

# ASIA COMMUNICATION SUNDAY

World Association for Christian Communication-Asia Region

2 SEPTEMBER 2012



**GOD OF LIFE:**

LEAD US TO JUSTICE, PEACE  
AND RECONCILIATION  
WITH CREATION

WACC  
Asia



communication **FOR** all

## **Acknowledgement ...**

*Cover design is an amalgamation of the photographs taken from The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly theme. We acknowledge their contributions.*

*We acknowledge with appreciation the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) for their encouragement to celebrate Asia Communication Sunday 2012 on their Ecumenical Sunday in all the churches in Taiwan, making the worship resources available in Chinese for the people to use. We thank the General Secretary Rev. Chang Te-chien and the Associate General Secretary Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong for their special contributions.*

We also thank all our WACC regions and ecumenical partners who join us in this celebration.

We acknowledge with thanks all the contributors who enriched the worship resources to celebrate the Asia Communication Sunday 2012.

## CONTENTS

1. Introduction : Rev. Dr. Samuel Meshack
  2. Liturgy for Asia Communication Sunday
  3. Busan Statement on Communication ...
  4. God of Life, Lead Us to Justice and Peace : Rev. Andrew Chang
  5. Building meaning together : Dr. Dennis Smith
  6. God of Life: Lead us ... : Rev. Dr. Karin Achtelstetter
  - 7 .Migration from and for ... : Mr. Ramon Bultron
  8. For the Victims of ... : Ms. Akiko Yamaguchi
  9. Reflections on Rio 20+ : Ms. Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron
  - 10.AIDS Festival 2012 : Ms. Elijah Fung
  - 11.The Parable of the Persistent Widow : Ms. Kristine Greenaway
  - 12.How Churches Respond to Disaster ... : Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong
-

## “GOD OF LIFE: LEAD US TO JUSTICE, PEACE AND RECONCILIATION WITH CREATION”

**Prof. Rev. Dr. Samuel W. Meshack**

*Chairperson, WACC-Asia*

*Secretary, WACC Global Board*

Communication is Gift of God to humanity, giving life to all human living. Communication is the nerve blood of human life, helping humanity to enjoy life with God and other creations of God. Because God created the world and entrusted the responsibility to human beings to take care of them so that we together enjoy life which God created and saw all that he created was good. Christ said that he came that we may all have life in all its fullness. The members of the executive committee of Asia Region of WACC with the General Secretary Rev. Andrew Chang and the Associate General Secretary Rev. Lyim and officers of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, met at the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, Taipei have proposed to observe the 2012 Asia Communication Sunday on the theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the World Council of Churches theme: God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace with an addition to the theme to go in line with the triennial theme of WACC-Asia, “Communicating Climate Justice” has modified it to have the theme: **“God of Life: Lead us to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation with Creation”**, as the Creation is also groaning for Justice and Peace and humanity needs to reconcile with God and Creation to have life in all its fullness.

The consultation on communication was convened at the initiative of the Korean Host Committee of the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly and co-moderated by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) endorsed that everyone will join with the WACC – Asia to celebrate Asia Communication Sunday – 2012 to observe the Communication Sunday. While celebrating and thanking God for creating life on earth, we plead for justice and Peace is restored on this earth between God and humanity and between humanity and creation and we may all witness a New Heaven and a New Earth with life in all its fullness.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has come forward to observe the Asia Communication Sunday – 2012 in a great scale translating the material into Chinese to make it available to the Chinese speaking congregations in Taiwan. Thanks to the General Secretary of PCT for this co-operation and the help PCT is rendering to promote ACS – 2012. There is a great enthusiasm and co-operation has been shown to join us by the other regions of WACC and WCC and WARC. We thank all our sponsors to make this great event celebrated all over the world.

The President, Dr. Dennis Smith said: Asia Communication Sunday is the contribution of Asia to the Global WACC. It is a celebration of all Life given by God and praying for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation at the crucial point of time in the history of humankind and the creation, who are groaning for life, as we hear the cries of people and the nature in the midst of war, terrorism, conflicts, earthquakes, tsunami, typhoon and all forms of destructive forces on the universe, that God may intervene to bring reconciliation and help us to reconcile with all creations and enable us to be good and responsible stewards of the gifts God has given in our hands.

On behalf of all the members of Asia WACC, I take this opportunity to thank all the contributors to this Asia Communication Sunday 2012. There are powerful messages, reflections, prayers and stories as excellent resources to enable us to make our worship meaningful. I sincerely thank the General Secretary and the Associate General Secretaries and other officers of Presbyterian Church of Taiwan who enabled us to celebrate the Communication Sunday being celebrated in all the Churches and institutions. May the Lord of Life, lead us into all truth to be channels of blessings to the entire creation. Amen.

## LITURGY FOR ASIA COMMUNICATION SUNDAY 2012

### Liturgy - Introduction

Leader: We have gathered in this sanctuary to celebrate the Asia Communication Sunday 2012 on the theme, "God of Life: Lead us to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation with Creation", integrating the WCC 10th Assembly theme "God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace", with the Yogyakarta Declaration on "Communicating Climate Justice". Though, the World Association for Christian Communication in Asia Region is initiating it, our brothers and sisters around the world from all the eight regions and the World Council of Churches and World Association of Reformed Churches communication departments are joining with us in celebrating this Asia Communication Sunday on this day. The aim of this celebration is to communicate the good news to the world that God is the source of all the life in the Universe as a creator God and to affirm our faith that we are who called us to participate in his creative activities to fulfill his purpose in being God's co-creators and preservers of his creation in truth, justice and peace. He is calling us to reconcile with his total creation for a harmonious life in this world with all the creations of the Universe. This worship is a call to preserve all God's good creation in its perfect order and challenge all those structures that are destroying God's order of creation and reconcile with God and his creation to preserve the Creation as good stewards of God's creation.

Let us begin our celebration in the name of our Creator God, preserver and sustainer of the Creations A-men.

Leader: We have gathered in this sanctuary to celebrate the Asia Communication Sunday 2012 on the theme, "God of Life: Lead us to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation with Creation" as a

theme integrating the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly theme "God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace", with the Yogyakarta Declaration on "Communicating Climate Justice". Though, the World Association for Christian Communication in Asia Region is initiating it, our brothers and sisters around the world from all the eight regions and the World Council of Churches and World Association of Reformed Churches communication departments are joining with us in celebrating this Asia Communication Sunday on this day. The aim of this celebration is to communicate the good news to the world, God is the source of all the life in the Universe as a creator God and to affirm our faith that God, who called us to participate in his creative activities is calling us to fulfill his purpose in being God's co-creators and preservers of his creation in truth, justice and peace. He is calling us to reconcile with his total creation for a harmonious life in this world with all the creations of the Universe. This worship is a call to preserve all God's good creation in its perfect order and challenge all those structures that are destroying God's order of creation and reconcile with God and his creation to preserve the Creation with care and responsibility.

Let us begin our celebration in the name of our Creator God, preserver and sustainer of the Creations **A-men.**

### OPENING HYMN:

### CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: We have chosen to be here, forming one body out of many in God's creation

**All: We are one in the Spirit; we are one in Christ. We are one in the power of the Creator, the Lord of Life.**

Leader: With us are those we see and those who share our vision but are scattered across creation.

**All: We are one in the Spirit; we are one in Christ, We are one in the power of the Creator, the Lord of Life.**

Leader: We share a vision arising from differing experiences—men and women, gay and straight, rich and poor, of many races, creeds and cultures that are one with us in this moment.

**All: We are one in the Spirit; we are one in Christ, We are one in the power of the Creator, the Lord of Life.**

Leader: We have chosen to be here in a time of conflicts, terrorism and signs of war when we have called for peace.

**All: We have chosen to be here in a time of injustice when we have called for liberation.**

Leader: We have chosen to be here in a time of fear when we have called for hope.

**All: We have chosen to be here in a time of action as a sign of faith.**

Leader: We have chosen to be here in a time of darkness as a sign of light.

**All: We are one in the Spirit; we are one in Christ. We are one in the power of the Creator, the Lord of Life.**

Leader: Creating and healing and transforming God, the author and source of Life, who is leading us to sharing in the hope of faith, remind us that we are more than the people in this sanctuary and more than the present time that we may be your instrument for peace and justice in the present time and for all time.

**All: Amen.**

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Creator God, You who are Holy Trinity, By your spoken Word you created all that is seen and unseen. That Word is Jesus Christ, through whom and for whom you created this and all worlds. We thank you for making creation astounding with complexity and variety And for calling it very good.

**All Creator God, We humbly thank you.**

Leader: We praise you for entrusting us with so great a responsibility, that of caring for creation. We acknowledge our dependence on your world— The air we breathe The water we drink The food we eat.

**All: Creator God, we humbly thank you!**

Leader: We confess our polluting influence we so often have on your world— The air we breathe , The water we drink, The land we farm.

**All: Creator God, we humble ourselves before you!**

Leader: Open our eyes, O gracious Creator, to see the destruction we cause by our careless consumption.

**All: Forgive us our trespasses, merciful God.**

Leader: Open our ears, O merciful God, to hear the groaning of all creation and the cries of those without voice and the voice that are suppressed.

**All: Forgive us our trespasses, merciful God.**

Leader: Open our hearts, O compassionate Lover, to feel remorse for our unfaithful care of your creation.

**All: Forgive us our trespasses, merciful God.**

Leader: Open our eyes to see inhuman, oppressive and unjust structures that suppress the voiceless and marginalized

people in the world, Gracious God. We are sorry for our inhuman attitude in supporting the unjust structures that oppresses people and being silent spectators of the struggles of the marginalized victims of the society.

**All: Forgive us our trespasses, merciful God.**

Leader: Gracious God, you have called us to be peace-makers, as you are the God of Peace. However, we fail to be instruments of your peace with people and the creations and unmindful of hearing the groaning of the creations and those who are suffering.

**All: Forgive us our trespasses, Gracious God.**

**Lord of our Life and the whole Creation, enable us to change our ways. Give us a vision of faithful living on this great Universe. Empower us to make both the simple and complex changes you desire for us.**

**Lead us to Justice and Peace and reconcile with God, our fellow neighbors be instruments of Justice, Peace and Harmony with all creations. –Amen.**

*Adapted from prayer of Confession  
by Presian Burroughs*

### **SONG: JESUS CHRIST IS WAITING**

Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;  
no one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.  
Make me, friend or stranger,  
fit to wait on you.

Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets,  
where injustice spirals,  
and real hope retreats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.  
In the Kingdom's causes, let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;  
Curing those who suffer,  
touching those he greets.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have passion too.  
Let my care be active, healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,  
where each sign of hatred;  
He, with love, defeats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, we should triumph too.  
On suspicion's graveyard, let us dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,  
'Who will join my journey?  
I will guide their feet.'  
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.  
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

*(Text: John Bell, alt. Tune: Now the Green Blade Rises  
Iona Community, Scotland GIA publications)*

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

Hebrew Scripture (O T) Reading: Micah 3: 5-8  
Epistle Reading: Romans 8: 22-23  
Gospel Reading: St. Luke. 18:1-8

### **MESSAGE**

**HYMN:** (*offertory Hymn*)

## INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

(After each petition, the congregational response will be singing  
"Kumba Yah, My Lord Kumba Yah")

Leader: Merciful God, Lord of Life,  
Lord of Peace, Justice and Reconciliation  
We bring before you our supplication, seeking your favour  
in hearing our prayers.

**All: God of Life, my Lord, Kumba Yah (3)**  
**O Lord, Kumba Yah!**

**Someone crying Lord, Kumba Yah! (3)**  
**O Lord, Kumba yah!**

Leader: Someone's crying Lord, somewhere  
The some is not one or a few, but several millions Lord  
The somewhere is not one place Lord, several places

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines,  
Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tibet, (include the country or  
place specific to your concerns ...) all over Asia, Africa, Latin  
America, Pacific, or even Europe and America... (include the  
place of your own ...)

We bring before your throne of grace, your children living in  
South and North Korea.

O God, you sympathize with this nation suffering from the  
division between South and North under the perennial threats  
of war.

Now 67 years have passed since the division of this nation;  
While we have been looking for each other, calling and missing  
each other for this painful period,  
Your children of South and North Korea have endured in  
praying for the reunification of this nation,

Standing on our firm belief that God of providence has made  
and preserved us one in this nation.

As days, months and years have passed, we see our desire for  
the reunification overflow even more from the heart.

There are tears of fears and suffering  
There are tears of weakness and disappointment looking for  
your intervention for peace  
Redeem their Lives, Grant them your peace.

**All: Some one's dying Lord, Kumba yah (3)**  
**Oh, Lord, Kumba yah!**

Leader: Some are dying of hunger and thirst,  
Diseases and other epidemics, like HIV/AIDS, etc.,  
Some are dying because, there are structures and systems  
that crush the poor and alienate the rich

Some are dying because we become agents of  
oppression in exploiting the poor and the marginalized  
and the Creations.

The Land and lives on earth are dying, because we are still  
not prepared to take sides to bring justice to those who  
are denied of their rights.

**All: Someone's shouting Lord, Kumba Yah (3)**  
**Oh, Lord, Kumba yah!**

Leader: Someone's shouting Lord!  
Shouting out boldly with courage  
Someone has made a choice  
ready to challenge the oppression  
ready to offer his/her very existence  
in confidence and commitment  
to fight death surrounding humanity and the  
creations  
to bring fullness of life to the whole creation.



Someone is shouting Lord,  
Redeem them and strengthen them with your peace and  
Justice.

**All: Someone's praying Lord, Kumba yah! (3)  
Oh! Lord, Kumba Yah.**

Leader: Someone's praying Lord,

We join hands with them in praying with tears

- In frustration and weakness
- In strength and endurance
- In confidence and commitment

We are shouting and wrestling

- As Jacob wrestled with the angels
- As Elisha wrestled with Elijah
- As the Samaritan woman wrestled with Jesus  
Who were touched  
Who were marked  
And became a blessing.

We are praying Lord

Spur our imagination  
Sharpen our human will

- Touch us to be touched
- Renew us to renew
- Bless us to be a blessing

In seeking miraculous cures for human disease,  
may we also speak for the well-being of the planet itself.

**All: We are praying Lord, Kumba yah  
Oh! Lord, Kumba Yah!**

**All: Let the prayers of our mouth, the meditations of our heart  
and the actions of our lives be as one, that we may live each  
day in harmony With Mother Earth and all creations. –  
Amen.**

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:**

We believe in God who created the heavens and the earth  
through his Word of Communication. All things came into being  
through God and without God not one thing came into being.  
Without God's communication there would be no life. Creation  
was, and is, an act of communication. Communication was, and  
is, an act of God. God is the source of Communication.  
Communication is the essence of life and that human beings are  
in called to be in communion with all creation.

We believe that Communication is a gift of God that affirms  
life by promoting truth-telling, fairness, participation, dialogue,  
openness, and inclusion. All that threatens life characterized by  
censorship, misinformation, hate-speech, lies, and exclusion are  
not communication. True communication plays a vital role in  
confronting threats to life. Communication has the potential to  
promote life together in faith, hope and love.

We believe that Jesus is the Word that become flesh and  
dwelt among us and who emptied himself, taking the form of a  
servant, taking up the cause of the poor, the suffering, the  
outcasts, the weak and the oppressed. Communication in the  
manner of Jesus must promote wholeness and the well-being of  
all creation.

We believe that Communication can lead us to Justice that  
affirms life. As Communicators for justice we affirm that we  
empty ourselves and act as servants of the Gospel, even  
challenging structures of power that silence and deny access to  
media to share larger interest of Justice by exercising our  
prophetic role.

We believe that Communication leads to Peace and affirm that Communication for peace creates opportunities for people to consider and value non-violent responses to potential and actual conflict. As Communicators for peace, we affirm to create images and tell stories that respect the values and traditions that lie at the heart of other people's lives.

We believe that challenges of climate change have helped us to create a common ground upon which all religions stand and struggle for the sustenance of the highest common gift of life. Threats to the eco-system are a threat to life, making the creations also to groan with human beings. This calls for reconciliation with creation. As Communicators, we affirm and commit to be responsible stewards of God's creation that protects life on this Universe.

We affirm that Communication for life, justice, peace and reconciliation with all creations affirms the centrality of communication rights to mass, community and social media and to restoring voice and visibility to vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people in a spirit of genuine solidarity, hope and love.

God of life, in your grace, lead us to communicate justice and peace. – Amen.

### ***Benediction***

God of Life,

Open our eyes...

To see your presence in our life and the lives of your creations and be instrument of your Justice

Open our ears...

To hear your voice and the voice of the groaning of your creation to be instruments of Reconciliation

Open our Lips...

To proclaim your Good News of Peace, and be instruments of your Peace.

Now may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
rest and abide with us all both now and always. Amen

### **Recession Hymn:**

The members of World Association for Christian Communication – Asia Region thanks you for joining us in this celebration of Asia Communication Sunday – 2012. May the Lord of Life, lead you to care for the whole creations in proclaiming Justice and Peace to all. Go in Peace and Serve the Lord of Life as stewards of God's Creation. A-men.

# BUSAN COMMUNICATION STATEMENT

## Reclaiming communication for life, justice and peace

*Statement from the International Consultation on the Theme of the World Council of Churches' 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly: A Communication Perspective held in Busan, Korea, 22-25 May 2012 and organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC), World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), and the Korean Host Committee (KHC).*

### Preamble

The world is a very different place from when the World Council of Churches addressed the issue of communication at the Uppsala (1968) and Vancouver (1983) Assemblies. Today, people everywhere, even children, share their stories through media platforms – ranging from Internet-based social networks to the initiatives of citizen journalists – that are more powerful than those available to churches, governments and media conglomerates 30 years ago.

Political, economic, social, and cultural structures have been transformed by globalization and technological innovation. Yet, important elements of our context remain unchanged. Urgent questions of justice and equality need to be addressed all over the world, not least in countries suffering repression, conflict and poverty.

As the World Council of Churches prepares to gather on the Korean peninsula, we are mindful of the role played by communication in deepening divisions that have lasted for generations, but also in sowing the seeds of reconciliation.

In today's world, despite the potential of social media, a few powerful corporations and individuals continue to decide whose voices

are heard and what images are seen by the public, allowing them to shape policy, form public opinion, and move people toward war or peace.

The integrity of the journalistic enterprise has been compromised by media conglomerates and challenged by new forms of media. Some media workers, journalists included, have dared to lift up the concerns of the excluded and to interpret with insight how power flows today.

Communicators who discern the ebb and flow of political, economic and cultural power in a particular time and place can use their insights to denounce the abuses of the powerful and to defend the dignity of widows and orphans, outcasts and strangers. Communicators can also announce the good news of how God is working in our midst to bend human history toward justice and peace.

### Communication for Life, Justice and Peace

During World War II, many women – including many Koreans – were forced into sexual slavery by Japanese soldiers. Euphemistically, these victims of war were known as “comfort women”. Beginning on 8 January 1992, a group of survivors gathered each week in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul asking for a formal apology from the Japanese government. When they held their one thousandth



gathering on 14 December 2011, they unveiled a statue of a bare-foot girl seated on a school chair. Beside her is an empty chair that invites people to sit next to her in solidarity. As Christian communicators we are called to sit next to this little girl and be witnesses in service to life, justice and peace.

### **God of Life**

What if God had not spoken?

According to the Genesis account, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...” According to John's Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word. [...] All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.”

Without communication there would be no life. Creation was, and is, an act of communication. Communication was, and is, an act of creation.

All living beings consist of many cells that can only survive if there is communication between them. In the traditional Eastern worldview, as well as that of many indigenous peoples, the universe is understood to be an integrated whole, an interdependent organism. This view helps us to see that communication is the essence of life and that human beings are in communication with all creation.

Communication also plays a vital role in confronting threats to life. It affirms life by promoting truth-telling, fairness, participation, dialogue, openness, and inclusion. Communication that threatens life is characterized by censorship, misinformation, hate-speech, lies, and exclusion.

Communication can strengthen people's ability to identify and respond to threats to life and can advocate for those made invisible and excluded. In a world that has enabled people of different backgrounds, religions and cultures to be more aware of each other and their inter-connectedness, communication has the potential to promote life together in faith, hope and love.

### **Lead us to Justice**

Communicators are called to take a stand for justice. The struggle for the dignity of all women, all men, requires that communicators become effective advocates for human rights – including the right to communicate – as well as defenders of the integrity of all creation.

Communication in the way of Jesus must promote wholeness and the common good. According to Philippians 2:7, “Jesus emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.” That means He served all people, especially taking up the cause of the poor, the suffering, the outcasts, the weak and the oppressed. Communicators for justice will empty themselves and act as servants of the Gospel – even if this means challenging structures of power.

Prophetic communication opens up alternative horizons that are not limited to the perspectives imposed by the dominant culture. Prophetic communication empowers individuals and communities to tell their own stories and to craft their own images and gestures. Communicators must ensure that those who have been silenced have access to the media they need in order to share their views with the larger world.

### **Lead us to Peace**

Communication can sow understanding or misunderstanding, harmony or discord. Those who challenge injustice use communication to empower. Those who deny justice use communication to disempower. Communicators for peace seek to create images and tell stories that respect the values and traditions that lie at the heart of other people's lives. Such images and stories can strengthen inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding, challenge stereotypes, and promote societies that are able to live together in peace, affirming what they hold in common as well as what separates them.

Communication for peace creates opportunities for people to consider and value non-violent responses to potential and actual conflict. Communication for peace reveals backgrounds and contexts, listens to

all sides, exposes hidden agendas and highlights peace initiatives no matter their origin.

The complexity, scale and diversity of the conflicts that exist in today's world means that no single news source can hope to address adequately the challenge of communicating about conflict or ways of creating sustainable peace. Opening eyes and ears to diverse sources of information and knowledge fosters the depth and breadth of understanding that allows people to make informed decisions.

### **Reclaiming communication**

Communication rights claim spaces and resources in the public sphere for everyone to be able to engage in transparent, informed and

democratic debate. They claim unfettered access to the information and knowledge essential to democracy, empowerment, responsible citizenship and mutual accountability. They claim political, social and cultural environments that encourage the free exchange of a diversity of creative ideas, knowledge and cultural products. Finally, communication rights insist on the need to ensure a diversity of cultural identities that together enhance and enrich the common good.

Communication for life, justice and peace affirms the centrality of communication rights to mass, community and social media and to restoring voice and visibility to vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people in a spirit of genuine solidarity, hope and love.

God of life, in your grace, lead us to communicate justice and peace.

### **Call for Action**

In order to be effective communicators in today's world and to give due recognition and support to church communication workers, secular media professionals and citizen journalists, we call on the churches and their partners:

- To become communicators for life, justice and peace throughout the world and especially in the context of the peaceful reunification of Korea.
- To advocate communication rights for all.
- To train people both within the church and secular society to communicate responsibly and with integrity and to understand how media are created and consumed in a globalized world.
- To reflect on their own ways of communicating internally and externally.
- To advance media literacy, communication for participatory development, media and gender justice, and to develop contextualized toolkits on how to communicate effectively.
- To integrate the study of communication for life, justice and peace into theological training.

# GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

The Rev. Chang Te-chien

General Secretary

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Translated by Tsai Sheng-hsin



It is “the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1; NIV). Zechariah the prophet clearly pointed out that God, with His almighty power and authority, stretched out the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and

formed the spirit of man. God has absolute sovereignty over all His creations. Man, as one of God's creations, has management rights over the world because of God's grace (Genesis 1: 26~28). In the original Hebrew text of the verse in Zechariah 12:1, the description was written in the present participle form (V+ing form) instead of the present tense, as seen above, in order to emphasize the fact that God, throughout history, keeps creating the world again and again as part of His salvation plan. God not only gives people life but also hopes that “created men” will continually renew their lives and give up selfishness and the desire to rule. Therefore, they can treat all things on earth with peace and justice as good housekeepers for God.

## **From Domination to Sustainability**

Nature is a precious gift from God. However, the idea of anthropocentrism has affected the relationship between mankind and Mother Nature for a long time. Being self-centered, people hold the idea that all things on earth should serve them. As a result, people have not only exhausted natural resources but also seriously polluted and destroyed the environment. It is exactly this type of condescending attitude by people that has led to the damage of the Shalom between mankind and Mother Nature. Recently, natural disasters have occurred in every part of the world. For instance, there was the 8/8 Flood in

Taiwan on August 8, 2009 caused by Typhoon Morakot and also the devastating tsunami and the nuclear crisis in Japan caused by the 3/11 earthquake in 2011. Moreover, there are also long term environmental problems, such as global warming and extreme weather all over the world. All these disasters are Mother Nature's way of fighting back in order to remind us that we should try to value and balance the environment and respect the animals, plants, earth, and water resources, instead of simply pursuing our own individual interests. We should strive for the wholeness and completion of the ecological system. Therefore, repentance and conscience can be the foundation of sustainable development.

## **Preach Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins**

“Repentance and the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24: 47) The key point for Jesus in his preaching was not only to call sinners to repent but also forgive with grace those who repented. Both mankind and Mother Nature rely on each other to survive. Christians should play a role in leading the people of the world to reflect on their own desires, which motivates their greedy behavior. Then, people should look up to Jesus, who is already resurrected from death, and renew themselves with a repentant heart. Jesus took our wickedness and gave us His righteousness (Colossians 1:20). Jesus came to bring peace. He planted love and reconciliation in a world full of conflict and injustice. We need to imitate Jesus and spread His way of treating all things on earth with kindness. Moreover, we should also ask Jesus to forgive our sins with a repentant heart. In doing so, we can really change. Also, the world will again be true, good and beautiful, just like when God first created it.



### **Rebuild Godly Principles**

We believe that God gives mankind dignity, talent, and land. Therefore, man, as part of His creation can be responsible for ruling the earth with Him." From this confession of faith made by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), it is clear that we have the responsibility to rule the world with God. Therefore, the first Sunday of June every year is observed as "Environment Sunday" by PCT. On that day, PCT appeals to all the church members to restore the relationship between mankind and all things on earth. We need to take responsibility to be good housekeepers for God. Moreover, we should do so in awe, taking action to show our care for the earth. In the past few years, PCT has strived to promote and integrate its "Six Dimensions of Holistic Mission" (proclaiming the Gospel, nurturing God's children, serving with love, transforming the society, caring for God's creation, and Gospel and

culture) in communities throughout Taiwan in order to make more people know about the God of Life. In particular, in regard to the care for God's creation, all followers should do their best in striving to make Taiwan a "nuclear-free country" so that, together with our faith, we can implement God's environmental justice. Jesus is not only the Lord of life (John 14:6), but also the center of creation. He holds all things together with His almighty power. Therefore, we, as Christians, should unite all the countries in the world to promote God's principles and also live a simple life with a thankful heart. Furthermore, we should put emphasis on eco-spirituality in order to coexist in harmony with all things on earth. That is how we share our testimonies in this chaotic world, walk with God humbly, walk towards the way of renewal and hope, and then walk to an eternity of justice and peace.



## **BUILDING MEANING TOGETHER ...**

### **ON THE PATH TO JUSTICE, PEACE AND RECONCILIATION WITH CREATION**

**Dennis A. Smith**

President, WACC.

As communicators we understand that building meaning together, a sacred task, is not only a tool but also a process, a way of being, on the path to justice, peace and reconciliation with Creation.

Communication, communion, community – all express our commitment to the common good.

One of our tasks as communicators is to shed light on that which has been hidden – the lies and corruption of the powerful – but also to lift up before the world those that have been made invisible. We say: “Look. Listen. God is present in all places, at all times, but most especially here, where we did not think to look. Do you have eyes to see?” This is the way of Jesus.

I have been working in Latin America as a Presbyterian mission worker for 35 years. In that time I have learned to listen for God's special presence among those that have been silenced. For stories of courage and creativity, I have learned to seek out women's groups, the poor, tribal and indigenous communities.

We moved to Argentina in early 2011. Just recently I had my first opportunity to visit the Qom people in El Chaco, a vast, sparsely populated region that straddles Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. The Qom are a hunter-gatherer people; El Chaco provides a harsh environment. Summer temperatures can rise above 50° C. and drop below freezing in the winter. Like so many other tribal peoples throughout the world the Qom struggle to preserve traditional cultural values while adapting to challenges ranging from climate change to jobs and education for their youth to preserving their rights to ancestral lands.

While visiting El Chaco, I met Rev. Auden Charole, a young Qom pastor and community organizer. He shared with me a new book, published by the provincial government, which documents Qom knowledge of local wildlife, including legends told by the elders explaining each creature's place in the community of all created things. Rev. Charole is one of the authors of this pioneering volume; he drew many of the illustrations.

Rev. Charole explains that his parents are Christians; he came to know the Gospel as a child. When he was 16, however, he left the church and went to work as a day laborer for immigrants that had usurped Qom lands. “It didn't occur to me to value my own culture; I had no hope of defending my rights as a person,” observes Rev. Charole. “But then in 2001 our community experienced a re-birth of our rights as a people, of our self-esteem, of our traditions. It was the Bible School that provided the space where we made all these discoveries. That is where our leaders gathered. I was able to finish my schooling there. Now I have a family and it is my son that encourages me to continue the struggle for our rights, for our land.”

Most South Americans have never heard of the Qom people. If El Chaco makes the news it is likely to be because agri-business interests want to invade more “uninhabited” land to plant more soybeans for the global market.

That is why we will continue to work so that Auden Charole and the Qom people can tell their story.



## GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

**Rev. Dr. Karin Achtelstetter**

WACC General Secretary

It is my great pleasure to send you warm greetings from the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) on Asia Communication Sunday. In the spirit of communication for all, I would like to thank the WACC Asia Region for its gift to all our members and partners of a day on which to recognize the vital role played by communication in promoting greater understanding, peace and the promise of reconciliation.

Recently a story about communication made the headlines in Canada (where WACC has its global secretariat) and around the world. It is a story of hope and reconciliation – with the aid of today’s digital technologies.

From begging in the slums of India to becoming a successful Tasmanian businessman, Saroo Brierley’s life has taken some unexpected turns. At the beginning of June (2012) it came full circle when he returned to India and was reunited with the family from whom he was separated 25 years ago.

At the age of five, Saroo was begging at a train station in west India with his older brother. He got lost and by mistake boarded a train going in the wrong direction. He fell asleep and woke up 10 hours later on the other side of the country. For a month, he tried to find his way back, almost drowning in the River Ganges and nearly being abducted by a man who intended to sell him as a slave.

Declared a lost child he was placed in an orphanage before being adopted by Tasmanian parents. A month ago, he returned to India find his family. “I kept in my head the images of the town I grew up in, the streets I used to wander and the faces of my family, I treasured those memories,” he said.

“Using Google Earth, I spent so many hours zooming in and out looking for something I recognised,” he said. He remembered the Khandwa train station and surrounding area, which he eventually found on Google Earth. He then joined a Facebook group for his home town Ganesh Talai and managed to piece together details by e-mailing members of the group. He booked his plane ticket and went to the town, scouring streets until he found his family.

Saroo said his mother told him of how they had searched endlessly for him after he went missing and saw fortune-tellers who told them they would one day be reunited. It sounds like the storyline from a movie, but it happened in real-life and would not have happened but for new information and communication technology.

New media technologies have expanded the communication opportunities for many people around the world and helped to amplify alternative voices,

On Asia Communication Sunday, WACC offers its own message of justice, peace and reconciliation through the power of communication. In the words of the Busan Communication Statement (May 2012):

“Communication can strengthen people’s ability to identify and respond to threats to life and can advocate for those made invisible and excluded. In a world that has enabled people of different backgrounds, religions and cultures to be more aware of each other and their interconnectedness, communication has the potential to promote life together in faith, hope and love.”

Strengthened by our faith, and empowered by communication, may we all strive for peaceful coexistence with each other and with the whole of creation.

# "MIGRATION FROM AND FOR UNDERDEVELOPMENT"

Ramon Bultran

Vice-Chairperson of WACC-Asia

Life as God's creation should be treated with dignity. But what if human beings, their life and their future are traded as commodities? Then the dignity and sanctity of God's creation is violated.

Such is the intent of neoliberal globalization on migration and migrant workers.

In a world still mired in crisis, abundant with underdeveloped countries and people denied of the fullness of life, where the disparity of the rich and the poor grows exponentially and where wars are waged for selfish interests of powers-that-be, genuine development has been as elusive as the dream of migrant workers to finally be with their loved ones living a decent and humane life in their homeland.

Six years ago, the richest and most influential countries in the world from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) designed a meeting where states shall discuss and come up with recommendations on how migration can be made to work to advance development. After previous discourses on migration, development and other related issues as well as getting frustrated with how negotiations on migration have turned out within the framework of the General Agreement on Trade and Services under the World Trade Organization, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was conceived and held by the next year.

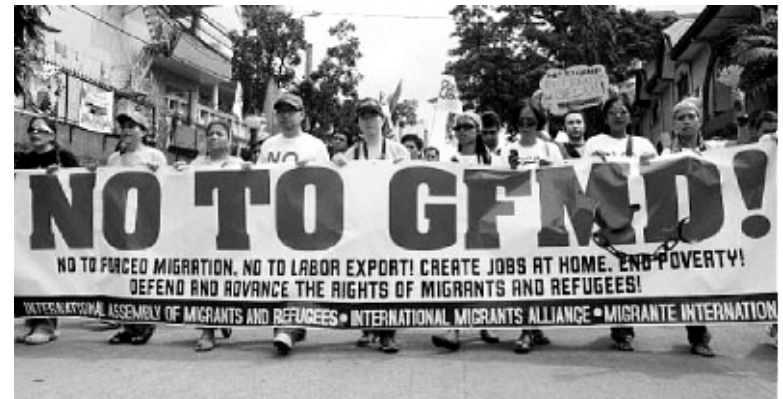
After five meetings that took the migration and development discourse from Belgium to the Philippines to Greece, Mexico and then Switzerland, the GFMD is now on its sixth run and shall be held in Mauritius on November this year. Yet, there is still no indication that the upcoming meeting shall really address the commodification and modern-day slavery of migrant workers.

The first meeting laid out the foundations of the GFMD including its framework and working mechanisms. Afterwards, it tried to assuage

critics and grassroots migrants by doing lip-service on the rights of migrants considering also that it was held in the Philippines – a country known for its well-developed labour export program and whose nationals overseas face human rights violations everyday.

The next meeting tackled policy and institutional coherence where integration of migration with development plans took centre-stage. In Mexico, partnerships on migration and development were explored. In Geneva, the GFMD discussed how previous resolutions of the GFMD and related meetings of working groups and various modalities could be implemented in the national or regional levels.

This time in Mauritius, the GFMD carries the theme "Enhancing the human development of migrants and their contribution to the development of communities and states". Couched again in big words to make the GFMD palatable, the flawed framework of the GFMD remains which gives grassroots migrants not much hope in it making positive impacts to the condition of migrants.



In a study on the impacts of the GFMD and its migration paradigm by the APMM and the IBON Foundation in the Philippines, telling conclusions were gleaned from research participants among grassroots migrant workers and advocates from all global regions.

First of all, the level of awareness of grassroots migrants about the GFMD leaves a lot to be desired and of those who have a certain awareness of the GFMD, they learned about it from migrant organizations and NGOs. The lack of efforts of the GFMD to make grassroots migrants informed of the GFMD, its direction and its processes do not provide a condition for grassroots migrants conducive for their active involvement on the discussions about migration and shaping related policies.

More than this, the GFMD process itself is, in practice, closed to grassroots migrant workers. The Civil Society Day (CSD) that is the formal venue for non-state actors to talk about the GFMD is not really open to grassroots migrants because the GFMD do not make effort to reach out to them and ensure their participation including overcoming financial limitations.

The said study also revealed the dissatisfaction of grassroots migrant workers and advocates on how responsive the GFMD has been to issues of rights and wellbeing of migrant workers. Many of those interviewed also expressed their lack of confidence to the GFMD to deliver on the rights of migrants as it is a non-binding forum that is also outside formal intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations.

Respondents on the survey and interviews conducted, as well as the participants in the focus groups discussions, also disagreed with the GFMD's plan to use migrant's remittance for development. They averred that such framework is not sustainable as well as nonresponsive to the real nature and causes of forced labour migration. In fact, many critics of the GFMD have pointed out not only the failure the GFMD to answer the concrete problems of migrant workers but the inherent danger of the framework it holds.

For indeed, the GFMD carries with it the design that shall not end forced

labour migration but shall instead further commodify migrant workers and make them slaves of modern times.

Though it vows not to impose migration as a development strategy, the GFMD does not seek to end underdevelopment – and thus, forced labour migration – but rather, it aims to use migration in order to cover up the failure of global economic principles to uplift people's condition and also put migration in these very same principles.

For the past three decades, neoliberal globalization has been the mantra echoed especially by powerful countries in the world to foster development. However, instead of ushering in progress for all, principles of liberalization, deregulation and privatization have exacerbated poverty and put countless people in a condition of deprivation, dislocation and hopelessness.

Crisis after crisis has plagued the peoples of the world and they have become more frequent and more serious than before. The economic crisis that started in 2008 still afflicts many nations while the source of the crisis, the United States, still struggles to come out of the quagmire it has put itself in through more aggressive actions from increased military



intervention to war. Currently it is spreading more of its troops in Asia and the Pacific while consolidating the spoils of its unjust wars against countries like Iraq and Libya.

The past global summits on the environment and on sustainable development has also shown the deep-seated problems created by giant corporations in powerful states but borne by the world's workers, peasants, migrant workers, indigenous people, women, youth, students and all other disadvantaged sectors.

In the 2009 UN Conference on Climate Change, alarm bells were rung on the state of the natural environment and calls for drastic changes were echoed. However, the people were gravely disappointed by the tendency of government's only to delve only into peripheral issues that impact on the environment and not zero in on the root causes of the wanton destruction of nature due to plunderous and destructive operations of giant corporations especially in underdeveloped countries.

More recently in the UN Conference on Sustainable Development or commonly known as Rio +20, the widening disparity of the world's poor and rich was highlighted by peoples movements present in Brazil. The issues of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and related concerns such as diminishing and genuine development aid were presented by grassroots people's organizations. However, much like in Copenhagen with the summit on the environment, the real issues on sustainable development were relegated to the sidelines and schemes such as the "Green Economy" that is only good as a package but is actually more subservient to corporate interests are the ones promoted by governments.

The GFMD suffers from the same malady that infects the above-stated gatherings of governments: it refuses to acknowledge that neoliberal globalization is the cause of the world's miseries and to implement its policies perpetually shall only worsen the people's situation.

GFMD plays exactly in this same game and thus focuses merely on "migration management" instead of recognizing the truth that current

migration patterns and policies commodify migrants and impinge on human dignity for they treat migrants as no different from any other goods for trade. Managing migration is managing commodification. Managing migration is institutionalization of the slavery of millions of migrants.

Forced labour migration is a product of underdevelopment. As long as neoliberal globalization is held aloft as the ultimate framework of development, then labour migration can never be used for development but will only serve to cover up the destructive impacts of neoliberal globalization by providing migrant workers and their family a false sense of security which is actually only about surviving.

In the past meetings of GFMD, grassroots migrant workers and advocates under the International Migrants Alliance (IMA) challenged and exposed the GFMD's design in the grassroots-led International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees or the IAMR. This conference series built up the unities of migrant organizations and advocates around the world against urgent issues migrants, immigrants, refugees and other displaced people face, and consolidated the position of the grassroots against the GFMD and its agenda of furthering underdevelopment.

This year, grassroots migrant are gearing for an intensified resistance against neoliberal globalization and its application to migration. For the grassroots, to defeat neoliberal globalization shall pave the way for the building of economic, political and social structures where hopes for genuine development, restoring the dignity of migrants, making people enjoy the abundance of life and ending forced migration shall not only be pipedreams.

---

*\*APMM Corporate member of WACC is a non-profit; Church based regional migrant centre working for the empowerment of migrants through education training, campaign and advocacy, research and publication and supports the movement of migrants in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions.*

## FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY BY JAPAN

**Ms. Akiko Yamaguchi**

National Council of Churches in Japan

During the World War II, thousands of young women and girls were victimized by Japanese military forces in all over Asia, in Korea, in China and Taiwan, in the Philippines, in Indonesia, wherever Japanese military troops went. Some were raped by soldiers in their own lands which became war place and others were kidnapped from Japanese colonies to the war place as comfort women. However, these victims had to keep long silence as it was thought to be a shame for women to come out as a victim of sexual crime.

67 years has passed from then, although many victims passed away during these years, however, the survivors are now seeking for the adequate redress from Japanese government who claims that the issue has been resolved by agreements between two nations and there is no legal responsibility to Japanese government to pay compensation for individual person.

Recently, a small stature of a girl was erected by the roadside across the Japanese embassy in memory of the struggle of the comfort women who have done demonstration more than 1000 times on each Wednesday noon requiring apology and compensation by Japanese government. Japanese government which is under the influence of right wing politicians claimed that this is an act to disgrace Japanese diplomatic organ as if forgetting the past disgraced the human dignity of women.

We, Christian women in Japan, in solidarity with Asian sisters, require our government to take an immediate action for responsible resolution of the issue. The Justice should be done for the all victims of the Sexual Violence especially those who are under War and conflicts.

## BRINGING BACK RIO FOR PEOPLE

Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron

IBON International

All eyes were on Rio de Janeiro last June as national governments, international agencies, corporate representatives, and civil society advisors gather for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, more popularly known as “Rio+20,” one of the largest conferences to discuss the future of the world, 20 years after the first Earth Summit. Rio +20 breaks UN records for conference scale and scope. One of the principal questions of Rio+20 will be how to lay out a vision for what “sustainable development” will look like in the future, so that economies can supposedly grow without further harming the environment further, while at the same time supposedly ensuring that the benefits of this economic growth will reach the people - a vision that will be achieved through what the UN calls the “Green Economy”

### Agenda.

Rio+20 came at a critical juncture for the world. Twenty years ago, poverty, inequality, unequal terms of trade, external debt, and unequal flow of resources out from the South have permeated the debates in the official negotiations. And as with the Earth Summit, multiple interacting and causally related crises are again afflicting the planet. And as before, the impacts of these crises are disproportionately felt by the world's poorest. But, in spite of the Earth Summit, the crises have increased in magnitude with more people affected and the effects becoming increasingly severe.

A defining characteristic of the change that the world has undergone in between the Earth Summit and Rio+20 is that while the wealth of the world as a whole has increased through economic growth, the richest have become richer, but the poorest remain trapped in their poverty. And the widening poverty gap is exacerbated by food shortages, armed conflicts, human rights violations, rising unemployment – the list goes on. Beyond this, while the absolute numbers of poor may have

decreased, the structures which stunt the social mobility of the poor remain firmly entrenched – put simply, those who are born poor, whether in rich countries or poor countries, are likely to remain poor. Moreover, the situation of only a select few benefiting from the planet and its resources has been maintained, exerting increasing pressure on the environment and resources at a global level, and often detracting from the ability of people to access the resources they have been given the responsibility of stewardship of.

The situation of entrenched, chronic poverty faced by the majority is maintained in spite of international agreements and declarations such as the UN Declaration on the Right to Development and the far-reaching programme of action endorsed at the Earth Summit which recognised such issues and produced commitments designed specifically to confront many of their causes. While there is a recognition of the collective responsibility of the community of nations to create enabling conditions for the fulfilment of the right to development, ---- and this





does not only mean the provision of ODA from North to South --- and then again even if the 0.7% GDP as ODA commitment was met, this would not make a dent in poverty eradication and the shift to sustainable development pathways without major reforms in the international financial architecture and multilateral and bilateral trade rules.

We all know that financial speculation is a major factor behind commodity price volatility and the hike in food prices which impacts on the right to food. We know that unfair trade rules, including agricultural subsidies in the North, continue to wipe out small agricultural producers from developing countries, driving tens of thousands of impoverished and indebted peasants in India to suicide, to cite just one country.

At the heart of such huge global disparities is a political-economic system which both creates and perpetuates inequity based on exploiting people while at the same time pillaging the environment in order to maintain itself. It is capitalism which is responsible for extreme inequalities of wealth characterised by over-consumption driven by an unsustainable mode of production, at the heart of which lies exploitation, of both people and the environment. It is capitalism which prioritises a continual pursuit of growth over and above an egalitarian distribution of the immense wealth already in existence in the world. And it is the international and domestic finance oligarchy which ensures that at a global and national level the system is maintained in the interests of the relative few who benefit from it and at the expense of the majority of people. At the base of the system is the exploited labour power of workers, and the environment, which sustains it with necessary resources and is polluted by its outputs.

The systemic disparities in wealth at the heart of the world's social and economic crises are directly linked to the environmental crisis facing humanity. The more that wealth has been accumulated, the more the planet's ecosystems and people become adversely affected by climate change, pollution and resource depletion – threatening the foundation of the ecosystems that humans and other species depend on for their

survival. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are intertwined with the rise of heavy industry and the predominance of multi-national corporations under capitalism.

Unfortunately, through endless negotiations, the very meaning of the word “green” has changed, and many proposals at Rio+20 focus on proposals for supposed solutions that make environmentalism profitable. Market-based “solutions,” ranging from the familiar “cap and trade” for carbon emissions, to the REDD+ program to maintain forests, aim to make environmentalism palatable and profitable for corporations. However, what they really do is allow developed countries to continue their polluting while paying developing countries small amounts of money to grow plants to “offset” the pollution. “Green” here, has obviously taken on a new meaning - green for environmentalism and sustainability has been taken over by 'green' as in the color of money, of corporate control, of the relentless pursuit of profit.

Decisions made at Rio+20 will have an enormous impact 5 or 10 or 20 years down the road. That is why it is critical for the people to know how Rio+20 works (or doesn't work), what are being debated, and just how high the stakes are for this debate.

*“Development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*

The solutions on offer in the official Rio+20 process – the Green Economy and reforms of institutions for sustainable development – fall short of addressing the fundamental failings of the economic system and of the structures of global governance. And these supposed solutions will actually exacerbate the crises and the poverty that the world's poor are faced with.

We know that there are limits to what we can achieve through the UN system and that ultimately fundamental change will come from below. Nevertheless we must take advantage of Rio+20 to claim our rights and challenge our governments to take positive steps towards meeting the needs of the people and the planet.

From the point of view of many - especially Southern - civil society organisations (CSOs), Rio+20 represents something else. Southern CSOs have come together to hold a “People's Summit”, “Cúpula dos Povos”, which ran alongside the official UN summit. The CSOs state that they “want to transform Rio+20 as a moment of opportunity to address the serious problems that humanity is facing and demonstrate the political power of organized people”.

We will not allow Rio+20 to legitimize the corporate Green Economy agenda.

We should expose and oppose attempts by powerful States, particularly the US, to whittle down human rights obligations and equity principles in the Rio+20 outcome document in order to avoid concrete commitments to meaningful reforms in social, economic and environmental policies, while on the other hand, they are pushing for corporate-led investments and initiatives to fill in the gap left by government inaction.

We should not allow States to backtrack on the Rio principles and internationally agreed human rights norms and standards. We must assert that the Rio principles be upheld, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, the polluter pay principle, the precautionary approach, and the principle on access to information, public participation and justice. We should also assert that sustainable development must be based on the observance and fulfillment of human rights norms and standards, including the rights to food, health and water, the right to education, the rights of women and children, the right to self-determination, the right to development, and the right of people to participate in decision-making.

The future that we want is not what is being negotiated on in New York or in Brazil, by the world's elites. The future that we want is a future that puts people and planet first, before profits.

**Together, we must reclaim Rio for the people! No to corporate greed economy!**

*\* Tetet Nera-Lauron is IBON International's Climate Justice Programme Manager. She served as WACC-Asia Region Secretary from 2005-2011.*



## AIDS FESTIVAL 2012: ZERO NEW HIV INFECTIONS, ZERO DISCRIMINATION

Miss Elijah Fung,

Centre Manager & AIDS Festival Coordinator  
St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre

*More than 2,000 people from different sectors of the community participated at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual AIDS Festival, held on Sunday, 1 April 2012 at the Chater Road Pedestrian Precinct, Central, Hong Kong. The theme of the AIDS Festival 2012 was "Zero Infection, Zero Discrimination".*

According to UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS), at the end of 2010 an estimated 34 million people were globally living with HIV; in 2010 there were 2.7 million new HIV infections and 1.8 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses. Around 2.5 million deaths are estimated to have been averted in low-and middle-income countries due to increased access to HIV treatment since 1995. New HIV infections have been significantly reduced or have stabilized in many parts of the world. A decline in new HIV infections is also being spurred by changes in sexual behaviour, particularly in young people.

**In Hong Kong, a total of 438 cases of HIV were reported to the Department of Health in 2011, compared with 389 reported cases in 2010, taking the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 5,270 since 1984. The record high reported HIV cases in 2011 signals its continued significance as a major public health to Hong Kong.**

To reach HIV zero infection, zero discrimination and zero HIV deaths, UNAIDS launched a new strategic approach to investments, focusing on high-impact, evidence-based, high-value strategies to revert the AIDS pandemic. It is strongly advocated that programme activities recognize critical enablers such as reducing stigma, respect for human rights, creating a protective legal environment and capacity building for community based organizations. **UNAIDS underlines the importance of shared responsibility in the AIDS response. Shared responsibility is one of the central pillars of UNAIDS' strategy to reach zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths by 2015.**

**The AIDS Festival 2012 was the 9<sup>th</sup> festival organized by the St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre. It was a whole day outdoor event**

**aiming to educate the public about AIDS prevention, to reduce stigma and discrimination, and to contribute to reach the targets of HIV zero infections, zero discrimination and zero deaths.** Thirty organizations/teams including local and international schools, AIDS organizations, ethnic groups and 200 volunteers performed at the AIDS Festival 2012. A variety of activities including AIDS and health information booths, yoga demonstration, magic show, poem reading, fashion show, cultural presentations and a Q & A session were delivered. The ceremony was attended by guests of honour including DG David Harilela, District Governor of the Rotary International District 3450 (Hong Kong, Macao & Mongolia), Ms. Howin Yuen, Chairperson of the Hong Kong Coalition of AIDS Service Organizations (HKCASO), The Revd Canon David Pickering, Acting Dean of St. John's Cathedral, and representatives from different ethnic groups such as Filipinos, Thais, Nepalese and Sri Lankans.

**The St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre was established in 1995.** The AIDS Festival is one of its annual major events to limit the spread of the AIDS epidemic in Hong Kong. Other services offered by the Centre include providing AIDS and reproductive health education for school youths, ethnic minorities and the community, conducting research on AIDS and reproductive health issues, cooperation with interfaith groups to combat AIDS in the Asia region, and running internships for students.



# GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

## GATHERING PRAYER

Prepared by:

**Kristine Greenaway**

Head of Communications, World Communion of Reformed Churches

*Creator God,*

*We gather today to seek how best to understand the role of Christian communication in contributing to the creation of justice and peace. Guide us in the right paths and sustain us on the way. – Amen*

**Luke 18:1-8** New International Version (NIV)

### **The Parable of the Persistent Widow**

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

<sup>4</sup> "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

### **Reflection**

Justice is a matter of faith. The persistent widow had faith. She believed that if she did not give up, she would finally receive justice. Her faith was rewarded. With this parable, Jesus offers us a model of justice that can be interpreted in many ways. But two elements of the story are key to us as Christians who are seeking to be faithful to God's call to work for justice and peace in the world.

The first element is the widow's refusal to take "no" as an answer. She was alone, unvalued, and marginalized, yet she had the courage to continue. The second element is the judge's ability to give in and grant justice. He finally heard the woman and granted her what she needed. Jesus tells us that if even a judge who was not naturally kind and caring could finally grant the woman's wish, how much more can we expect from God's love and compassion.

These two elements of the story speak directly to Christian communicators. Communicators are like the persistent widow as they tell stories of injustice and of violence, disagreement and dissent and plead that justice be done and that peace come. They too can feel alone, isolated and on the margins of society. They may even find themselves on the margins of their own churches and organizations. Can they find the courage and faith to persist in their calls for *new forms of communication* in our contexts - communication that contributes to communities of justice and of peace?

Communicators can also be like the judge who lacks compassion and wisdom. They sometimes do not hear the voices from the margins or do not give them credit or are too busy to listen or are too tired to tell one more story of injustice. Do they have the courage and faith to keep listening to the persistent, isolated voices from the margin and to respond to those requests to be heard?

When communicators do pay attention to those voices, they can weave the stories into a big canvas of analysis, theory and theology such as

statements like the Accra Confession, used by the World Communion of Reformed Churches to describe the link between our faith and economic and social justice.

The Accra Confession states that matters of economic and ecological justice, such as those raised by persistent widows and by persistent social justice advocates, are not only social, political and moral issues, they are actually integral to faith in Jesus Christ and they affect the integrity of the church. The Confession says that being faithful to God's covenant with humanity requires that individual Christians and the churches take a stand against current economic and environmental injustices.

The Confession calls on the church to stand in solidarity with persons who are suffering and struggling. This means following the justice traditions of the biblical prophets and of Jesus in the gospel narratives. The Accra Confession views the current world *disorder* by "looking through the eyes of powerless and suffering people." It calls the churches and society to hear the cries of the people who suffer and to hear the "woundedness" of creation itself – creation that is over-consumed and under-valued by the current global economy.

Lofty words and ideals such as those in the Confession speak to theologians, Christian economists and ecological activists but perhaps are not so clearly understood by community organizers in inner city neighbourhoods or by ecology students active with groups like Green Peace.

The task of church-based communicators is to stand at the intersection where they hear both the lone voices of the marginalized and the high-flown words of Confessions, declarations and statements. Their task is two-fold. It is to make the voices from the margins heard by those who write the declarations *and* to make the declarations understandable to those on the margins. The words must be understandable in ways that nourish and sustain the courage and persistence of those at the edges of society and of those who are beyond the reach of the mass media.

Standing at the intersection between theory and action and seeking to be an effective communicator sometimes seems like an overwhelming challenge. How does one find the courage and persistence of the widow? These can be difficult to find if one is working as an isolated individual. But by God's grace and the companionship of sisters and brothers in faith, communicators are able to persist until, at last, perhaps one judge yields and one thing changes. In that moment, we glimpse and transmit the vision of more change to come. May it be so.

### **Responsive prayer**

We pray for communicators in all parts of the globe, each facing challenges in church and society. God of life, lead them to justice and peace.

We pray for the churches to which they belong, for the organizations they represent and for the worldwide ecumenical movement that sustains them. May their leaders have wisdom and compassion for those who serve in communication ministries.

*One: God, in your mercy...*

### **All: Hear our prayer.**

We bring before you the names and stories of people we know who have acted as the persistent widow did in the search for justice. *[People are invited to name those about whom they are thinking.]*

*One: God, in your mercy.*

### **All: Hear our prayer.**

*One: Let us join in the Lord's Prayer, each in our own language.*

### **Commissioning**

And now may we leave this time of meditation prepared to be as persistent as the people we have named and as committed as the widow to work for transformation in your world.

Amen

## HOW CHURCHES RESPOND TO GRAND DISASTER EVENTS

**Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong**

Associate General Secretary

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Translated by **Peter Wu**



In recent past decades, there have been various kinds of natural disaster happening around the globe and these have raised grave challenges to human survival. The UN has held several climate change conferences, urging people to cherish Mother Nature in order to reduce global warming.

But such a mindset overhaul should be anchored by faith fixed upon God! It means we have to confess and repent our sin of past domination and exploitation in human history, humble down ourselves to live peacefully with Mother Nature, and try our best effort to fulfill our stewardship as responsible created beings. Only after satisfying these requirements, it becomes possible for us to co-work with God to manage the earth's resources and respond to natural disasters with Christ's mercy and love.

As a loyal servant to Taiwan society, especially when Taiwan suffered its greatest catastrophe ever, PCT's mission is to organize the church body, establish a disaster relief network, help sustain the needy and maintain the dignity of suffering people in order to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The greatest natural disasters haunting human beings are earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis, ice storms, volcano eruptions, dust storms and floods. On Sept. 21st, 1999, Taiwan experienced a major earthquake - 7.3 in Richter scale – which is now known as the “921 Earthquake”. Death toll across the island reached 2,000 and more. About 200,000 households were affected in this severe calamity.

Ten years later in August 2009, Taiwan was heavily battered by a

typhoon called Morakot. The total rainfall during those 4 days of typhoon downpour equaled to Taiwan's annual rainfall volume - about 2500 mm. Lots of bridges and roads between cities and towns were destroyed. Rural landslides erupted across the island, and urban areas suffered from severe floods. As a result, 724 people died and 4,975 houses are destroyed or damaged.

Called and commissioned to take care of the people and society immersed in deep trauma after these natural disasters, PCT set up a 3-step procedures on disaster relief :

STEP 1: “Sustain and Accommodate”. We delivered material supply and medical care services to the wounded, supplied food, and took care of the diseased. PCT organization structure was also utilized to frame our operation system, with a coordination the command center set by the General Assembly Committee. The committee established disaster relief network, appointed chief executive officer, etc. Responsibilities for each layer of PCT disaster relief system are as follow:

(1) General Assembly Committee: Its mission is to supervise the relief operation, follow up the recovery progress, and report to the General Assembly.

(2) Rebuilding Center at General Assembly Office: Its assignment is to establish disaster relief operation system, co-ordinate between different units, arrange a supporting and/or accompanying social work system, plead for national or overseas donation, setup internet website for the Rebuilding Center, release news or information, and publish periodical financial report.

(3) Rebuild/Care Unit at local presbytery: Its job is to comfort the suffering through relief efforts, accommodation and rebuilding projects, and report back to Rebuilding Center at the General Assembly Office.

The accomplishments at PCT's Step I disaster relief are as follows:

9 Rebuilding Centers at local presbyteries were established, many un-afflicted presbyteries were paired to support severely affected presbyteries. Material demands from each afflicted presbytery were assessed and reviewed in order to effectively manage and transport urgent goods and services to the most needy. Plans to help clean up the destroyed households are proposed and coordinated.

STEP 2, "Rebuild and Care". To be a partner of the government's 4-years recovery project, PCT focuses on doing the relief serves. But PCT's ministry also places emphasis on the policy issues, including:

(1) Evaluate all the government's policy toward the afflicted villages, continually check and analyze government's policy, support union of aboriginal villages to claim their rights and privileges especially in NGO meetings.

(2) Organize aboriginal villages into a network, encourage them to set up self-help aboriginal villages union and office site.

(3) Host a series of campaign activities to restore aboriginal villages, facilitate household recovery, cooperate with PCT Indigenous Mission Committee to publish annual journals, edit the pamphlet on aboriginal recovery, and hold seminar and forum etc.

The official policy of the Taiwan government is to persuade the aboriginal people to move away from their land, but PCT insist that it should respect the ethnic characteristics and tribal demands from each aboriginal people. In other words, PCT's principle is to "Leave disaster zones behind, without leaving home. If leaving a

house is inevitable, then do not move too far away". PCT has also helped to restore aboriginal villages. Chin-Her village and Min-Tsu village are very good example for reference.

In addition, revitalizing the agriculture, pastoral care of the children, youth, woman and elderly, rebuild homes and churches are all important ministries during STEP 2.

STEP 3: "Mission Transformation". PCT is now trying to transform the relief/care units in afflicted local presbyteries into a ministry center for each presbytery in Taiwan. It anticipates that each presbytery will be trained and equipped well enough to do their disaster relief ministry independently.

PCT set up this disaster relief network through its organizational structure. Although these 3 steps in relief operations could be similar to other countries, we believe that a feasible framework depends on the actual church structure in different countries.

In Taiwan, PCT General Assembly Office plays the role of an organizer and coordinator, while each local presbytery functions as the relief operator. The General Assembly Office and local presbyteries do their specialized jobs respectively, but they will cooperate as one body to take care of the church integrity and local demands.

Natural disaster is indeed a great source of suffering for every nation and people, but the apostle Paul said: "(God) who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we our selves receive from God". Suffering restores the relationship between human and God, and shows us the hope of resurrection. Therefore, this is a critical time for us to witness and share the Gospel.

Looking ahead into the future, natural disasters will only increase. Let us be awake and sober! (2 Thessalonians 1:5) Let us live a life faithful enough to God, charitable enough to our neighbors and compassionate enough to our mother nature!

## THE COMMON PRAYER SHARED BETWEEN SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA FOR THE 2012 EASTER

For your bountiful grace of granting us the promise of peace and love;  
We your children living in South and North Korea give you praise and worship you .

O God you sympathize with this nation suffering from the division between South and North under the perennial threats of war .

Now 67 years have passed since the division of this nation;  
While we have been looking for each other calling and missing each other for this painful period ,  
We brethren of South and North have endured in praying for the reunification of this nation ,  
Standing on our firm belief that God of providence has made and preserved us one in this nation .  
As days months and years have passed we see our desire for the reunification overflow even more from the heart .

O God you are unchanging forever and ever .  
Long as those 67 years of division is ,  
Are they comparable with the long history of this nation with the same blood and the same tongue?  
Separation cannot keep from reunion; hatred cannot win over love .  
Likewise we believe and confess that war can never overcome peace .  
Following the Lord who leads those divided into one and builds up everlasting peace ,  
We will reconcile ourselves to each other and make one in spite of difference in ideology and regime;  
We will transform hatred into love disbelief into mutual trust .

O God you are caring for even the smallest pains .  
May you touch this nation injured and in distress on the way to a peaceful reunification;  
May you dry the tears of the sisters and brothers hurt from the division;  
May you make your promise of peace to come true .  
Help us know that it is your will for us to make a great and welfare nation in your holy way .  
Now that the winter has passed away the spring has come with snow melting breeze and burgeoning sprouts .

In this Easter morning ,

We pray that you tumble down the wall of division and warm up the hearts of the nation with the warmth of spring that South and North may be united into one nation .

In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ Amen .





**The World Association for Christian Communication - Asia Region.**