



ASIA MISSION STATEMENT

Introduction

The decision to adopt a Mission Statement, after discussion and deliberation at the Asia Mission Conference 2017 is a great act of faith. It boldly and loudly proclaims that the Asia Mission Conference held in Yangon, Myanmar, from 12 to 16 October 2017, should prophetically and challengingly continue to speak to the churches and to all concerned people all over Asia and beyond. And that from that conference, the AMC should grow into a path-breaking Mission Movement that opens new annals in the history of Mission in Asia.

Having gathered for both the Asian Mission Conference in Yangon-Myanmar, and for the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Christian Conference of Asia, we, having heard the social, political, economic, religious and ecological contexts of the Churches in Asia, commit ourselves, and call upon all people of God, to

'Journeying Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light, in Asia'.

The theme of the Asia Mission Conference - 2017 'Journeying Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light, in Asia' is inspired by the Biblical verses illuminated in the Gospel of John,

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me, will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

"I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37).

The theme is rooted in the Asian context. We are called to be on a journey. A journey together, following our Lord Jesus and witnessing to God's truth and light, in Asia. We begin our journey in Asia, where we experience the risen Lord, and are related to one another in Jesus Christ. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Asia is home to all major world religions. The majority of the people of Asia are poor, often struggling just to get by, due to injustice and exploitation. And yet, we live out a message that speaks of the

hope that is within us, though articulated imperfectly, and in different ways, and in different languages.

We journey together; ours is not an exclusive path. We walk together towards a common goal, with people of different faiths and with people of no faiths. As Christians, we journey with our sisters and brothers in churches who join together in communion with one another. We journey with our families and with people of many different nations and cultures who walk on the roads, sail in the seas and fly in the skies, embracing one another and struggling for justice and peace. We journey with the migrants and the excluded as we embrace the stranger (Hebrews 13:2). As religious believers, we journey together with women and men from other religious communities, drawing inspiration from all people who seek the common good amidst the groaning of creation. And as we journey on, we know that God will never be far from us, and we will not be overwhelmed nor consumed (Isaiah 43:2).

We seek to bear witness to the truth and light that has been given to us which illuminates our way forward. We proclaim our message in a listening way (Matthew 16:13), as we accompany others bringing good news to the oppressed (Isaiah 61:1-2). We bear witness not as masters but as servants (Luke 17:7-10); we journey not to be served but to serve others (Mark 10:45). We announce the reign of God in a spirit of repentance (Matthew 4:17), embodying the spirituality of the cross and emptying ourselves (Philippians 2:5-8). We bear prophetic witness to the truth and light drawing on our Asian heritage and our rich cultural and religious traditions that bore witness to God in Christ long before the missionary movement of the modern era (Colossians 1:15-20), and we draw on the modern traditions, which continues to bear prophetic witness today.

For sixty years, the Christian Conference of Asia, together with its member churches, councils, other ecumenical organisations and related communities, has been on a journey bearing prophetic witness to the truth and light, in Asia. We are now called to re-envision that witness, as we respond today to the challenges of God's mission, in Jesus Christ, who made a paradigm shift in the mission here on earth, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our calling springs from the Asian context, but our message is to the entire world.

Prophetic Accompaniment

We journey together with all humanity, with all creation, as co-sojourners, and as co-pilgrims on our journey with a sense of oneness, humility and service. We follow the manner of accompaniment of Jesus, because He has sent us: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). He was sent by the Father. He comes among us in our humanity and accompanies us as one of us. He pitches his tent among us (John 1:14). He also comes with a prophetic mission: The Lord God has anointed him with the Spirit and has sent him to bring good news to the poor and to proclaim the year acceptable to the Lord (Luke 4:18-19). He gives His life for us. Knowing we are sent, we go to others. We do not wait for them to come to us but we, first, go to them. We journey with them. We live among them. We respectfully listen to them. We learn from them. We are at home with them. We appreciate

and understand the value of their languages, customs, and culture, in order to journey with them and to accompany them in a way that they can join with us. But we do not simply follow them wherever they go, merely conforming with their journey. As co-pilgrims, we share, in some way, the light and the truth that they already have, because the Holy Spirit is active and present in the heart of each and every person, and because the true light of the world has enlightened everyone (John 1:9). We do not seek our own status, position or wealth and we do not hesitate to confront unjust powers. But we courageously challenge the unjust structures and powers in our prophetic accompaniment. We give of ourselves for the good of the others, the least, the needy, the poor, the marginalised and the outcast (Matthew 25:40).

Affirming the Servanthood

We understand, from the life and ministry of Jesus, that mission unquestionably affirms servanthood. Biblical teachings depict various forms of servanthood. For example, servanthood is suffering (Isaiah 52:13-53:1-32), it is practicing humility, it is being in service to others (Mathew 20:28) and it is sacrificing oneself (Luke 17:7-10). Affirmation of servanthood requires a new understanding of its complex manifestations. Servanthood must challenge the hierarchical structure of the society and it must challenge the church that marginalises people based on their nationality, religion, class, gender, age, ethnicity and different abilities. Our affirmation must lead us to a new understanding of servanthood: as friendship. We are called to be servants to one another, to minister to one another and to befriend one another. St. Paul reminds us to, “Serve one another in love” and “the entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbour as yourself” (Galatians 5:13-14).

Without losing sight of the example of servanthood in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our affirmation disclaims any call to servanthood that denigrates the lives and struggles of victims of violence. It disclaims the model of servanthood that denies the lives and liberation of the downtrodden and that which ignores the vulnerability and the fragility of life in the midst of war, violence, discrimination and victimisation. Instead, our affirmation echoes the voices and histories of Asian people who have resisted the powers of injustice and have found, in their living testimonies, a form of servanthood that is a powerful example and ethic of resistance. Our affirmation brings out the stories of Asian people who have sacrificed their lives for the dignity and liberation of the marginalised, and finds a form of servanthood that is a life-giving praxis in their living testimonies. Our affirmation takes us into the everyday Asian realities, where servanthood is a central dimension of peoples’ practice of solidarity across boundaries.

We affirm servanthood, because it provides a model of leadership that is embedded in humility, perseverance service and sacrifice. A leadership that is based on sharing of power with, instead of power over, a leadership that gives life in the midst of dehumanising powers that create injustice and thrive on unjust human structure. Jesus taught us that in His kingdom, servanthood is deemed a virtue and not a punishment. We are reminded of what

Jesus said, “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-27). We affirm servanthood because it extols the living together as a human community that respects human dignity and the sustainability of all creation.

In our journey together with humanity and all creation, we affirm servanthood as a way of life that disrupts every form of power that causes injustice and violence against the rights and dignity of human beings and all creation. Jesus exemplified servanthood by redefining power and ministry as the power to share and to minister to one another (John 13:1-17), by resisting the violence that dehumanises the lives of the marginalised (John 8:2-11), and by empowering the powerless to voice their rights (John 5: 1-18). He sacrificed his life as a testimony to the risk of living the life of a servant. In our journey together with all the peoples of Asia, we affirm servanthood as a web of power and imagination that is centred in the life and dignity and liberation and fullness of all life. We affirm servanthood in our witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in Asia today.

Participating in the Reign of God

Journeying together with all humanity and with all creation, we understand mission as participating in the reign of God. The reign of God was well manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. He began his public ministry announcing: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (Mark 1:15). The reign of God is here; it is in our midst (Luke 17:21). Yet, the fullness of the reign of God will be revealed in the End Times, “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels” (2 Thessalonians 1:7). The reign will be revealed clearly only when, “he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marvelled at on that day among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed” (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

We participate in the reign of God by living a life of prophetic witness here and now on the earth. Paul tells us that it is necessary to do God’s will to enter the reign of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:21). Jesus reminds us that detaching oneself from the things of this world, doing the will of the Father and bearing good fruit (Mathew 19:24; 21:31; 21:43) are necessary to enter into the reign of God. We learn from Luke that the poor are blessed because the reign of God is theirs (Luke 6:20), and that we must be prompt and wholehearted in our response to the invitation to the reign of God (Luke 9:60-62). We are reminded of the essentials to enter into the reign of God: The Holy Spirit is the key to enter into God’s reign. Bearing prophetic witness is the key to participating in the reign of God. Living in the Holy Spirit is the key to remaining and participating in His reign. This truth tells us, again, that there needs to be a fundamental transformation of the whole person. By the power of the Spirit, we can and must learn to see in the way that God sees, to judge in the way that God judges and to love in the way that God loves. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what the will of God is — what good and acceptable and perfect is” (Romans 12:2).

Embodying the Spirituality of the Cross

Journeying together with all peoples in Asia, we understand our mission as embodying the spirituality of the cross. The cross is one of the most complex inadequately understood symbols in the history of Christianity. It had been used as a symbol to maintain power over the marginalised. It carried with it a historical burden of violence perpetrated against different religions, too. However, it remains as a symbol of the people's struggle and liberation. It continues to remain as the most powerful symbol of faith that sustains the life and hope of Christian communities in the midst of suffering, violence and injustice.

The gospel narratives testify to various realizations of the spirituality of the cross. Witnessing the last breath of Jesus on the cross, the women disciples modelled a spirituality of perseverance and faithfulness (Mark 15:40-41). They manifested the amazing spirituality of remaining by, standing, watching, listening and receiving Jesus's message spoken from the site of wounds, the site of death (John 19: 25-27). Their exceptional courage and unbelievable tenacity in witnessing the death of Jesus from within the site of violence, is interwoven with their testimony of life — "I have seen the Lord!" said Mary Magdalene (John 20:18). In the testimony of the women disciples, through their audacity to imagine life and the possibility of eternal life in the aftermath of violence and death, we see the embodiment of the spirituality of the cross. It is the spirituality that inspires and strengthens the women and the peoples of Asia to go forward, facing the life in the midst of injustice, violence and death.

Embodying the spirituality of the cross in Asia today is also similar to the journey of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Marked by the trauma of witnessing the death of Jesus, the disciples failed to witness the presence of life in their midst. Jesus' act of breaking bread, however, re-familiarised them with the sharing of a meal and the warmth of fellowship. That great act reminded them of the possibility of life in the aftermath of violence. Participating in the act of sharing a meal is a form of embodying the spirituality of the cross in Asia. Practicing hospitality towards strangers as an embodiment of the spirituality of the cross is a form of everyday spirituality. It has also become a risky practice because it is embodied in the lives of those who persist against injustice and violence, while embracing, and offering love to, strangers, who have often turned out to be enemies.

The spirituality of the cross is embodied in Asia today in the lives of Christians and all people who struggle for healing, justice, and transformation, and for courageously challenging structural injustices. In the aftermath of the cross, the disciples received the breath of resurrection (John 20:19-22). The giving of that breath took place at the site of fear and uncertainty. The giving of breath signifies three elements of Jesus' life: The sharing of peace, the sending out of the disciples into the world (John 20:21) and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. These remind us of our mission as an embodiment of the spirituality of the cross; as the practice of bringing peace to a community that has been overcome by fear and violence; as the sending out of people to serve as witnesses to the breath of life, amidst the power of death; and as the pouring out of healing through the embracing love of the Holy Spirit.

Mission Concerns

1. Groaning of Creation: Our Stewardship and Kinship

The Biblical reference to the groaning of creation (Romans 8:22) is becoming all the more relevant to our age, which practices massive destruction to the environment and brings about the fatal endangerment of all life on earth. We have now come to recognise the deep interconnections and interdependence between human life and all other forms of life on earth. We also realise that human activity can change the delicate natural balance of our small planet for the worse. Global warming and climate change – obviously related to the excessive emission of carbon from human industrial activity – the burning of fossil fuels and the pervasive consumerist life-style are now visibly affecting all parts of the world. Inexorable human greed continues to destroy forests, pollute rivers and deplete ground water along with many other non-renewable resources. The United Nations, in spite of its huge efforts to convoke summits of world political leaders and its appeal to voluntary organisations and religions on these crucial issues, does not seem to be effective in checking the mad rush of the world to a fatal end.

While we recognise and appreciate the positive role of the many Christians and several churches in Asia who make their congregations aware of the gravity of our environmental situation, we urge all churches in Asia to take bold steps in order to seek collaboration with adherents of other religions. We also urge all people of goodwill to implement sane environmental policies, for the future of humanity. The use of alternative forms of energy, reduction of carbon emissions, greening of the earth, and above all, the constant effort to follow a simple lifestyle, are to be promoted in Asia, as essential Christian values for our age.

2. People on the Move: Embracing the Stranger

People on the move have been a phenomenon in human history. The nature of, and the reasons for, people on the move were varied in biblical history: Abraham, Jacob, the Israelites out of Egypt, the Israelites sent into Babylonian captivity, the dispersion of the Jewish Diaspora in the Roman Empire, and the missionary journeys of the early Church. Biblical narratives portray the reasons for various forms of migration – due to economic reasons, drought, starvation (Genesis 26: 1; Ruth 1: 1), war (Jeremiah 14: 12). The experience of being wanderers and then being liberated from oppression manifested the very identity of the people of Israel. Similar situations continue to threaten the lives of millions of people in the world today. An increasing number of people are forced to leave their ancestral homes or countries in search of a better and safer life. Asia is not an exception to this growing trend.

People on the move are increasing in large numbers today in Asia with different causes and they belong to various categories: war refugees, climate refugees, migrant workers, internally displaced persons due to conflicts and violence, victims of religious and ethnic persecutions and preys of human trafficking. Welcomed or not, these less fortunate people

end up in other countries and communities as migrants. They are often strangers in unfamiliar circumstances, facing discrimination, social exclusion, and even rejection. The victims of forced movements and their numbers are increasing in Asia too. Despite the progress of modern transportation and information technologies, in the era of globalisation the doors of the world are tightened or altogether closed for migrants. Migration inevitably poses a challenge to any society, as norms of justice and hospitality are not followed. We live in societies where the status of strangers has been changed from being a recipient of hospitality to that of a victim of hostility.

The Church, as the body of Christ, is the embodiment of the presence of Jesus, who was incarnated as a stranger to the world (John 1:14), He suffered and died under discrimination and exclusion (John 1:5, 3:19-20, 8:23). God as the Migrant God is clearly evident in the incarnation of Jesus, who had a refugee status in Herod's killing fields, who experienced a marginal status due to his identity of a native of the less reputed province of Galilee and due to his wandering style of ministry in Palestine.

Realising the fact that Asia has been experiencing disturbing situations of displacement of people and communities in manifold forms, the mission of the Church is to accept strangers as subjects, as they are people with the same 'likeness and image of God'. We have to host them as messengers from God. The Church needs to be a Church of hospitality and proclaim the good news of the reign of God that is actualised by the compassion of God through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, who demonstrated the inclusive and friendly character of the nature of God's kingdom. As a community of the pilgrims of faith, we are called to be concerned about the people on the move and to cross borders to embrace the strangers in our midst.

3. The Excluded and the Marginalised: Accompanying People and Communities

The kingdom, the rule of God, is based on the logic of 'total inclusion'. It cannot, in any way, be on the logic of exclusion. In simple language, God's mission cannot be anything but universal and all inclusive. St. Paul writes, "With all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10). Again, clearly referring to the situation of his time, St. Paul states, "There is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male nor female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Most importantly, the Risen Lord reveals the ultimate reconciliation of 'heaven' and 'earth'. So God's Mission (Missio-Dei) revealed through Jesus Christ cannot be anything but all inclusive and we are all called to participate in God's all-inclusive mission, totally rejecting exclusion on any basis; whether it be, caste, colour, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientations.

Asian societies, in reality, are divided. Vast sections of people are marginalised and excluded. Sociological forces are not the only reasons for such exclusions, but economic impoverisation as well, as people become victims of the present dominant model of development. In the present context of extreme marginalisation and exclusion, we are

called to be part of a mission of accompaniment and inclusion. Our Lord Jesus loved and related to the excluded and the marginalised — the lepers, the outcastes, the Samaritans, the tax-collectors, non-Jewish people, women, sinners, publicans, etc. Jesus, through his life and mission, manifested an incomparable model of love, concern, solidarity and accompaniment. Through his statement, “...just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40), Jesus is declaring his total oneness with the least — the hungry, the naked, the imprisoned, the marginalised and the excluded. So, our participation in God’s mission requires us to accompany and journey with all those who are marginalised and excluded. We, the churches and the faith communities, have to ask ourselves whether we are currently searching for, identifying ourselves with, and giving accompaniment to the marginalised and the excluded among us. This is the unavoidable mission task of the churches and the followers of Jesus, today.

4. Economic Injustice: Prophetic Witnessing

One of the starkest realities of the present world, where we are called to be in mission, is the alarming intensification of inequality. The very design and principles of our economies have taken us to an extremely unsustainable and unjust point. As inequality is shockingly intensifying in Asia, an inescapable mission imperative for churches and the faith community is to become deeply and systematically aware of the intensification of poverty and inequality. The Church and the followers of Jesus must stand up against and confront the powers and practices of injustices. The context in which Amos was called to prophesy was when the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer. It should be remembered, “When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I, the Lord, will answer them” (Isaiah 41:17). So, in obedience to the will of God in the context of increasing impoverishment, the church and the followers of Jesus must work for the establishment of fair and just ‘provisioning’ for all people, and for a just and sustainable society. The Church and faith communities locally regionally, nationally and transnationally have to take up this mission task unhesitatingly and with unquestionable commitment.

As the present economic trend of the world witnesses the ascent of money, the world is fast coming under the reign of money. People are falling into the trap of worshiping money and prosperity. The worship of wealth and power deeply impacts values, thinking, ethics, and religion. In such situations we are reminded of Jesus, who undeniably said, “You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24). The faith community in Asia has to wake up and respond to the current realities, become deeply aware of the massive and grave economic and social changes, and guard itself against the worship of ‘mammon’. It is our task in such situations to undauntedly prophesy and stand up against the reign of money that subverts the kingdom values.

The true mission is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes, “he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8). True to the mission commitment and inspired by the Holy Spirit, in this time of intensifying

inequality, impoverisation and injustice, the faith community has to dedicate itself to prophetic ministry. The commitment to mission demands the rejection of the worship of prosperity and power. It demands a courageous stand, against all dehumanising forces and unimpeachable solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.

At this critical time, the Church and the followers of Jesus are called to be unhesitant prophets, courageous upholders of the kingdom values, and undaunted bearers of the spirituality of the cross, as part of their inalienable mission.

5. Religious Intolerance: Nurturing Interfaith Harmony

Although well-meaning people everywhere had hoped that the 21st century would usher in an age of peace and justice, our world is suffering from surmounting violence and conflicts under the banners of religion and culture. The spectre of fundamentalism, with its characteristic exclusivism and aggressiveness, is on the rise in several world religions that were once considered pacifist. War and conflicts are generating massive migrations of populations that challenge the traditional openness and hospitality of human communities. Xenophobia, with a religious tinge, can be the most dangerous sign for the future of our world. We may find some solace in the fact that the member churches of the Christian Conference of Asia and other recognised ecumenical bodies would largely stand by the great biblical virtues of hospitality to the stranger, and love of the enemy. In this context, we call upon all Christians to demonstrate the forgiveness and reconciling power of the cross of Christ, in their relationship with other religions and other faith bodies.

Witnessing to the truth in love and forgiveness is a prophetic and holy task laid upon all those who follow Christ. Resolving old conflicts and healing wounded memories, with attention to the principles of justice and the promotion of life in communities, are of crucial importance in the ministry of the Church. Local congregations and Christian institutions are called to engage in dialogues of life with neighbouring communities, with mutual respect and openness to learn from the other. The practice of true hospitality by accepting the other, irrespective of religion or faith as God has accepted us in Christ, can help Christians to contribute to the making of a new humanity leading to peaceful co-existence here on earth.

6. Geo-Political Turmoil: Building Peace

We recognise that the Asian continent is diverse, and the core Asian values cover a wide range of factors: vast geographical terrain, rich religious and cultural heritages, ethnic identities, philosophical traditions, diverse customs and social values, economic gamut, and political ideologies. As the world has been witnessing the crumbling of the sacred edifice of the much-acclaimed economic development models, Asia has been considered a region uniquely equipped for a major leap forward in a troubled global situation. Asia has been recognised as a potential force, capable of shifting the centre of gravity of global economic and political systems to this continent in the 21st century. However, we view the emerging trends in Asia's geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic situation with a sense of deep concern.

Unfortunately, Asia is a region where most nations deeply distrust their neighbours and where old-style nationalism, or religio-nationalism still reigns at its zenith. Nuclear and missile programmes are advancing fast in Asia, due to competition among nations. A growing military-technological alliance between Asian countries and non-Asian nations, and the amassing of sophisticated weapons and advanced military technologies by an increased number of countries in Asia are disturbing situations. External interventions and militarism promoted by foreign powers in Asia have trampling effects on the sovereignty of Asian nations. Asia still holds promises and hopes, but for the promises to be realised and the turmoil to be quashed, strong and sustained efforts for peace building, confidence building, and dialogue within and across borders of nation states in Asia are imperative. Asian nations should embrace the long nurtured Asian values of tolerance, harmony, reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

Our faith leads us to reflect upon the fundamental Christian values and the theological convictions which affirm that there is no peace without justice. The absence of peace and situations of conflicts in Asia are due to the denial of justice. Justice is not only about rectitude; it is also about giving what is right and just. Our faith reminds us that peace is a condition where God leads nations to settle their conflicts and beat their swords into ploughshares (Micah 4:3). We believe, that ultimately, peace is a condition where, “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6). Building peace is an act of engaging in God’s mission and to have peace, means to enjoy God’s gift of the fullness of life, security, and liberty (Ezekiel 34:25-31).

Affirmation of Our Commitment

With indestructible hope, we commit ourselves ‘to journey together, and to partake in the mission of prophetic witness to the truth and light, in Asia.’ Our faith and commitment inspire and strengthen us to be sojourners in God’s mission and to follow the way revealed to us by Jesus Christ.

Our Redeemer Jesus Christ ‘did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself, taking the form of servant’ (Phil. 2:6-7). We sincerely repent, because we have not sufficiently humbled and emptied ourselves and have refused to be servants. We have not been fully faithful to the redemptive acts of our Lord Jesus Christ and have not fully submitted ourselves to carry out God’s mission in the present world and to embody its spirit. So with hearts full of repentance we commit ourselves to be genuinely humble and to be truly servants. And to be undaunted prophetic witnesses to the truth and light, in Asia.

God is at work to redeem all that the Parent God has created. God’s ultimate purpose, the divine mystery, that is revealed to us in Jesus Christ is that God is at work ‘to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth’ (Eph. 1: 10). The Triune God invites the entire cosmos to the Feast of Life and to the fullness of life (John 10: 10). We have to be the stewards of the whole creation. And we whole-heartedly commit ourselves to participate in God’s redemptive mission for the whole creation. In particular, God unites all humanity in

Christ. Jesus Christ prayed, "They all may be one" (John 17: 21). So, we are called to pray and work for the unity of the whole humanity and uncompromisingly fight against all divisive and disuniting forces. In Mission, we have to embrace the stranger and give hospitality to them.

God's mission in Christ calls us to envision a new humanity based on freedom, justice and love. He urges us to be in solidarity with those who are denied these three things, which include 'the blind, the poor, the oppressed and the captives', and He urges us to bring the 'good news' to them (Luke 4:18 &19). We commit ourselves to stand up against all exploitative, oppressive and dehumanizing forces, at this time of intensifying impoverisation, inequality and exclusion, and to be harbingers of a new humanity and 'a new heaven and a new earth.'

In Mission, God empowers us to be forgiving and to be healing. We commit ourselves to nurture harmony with the brothers and sisters of different faiths, and to build peace in the midst of the conflicts, tensions and turmoils.

We believe that the Holy Spirit guides and empowers us to participate in God's Mission with unquestionable dedication and unchallengeable commitment. We embrace the spirituality of the Cross. And we believe in and look forward to the ushering in of the 'reign of God', the creation of 'new heavens and a new earth' (Isaiah 65: 17). And "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light, those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them" (Isaiah 9: 2).

We sincerely pray and ardently hope that there would be genuine repentance, with a profound re-envisioning of the unquestionable commitment to the Mission that is entrusted with us by our Lord Jesus.

Sixty years ago in Prapat, we committed ourselves to 'Live Together'. Here in Yangon, we move forward and commit ourselves to 'Journey Together.' We hope that Yangon will become an unforgettable name in the history of Mission.

We believe that 'our journey together and prophetic witnessing' will inaugurate a new era in Mission.

.....