangelical churches. Each family took turns leading the morning worship and

sharing their spiritual heritage. As the assembly also celebrated the MECC's silver jubilee, member churches evaluated the work of the council over the past twenty-five years, and looked to the role of the council in the new millennium. One of the concerns of the assembly was the growing number of Christians leaving the region.

The Assembly recognised the growing cooperation between the MECC and the Christian Conference of Asia. CCA was represented by Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat, the Associate General Secretary for Program Coordination.

HenrietteHutabarat

Ecumenism on the Threshold of the Third Millennium

His Holiness, Catholicos Aram I gave a presentation on 'Ecumenism on the Threshold of the Third Millennium'. His deep insight

into the ecumenical movement worldwide has given the catholicos a remarkable ability to see the movement both as a whole and as something that

has impact at the grass roots. There are five challenges before the movement as a whole, he said. The church must be one that cares, one that is responsive to the issues of the day and the concerns of the people. It must also appreciate the fact that its milieu is and will remain pluralistic. The need to be in dialogue with others is not simply an exercise in conceptual thinking—it is existential. Furthermore, the church's search for unity cannot be considered separately from its calling to mission. It is a God-given mission that begins with the witness to Trinitarian unity and works out in the Great Commission. Unity and mission cannot be separated. A fourth challenge is that the church must address the ethical issues of the day—consum-



The Middle East Council of Churches

The council is worth getting to know. The first and most remarkable feature of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) is its setting. It was through the Middle East that Abraham, his children and grandchildren migrated. Here the ancient Hebrew tribes wandered, and the judges, prophets, priests, kings, singers and sages who gave voice to scripture were nurtured. And it was here that the incarnation took place, and the redeeming ministry of Christ was fulfilled. The church was born in the Middle East, and here the early controversies played themselves out and the first divisions in the church occurred.

The people and churches that form the council are the direct heirs of all of that. And the vibrant ecumenical movement to which the council gives expression in this region is a profound healing process. A glimpse of the Tree of Life, whose leaves are 'for the healing of the nations' (Revelation 22:2), is somehow not so distant here.

The second feature is geopolitical. Powerful forces swirl and eddy in this region. They break out from time to time in violence. Death, misery and exploitation are no strangers. Economic forces, ethnic movements, big power pressures, religious passions ... these make for a heady mix of variables drawing in influences and interests from around the world, and predators abound. In the midst of this, for the past quarter century there has been the MECC, committed to witness and serve in Christ's name. The circumstances of human dysfunction place upon it an overwhelming burden.

People in the Middle East have reason to be suspicious of those who say they want to do them good. Wolves in sheep's clothing have been plentiful. In a region overwhelmingly Muslim in complexion, it is remarkable that

the council, an indigenous Christian agency, should retain the credibility rating it does. It has worked quietly and effectively as an agent of mercy and reconciliation in wartorn Lebanon. It has interceded in the delicate dialogue between the Palestinians and the world, preparing some of the more important

pathways that led to the peace process, it was early on the scene in post-war Iraq. It initiated discussions within Arab society to engage both Muslims and Christians in the examination of what should go into building a just and peaceful civil society and it has participated in some momentous initiatives of Christian reconciliation. There is a pivotal quality to the MECC, and that pivot has integrity.

Having a legacy directly tied into the early days of the ecumenical movement, the council has served in another remarkable way. Because of its long-standing partnerships with

churches and Christian agencies both in the West and in the East, it depicts as no other body in this region that the love of Christ transcends barriers and makes of humanity one people. By the sheer fact of its existence it is a testimony to the fact that healing can happen.

Finally, there is the intimacy of the council. The twelve to fourteen million souls who claim Christ's name in the Middle East are few in number when compared to the constituents of similar ecumenical associations elsewhere. But being small means that people know each other, and there is a bond of kinship that is rather special. It is no accident, therefore, that the council chose to organise itself as a family of families—the Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox, the Catholic and the Protestant families. Each makes its contribution to the witness of all.

This, then, is the Middle East Council of Churches.



erism, secularism and materialism. The church's ethical awareness is pegged to the image of God in the human person, and that implies that it must tackle moral issues seriously. Finally, the catholicos addressed the twin issues of specific identity and globalisation. The contemporary force of globalisation, that dehumanises and destroys local identity, must be confronted by an ecumenical awareness that identity can be maintained in a spirit of unity and reconciliation.

With that as background, Catholicos Aram noted that all five challenges are challenges to the churches in the Middle East. Specifically, he noted that the MECC is not an impersonal office of some kind but a living fellowship of churches, and must become a living reality in the life of the churches. As the region undergoes rapid change and disruption, the MECC has a role to play in helping churches articulate what they are facing. Furthermore, the MECC promotes regional ecumenism in encouraging the churches to work together thereby proving that partnership, though complex, is possible. The MECC must be sustained in a process of constant review. The constantly changing environment demands that the churches focus upon unity, education and diakonia with a flexible understanding. The MECC should not seek for models in other organisations, even the WCC. The churches of the Middle East must make their own structure according to their own priorities. According to him, if, in the MECC, the region's churches are faithful to themselves and their particularities, they will have something of true value to share with the world ecumenical movement.

Year of the Lord

Message of the Presidents of the WCC at Pentecost 1999

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Grace to you and peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

In many places around the world people are preparing for the start of a new millennium—some are apprehensive, others full of hope. For us Christians the beginning of the new millennium marks the 2,000th anniversary of the year of our Lord Jesus Christ and we must prepare joyfully for the celebrations. 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy.' (Luke 2:10) The angel's words are fitting for this special birthday.

And this is also the message we must give to all those who are looking towards this new millennium with feelings of uncertainty or even of fear. Apocalyptic and sectarian notions are flourishing at the present time. But it is also a time when many people are open to new ideas and eager for direction and reassurance. To those who are anxious, to those who have questions, we say: this new year, too, will be a 'year of the Lord':

- a year that is given to us by the one who holds time and space in his hands and who gives us the earth and all its fruits
- a year for which we are accountable before God. We must heed the critical questions that people are asking and repent. It is true, we have not done enough to overcome our divisions. We have not shown forth the peace of Jesus Christ clearly enough for the world to see

- a 'year of the Lord' also means that the God of the Bible is the one true Lord. All other authorities and powers that seek to enslave us must yield before God and, because God is Lord, nation and race, money and ideology can never have dominion over us.

Just six months ago delegates from our churches gathered in Harare for the World Council's 8th Assembly, with the theme 'Turn to God—Rejoice in Hope'. In the name of our churches they re-echoed a phrase from the message of the first Assembly in Amsterdam fifty years ago, reaffirming that 'we intend to stay together'.

And together we shall also move forward into this new millennium, trusting in God's Spirit, the Spirit of Pentecost. God's Spirit will guide us and help us to understand one another better despite our different traditions and cultures. God's Spirit will help us together to speak to the world about 'God's deeds of power' (Acts 2:11) and to tell all people of Christ's promise, 'Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matthew 28:20).

Dr Agnes Abuom, Nairobi, Kenya; Rev. Kathryn Bannister, Bison, KS, United States of America; Rt Rev. Jabez L. Bryce, Suva, Fiji; H.E. Metr. Chrysostomos of Ephesus, Athens, Greece; H.H. Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Damascus, Syria; Dr Kang Moon-Kyu, Seoul, Korea; Bishop Federico J. Pagura, Rosario, Argentine; Bishop Eberhardt Renz, Stuttgart, Germany

Bukit Inspirasi (Inspiration Hill)



The Preparatory Committee visits the open amphitheatre located on the shore of Tondano Lake (about fifteen minutes drive from Tomohon), the planned site for the cultural program during the CCA Assembly in June 2000

The eleventh General Assembly of CCA, scheduled for 1–6 June 2000, will be held at the Auditorium of the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (Protestant Christian Church in Minahasa, GMIM) located at the Bukit Inspirasi (Inspiration Hill) in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, under the theme 'Time for the Fullness of Life for All'. The Assembly will be

hosted by GMIM, one of the member churches of CCA, in collaboration with the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI).

The Preparatory Committee of the Assembly was appointed by the General Committee in May 1997.

The Committee held its second meeting in Tomohon on 22–23 April 1999 and was able to visit the site of

the Assembly. The committee was warmly welcomed by the leadership of the GMIM, especially Rev. Dr W.A. Roeroe, General Chairman, and Rev. Nico Gara, General Secretary.

The members of the GMIM warmly welcome participants of the CCA Assembly 2000 to stay in their homes and enjoy Minahasa hospitality.

Henriette Hutabarat

The Road to Tomohon

The road to CCA's 11th Assembly in Tomohon is now clear. Details of the preparations will be presented and discussed later, along with presentations and discussions of other matters related to the Assembly, such as vision and structure and constitu-

tional review. Our agenda is geared in such a way that a significant time will be devoted to Assembly matters. Let me predicate that discussion however with a number of general comments on the Tomohon Assembly. The Assembly will be very different from recent assem-

blies of CCA in many ways. For one thing, in Tomohon we return to our roots. Over forty years ago the CCA was born in Indonesia amidst the difficulties, uncertainties and challenges of the post-independence years. Forty-three years later we return to Indone-

sia to start work amidst the enormous challenges, dilemmas, opportunities and uncertainties of a new century and a new millennium. This sense of historical return and historic projection will be an important ingredient of our meeting. For another, Tomohon, like Prapat where the CCA was born, is a relatively rural area of Indonesia. It is by no means inactive and languid—it is in fact one of the centres of growth in the Indonesian archipelago. It is not however one of the known urban centres of Indonesian life. The Assembly will be comfortable, and will be well-fed, but it will not have the frills of a modern Asian city like Manila, or Seoul, or Singapore, or Bangkok, or Kuala Lumpur.

Above all, however, it will be different because, in a very literal sense, we will be meeting in the bosom of the Indonesian churches, and of the Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa (GMIM) in particular. We have been invited to live in the homes of GMIM members, we will be meeting in an auditorium specially built for the PGI Assembly in 1980 and which will be renovated specially for the CCA Assembly in 2000, we will be fed by members of GMIM with food provided by local congregations and our pre-Assembly gatherings will spread out into the other areas and congregations of GMIM. Tomohon, in comparison to recent assembly venues, is a very quiet and tranquil place, the pace is relatively slower and life is more relaxed. In the hotels that may be used for our meetings and residences, and in the auditorium where we will be meeting, the air is still clean amidst the lush flora and fauna of a still-verdant part of Indonesia. Such an ambience, I hope, will have some bear-

ing in the kind of Assembly we will have.

The emerging inputs and preparatory work that are moving towards the Assembly indicate quite clearly that beyond making preparations for another meeting, it is becoming clear that what is beginning to happen is a wider and more encompassing effort at looking at the future, what form and shape the ecumenical movement in Asia might become, and what new challenges it might confront in the years ahead. Over forty years of history for the CCA, and over fifty for the ecumenical movement worldwide, provide an astonishing accumulation of experience in 'life (and work) together in common obedience to the mission of God' that should be the basis of a fresh look at ecumenical life in its varied aspects.

There are clear areas of great achievement about which we should all be proud. There should, however, be

no hesitation that the recognition of incredible achievements will be balanced by a critical sense of areas of repentance and renewal. We are now, and will be even more so, under the enormous and astounding pressure of the changed and continually changing life and condition of the church and of the human condition in the world that cascades upon us as we come to the turn of the century and the millennium. Above all, amidst all of these changes and the pressures that they will bring upon us, we will be under the pressure of God's own demands upon us and the call that the Gospel will bring on us in the new age that is dawning. The sense of common, costly and perceptive obedience that brought the CCA into being over forty years ago will hopefully continue to be the primary sentiment that will guide us as we move towards our Assembly in the year of our Lord 2000.

Feliciano V. Cariño



Bishop Kenneth Fernando, CCA President, and Dr Feliciano Cariño, General Secretary (third and fourth from left), meet with Rev. Dr W.A. Roeroe, GMIM General Chairperson, Rev. Dr Richard Siwu, Chairperson of the GMIM Ecumenical Committee, and Rev. Nico Gara, GMIM General Secretary

World Youth Project and Rural Youth Program Committee Meetings

The 1999 committee meetings of the World Youth Project (WYP) and Rural Youth Program (RYP) of CCA Youth took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 23 February to 2 March.

The WYP Committee agreed to support eight local initiatives, while the RYP Committee provided support for twenty-two local projects across Asia. While WYP focuses on cutting-edge issues, the RYP concentrates on development projects for, of or by rural youth organisations.

A very important regional initiative supported by the WYP will be the Asian Youth and Student Gathering (ASYG) in 2000. This proposal was drafted by a working group formed from staff and youth members of Christian youth and student organisations throughout the region. Another preparatory meeting was held in May to make specific program plans for the gathering, which

CCA Youth

will be hosted in Taiwan in January 2000.

WYP also plans to support the Youth Consultation on Plurality in South Asia, which will take place in November in Sri Lanka. In December an evaluation meeting of WYP project holders will be held in Thailand.

WYP affirmed the need to have a Youth Internship Program for 2000 to focus on the Steward Program of the CCA General Assembly next year.

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

focus for future regional initiatives. Two types of regional initiatives will be supported by RYP this year. One is regional training, which includes:

- International Development and Management Training, coorganised with the Development and Service Desk, held in March in Thailand
- Youth Workshop on Indigenous and Tribal People's Rights, to be held in September in Thailand.

The RYP Committee also approved internship and exposure programs for rural youth. An intern will be placed with CCT-Youth to assist in the planning of the Youth Workshop on Indigenous Rights this year. Exposure programs to other countries will be arranged for potential youth leaders who are nominated by the RYP project holders. This effort is to develop human resources among rural youth groups across Asia.

Lung Ngan Ling

Impressions of Bangladesh

WYP committee member Emma Leslie gives her view of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a country of 120 million people, perched on a series of sandbanks awaiting the next flood season. Survival is the basic instinct of everyone, in a nation that was crippled by war in the early 1970s, lacks natural resources and is exploited by multinational organisations keen to cash in on cheap labour.

One of the things we were to learn about the people of Bangladesh is that they harbour the most overwhelming hospitality I have ever experienced. In our spare time we were invited to people's homes, no matter how simple, to share in the afternoon ritual of 'taking tea' or for a morning curry and rice or numerous other delicacies. On each occasion we were presented with gifts and tokens of love from the household or the host family. If I was to speak

honestly I would say I was at first sceptical of this display of generosity. After all, we were meeting to distribute this year's funding to various projects throughout Asia, including Bangladesh. But after ten days I came to see that this is the beauty and grace of the Bangladeshi. Whatever they have, no matter how small or humble, they will share it. It was not just a sharing of gifts, but of homes, families, stories, struggles and love. By the time we left



Committee members working hard

we felt we had known the young people of the Bangladesh National Council of Churches for many years and that we were leaving old friends behind us.

There are 300,000 rickshaw pullers in Dhaka, who are so poor they rent their rickshaws from slum dwellers. So are the 4,000 families who lost their homes during our visit because of a massive fire that swept through their slum. Cardboard homes burn so easily, especially when a fire is deliberately lit to clear people away for future development. So are the young girls who work eighteen-hour shifts in garment factories sewing clothes for the developed world and wealthy middlemen, hoping they can raise enough money for their dowry, in order to attract a half-decent husband who won't beat them or abuse them too badly. So are hundreds of beggar children selling flowers amidst the traffic and the layers of pollution it generates. So are the lepers who throw themselves in front of cars in order to attract atten-

tion to their plight and won't move until a few taka are thrown in their direction.

We made a visit to see one of the projects the Rural Youth Program (RYP) had been supporting, a program providing training, credit and savings programs to village women. It

was a privilege to sit and listen to their stories of how duck- and chicken-raising had improved their lot.

In one village I was horrified to be asked whether it was possible for me to be friends with these women. I said, of course, why not? They replied well you are so much richer than us. This developed into a conversation in which we were able to exchange life experiences and learn a little from each other. They asked me many times to give them advice about how to improve their lives. Finally I asked them the same question and their advice to me was, 'Don't quarrel with your husband'. This is an Islamic country where women have no rights and can be cast out by their husband at any time.

Bangladesh is such a paradoxical place where hospitality and generosity comes hand in hand with poverty, corruption, suspicion and abuse. We met remarkable people working to overcome the injustices and imbalances.



Making a presentation to the Moderator of NCCB Youth

Asian Students and Youth Gathering 2000

The Asian Students and Youth Gathering (ASYG) 2000 is being jointly organised by Christian student and youth movements in Asia: Christian Conference of Asia Youth, International Young Christian Students Movement, International Movement of Catholic Students Asia Pacific, World Student Christian Federation Asia Pacific Region, and Young Men's Christian Association—Asia Alliance. This network was initially formed to plan for ASYG in 1993 as a regional preparatory event for the Ecumenical Global Gathering of Youth and Students (EGGYS) in 1993.

Focusing on the issue of globalisation and with different tools of analysis, including a biblical-theological perspective, ASYG 2000 intends to:

- review critically the socioeconomic development of the postcolonial period in Asia
- initiate a process of participatory study on concerns related to development and globalisation, and their effects and impact on young people, the educational system and society in general
- facilitate a consolidated awareness-raising campaign on these issues

and concerns

- enable youth and students from Asia and the Pacific to evolve a common understanding and analysis of the issues and their role in society, as well as identify and develop alternative paradigms that promote fullness of life and formulate concrete regional strategies
- enable the participating students and youth movements in Asia to further strengthen ecumenical partnership and sharing efforts between and among themselves
- enable the coorganising movements and participants to come up with a clear follow-up plan to be implemented at regional, national and local levels.

ASYG 2000 will comprise two phases. In the first phase (January to December 1999) the local movements of the coorganising partners are encouraged to work together in an integrated process of participatory research and study, and an awareness-raising campaign at the national level. The result of the national activities will be shared in the regional gathering. The second phase is the regional gathering itself, which will be held 21–28

January 2000 in Taiwan. Over 100 youth and students across Asia will be invited. The theme of the gathering is 'Review, Reflect, Renew: Building Sustainable Communities'. During the gathering three overlapping consultative processes will be initiated: at national, intramovement and subregional levels.

These processes will endeavour to come up with a common understanding and analysis of issues and concerns related to development and globalisation and the role of young people in society, as well as to identify and develop alternative paradigms and a common program of action at the different levels mentioned above. As it is a common concern among all the participating movements, a gender balance will be observed for ASYG 2000. It is expected that men's and women's caucuses will take place during the gathering.

Finally, a report/documentation will be published and distributed in the first half of 2000 to the participants and Asian and international youth and student networks, as well as funding partners.

Lung Ngan Ling

Asia Youth Week

10–16 October 1999

CCA Youth celebrates Asia Youth Week during the third week of October every year. This year the theme is 'Globalisation'.

A postcard and resource material on related liturgies, and articles from youth perspectives will be published and distributed in August 1999.

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

Development Management Training



A four-week Development Management Training (DMT99) was organised in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 28 February to 27 March 1999.

Twenty-seven participants, representing church, church-related and social-development organisations from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal participated. The course was facilitated by Rev. Sammie Formilleza (Philippines), Bennet Benjamin (India), Dr Edith Maslang (UP, Philippines), Emmanuel Ilagan (ESCAP, Thailand) and Joop Theunissen (ESCAP, Thailand).

DMT99 was the first in the series of a three-year program (1999–2001) initiated by CCA Development and Service in conjunction with CCA Youth.

In his opening remarks, 'I Have a Dream', Rev. Sammie Formilleza emphasised that the 'dream will remain

unfulfilled if we do not do something and act now'. He added, 'And I am happy that we are here today to share experiences and learn from each other, as partners with the suffering masses in the long and arduous journey towards the fullness of life and social justice.'

'We are gathered here to subject the dominant development model to a critique and discover the basic issues that hinder genuine people's development. We are here to denounce the oppressive character of globalisation and to announce the liberating aspects of development emerging from people's movements for social transformation.'

The course agenda moved beyond a general discussion of development issues, concepts, theories and approaches. Bennet Benjamin had the important task of setting the tone of the course with various aspects, models and impacts of development schemes around the world, especially

in Asian contexts. The importance of understanding project management concepts and skills was a central point of the program.

Three resource persons then facilitated a systematic study on 'project management knowledge and skills', including a community-needs assessment, steps in project planning and implementation, project monitoring, evaluation and report writing and presentation. Using adult-learning principles, participants were able to have hands-on practice in project proposal making, project evaluation and report writing.

As part of the course, field visits to community and project sites were arranged. These provided a venue for an exchange of ideas and experiences between participants and the local Thai development workers, project members and villagers. This was then used as a case study for the course.

Prawate Khid-arn

Urban Rural Mission Programs

In the absence of a URM staff worker until the appointment of Josef Widyatmadja, Ahn Jae Woong has looked after URM programs. The following took place in the first half of 1999.

Grassroots Organisers Training Program (GOTP)

This program was held 12–24 January at the Villa Jessica Inn and Action for Development Foundation, Inc. (ACTION) in Tacloban City, Philippines.

GOTP was conducted by Oca Francisco, a member of the Training Task Force (TTF) of CCA URM, who made a tremendous contribution in building leadership formation in CCA URM. There were seven sessions: an overview of GOTP, the course curriculum, URM thrusts and direction, global and Asian contexts, community organisation and people empowerment, the ID/OS concept and evaluating training.

Rev. In Myung Jin, Moderator of CCA URM, and Ahn Jae Woong from CCA led a session on the URM thrusts and direction of CCA. (A full report of GOTP is available on request from CCA.)

Training Program for URM Related Women Workers

This program was held 4–11 April at the YMCA Collins House, Bangkok, and PJS-SDSC, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Janejinda Pawadee, a member of the program committee of CCA URM conducted this program. The purpose was to exchange and share the situation of women workers and the role



of the church and URM for women workers in Asia and to strengthen the solidarity network among women workers. Other areas of concern included globalisation, the IMF, World Bank, WTO, TNCs and women workers, and the role of URM. The questions, 'Why there is massive unemployment all over Asia?' and 'What alternatives are being made or conceived by women workers?' were well examined.

Lively discussions followed and an exposure program was arranged to factories, slum areas and churches as well as meeting women workers. (A full report of this program is also available on request from CCA.)

URM Exchange Visit

The Korea Christian Action Organisation (KCAO) invited Kavaljit Singh as the keynote speaker at their national consultation on urban and rural mis-

sion, held 11–13 May in Seoul. Kavaljit Singh is a well-known Indian economist, the author of *Citizen's Guide to the Globalisation of Finance* and co-ordinator of the Delhi-based Public Interest Research Group. He made a couple of important speeches during his visit to Seoul and was able to meet with many people and civil society groups in Korea. His book had been published into Korean by KCAO and it is very popular among people in grassroots movements.

The aim of the consultation was to build a strategy for coping with the impact of the globalisation of finance on the economy of Korea and people's lives. The consultation decided to raise awareness of the problem of globalisation of finance through URM activities, have regular meetings on the issue, and devise a strategies to counter financial globalisation.

Ahn Jae Woong

Human Rights Violations Provide Sharp Focus for Training Program

Krishanthi was 18 years old. She was educated, well respected, middle class. On her way home from a school examination, she was stopped at the Chemmani Army check point in Sri Lanka for 'intensive questioning'. When she didn't arrive home, her mother, brother and a neighbour went to look for her. All disappeared. An investigation led to the discovery of the decomposed bodies of Krishanthi, who had been dismembered, and her mother, who had been strangled. It was later disclosed that Krishanthi had also been gang raped.

During 25–30 May 1999 the CCA's third Annual Human Rights Training

Program was held in Bangkok. Participants came from throughout Asia to share stories of human rights violations—including the story of Krishanthi—reflect on the concept of human rights, develop strategies for advocacy and prepare themselves better to be active supporters of human rights in their home countries.

The timing could not have been more appropriate. As the program went about its work, the Philippines Senate voted in favour of the Visiting Forces Agreement, inviting the return of the United States military, and India and Pakistan stood on the brink of conflict. Even so, the stories emanat-

ing from the participants provided an even sharper focus for the training program.

Again and again the conference heard reports of human rights abused and under threat.

Stories of child labour and child abuse in Thailand, Bangladesh and Vietnam, religious tension and discrimination in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Laos and Myanmar, government preference for security over human welfare from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and South Korea, calls for self-determination for indigenous people in Malaysia and Aotearoa New Zealand, and details of the traumatic human



cost of political change in Indonesia and Hong Kong meant the training program was always grounded in concrete everyday realities.

These shared stories became the touchstone for the conference's theoretical input, including the two powerful Bible studies led by Septemmy Lakawa of Indonesia. These invited participants to listen to the Bible's stories for the voices of those who are silent and to ask how this silence can be broken.

The first day of the program began with a valuable sketch of the development of the concept of human rights and the critical role it has played in human society from religious, philosophical and historical points of view, presented by Dr Mathews George Chunakara of CCA.

These insights were built on in a study of biblical and theological foundations for human rights from both

Old and New Testament perspectives by Rev. Dr Oscar Suarez from Manila. Professor Michael Davis (Chinese University, Hong Kong) guided the group through some of the implications for human rights of economic globalisation and political cultures. He warned participants to be wary of political agendas that sideline human rights in the name of any culture's 'special values'.

Professor M.J.A. Cooray (City University, Hong Kong), further challenged the meeting to ask what activities can be set in place to move communities toward more participative processes enabling human rights to be set in place and safeguarded.

Srisak Thairy, Director of Child and Youth Development Council in Thailand, in a presentation on 'the rights of the child', underscored the extent to which the 'economic crisis' has ef-

fected children in Asia both because families are under increased pressure through unemployment and because Governments have cut back welfare budgets in response to the crisis.

On the last day, Alex Marcelino's (Consultant to UNDP, Cambodia) workshop on monitoring and advocacy gave participants an opportunity to identify practical ways churches can promote awareness of human rights and forge effective partnerships with local and national interest groups, both outside and including government.

The training program provided a vital opportunity for thirty-five prospective Asian church leaders to grow together in their understanding on human rights of how the church can have an effective voice in calling and caring for the rights of all God's people in every land.

Chris Nichol, Aotearoa New Zealand

Religious Freedom and Human Rights

Religious freedom means the freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of one's choice, and the freedom to publicly practise and propagate it. Although a right to religious freedom has been enshrined in the constitutions of most Asian countries as a fundamental, religious minorities in some countries have been persecuted and threatened by majority religions and dominant political ideologies. In several countries in Asia, majority religious groups are taking a leading role in civil and political affairs by trying to dominate minorities,

and national aspirations are framed in religious terms. This is sowing seeds of communal hatred and violence and violating human rights.

Legislation is increasingly being introduced to control minorities, and to prohibit or discourage religious propagation and conversion. Some ruling parties use religion to gain popularity among certain religious groups to ensure their survival in power. In the so-called socialist countries of Asia religion is viewed as an alien force with the potential for opposition to the dominant political ide-

ology. In these countries also legislation or regulations are being introduced to silence religion.

The right to religious freedom has been and continues to be a major concern of the churches in Asia. Recent incidents in different Asian countries have led to communal violence and religious persecution and several member churches of CCA have had traumatic experiences of religious intolerance, denial of religious freedom and persecution.

In this context, the CCA International Affairs Unit initiated a study pro-

gram to analyse and study emerging trends with regard to the right to religious freedom in Asia, as mandated by the last General Assembly of CCA.

The first in this study program series was held at the YMCA, Bangkok, Thailand, 23–27 March 1999, when the focus was on nine countries within the CCA constituency: Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, analysing the situation of a growing trend towards violence and sectarianism, which poses a serious threat to the concept and establishment of a civil society.

Since the exit of the colonial powers, the nation states of Asia adopted written constitutions for running state business and for maintaining orderly and meaningful state–citizen relations. The concept of a nation state presupposes the concept of a pluralistic society with different ethnic identities

regarding race, language, culture and religion. Democracy and secularism are correlative. No democracy can be established without there being a secular state structure and a secular approach within that society. It is based on the principles of equality, justice and tolerance. It promotes a culture of coexistence.

The fundamental rights guaranteed in these constitutions and the interpretation of these rights is being urged in a broader human rights perspective, particularly after the ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by more than 150 members of the UN.

Despite this the political establishments of many countries have been acting in a neocolonial fashion for their own vested interests. The major casualties have been the freedom of conscience and religion.

The abuse of religion for political gains has developed religious funda-

mentalism, promoting a culture of violence, hate and intolerance. Different religious groups promoted by a foreign agenda during the cold war have now overgrown their militant religious extremism and are posing a serious threat not only to the concept of good governance of their one-time foreign promoters, but also to their national political establishments as well. Because of their fundamentalist stance, these militant groups are not prepared to recognise the human rights and equal status of minorities in the society.

Therefore, a democratic culture on secular lines needs to be developed to establish peace and tolerance amongst people and to bring an end to the gory happenings in the name of religion that are becoming a common feature in our societies. Development of such a culture is possible only through a process of conscientisation and through



liberative political movements. Those who are concerned about nurturing secular democratic principles must continue to pay attention to the establishment of a culture of tolerance, notably through education.

It was reaffirmed at the study program that issues of religious freedom should be studied within the larger framework of human rights and should underscore the issue of 'fundamentalism' within all religions, including Christianity. Fundamentalism is intrinsic to all religions. How it manifests itself in different religions should be one of the crucial aspects of the study.

A serious analysis would lead to the root causes of religious fundamentalism. Almost all Asian churches live in a context of religious pluralism. This multifaith context poses a serious challenge to the churches in Asia in terms of their theological understanding of mission and evangelism.

In so many Asian contexts, the churches have been deeply involved in the process of socioeconomic transformation, which has angered the dominant religions and groups as it challenges the status quo. Such situations eventually create tensions and even persecution. Human rights and

religious liberty issues of certain socialist countries should therefore also be studied, taking into consideration national sovereignty, particularly in a context where it has been abused by colonial powers. The study should be focused on political dimensions and implications.

The controversy of religious conversion should be addressed clearly. The study should also trace the implicit connections of religious freedom and human rights with the economic, social political and other undercurrents in a country.

Mathews George Chunakara

Cambodian Church Leaders Visit Vietnam

A group of eight Cambodian church leaders visited the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 27–30 March 1999. They visited the leadership of the Vietnam Evangelical

Church and worshiped in different churches in Ho Chi Minh City. They also met with the leadership of the Catholic Solidarity Committee. For most participants, this visit was an eye-

opener, since the church situation in Vietnam is entirely different from Cambodia. The Sunday church services were full with believers, and the congregations were organised in a system-

atic way. Vietnamese churches are self-supporting and are now free from external control.

One Cambodian church leader at the end of the visit said, 'We should learn more from Vietnamese how to strengthen the church without overseas missionary influence and competition'.

The origins of Christianity in Vietnam and Cambodia came from the same missionary tradition and the



churches in both countries were organised in a systematic way until the early 1970s. As the political situation in these countries changed the churches became isolated from each other and underwent traumatic experiences. The new situations in Cambodia and Vietnam provide an opportunity for churches meet each other.

This was the second time that CCA has organised a visit of Cambodian church leaders to Vietnam.

Mathews George Chunakara



CCA Plans Consultation on Arms Race

CCA has been concerned about the deterioration of peace and security in Asia for some time. It has tried to understand the situation and to respond based on the issues in specific circumstances. As part of its ecumenical response to these issues, the CCA General Assembly in 1995 decided to undertake the responsibility of

studying the question of the arms race in Asia. However, in the past three years several new issues have emerged in Asia and these have become a matter for serious consideration by those who are concerned about peace and security in Asia. In this context, CCA's International Affairs Committee proposed an Asia regional consultation to

analyse trends in the arms race, the arms trade and strategic security alliances in Asia, with an aim to educate Asian churches on these issues and reflect on the peace and security concept from a Christian ethical perspective. The hope is that this will help Asian churches to be engaged in working towards the goal of building a culture of peace.

A preparatory committee meeting to plan this consultation was held in Hong Kong on 27–28 April 1999. The committee, with the assistance of two experts, identified the main thrusts of the consultation and worked out details. CCA will invite a group of forty people—church leaders, academics, peace activists, government officials, diplomats and interreligious organisation representatives—from twenty Asian countries and other observers from non-Asian countries. The consultation will be held at Bandung, Indonesia, in November 1999.

Mathews George Chunakara



Executive Committee Meeting

The CCA Executive Committee held its meeting in Hong Kong on 7–8 May 1999.

The Committee discussed the preparation for the CCA Eleventh General Assembly, to be held in June 2000. It appointed two new executive staff, Pastor Corazon Tabing-Reyes from the United Church of Christ in the Philippines to be Executive Secretary of Women's Concerns and Rev. Joseph Widy-atmadja from the Christian Church in Indonesia to be the Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission (URM).

The officers also took the occasion to issue a 'Call to Prayer' for all Asian churches to pray together for various crucial concerns in the life of people



in the region. The Committee received the General Secretary's Report presented by Dr Feliciano Cariño and the

Finance Report presented by Dr Ahn Jae Woong.

Henriette Hutabarat

Frontiers in Christian Mission: A Theological Roundtable

Forty topflight missiologists and mission practitioners from Asia and other parts of the world are expected to participate in the CCA theological roundtable on 'Frontiers in Christian Mission'.

The roundtable will be held in Hong Kong SAR, China, on 11–17 November 1999, in collaboration with the Council for World Mission, London, and with the participation of a number of partner ecumenical mission agencies.

Considered one of the major events in the life of the CCA during the current term, the roundtable is being called to probe issues, concerns and coalitions on the Christian mission and missiology towards the twenty-first

century. Papers, presentations and roundtable discussions will discuss themes and questions and will include the following:

- biblical and theological framework for conceiving mission today
- the challenge of other faiths and religious plurality: God's People amidst all of god's peoples
- mission and engagement in society: models for mission, social thought and action
- mission and economic globalisation: faith, witness and the ideology of the market
- mission, proclamation and unity: Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical perspectives.

Four background and survey papers for the roundtable are in process of preparation:

- a survey of mission and missiological concerns and perspectives in Evangelical and Pentecostal churches
- a survey of mission concerns and missiological perspectives in the ecumenical movement
- a survey of mission concerns and missiological perspective in the life and work of action groups
- a survey of mission and missiological perspectives in the Roman Catholic Church.

Feliciano V. Cariño

CCA Staff Annual Retreat

On 19–20 May 1999 the CCA Executive Staff took time out for a retreat at the historical Morrison chapel in Macau, with Dr Tso Man King of the Hong Kong Christian Council as retreat leader. Fellowship was celebrated in a relaxed pace and atmosphere through worship, deep reflection, community integration and the sharing of food in the spirit of collegiality.

Dr Daniel Thiagarajah led the group twice in worship, reflecting on spirituality as modelled by Jesus and the call to ministry as experienced by Isaiah and Moses.

The retreat was enriched by Rev. Dr Michael Poon's sharing of his ministry in church and community in Macau as pastor of the Morrison congregation. According to him, a redefinition of Christianity from the point of view

of the people of Macau is important in letting the church become a window to the world, specially as Portugal will hand over Macau to China at the end of this year.

Dr Tso Man King shared his reflection on the context of Asia and the challenge of moving from an old identity to a new identity. There were also pastoral tips on practical things that staff should consider as they move to a new millennium.

Dr Feliciano Cariño shared some highlights of his ecumenical journey and from these stories drew reflections that point to marks that should characterise or even challenge ecumenical work and leadership now and in the years to come.

After the retreat, it is all go! go! go! as a team!

Corazon Tabing-Reyes



Back: Prawate Khid-arn, Henriette Hutabarat, Daniel Thiagarajah, Josef Widyatmadja
Front: Mathews George Chunakara, Lakshmi Daniel, Lung Ngan Ling, Tso Man King, Feliciano Cariño, Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Emmanuel Ilagan

New CCA Staff

Corazon Tabing-Reyes



Pastor Corazon Tabing-Reyes, from of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), has been appointed by the Executive Committee as Executive Secretary for Women's Concerns for a term of four years beginning 1 June 1999. It is also expected that she will coordinate the program of education within the Staff Cluster on Mission, Education and Formation of CCA. Cora brings with her much experience and involvement in local congregations, theological education and ecumenical formation programs. In 1970 she was commissioned to be a Christian education worker (deaconess) of the UCCP and served in a number of local churches. She was a teaching fellow in Christian Education at the Divinity School of Silliman University (1974–1975) and served on the Faculty in Christian Education at Union Theological Seminary (1976–1992). Prior to her appointment at CCA, she was the Executive Director of the Commission on Christian Education at the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (1992–

1998) wherein the program unit on women was lodged. For a brief period this year she returned to UCCP to take on the responsibility of Coordinator of the Program on Christian Education and Nurture. She has participated in many CCA programs, has wide experience in national, regional and worldwide activities in women's concerns and education, and has served in various bodies and committees of the CCA and other ecumenical bodies in Asia and worldwide. She holds a Master's degree in Theology from the Southeast Asia Graduate School of Theology, and Special Graduate Studies in Women's Studies, Theology and the Bible from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, USA. She is married to the Rev. Rolando A. Reyes, and has three children, Ermine Ruth, who is a student at De La Salle University in Manila, and Hesed Roland and Shan Aldrin, both secondary school students at the Philippine Christian University.

Josef P. Widyatmadja

Rev. Joseph P. Widyatmadja, an ordained minister of the Gereja Kristen Injonesia (GKI), has been appointed by the Executive Committee of the CCA as Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission (URM) for a term of four years.

Well known in ecumenical circles in Indonesia, Joseph comes to CCA with a wide experience in urban rural ministry, especially through the work of the Yayasan Bimbingan Kesejahteraan Sosial (Social Welfare Guidance Foundation, YBKS) in Surakarta, Central Java, where he was director since the establishment of the foundation in 1974. Since 1977 he has been actively involved in the labour movement and addressing the land issue in Central Java. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Christian Institution for Social Concerns (ACISCA). He holds a Bachelor of The-



ology degree from Duta Wacana Theological Seminary in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and a Master's in Theology and Development from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He is married to Wieke Widiyanti of Yogyakarta, with whom he has two children, Allen Widyatmadja, a postgraduate student in Indonesia, and Alice Margaretha, who is studying Chinese language in Beijing.

Forthcoming CCA Events

Leadership Development Training in Laos
8–12 July 1999
Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, Indochina Program

Consultation on Freedom of Religion and Human Rights in India
Bangalore, India, 26–30 July 1999
Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, International Affairs Unit

Workshop on Ecumenical Enablers in India
29–31 July 1999
Contact: Daniel Thiagarajah, Mission and Evangelism Unit

Myanmar Council of Churches Team Visit Malaysia on Migrant Workers Concerns
1–14 August 1999
Contact: Prawate Khid-arn, Development and Service

Bible Study Workshop in Vietnam
1–6 August 1999
Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, Indochina Program

Congress of Asian Theologians
Bangalore, India, 9–15 August 1999
Contact: Lakshmi Daniel, Theological Concerns

Ecumenical Enablers Program
Bangkok, Thailand, 25–29 August 1999
Contact: Daniel Thiagarajah, Mission and Evangelism Unit

Rural Youth Program Working Group Meeting
Manila, Philippines, August 1999
Contact Lung Ngan Ling, Youth Desk

Youth Consultation on Indigenous and Tribal People's Rights
Chiang Mai, Thailand, 3–11 September 1999
Contact: Lung Ngan Ling, Youth Desk

CCA–WCC Working Group Meeting

Geneva, Switzerland, 6–7 September 1999

URM Training Task Force

Manila, Philippines, 6–12 September 1999

Contact: Joseph Widyatmadja, Urban Rural Mission Unit

CCA–FABC Joint Ecumenical Formation Course

Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, India, 14–30 September 1999

A joint program initiated by CCA and FABC (Federation of Asian Bishop's Conferences) for South Asia
Contact: Henriette Hutabarat (CCA) and Edmund Chia (FABC)

Training Workshop on Pastoral Ministry of Churches on HIV/AIDS Concerns in the Mekong Subregion

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 9–25 September 1999

Participants will represent churches from the Mekong subregion, including Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and China
Contact: Prawate Khid-arn, Development and Service

CCA–WCC Consultation on Emerging Asian Crisis and Internally Displaced Communities

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 12–17 September 1999

Contact: Prawate Khid-arn, MRIA Program/Development and Service Unit

Conference on 'Church and Society'

Northern Territory University, Darwin, Australia, 23–30 September 1999

Theme 'Faith and Life in Contemporary Asian Realities'
Contact: Feliciano Cariño, Theological Concerns Unit

Leadership Development Training in Cambodia

Pnom Penh, Cambodia, 1–4 October 1999

Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, Indochina Program

Consultation on 'Right to Communication of Refugees—Asian Experience'

October 1999

Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, MRIA Program/International Affairs Unit

Community-based Saving and Micro-credit Training

Bangladesh, 3–9 October 1999

Contact: Prawate Khid-arn, Development and Service Unit

Asia Youth Week

10–16 October 1999

Theme: 'Globalisation'

Contact: Lung Ngan Ling, Youth Desk

Vietnam Church Leaders' Visit to Malaysia

13–16 October 1999

Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, Indochina Program

Workshop on 'Curriculum of Christian Education in the Context of Asian Plurality'

Indonesia, 20–27 October 1999

Contact: Henriette Hutabarat, Daniel Thiagarajah and Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Education Unit

Workshop on 'Worship in Inclusive Community in Asia'

Indonesia, 20–27 October 1999

Contact: Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Women's Concerns

CCA Executive Committee Meeting

Hong Kong, 6–7 November 1999

CCA and Partners Roundtable Meeting

Hong Kong, 8–10 November 1999

Roundtable on Mission and Missiology

Hong Kong, 11–17 November 1999

Theme: 'Frontiers in Christian Mission: A Theological Roundtable'
Contact: Feliciano Cariño and Daniel Thiagarajah, Theological Concerns and Mission and Evangelism Units

Asian Consultation on 'Towards a Culture of Peace and People's Security'

Bandung, Indonesia, 24–28 November 1999

Contact: Mathews George Chunakara, International Affairs Unit

Youth Consultation on Religious Plurality in South Asia

November 1999

Contact: Lung Ngan Ling, Youth Desk

CCA–UN/ESCAP Training Program in China on Rural Youth Workers

November 1999

Contact: Imanuel Ilagan, CCA–UN/ESCAP Joint Program

11th General Assembly

Tomohon, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, 1–6 June 2000
Theme: 'Time for Fullness of Life for All' (John 10:10)

New Appointments

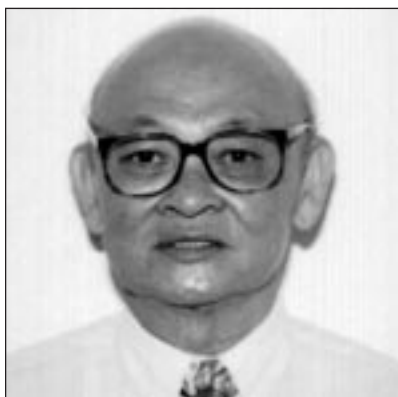
Victor Azariah was recently appointed as Executive Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Pakistan.

Rev. Lolita Dais was appointed General Secretary of the Convention of the Philippine Baptist Churches as from 1 March 1999. Rev. Dais is the fourteenth General Secretary of the Convention and the first woman in the history of the Convention of the Philippine Baptist Churches to be elected to this position.

The Most Rev. Tomas A. Millamena has been elected as the new head of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente in the Philippines.

Rev. Dr J.M. Ngul Kan Pau has been elected as the new General Secretary of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India.

Rev. Johanis Bedjo Sudarmo was recently appointed as the General Secretary of the Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ) in Indonesia.



Tan Chi Kiong

volunteer consultant in various ecumenical and non-governmental organisations in the area of organisation review and support. Previous involvement and interests bring him very close to the work that ECTWT has been doing and hopes to do in the future.

His office is located in the CCA Centre at 96 Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin Road, Sha Tin, NT, Hong Kong SAR, China, and he can be contacted by telephone at +852 2603 2669 or by e-mail at contours@pacific.net.hk.

The Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT) was formed in 1982 by the: Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) through its Office for Human Development (OHD), the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), the Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Middle East Council of Churches. These bodies agreed to form a coalition in order to enable people's response to tourism in the Third World. The General Secretary of CCA, Dr Feliciano V. Cariño is the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the ECTWT.

Harare Follow Up

Three months after the eighth Assembly of the WCC in Harare, the newly elected Executive Committee held its first meeting in March 1999 at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, near Geneva. The main focus of the Executive Committee's agenda was evaluation and follow-up of the decisions of the Harare assembly.

Besides considering a preliminary evaluation report by staff, the committee offered its own assessment of the assembly's program and its outcome and suggested some directions for the consolidated evaluation report to be submitted to the Central Committee at its first meeting in August–September this year.

The formation of future WCC commissions and advisory groups was considered. Suggestions of names of persons for these commissions and groups are invited. The Executive Committee, at its meeting prior to the Central Committee, will review all proposals received and submit its recommendations to the Central Committee.

An important decision by the assembly to form a special commission to address concerns being raised particularly by the WCC's Eastern Orthodox member churches was discussed and a list of proposed members from among the WCC's 'non-Orthodox' member churches is being considered.

An interim report was made on explorations regarding a possible Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations. After a further meeting with potential partners in the forum, more specific recommendations will be formulated for consideration by the Central Committee.

New ECTWT Executive Secretary

Tan Chi Kiong, immediate past General Secretary of the Asia Alliance of YMCAs and Director of the Asian Migrant Centre in Hong Kong, has agreed to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Ecumenical Coalition for Third World Tourism (ECTWT). Well known in ecumenical circles in Asia and in the worldwide network of the YMCAs, "Chi Kiong", as he is known to friends and colleagues, is a seasoned ecumenical worker currently serving as a

New General Secretary of the Caribbean Council of Churches

Gerard A.J. Granado, a layman of the Roman Catholic Church, has been elected as the new General Secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches. Gerard, who comes from the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, is no stranger to the ecumenical movement in the Caribbean and beyond. In the early 1980s he was a staff member of the CCC attached to the Caribbean Ecumenical Program—the CCC's theological department. In more recent times he served as the William Paton Fellow at the ecumenical Selly Oak Colleges/University of Birmingham, UK. Before taking this position, he was the Associate General Secretary of the CCC.

Australian Appeal for Kosovar Refugees

An appeal for Kosovar Refugees by the National Council of Churches in Australia has raised over A\$100,000 (approximately US\$65,000).

'We are very thankful to have received \$100,000 so far for our appeal for Kosovar refugees,' says Michael Brown, Director of NCCA's Christian World Service. '\$90,000 of that amount has already been transferred to ACT (Action by Churches Together) to assist in caring for refugees in the region around Kosovo.'

ACT is the NCCA's international

agency for emergencies, and it has three major partners with whom it is working in the region around Kosovo: the Diaconia Agapes—the social and development office of the Orthodox Church in Albania, the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Orthodox Christian Charities in Montenegro.

The ACT team, as well as workers from other aid organisations, had problems in getting agreements for new refugee camps in Albania. The Albanian authorities, and others, are concerned about increasing security risks for refugees too close to the border, and people are being moved south for their protection.

Despite the difficulties, the ACT team in Albania were able to start work on two smaller camps near Kavaja, south of the port city of Durres (just west of the Albanian capital Tirana), and one larger camp near Lac, north of Durres. The smaller camps are for approximately 2,000 refugees each and the larger one for up to 10,000.

'We also need to remember,' adds Michael Brown, 'that not all refugees are in camps—many thousands are staying with host families. ACT has set up a warehouse and recruited staff in Skodra for distribution of food parcels to refugees in host families—one way to relieve some of the pressure on these most hospitable people. When this program is fully developed approximately 24,000 refugees and host family members will benefit from the food parcels.'

While encouraging people to support the NCC Australia Kosovo Crisis Appeal, Michael Brown urged people to pray that the violence on all sides

may soon come to an end. He said that it will be hard for the anger and the desire for retribution to disappear, but for this we must work and pray.

New Associate General Secretary for Finance

Dr Ahn Jae Woong took up the position in CCA of Associate General Secretary for Finance in January. He says, 'There are many challenges in my new position as the ecumenical movement moves into the new millennium, but the transition has been made easier by the procedures set up by my predecessor, Christine Ledger'.

Increased Contribution from Japan to CCA

Several Asian churches are taking a keen interest in hosting CCA programs and contributing to the costs. As an example NCC Japan have pledged to contribute to CCA US\$10,000 more annually for the next three years. We thank the churches in Japan for this contribution.

The Peacemaking Church

The 75th Anniversary Lecture and Symposium on 'The Peacemaking Church', organised by NCC Korea, was held in Seoul, 22–23 April 1999. A keynote

speaker was Dr Konrad Raiser, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, who spoke on the theme 'Prospects for the Ecumenical Movement in the Twenty-first Century'. This was followed by an international symposium. Dr Ahn Jae Woong from CCA made a presentation entitled 'Peace-making Is an Overture to the Asian Churches' in the session on 'World Peace and the Role of the Church' along with three other international speakers. Five ecumenical leaders gave presentations on different subjects related to 'Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula and the Role of the Church'.

Taiwan Presbyterian Church Meets

The 46th Annual General Assembly Meeting of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was held in Tainan City at Chang Jung Girl's High School Auditorium from 6 to 9 April 1999. Dr Ahn Jae Woong represented CCA at the assembly.

First Cambodian Theological Graduate

Smak Sothy Sithara from Cambodia has successfully passed a MDiv course at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) in Hong Kong, where he has been studying during 1995–1999. He is the first native Cambodian since 1975 who has undergone a systematic theological training course and obtained a theological degree from a rec-



Smak Sothy Sithara

ognised theological seminary. Christianity in Cambodia was almost completely wiped out during the Pol Pot era, 1975–1979. Churches were destroyed, pastors were killed and even after the Pol Pot era churches were not allowed to function due to the prohibition of religious freedom under the Communist rule until 1991. What we see today of Cambodian Christianity is only seven years old. This led to a crisis in leadership in the small Christian community in the country. CCA initiated the theological training of Cambodian students and presently seven Cambodian students are studying in different theological seminaries in Asia (Hong Kong, India, Malaysia and Thailand).

On his return to Cambodia in January this year Smak Sothy was appointed Program Coordinator of the Kam-puchea Christian Council (KCC).

CBCNEI 50th Anniversary

The fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India will be held 17–20 February 2000 at Guwahati.

Presbyterian Church of Korea Sponsors CCA News

For the first time in the history of the Christian Conference of Asia, a member church is sponsoring the publication of an issue of *CCA News*.

This is an unprecedented, generous and imaginative gesture of support. In order to strengthen CCA's communications work, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and the Dorim Presbyterian Church in Seoul took the initiative to fully cover the costs of publishing this issue. In so doing, PCK has not only provided much welcome assistance, but opens up the possibility and challenge for other member councils and churches to sponsor issues of *CCA News* as one way of supporting and strengthening the work of CCA.

We are grateful to the PCK and the Dorim Presbyterian Church for this generous and challenging initiative.

Feliciano V. Cariño

Sun Ai Lee-Park

Rev. Sun Ai Lee-Park passed away on 21 May 1999. Sun Ai, as many friends and colleagues called her, was a leading Asian woman theologian and a poet. For many years, she dedicated her life to the development of feminist theology in Asia. Sun Ai initiated the publication of the famous magazine *In God's Image* in December 1982 and became its first editor. She realised the crucial role of this magazine as 'a forum for Asian women to express their suffering and joy, struggle for liberation, aspirations and theological reflection in various forms—essays, poems, prayers, sermons, drama, stories and other creative ways ...' Out of this work emerged the Asian Women Resource Center for Culture and Theology (AWRC). Through her many writings, she pointed out that the domination of patriarchy that is embedded deeply in our society has destroyed not only the relationship between man and woman, but also the various manifestations of relationship in the political, economic and social arenas. In addressing the concern of the reunification of Korean peninsula, Sun Ai suggested, 'We need to create a continuous spiral of scientific analysis, organisation, effective action, theorising and theologising in the creation of a new life model and new human relationships. This means a change in our daily life to



overcome the division and alienation between men and women as we lay the concrete groundwork for the achievement of unification of the Korean people. These two ways: equality between women and men, and the unification of south and north Korea, are fundamentally one and the same way, that is, a way that abolishes the patriarchy and works to build an alternative culture' (1988).

Sun Ai was also disturbed by the reflection of such domination in the relationship between human beings and nature, where human beings tend to dominate and exploit it. In other words, an ecological concern is also seen as fundamentally one with the domination of patriarchy.

Sun Ai Lee was married to Rev. Sang Jung Park, a former General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia. They had three children.

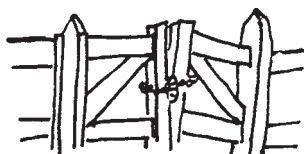
I only met Sun Ai personally a few times. But her thoughts and reflections—through essays, sermons, poems and other creative expressions—have been a source of inspiration for me, and, I am sure, for the many whose lives have been touched by her.

She was a woman of courage. Her energy and commitment, her spirit of life and her passion for 'the fullness of life for all' were memorable.

Henriette Hutabarat

On the Rugged Road: I

*I*n my heart are many rooms
for loved ones
Some nearer
Some dearer
Of all I have got
I cherish them the most
They are cozy, warm, and real



TAKE AWAY THE FENCES,
TAKE THEM AWAY.
THIS LAND IS ALSO OURS!

Yet it's not all that I treasure
I tread on a rugged road
I don't dwell any longer
in the cozy nest designated
to my womanhood
It's not denying my womanhood
Because there is no reason for that
Because we are able and beautiful

It's only asking for freedom
to use gifts the Creator
has already endowed
It's wanting to extend
my love and concerns beyond
boundaries fixed
by powers new and old

To go beyond the secure fence
is scary and painful
And yet challenging and worthwhile
I choose to trend the rugged road

It means to bear the rugged cross
Therefore the way to resurrection
to meet the call of the timely task
as an obedient steward
as a faithful partner of creation

And yet in my struggle on the rugged road
I cherish most
many rooms in my heart
for the loved ones
who are cozy, warm, and real

On the Rugged Road: II

*L*et us enlarge our vision
as far as the horizon
over the ocean, over the plain
as vast as the whole of creation
breaking free from that hard shell
of ONESELF
and let us go
on a freedom journey everlasting
In our heart embracing
the whole lot of unjustly hurt souls

We can also be
as great as the greatest
and make a new history
if we only believe together
and together deny the old way
and love, love, love ...
For the new wine is brewing in us
needing badly new skin

Let us cherish on the way
marvels of a lone wild flower
nearly surviving polluted dust
Let us remember in heart's depth
the kindly deeds of dear friends
the untainted smile of a little child
as we go on the rugged road
Oh, daughters of the loving, just God!



*nothing is so strong
as gentleness
nothing is so gentle
as real strength*

17 March 1983, Singapore

This issue of CCA News has been sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Dorim Presbyterian Church in Seoul.
We are grateful to PCK and the Dorim Church for this generous initiative

The Presbyterian Church of Korea

A special characteristic of the Protestant church in Korea is that before foreign missionaries came to Korea, the Korean people themselves in their own strength and initiative translated the Bible, began evangelism, and established a church.

The history of the Protestant church in Korea began in 1884 when Suh Sang-Yun founded the Sollae Church in Hwanghae Province. In 1879 Mr Suh had been baptised in Manchuria by the Scottish missionary John Ross. He helped Ross with the translation of the New Testament into Korean.

From 1884, missionaries from the USA, Australia and Canada started to arrive. The missionaries divided Korea into mission areas to facilitate cooperation and efficient administration and the so-called Nevius Plan for evangelistic outreach was adopted. Its three basic principles were: self-propagation, self-government and self-support.

In 1901 the Presbyterian Theological Seminary was founded in Pyongyang. The All-Korea Presbytery was organised in 1907, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea was established in 1912 with fifty-two ministers, 125 elders, and forty-four missionaries.

Following Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, worship at the Japanese shrines became a very difficult issue for the church. After 1938 the General Assembly

began to fall into confusion. Finally the seminary was closed. Under heavy pressure, however, the church was reorganised in 1943 as the Japan Christian Chosun Presbyterian Church.

Immediately following Liberation in August 1945, there was an interdenominational general meeting of churches and in 1947 there was a second general assembly meeting in the south and the PCK was officially reorganised at the 35th General Assembly. On this foundation the church began to grow again.

However, in 1950, the Korean War began and both the church and the nation were decisively divided. In 1952 at the 37th General Assembly the so-called "Koshin" church group separated from the PCK. Subsequently the PROK also separated.

However, in spite of its painful divisions, and because of the witness of its martyrs, its Bible study, prayer, evangelism, enthusiasm and missionary work, the PCK has become a world leader in church growth.

The year 1985 was proclaimed as the Church's World Mission Year. A target was set to have 348 missionaries on the field overseas by 1994. That goal was exceeded early in 1994.

Church maturity, unity, peace, social ministry, human rights, rural and fisheries ministry, medical mission and reunification have been set as objectives and the church has resolved to strive for these goals with all of its strength.

Church Statistics

(as at 31 December 1998)

Presbyteries	59
Churches	6,061
Ministers (19 women)	8,077
Evangelists	4,147
Elders (22 women)	15,614
Kwon sa (laywomen)	44,820
Ordained deacons	21,792
Baptised members	1,075,425
Total church members	2,244,944

Dorim
Presbyterian
Church, Seoul

