My friend made a crucifix,
I saw it on his wall.
I said to him, "That’s beautiful."
"Terrifyingly," he said:
That’s all he said,
That’s all.

He took a piece of common wire,
Cruelly barbed and strong;
And turned it into sorrow.
As holy and mysterious
As it was long,
So long.

I envy him that savage wire,
The agony of hand and heart.
In the shame and grief and sorrow
That I do not have words for,
Let me have part,
My part.

(The Outlook)

Editorial

In Fellowship and Honesty

It may not be seemly to enter into public dialogue with some esteemed colleagues and with valued members of our constituency. However, as readers are aware, there is enough nonsense and misrepresentation about the ecumenical movement being broadcast. In such a situation, nothing will confuse and demoralise sincere and open-minded Christians more than to hear discordant voices from those in the ecumenical movement who are supposed to help clear thinking and above all to provide support to costly commitment to the mission of Christ’s Church in our times. Our integrity and commitment to one another in the ecumenical movement makes it imperative that we be honest with one another.

We are deeply exercised over two pieces of writing in the past month or so. One on Dialogue and Evangelism by Raymond Fung, WCC Secretary for Evangelism in his Monthly Letter on Evangelism (Dec. 82); the other, an editorial entitled ‘Spot-light on the Minister’ in the January issue of The Filipino Methodist. These are reproduced in this issue of CCAN. Mr. Fung’s remarks on Dialogue and Evangelism are worth listening to, like much else he has to say. But we must register some of our misgivings.

We believe that a good case can be made for dialogue with people of other faiths without trying to write off the modern missionary movement. One certainly needs to be modest in assessing the achievements of the modern missionary movement but the fact that Mr. Fung is today able to talk of ‘subsequent national churches’ is in itself no mean indicator of what it achieved. These churches, unlike the early apostles, may not have turned long established cultures and religions upside down but the gospel has left its impress on them. And the churches are there today in the midst of these cultures and religions, no doubt with many infirmities but none of them are likely to let themselves be smothered by the cultures and religions around them. The churches in China have shown this. We share Mr. Fung’s search and hope for another way of evangelistic endeavour, and, personally, we would be content if this way proves at least as effective as the old method.

Concerning dialogue, Mr. Fung seems, on the whole, ‘willing to strike but afraid to wound’. Serious and committed Christians interested and involved in dialogue have, from the beginning, been alert to the fact that the most crucial question here is that of ‘the finality of Christ’. The evangelism desk of the WCC
does well to remind us of it, but it should not undervalue the concern of others too about it even though they seem not to speak 'the language of evangelism.'

It is surprising that Mr. Fung has little hope of help in the matter from a theological approach. And we think he is less than fair to his Asian colleagues who are trying to work this out in Asia. Or else, he does not understand them. Despite all the controversy generated, the studies, conferences and statements on Salvation Today were found to be essentially liberating by those who seek a holistic understanding and a holistic response to the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, unless Mr. Fung is using 'salvation focus' in its limited and traditional sense he should not imply that the attempt of 'a few theologians' in Asia 'to understand Christianity afresh with a creation focus rather than the salvation focus' is invalid. Nobody that we know is looking for a Christology the only virtue of which would be that it will have 'easier sailing in the Asian context'. But many Asian Christians are deeply troubled by a Christology that puts out of the pale the faiths of their neighbours which, as Mr. Fung himself admits, can bring about 'enrichment of our own (Christian) faith'. They are looking for a Christology that will do justice to the work of God in other faiths without taking anything away from the biblical teaching about the work of God in Jesus Christ. This 'monumental task' needs desperately to be attempted if the Church is not to cease being a movement and become a monument. If Mr. Fung's comments — whether about dialogue, or elsewhere about Third World theologians — give the impression of a certain distance from, if not distrust of, his colleagues in Asia, he would not be making his best contribution to this task.

We find ourselves agreeing with Mr. Fung when he says "What do you think of Christ?" will always remain a question and a challenge with us, but not merely in the way he seems to have in mind. The difficulties between evangelicals and ecumenicals, the debate about the 'spiritual gospel' and 'the social gospel', the gang up of Messrs Reader's Digest and Associates against the WCC, all stem from the inexpressibly sad fact that Christians cannot agree among themselves on the answer to this question. This is a theological question. The question, therefore, is even more important to the evangeliser than to the ones that need to be evange-

ised. On the answer of the evangeliser to this question will depend the nature and scope of the evangelism achieved.

This is well illustrated in the editorial in The Filipino Methodist. Most Filipinos we have met and all observers of Filipino affairs have no doubt at all that the Marcos regime is repressive, has scant respect for human rights and is grinding the face of the poor. The editorial also obviously thinks so, because, describing the reality of life that Christian workers face it says, "he hears cries of pain and hunger, he sees rampant injustice and inequality". And yet it is alarmed that Christian workers are active in struggling to change this situation. It finds such activity only 'purportedly in the pursuit of Christian ministry' and is willing to believe that behind it are "ideologies foreign to fundamental Christian convictions".

How does one understand this kind of solicitude for the purity of Christian ministry and conviction except by tracing it to The Filipino Methodist's answer to the question "What do you think of Jesus?" It is so very sad that it seems to respond to the question in accents almost indistinguishable from that of the Reader's Digest! It is entitled to have its reservations about particular actions and events, but it has decided to dissociate itself from the general clamour and thrust for democracy, freedom, justice, equality and human rights in the Philippines? In this matter, has it chosen to part company with the Roman Catholic Church, the majority church of the land, as its sons and daughters and hierarchy are paying a high price for establishing righteousness in the Philippines? Has it chosen to denounce its NCC whose staff have been harassed, arrested and imprisoned? Is it opting out of the World Methodist Council which has been vigorously refuting the calumny with which a section of the media has been trying to saddle the ecumenical movement?

The present brave witness of the Church in the Philippine society is an inspiration to the Churches in the rest of Asia. It looks as though the Philippine Central Conference of the United Methodist Church will have no share in it if the editorial is to be taken as, in fact, speaking for it. Indeed for the proponents of dialogue and evangelism, for champions of the poor and a new society — for all of us who bear the name of Christ, the central question remains to be "What do you think of Jesus Christ?". There is no better time to face up to it than Lent and Good Friday and Easter, especially in these troubled times.

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GRK
DIALOGUE AND EVANGELISM

... The other thought I like to share, it may only be some sort of thinking out loud instead of well-thought out thoughts, has to do with evangelism and dialogue with people of other living faiths. As an Asian, I believe I have long been aware of the minority status of the Christian churches among neighbours who possess different faiths. We need the ministry of dialogue for mutual understanding, for cooperation, yes, for our own survival, and yes, for the enrichment of our own faith. I have also put much hope in dialogue because it challenges much of the missionary practices of the churches.

As far as I am concerned, in terms of world evangelization, the modern missionary movement and the evangelistic endeavour of the subsequent national churches have not made a dent on countries and peoples which have long-established cultures and religions. India, Burma, Thailand, China, Japan spring to mind. Our way of doing the job obviously has not worked. So I eagerly look for another way. Although fully aware of the fact that dialogue does not speak the language of evangelism, I was, and still am, prepared to see it in an ally or even a teacher, indirectly, in the church's evangelism task. Now, I've been put on alert. Do we or do we not proclaim that Christ is the Only Way?

Arrogance, let me assure you, has nothing to do with it. There's absolutely nothing in Christianity today that we can be arrogant about. Similarly, for that matter, for Islam and Hinduism. Massacre, totalitarianism, the caste system, etc., they provide the most compelling reasons in the will for people not to believe. That is why, for us Christians, there's all the more reason not to point to ourselves but to Christ. And the only asset Christians have in pointing others towards Christ lies with the recognition and confession 1) of our failure to follow him and 2) of his love which compels us to continue on this journey. This, in all fairness, is somewhat of a negative asset, but herein lies our credibility with all those who are on a journey too.

Back to the question of the finality of Christ. Probably, there is no one ecumenical answer to it, perhaps because of the nature of the ecumenical movement, or perhaps because of the nature of the question. But I am glad the problem has been defined. How shall we approach the issue? I believe we could debate it head-on on a practitioner's level, that is, let practitioners of evangelism share their experiences and conceptualization of evangelism among people of other faiths, to see if proclaiming Christ as the Only Way works or not. That would give us a good start.

We would, of course, take a more theological approach. But I don't know if we can break new ground. Or we would have to go a long way back, and say, "The question is all wrong. Let's bring in a new formulation." I am aware for instance that a few theologians in Asia have been attempting to understand Christianity afresh with a creation focus rather than the salvation focus. Potentially, this has the promise of easier sailing for Christology in the Asian context. We may be able to steer away from having to deal with the question of the finality of Christ with regard to other offers of salvation. But, I am not sure. It is a monumental task... and I suspect "What do you think of Christ?" will always remain a question and a challenge with us, seeing it did in the Gospel...

My preferred approach to the whole concern of world mission and evangelism among people of other living faiths is, and I must be careful now and I ask of you not to misunderstand me, the approach of solidarity, of participation in people's struggle for justice and dignity, in short, of the Good News to the Poor variety. During my 14 years of industrial mission in Asia, my every encounter with the poor was an encounter with people of another living faith, except when they happen to be Marxist-inclined. In most cases, we got through to each other. This is not to suggest that all non-Christian religious believers are poor. On a world scale, the overwhelming majority of them are. Neither do I suggest that the faith elements of the poor are not important to them. They are, and extremely so. As a matter of fact, I wish those of us who work with the poor for justice would have a much better appreciation of the religious in people. My experience has been simply that credibility, trust, openness and respect can be more naturally achieved if we, Christians and others, work together on our felt needs, struggle together against forces which sin against us.

(Monthly Letter on Evangelism)

SPOTLIGHT ON THE MINISTER

The year 1982 closed out with what appears as a pall of gloom over the Church in the Philippines in general, and the religious workers, ministers, priests, nuns, and laymen, in particular. For several weeks before Christmas the major dailies banned the arrest and detention of priests who, according to the military have openly given support to enemies of the state, even allowed themselves and their pulpits to be used for propaganda purposes and/or actual provocations against the government. Such news gave rise to fears of repression of the Church in the Philippines by the military. The military was quick to deny this, and the Minister of Defence, Hon. Juan Ponce Enrile himself gave the assurance that the military was after only individual workers found to have direct involvement in subversive activities, not against the Church itself. Mr. Enrile is a gentleman known to stand on his word. Also, as head of the Defence Ministry, he is the person presumed to have knowledge of all matters concerning the security of the state. We can, therefore, accept his assurance.

As for the Church, this might be a good time to take a deeper look into its involvement in various activities purportedly in the pursuit of its Christian ministry. There may be truth to the claim that ideologies foreign to fundamental Christian convictions have crept into the Church, cloaked in the robe of charity and justice. It is now widely known also that certain ordained workers have embraced the tenets of communism, confusing them for the actual teachings of Jesus Christ. Seduced by Marxist or Leninist or Maoist ideology, these dedicated workers have fallen into the totalitarian temptation. It is a thin line that separates Christian doctrines and communist creed. Or so it seems.

One reason why Christian workers fall into the totalitarian temptation, we suspect, is their lack of knowledge of the different ideologies. Curricula of seminaries and Bible schools have inadequate, if at all, courses on such subjects as Marxism, revolutions, socialism, and the like. The worker gets only a passing acquaintance with the subject. Once in the field of his assignment, he picks up additional knowledge from seminars and orientations conducted by groups predisposed to these ideologies. Coupled with that he finds the reality of life...
NO WAY TO GO BUT ONWARDS!
Philippine Religious Resist Marcos Repression

MORE than 300 priests, nuns, church workers and sectoral representatives coming from various parts of the Philippines met at St. Joseph's College in Quezon City, December 4, to protest the escalating persecution of the churches by the Marcos regime.

In a statement released during the occasion, the Assembly declared: "Historical patterns point to two trends. When the church and church people are silent, or when they take the side of the ruling power, the State does not mind - and even supports her. But once the church and church people begin to take the side of the ruled and the oppressed, State repressions also begin." It added, however, that "the more the churches are persecuted, the more they become united and strong!"

"State repression and harassment will continue," the statement predicted. "We, however, will continue to denounce such attacks and pursue resolutely the aspirations of the Filipino people for genuine freedom and democracy. We will not bow to the powers of the modern Pharaoh; we will not be deceived by the rhetoric of today's Pilate; and we will not let the stomping march of their centurions silence us to fear. For we will not worship their god and never will we bow down to the 'golden statues' that they built!" (Dan. 3, 18).

The statement entitled NO WAY TO GO BUT ONWARDS! further declared: "Our involvement with the struggle of the Filipino masses demands sacrifices and many of our brothers and sisters have fallen and given up their lives in pursuit of justice and liberation. This reality, and the long history and worldwide scope of foreign exploitation and repression, gave us the task and challenge to commemorate nationalist Christian martyrs.

"Thus on Nov 20, 1982, more than 1,000 of us - priests, pastors, sisters, seminarians and church workers - came together... to commemorate the deaths of our brothers and sisters in the Third World who have given up their lives in defense of the poor, deprived and the oppressed. We remembered and drew inspiration from the lives of Archbishop Oscar Romero, Maryknollers Ita Ford and Maura Clark (El Salvador), Fr. Camilo Torres (Bolivia), the priests who have died in Nicaragua and Guatemala, our own brothers and sisters Fr. Zach Agatep, Bro. Alfredo Cesar, Fr. Jerry Aquino, Puri Pedro, Noli Resus, Alex Garaile, Herman Moleta, Bro. Carlos Tayag & many more.

The statement concluded: "The burning torch of the Filipino people's struggle for justice and liberation will continue to beckon us to advance the struggle even more! There is no way to go but onwards..." (CCHRPHILIPPINES UPDATE. No. 1, 1983)
THE CHURCH, THE POOR
AND THE KINGDOM

CHRISTIAN Faith does not separate us from the world but rather submerges us in it. The church is not an elite but rather a follower of that Jesus who lived, worked, struggled and died in the midst of the city, the "polis."

Christian faith and the actions of churches have always had socio-political repercussions. By act or by omission, by living with one or another social group, Christians have always influenced the socio-political configuration of the world in which they live. How can Christian faith best influence the socio-political world?

The world of the poor

Our Salvadoran world is not some abstract idea. It is a world in which the vast majority of men and women are poor and oppressed. That world of the poor provides the key to understanding the Christian faith, the performance of the church, and the political dimension of that faith and that church's actions. The poor tell us what our world is like and what service the church can render in the world.

We have returned to the world of the poor and have found it to be our rightful place. Far from distancing us from our faith, its harsh realities have moved us to incarnate ourselves in the world of the poor. In this world we have found the real faces of the poor.

There we found peasants without land or steady work, without water or electricity in their poor dwellings, without medical assistance when the women gave birth, and without schools when children begin to grow.

There we found workers with no labour rights, workers who were fired when they demanded their rights, workers at the mercy of the economy's cold calculations. There we found mothers and wives of the "disappeared" and political prisoners. There we met the people who live in hovels where misery exceeds the imagination.

This encounter with the poor has enabled us to recover the central truth of the gospel: The Word of God urges us to conversion. The church has good news to announce to the poor. Those who have heard the bad news in a secular context and have lived even worse realities, are now listening, through the church, to the word of Jesus: "The reign of God is near." "Happy are you poor, for the reign of God is yours." And then there is also good news to announce to the rich: "Be converted to the poor and share with them the goods of the kingdom."

It is a new phenomenon for the poor to view the church today as a source of hope and support in the struggle for liberation. The Word of God calls the poor majority to awareness of their responsibility to be conscientized, to organize in a country which legally prohibits this or which makes it impossible to happen. The Word also endorses, at times critically, the just cause of the poor and their rehabilitation.

The hope which we preach to the poor is intended to return to them their dignity and to animate them to be the authors of their own destiny. The church has not only turned to the poor, but has made the poor the privileged object of her mission.

Defence of the poor

The church has not only incarnated itself in the world of the poor and given them hope, but has also firmly committed itself to their defence. The poor of our country are oppressed and repressed daily by the economic and political structures.

The terrible words of the prophets of Israel are still applicable in our country. Some people still sell the just person for money, the poor person for a pair of sandals: others lay up violence and plunder in the palaces; some crush the poor; they promote a reign of violence as they lounge in their ivory beds; they amass field after field until they end up owning the whole country.

These texts from the prophets Amos and Isaiah are not far-off voices of centuries ago; they are not just texts that we reverently read in our liturgies. They are daily realities whose cruelty and intensity we live on a daily basis...

In this situation of conflict and antagonism, in which the few have economic and political control, the church has put itself on the side of the poor and has assumed their defence.

This defence of the poor in so conflictive a world has occasioned a new reality in the recent history of our church: persecution. It is not just any priest or just any institution which has been persecuted, but that part of the church which is on the side of the poor and has come out in their defence.

Political dimension of faith

In El Salvador, the political dimension of the faith is the response of the church to the exigencies of the real sociopolitical world in which the church lives. These demands are fundamental for the faith and the church cannot ignore them. But the church does not possess her own political mechanism nor does the church seek political leadership.

A true option for the poor means that the church incarnates itself in the world of the poor, proclaims good news, gives hope, inspires a liberating praxis, defends the cause of the poor and participates in their destiny. This option for the poor is at the root of the political dimension of the faith and is its most fundamental characteristic.

We denounce again the existence of sinful structures in our country. These structures produce the fruits of sin: the death of Salvadorans — the rapid death of repression or the slow death (but no less real) of structural oppression.

For that reason, we have denounced the idolatry that exists in our country. Wealth is made a god, private property is absolutized by the capitalistic system, national security is made the highest good by the political powers who institutionalize the insecurity of the individual.

A preferential incarnation

We know better what incarnation means, that it signifies that Jesus took

(Next Page)
A Christian Dissident Discusses Korea's Future

THE Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan, a long-time advocate of broader human rights in South Korea, has spent the better part of the past seven years in prison.

First jailed under the late President Park Chung Hee's administration, Mr. Moon was among 48 political prisoners freed in December. Born in Manchuria, the 64-year-old Mr. Moon is, like his father before him, a Presbyterian minister. He said he decided to become a minister in 1935, when, as a high school student in Pyongyang, he was arrested for demonstrating against the Japanese. He was protesting the occupiers' practice of forcing Christians to worship at Shinto shrines.

Mr. Moon has long been a confidant of Kim Dae-Jung. Since his release, Mr. Moon has been speaking at prayer meetings organized by church groups. Church sources said government security agents have pressured organizers to keep Mr. Moon off the podium, with limited success.

Mr. Moon recently talked with James R. Schiffman, The Asian Wall Street Journal's Seoul correspondent. Following are excerpts from the interview:

S: What are the biggest problems Korea faces today?

M: Peace and unification. I'm not going to stop talking about peace. I do not want to see nuclear war break out in Korea. Never. A unified, neutral Korea would be good for the four big powers (the U.S., the Soviet Union, China and Japan). A divided Korea would explode peace, which would even lead to the destruction of the world. Geopolitically, Korea is in the worst place in the world because the big four powers face each other. There's no place like that in the world.

S: Could you trace your involvement in politics?

M: As a citizen I just wanted to say what I felt about the political and economic situation in Korea. The statement was issued on March 1, 1976, which was drafted by me, said that Korea should be democratized, that the economy should move to egalitarian principles to pave the way for Korean unification. For that I lived almost five years in prison.

When I was released in 1978, I was elected vice president of the Human Rights Association of Korea. Then I felt that democratization of Korea was essential for human rights. So it had a more political sound. In 1980, when I was released the second time, I had to tell people that a new constitution has to be democratic.

For that I had to live two years and 18 months of prison life. Now I realize that unless peace comes to Korea, there's no democracy, no human rights. That means peaceful unification of Korea. For that I would ask other nations to help us. We cannot solve it on our own.

S: How do you view the human rights situation here now?

M: In that area, I'm still in the process of study. It seems to me that the area of freedom of activity is much more restricted than before.

S: Could you be specific?

M: All the articles in the emergency decrees during the Park regime are in the standing law now. Freedom of the press is much more restricted than before. I don't have to elaborate on that. Labour law is much more strict.

(From Previous Page)

THE CHURCH, THE POOR... human flesh and put himself in solidarity with his brothers and sisters in suffering, in tears and laments, in the giving of himself. From the world of the poor the church will be able to reach all; it will be able to serve the powerful through a pastoral activity that calls them to conversion. But the reverse will not work, as has been proven so many times.

The world of the poor teaches us that the magnanimity of Christian love must respond to the demand of justice for the majorities and not flee from the honest struggle. The world of the poor teaches us that liberation will occur not only when the poor become recipients of government or church benefits but when they themselves become authors and protagonists of their struggle and their liberation, thus unmasking the ultimate root of false paternalisms — including ecclesial.

Faith in the God of life is what explains the depth of the Christian mystery. To give life to the poor, one must give from one's own life. This is what is happening every day in our country. Many Salvadors and many Christians are willing to give up their lives that there may be life for the poor. That is following Jesus and showing faith in him.

The world of the poor provides the ultimate criterion for the church's action. The church as church will support a particular political project only to the extent to which it benefits the poor.

We believe that this is the way to maintain the identity and the very transcendence of the church. We must insert ourselves in the real sociopolitical process of our people, judge it from the world of the poor, and inspire all the liberation movements that lead to justice for the majorities. We believe that this is the way to maintain the transcendence and identity of the church because in this way we maintain faith in God.

(Key Page Col. 3)
URGENT ACTION

Tokyo, March 8, 1973

South Korean Supreme Court today at 13:00 rejected appeals by the 16 defendants in Pusan Arson Trial, confirming appellate court sentences, including death sentences for two: Kim Hyon-Jang and Moon Bu-Shik. We urge immediate cables or calls to Korean government or local Embassy to spare these two lives. It is feared death sentences might be carried out quickly, as in some previous cases.

Also have learned that Rev. Koh Young-Keun, Jesus Presbyterian Minister, has been detained for sermon at prayer meeting Feb 24, in which he prayed for the lives of these two defendants.

Tsutomu Shoji, NCCJ General Secy.

Prisoners of Conscience in China

FATHER Vincent Zhu Hong-sheng (67), S.J., imprisoned in Shanghai for the last 15 months, may soon be brought to trial, according to an "Urgent Action" letter released by Amnesty International (AI) on January 28.

He was arrested in Shanghai in November 1981 on charges ranging from spying for the Vatican to having too much contact with foreigners. Arrested with him were other priests and lay people.

Since trials of other prisoners of conscience have been held in closed court, AI is concerned that Father Zhu may not receive a fair trial with full rights of defence and may continue to be held in prison for the non-violent expression of his religious beliefs.

AI also draws attention to the case of Father Stanislaus Shen Bai shun, now almost 80 years old, who was also arrested in Shanghai in 1981. He had been detained for 20 years from the 1950s and again briefly in 1980. He is now reportedly in the prison hospital in Shanghai and AI has expressed concern over his health.

AI is working to release 14 Catholic priests and lay people, many aged, who have been detained for long period for the expression of their religious beliefs in the People's Republic of China. One of them, Bishop Gong Pinmei, S. J., of Shanghai, now aged 82, has been detained since 1955. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1960.

AI has adopted Bishop Gong, Father Zhu and Father Shen as "prisoners of conscience," and is seeking support for the release of these and all prisoners of conscience in China.

(UCAN/Sunday Examiner)
SQUATTERS: People Hopeful of a Future

THE longest war in Asia is between governments and the millions of poor rural immigrants who live in the slums of its cities.

This war has dragged on since shortly after World War II, and there is no end in sight. Despite setbacks, such as the emergency in India when Mrs. Gandhi removed hundreds of thousands of families from the cities, the squatters are winning. In Manila there are now two million squatters, more than ever, about one-third of the population. Bangkok's population is about 20 percent squatters, Bombay's close to 40 percent. Figures are similar for the other major cities of South and Southeast Asia. In Asia there are approximately 150 million urban squatters, people living illegally on government or private land. They drift to the big cities in search of work. They cannot afford even the cheapest available housing and build their shacks wherever they can, as near to their jobs as possible.

Squatter areas range in size from pockets of 25 to 30 families sandwiched between office buildings or stuck under a bridge to Dharavi in Bombay that is home to 400,000 people. Big or small, they are ugly, congested and unhealthy.

Squatters are hopeful people

What are the squatters like? I realized over the years they are exactly the same as the immigrants who went to the United States or Australia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Like those immigrants, the squatters leave a life that has no future and take risks to find a new one. It is not much, judged by normal standards, but it promises a better future which they are willing to work for. They will put up with intolerable living conditions while they must, and they are willing to organize and struggle for what they consider their rights. There won't be riots in Tondo or Bombay or Bangkok. Squatters are hopeful people. In this regard squatter areas are different from the black slums of the United States, where for many people hope is gone. Underground groups have almost no success in organizing slum people in Asia. In a way the government bureaucrats are right: Squatter colonies and a modern city are incompatible. Their solution is wrong. If instead of driving out squatters, they upgraded slums and relocated people, where necessary near their jobs, as the United Nations urges, the cities would receive the tremendous benefit of having one-third to one-half of their people, who are already highly motivated, healthy, vigorous and more prepared to build a better city. They might be on their way to becoming modern cities.

To do this is within the means of Third World governments. To upgrade or resettle all the squatters in Manila, for example, would cost less than the elevated transit system that is now being built in the city. There are other solutions to mass transportation problems.

I do not think anyone can draw the scenario if governments do not respond positively. The needless suffering of millions will continue. Their relative and absolute numbers will grow. Some experts say Calcutta, for example, will grow to 25 million people, over half of whom will be squatters. The efficiency and vigor of the cities will diminish. The tragic results will not come dramatically, but slowly and in a hundred different ways, as happens in the rural areas when the forests are destroyed or in the seas when the waters are polluted. How it will end no one knows.

(America/Info on Human Development)
Natural Resources For Human Needs

THE conservation of nature has sometimes been called a concern of the rich. Yet it is the developing world's rural poor — those who must extract life's essentials directly from the soils, forests, wildlife, and waters about them — who suffer most from natural-resource depletion today. The precarious ability of huge numbers of people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to obtain food, cooking fuel, pure water, traditional medicines, building materials, and other necessities, in large measure, depends on the quality of their environment.

Losing ground to poverty

Hundreds of millions of the world's poorest people are locked into a tragic relationship with their surroundings. In their struggle to meet current survival needs, they are forced to damage the very resources on which the future improvement of their lives depends. Because of the combined effects of economic inequality, rapid population growth, and lack of technological advancement, people are today depleting the earth's biological "capital." They are clearing forests that are essential for both ecological and economic purposes, plowing soils that should be left idle, and generally subjecting the land to destructive overuse. If present trends are allowed to continue, the rural poor will, over time, need to toil even more to meet their essential needs — and their societies will have to invest more to gain less from the land. Thus the next generation's chances for a better life erode away.

Just as stable economic growth requires wise management of natural resources, resource protection requires improvements in the lives of the poor. The current negative trends result in part from the lack of economic opportunity facing great numbers of people in the Third World. In Venezuela, for example, peasants with no access to farmland or income-generating work see few alternatives to illegally clearing sites in nature preserves in order to grow food; for hungry families, long-term ecological losses have little meaning. In semi-arid Upper Volta, where tribal lands are becoming overcrowded, farmers who lack assistance to develop improved cropping systems must plant the same plot year after year until the soil turns to useless sand. Farmers in the hills of Pakistan clear steep slopes to grow food though they know the topsoil will soon wash away; the disruptive impact on river flows downstream is a worry they cannot afford.

Thus in many parts of the world today the poor are at once the unwilling perpetrators and the prime victims of resource degradation. Improved policies of land management are certainly needed — and they are being pursued in many countries. But the root causes of the problem extend beyond the scope of "environmental" policies alone and are beyond the control of the victims. National and global development patterns leave hundreds of millions of people with no chance to earn a living in a sustainable manner. The economic policies of many developing countries have long favoured city over countryside, industry over agriculture, and, within the agricultural sector, large farms and plantations over peasant subsistence farms. One ironic result is increased urban blight as jobless migrants from rural areas crowd into urban shantytowns. Moreover, many governments have made little headway against the rapid population growth that so often contributes to resource degradation. They have not made family planning services available to all and have not met the minimal health needs of the poor — measures that must precede any sharp drop in birth rates.

While the mismanagement of soils and forests is by no means confined to poor countries, the human consequences are most severe where poverty and crowding allow so little margin for error.

Although the worst effects are local, some forms of resource degradation are so widespread that they add up to matters of global concern. Cropland degradation anywhere must ultimately raise the cost of producing food for the global marketplace. Rising wood prices have been a driving force of global inflation. The accelerated extinction of tropical plant and animal species will be costly to medicine, industry, and agriculture, because such species are an important source of new drugs, industrial products, and genetic material important for breeding improved plant varieties. More broadly, by undermining local prospects for economic growth and political stability, the degeneration of the environment in developing countries may threaten the long-term security and prosperity of all nations.

To some degree, resource degradation in developing countries has international causes as well as consequences. The industrialized countries, through purchases linked to patterns of excessive consumption and through the practices of some multinational corporations, affect resource exploitation patterns in the poorer countries. Once-rich African and Southeast Asian forests have been grossly depleted to supply wood to Europe and Japan. Central American forests are being imprudently cleared into pastures to supply beef to North America. The extent of the poverty that leads to unsound land use is also worsened by some international investment and trade practices, as well as by inadequate flows and terms of official and commercial financing.

(Erik Eckholm in CARE Briefs)
Tax recycled for the needy

NINETY New Zealanders who believe justice is more important than money have pledged the proceeds from last October's tax cut to prove the point.

They are in two groups which share the belief that the tax adjustments benefit the well-to-do. One group, the Church in Community Coalition, based in Auckland but active on a national basis, has launched a programme to recycle some of the extra income from the tax cuts to help people trying to house themselves and find useful work. (See CCAN Oct. 82) spokesman for this group, the Very Rev Dr Alan Brash, said he believed a voluntary trade-in of tax had never happened before. Consequently, in launching its campaign the coalition had not set budgets and did not have specific targets.

"The results have been very encouraging," he said. "In the first five weeks we had more than $3000 in cash, with nearly $500 a week pledged by 67 people through direct credits at least for the duration of the wage-price freeze."

The coalition aimed to help people who had no help from elsewhere, and dealt directly with individuals as much as possible, in preference to organisations. It was not seeking to build up long-term responsibilities, but was trying to provide what could best be described as bridging finance.

There had been an immediate grant of $200 to a Christchurch group of unemployed youths seeking employment, a grant of $100 a month for six months to pay overheads for a self-financing wood-turning project, and $100 a month for six months to an Auckland housing trust. Individual rent subsidies were also being paid.

Dr Brash said the scheme had not been pushed in the period immediately before Christmas, so there would be no conflict with the NCC Christmas appeal, but activity would be stepped up again in February.

Political aims

The coalition's working group is endorsed and sponsored by the National Catholic Commission for Evangelisation, Justice and Development, the National Council of Churches' Church and Society Commission, and the Ecumenical Secretariat for Development.

In Wellington a group which has developed within the Inner City Ministry is engaged in similar activity, but with strong political motivation.

"It is now wider than the ICM, and 23 people are contributing to a fund for monthly distribution," said the Rev Helen Walch.

"We believe the tax changes benefit the affluent, and not the lower-paid people. What we can do with funds raised from the tax cuts is just a drop in the bucket. The situation has to change through decisions made in Parliament."

Therefore, this group was using the money for welfare purposes, but was also using it as a means of showing Parliament that there are affluent people who want justice rather than more money.

The first monthly contribution had been made to the Wellington Unemployed Workers Union and further distributions would be made in conjunction with activities in Parliament grounds to direct the attention of Parliamentarians and the public towards the political decisions required to alleviate the situation.

CHURCH UNION MOVEMENT REVIVED

MORE than a decade after legal action was taken to stop formation of a (United) Church of Sri Lanka, the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, the United (Church of South India, Jaffna diocese) units involved have begun to pass resolutions meant to overcome the legal objections.

By law, the Sri Lanka assembly must approve a bill to authorize the union. Some objectors in some of the denominations say union would violate their religious freedom and deprive them of various property rights.

So far, the Methodist conference, and one Anglican diocesan council (Kurunagala) have approved the proposed resolution. The CSI diocesan council is a strong union supporter. The Baptist and Presbyterian governing bodies have deferred a vote pending a fresh study and assessment of the 1963 union plan, which is said to be somewhat unfamiliar to younger ministers and members. The other Anglican diocese (Colombo) has appointed a committee to report on the situation to its council.

About two-thirds of the 15 million Sri Lankans are Buddhists, about one-sixth Hindus. Most of the 1.2 million or so Christians are Roman Catholics.

Ten Ecological Commandments

AN international group of young Jews and Christians recently came together to study the Creation story in the first chapter of the Bible, reflecting on "Human Responsibility for the Creation". Examining what guidance they could find in their respective traditions to come to grips with the threats to natural life and the natural resources posed by the rapid developments of modern technology, they formulated "Ten Ecological Commandments":

1. I am the Lord your God who has created heavens and earth. Know that you are my partner in creation. Therefore, take care of air, water, earth, plants, and animals, as if they were your brothers and sisters.
2. Know that in giving you life I have given you responsibility, freedom and limited resources.
3. Steal not from the future; honour your children by giving them a chance at longevity.
4. Implant in your children a love of nature.
5. Remember that humanity can use technology, but cannot recreate life that has been destroyed.
6. Set up pressure groups within your community to prevent impending catastrophes.
7. Throw out all arms which cause irreversible destruction to the foundations of life.
8. Be self-disciplined in the small details of your life.
9. Set aside time in your weekly day of rest to be with the world rather than to use the world.
10. Remember that you are not the owner of the land, merely its guardian.

(Current Dialogue)
"An inaccurate view of Christian love and justice at work"

"LOVE THINE ENEMIES."—U.S. BISHOPS ON NUCLEAR ARMS

COMMUNIST INSPIRED!

REPRESENTATIVES of the (US) National Council of Churches and its member denominations have protested an article in January 83 Reader's Digest about the NCC. In a later development, they have also criticized a CBS television network segment touching aspects of the work of the NCC, the World Council of Churches, and various US denominations.

Leaders of 23 of the NCC's 32 member denominations (other leaders could reportedly not be contacted in time) say in a letter to the magazine's editor-in-chief that they are "outraged by the distortions, misrepresentations, misleading information, and half-truths" in the article Do You Know Where Your Church Offerings Go? The Digest report says the NCC spends money on left-wing, political activities. A similar complaint was sent by NCC General Secretary Claire Randall. "Since you had been given correct information in advance", she writes, "I must assume that Reader's Digest deliberately published a distorted account."

The denominational leaders also criticize the Institute on Religion and Democracy mentioned in the Digest piece as a source of further information on the changing NCC. They call IRD a "small organization of self-selected individuals" seeking to "alienate" members of various denominations and "turn them away from the pursuit of racial and social justice."

The CBS segment suggests some money from US contributors is used by the national denominations, the NCC, and the WCC to support groups, causes, and projects which are Marxist and/or violent. The segment began by focusing on a Methodist congregation in Loganport, Indiana, opposed to denominational involvement in the WCC.

Responding to the 23 January TV report, NCC President James Armstrong, a Methodist bishop, called it "irresponsible and selective...a sensational and biased editorial rather than responsible and accurate journalism." Said Armstrong, "The church does not exist to reflect the values of either Leningrad or Loganport, but the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Randall spoke of a seeming pattern in the CBS series at issue of "negative and critical pieces about organized religion...which results in creating mistrust and doubt...I am distressed to see a news organization take such a secular, politicized, and inaccurate view of Christian love and justice at work."

(RPS)

Rural Development in the CNI

THE two-year Development Orientation Programme (1980-82) of the Church of North India (CNI) ended in December 1982. During this period seminars, conferences, consultations and workshops have been held at the Synod, diocesan (including three regional camps) and pastorate level for training, motivation and orientation of social service and development workers, diocesan and church leaders, pastorate and village level organisers. As a result of it, five dioceses have so far taken up certain small plans for economic development for the weaker sections of the community in the rural areas.

Plans have now been drawn up for a 3-year (1983-85) Rural Development Programme which envisages involvement of nine more dioceses of the Church thus bringing in a total of 14 dioceses (out of 23) within the programme.

So far 14 people are available for assistance in planning programmes in the dioceses. Services of specialists/consultants in the field of agriculture, health, family planning and social welfare are also available.

The Church of North India (over 400,000 members) is a united church.

(Reformed Press Service)

Asia Sunday
May 15, 1983

Theme:
Jesus Christ,
The Life of the World

FOR resources for worship (folders) and posters please contact:

— Your NCC.

— Hqs of CCA members churches.

— Christian Conference of Asia,
480 Lorong 2,
Singapore 1231.
Cable: Chrisconas;
Telex: RS 33733
Tel: 2553671/2552889
In Quest of
Dialogue for Peace in Indochina

A CCA delegation recently spent two weeks in Vietnam and Kampuchea at the invitation of the Peace Committees of the two countries. The delegation consisted of Soritua Nababan (Indonesia), Bishop Roman Tiple & Emilio Capulong (Philippines) Anwar Ujager (Pakistan), Jim Greenaway (New Zealand), Jintaro Ueda & Yap Kim Hao (CCA Staff). Between Feb 18 and March 3, 1983 they not only met with the host Peace Committees, officials and Church leaders, but also attended as observers the International Forum on South East Asia which met at Phnom Penh, February 22-27, 1983.

Vietpeace

In Hanoi the delegation had discussions with Vietnam Committee for the Defence of World Peace. They were represented by Mr. Tran Hoai Nam & Pham Huy Thong of the Presidium and Do Xuan Oanh and Nguyen Trung Hue of the Secretariat. They reaffirmed their appreciation of the cordial relationships between Vietpeace and CCA since November 1975. They reported that in mid-1982, Vietnam had a nation-wide campaign for peace and disarmament in which fifteen million signatures were collected. They stressed the need to promote dialogue between ASEAN and Indochinese countries in order to secure peace and stability in the South East Asia region.

In a later staff discussion between Vietpeace and CCA, the call was for closer relationships and co-operation between CCA and the Peace Committees in Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos. CCA was seen to have a more important role to play in people-to-people programmes rather than in channelling material assistance only. It was asserted that the small countries in Southeast Asia are more likely to understand the Indochinese countries because they share common experiences and common struggles, as well as a common destiny in this part of the world.

Political Issues

Mr. Ha Van Lau, Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam and Mr. Hun Sen, Foreign Minister of Kampuchea received the CCA delegation. The question of Kampuchea and the Non-Aligned Summit/Conference in New Delhi featured in these meetings. It was clear that efforts are being mobilized to work for a political solution to the Kampuchean issue. Peaceful co-existence, independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity were the principles which were affirmed.

The Coalition government was seen as a mask for the Pol Pot forces. They were strongly opposed to the attempts to invite Norodom Sihanouk to the Non-Aligned Meeting in New Delhi, and were in favour of keeping the Kampuchean seat vacant. Theirs was a strong and clear call for dialogue and negotiations to resolve the Kampuchean issue.
Christian Movement

On Sunday, the delegation joined the Tin Lanh Evangelical Church in Hanoi for a worship service and followed this up with discussions with Pastor Bui Hoanh Thu and Moderator Hoang Kim Phuc. The delegation also met Deputy Commissioner for Religion, Pham Quang Hieu, and discussed the religious situation in Vietnam.

The Church in Hanoi is in the first phase of a rebuilding programme supported by WCC/CICARWS. The estimated cost of the development in the Hanoi Church alone is US$660,000. The two other church rebuilding projects are at Hai Phong and Nam Dong Province, and are to cost US$710,000.

One of the perplexing problems facing the Protestant Church in Vietnam is that they have not been able to re-unite the churches in the north and the south. There are ideological differences and personality conflicts. The last official visit of church leaders from the north to the south was in 1980. It was mentioned that some of the church leaders in the south have proposed that the Fatherland Front and the State should help in the unification of the Churches.

The representatives of the Commission on Religion reported that the Roman Catholic National Conference of Bishops was held in 1981 and a second meeting is scheduled for May 1983. The Buddhist Church was likewise re-united in 1982.

In response to a direct inquiry, Mr Hieu replied that Bishop Nguyen van Thuan is now located in the Nha Trang diocese. As far as the Venerable Thich Huyen Quang and Venerable Thich Quang Dodof the Unified Buddhist Church are concerned they have been sent back to the pagodas in their native villages. These leaders were allegedly against the merger of the Buddhist Churches. (See CCAN, Feb 82, p. 15)

International Forum at Phnom Penh

The invitation to the CCA delegation to observe at the International Forum on South East Asia was extended by the Kampuchean Peace Committee.

About forty countries were represented at the Forum. Most of them were related to the Peace Committees in their countries. The Forum was presided over by Mr. Romesh Chandra of the World Peace Council.

The Foreign Minister of Kampuchea, Mr Hun Sen, gave the keynote address and representatives from different countries made their presentations on the question of peace in South East Asia, the Kampuchean issue, peace and disarmament. As expected, a particular political line was reflected in many of the speeches and support was given to the Heng Samrin government and the presence of the Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea.

However, the communique of the conference avoided the usual political jargon and only mentioned "reactionary and imperialistic forces", without identifying specifically, as in the past, the United States and its allies and Chinese hegemony. The tone was conciliatory and conducive to a dialogue for peace.

The Forum was a vivid and significant expression of the present mood for dialogue. The peoples of various countries have been urgently demanding that dialogue be used to promote mutual understanding and as a major means to settle problems in international relations.

"The Phnom Penh Forum on Peace in South East Asia feels that the positive and constructive discussions in this Forum can certainly make a noteworthy contribution to the common cause of the progressive people in Asia, and over the world, who are struggling strongly for the defence of peace and life, but against nuclear wars, and to embark upon dialogue for promoting mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation."

Visits

The participants of the Forum visited Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crime. This was the prison used by the Pol Pot government to imprison, torture, and kill those who did not support them. Torture tools, narrow prison cells, and photographs of victims were exhibited. At Choeung Ek Village, the site of some mass graves, a collection of hundreds of human skulls was on display.

A Special Seminar describing the suffering of the intellectuals, medical personnel, ethnic minorities, teachers, technicians, and artists during the Pol Pot regime was also held.

The CCA delegation was received by the Kampuchean Foreign Minister, Mr Hun Sen, who expressed appreciation for the relationships between CCA and the Kampuchean people. He urged CCA to continue to relate to Kampuchea in order to understand the situation and to work for peace and stability in the region.

Conclusion

This visit has been important in clarifying the relationship between CCA and Vietpeace. It gave indications of the kind of programme that we need to develop for mutual understanding and friendship. CCA should provide much more than just material assistance, and seek to relate to people at different levels. It is hoped that mutual visits can be arranged. Steps are being taken to have representatives of Vietpeace visit some countries in South East Asia.

Our presence at the Forum and the meeting with the Foreign Minister of Kampuchea affirms our earlier relationships with the Kampuchean people. Our new contacts with the Kampuchean Peace Committee are welcome. This visit should help the CCA to define more clearly its programme and policy in the Indochinese countries.

YKH
AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES BRING CHURCH RESPONSE

BUSHFIRES that blazed a trail of destruction across southern Australia in February left scores of dead, destroyed thousands of homes, and caused damage estimated at A$400 million. They came in the wake of one of Australia’s worst droughts this century.

The fires in the states of Victoria and South Australia burned out upwards of 10,000 square kilometers of farm and bushland. Several villages in Victoria were completely destroyed.

Many church buildings in both states were ruined. In the hills behind the South Australian capital, Adelaide, the Anglican Society of the Sacred Mission theological college was gutted. The brothers in the college huddled in a cellar as the fire passed over them, destroying the college and a 40,000-volume theological library. A Church Missionary Society conference centre near Melbourne was also destroyed.

The Australian church has been quick to respond. Anglican Primate John Grindrod launched a national appeal and called for a Sunday of "mourning and prayer for those suffering," 20 February.

"We pray for their care and for mercy on us all. May we at this time draw close to those who suffer everywhere. We pray humbly for the blessing of drought-breaking rain," he said.

Uniting Church President Rollie Busch also launched a national bushfire appeal. In a letter to all clergy, he wrote, "All of us are stunned by the tragedy that has struck people in Victoria and South Australia. This tragedy challenges us again to stand alongside those who are suffering."

In Victoria, the Churches' Steering Committee on Disasters has swung into operation. The Salvation Army has field teams meeting emergency needs. The Seventh-day Adventists are co-ordinating accommodation.

Major task falling on the churches is pastoral care to those who have lost family members, friends, or their homes.

Ten Plus One Movement

THE end of 1982 marked the decision to set up the Ten Plus One research centre on the 4th floor of the General Assembly office of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. The theme of 'Dedication' for the Ten Plus One Movement during the past year has resulted in a variety of activities for the Churches. These included a visit by 23 members of the PCT to Los Angeles for a few weeks to study Church growth, the publishing of Dedication Year Guide Book, a special magazine and the holding of study seminars and retreats for group leaders from local churches. It is reported that church growth is steadily taking place. The theme of the Ten Plus One Movement for 1983 is 'Witness', and a meeting is being planned for the end of June to evaluate the progress made so far in the Movement.

(CWM Newsshare)

Trinity College’s Extra Mural Work

IN his first Report as Principal of Trinity Theological College, Singapore, Dr Choong Chee Pang describes the growing extra mural work which the College is now being called upon to do. One area is in the field of religious education when, at the beginning of last year, the College was called upon by the Ministry of Education of Singapore and the National Council of Churches to help train RE teachers for secondary schools. 51 teachers from Church-sponsored schools completed their training in May, and this was followed by a similar course for 106 teachers from Government-sponsored schools. The College has continued to respond to requests from local churches and individual Christians for part-time and evening training courses. The most recent request came from a group of young and dedicated graduates of the National University of Singapore.

(CWM Newsshare)

WCC team in Bangladesh

IN January a meeting was organised by the National Council of Churches, Bangladesh in co-operation with the Catholic Church. It was a whole day's programme in which speakers from the Muslim and the Buddhist communities also took part. The meeting was rounded off by a joint ecumenical Service in the Ramna Cathedral. The joint ecumenical service was led by the Archbishop Michael Rozario, Rev. R. N. Baroi, Rt. Rev. B. D. Mondal, Dr. Michael Kinnaman of the World Council of Churches and others from the local Churches. Intercessions for peace and justice both for home and abroad were offered.

The special guests at the meeting were members of the Pre-Assembly visitation team of the WCC. The addresses and the discussions during the day helped them understand the situation of Christians in Bangladesh and to get to know what they think and plan to do about the mission of the Church in their country. For the local Christians it was an encouragement to hear from the visitors about the experience of Churches in other countries like Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

(CCAN)

'Tell-a-nun' outstrips Marcos

IN the current Catholic Church-Philippine government confrontation over priests accused of subversion, the church seems at a disadvantage because Marcos controls most of the public media.

But the church offsets this advantage with its "secret weapon": the nuns of major congregations, with houses all over the country.

When a government news release damaging to the church is issued, the press often displays it with blaring headlines. When the church responds, its comments are often buried in inside pages or are ignored.

That is when the nuns go to work. They reprint the church's statement and fan out through Manila to distribute it — outside church doors and movie houses, in restaurants and supermarkets.

Cardinal Sin says with admiration that the three fastest means of communication are telephone, telegram and "tell-a-nun."

(Zealandia)
A historic translation

THE first complete ecumenical translation of the Bible in Sinhala was marked by a colourful service of thanksgiving and dedication at Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo earlier this year. Celestine Fernando, former Bible Society general secretary in Sri Lanka described it as a "great and historic day for the Christian community in Sri Lanka, and for the nation." Among church leaders present for the festive gathering were representatives of the mostly Buddhist country's Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists. The day included a "colourful biblical ballet in oriental style, giving episodes from the creation story, the lives of Moses and Jesus and the apostles, and of Pentecost."

New Ecumenical Move

REPRESENTATIVES of Malaysia's Catholic bishops and the country's nine-denomination Council of Churches have met officially for the first time to discuss ways to foster Christian unity. They resolved to work to establish an "umbrella body" to include representatives of all the country's Christians, who are about five percent of the mostly Muslim population.

Poems Banned

JUST six months after the South Korean Ministry of Culture and Information prohibited the sale of KIM Chi-ha's collected poetry—seizing and shredding 6,000 copies lest they be circulated without its permission—the Ministry has once again decided what the South Korean people will and will not be allowed to read. On December 10, 1982, the "Creation and Critique" publishing company once again submitted a work by the noted poet for the Ministry's mandatory two-week pre-publication inspection. At the last minute, the company and poet were informed that the epic novel "NAM" ("South") would not be allowed to be sold.

Medicines for Lebanon

A consignment of drugs and medicines worth $10,000 from the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories in Melbourne was airfreighted to Lebanon on February 11 at the request of Australian Council of Churches. This included antibiotics, antihypertensives, antiabetic and antituberculosis drugs as well as burn ointments. QANTAS airways provided free transport to Athens where the consignment will be transshipped by Middle East Airlines to Beirut.

In August last year, the ACC sent a 10 member volunteer medical team to Lebanon for a three month period of service with the Middle East Council of Churches. ACC assistance to the Palestinian and Lebanese people injured in the June Israeli invasion of Lebanon now totals $98,000.

Religious Law for Taiwan?

Officials of the Ministry of the Interior indicated during a seminar, sponsored by "United Magazine," a monthly, last September, that legislation concerning a religious law in Taiwan seemed inevitable, in part, an effort by the authorities to control civic activities, including religious ones. So far, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan have opposed such legislation, declaring that such legislation is neither necessary nor constitutional.

LWS Tops

ALN reports "The work of Lutheran World Service has been developed and expanded to a point where it is now the world's largest non-governmental service agency, with an annual budget of about US$38 million, geared to act on behalf of member churches in order to give help, to restore, to heal, to rebuild, to rehabilitate, to train people to help themselves, wherever the need presents itself."

Military Toys

Church people in the GDR (East Germany) have begun collecting signatures on a petition urging a ban on the sale of all military toys, which they say condition children to accept war. The action by a group in Berlin was begun during 10 days of concentration on peace issues sponsored by the country's Federation of Evangelical (Lutheran and United) Churches.

Asian Catholic Man of the Year

The 1982 Asian Catholic Man of the Year was the late Bishop Leo Nanayakkara of Sri Lanka, according to the Asian Bishops' Office for Human Development.

Bishop Leo, who died in May last year, was very active in the areas the Asian Church has picked as its priorities: social action for the poor, interreligious dialogue and work for women. He was a staunch supporter of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

The Fate of the Earth, Jonathan Schell

One reviewer called it "the new Bible of our time, the white paper of our age." According to another "There have been books that have changed our lives: this one may save our lives — provided that it is read now and its warming headed". The following tells a little more about the contents of this important book.

Schell takes a detailed and scholarly look at the "nuclear predicament" and reaches some conclusions which should encourage the Church's "peacemakers". He begins by painting a vivid picture of the frailty of the superpowers' balance of terror, and postulates that a protracted atomic war would reduce the earth to a "Republic of Insects and Grass". He then suggests that most people refuse to contemplate the enormity of what he terms the "Second Death" — extinction not of one life, which is natural and inevitable, but obliteration of all humanity. This second section is highly contemplative and, really, the book's strength. "While things in the life of mankind have worth, we must never raise that worth above the life of mankind".

Finally, Schell reminds us that there is a choice, an alternative to annihilation and to the false security which protagonist claim for a policy of deterrence. He points out that wars are waged for reasons of national sovereignty — a political concept. Therefore, no military solution such as nuclear disarmament can succeed unless there is a political solution. The solution will indeed be revolutionary, for national sovereignty is perhaps man's most vehemently exploited political concept.

While nationalism flourishes, the doomsday clock ticks on. Obviously, no "nation", or what the concept contains, can be expected to threaten its own existence. So mankind's fate may well depend upon the determination of international bodies.

Today, only the United Nations Organisation and the Church can with any confidence lay claim to being universal institutions. Both have their detractors, and neither are acceptable to all governments equally, but that is not a situation which cannot be remedied, provided genuine efforts are made. Schell says "The point is not to turn life into a scene of protest; life is the point".

(Tony Smith in Justice trends)

This Festschrift, to honour Dr. Stanley J. Samarth, the former Director of the WCC Department of Dialogue with people of Living Faiths and Ideologies, challenges all thinking Christians on urgent questions like: What is the Christian obligation in the quest for human community in the pluralist situation of multi-religious societies? and also, 'What are the alternatives between shallow friendliness and intolerant fanaticism?' In other words, the book calls for a serious rethinking of the theology and practice of mission in the total context of human history, particularly in the complex realities of India today.

The contributors to this volume, 16 in number, are all renowned scholars from Asia, Africa Europe and America, and are of different religious traditions — Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian. The major sections in the book concern (a) Listening to the Scriptures, (b) Emerging cultures and traditional religions (c) Religions and Quest for Community (d) Prospects for Dialogue.

The Epilogue by Wesley Ariarajah from Sri Lanka, at present an associate in the Dialogue sub-unit of the WCC, is the heart-piece of the whole volume. It is written with great discernment and insight. He says on page 236, "Dr. Samarth puts his finger on the dilemma that the Church faces in the midst of religious pluralism. On the one hand to give up 'Mission' would be to spill the oil from the lamp of Christianity': sharing the good News of God in Jesus Christ, has been the justification of the Church’s existence in the world. On the other hand, a unilateral proclamation of a "uniquely saving truth", far from making a contribution towards true community, is more likely to be misunderstood as the arrogance born out of an apparent claim to monopolistic possession of truth".

Dr. Samarth’s writings have been many. This book alone has gathered a select bibliography of his writings listing 14 major books, 2 extended essays, and no less than 83 selected articles.

These essays, dealing with fundamental issues in inter-religious-relationships, will stimulate further discussion on this matter, not only in the churches but also among neighbours of other religious communities.

(M. Azariah in South India Churchman)

Books Received

4. The State against people? Discussions on Trends in authoritarianism and militarization in India. Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore-S60 066, pp. 98, Rs. 10 (India).
5. Jesus Christ with People in Asia — Report of the Asian Consultation, July 82, Singapore, on the theme Jesus Christ, the Life of the World. pp. 73.
7. Christian Art in India, ed. Herbert Hoefker, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Madras, pp. 159, Rs 40 (India).

ASIAN HEALTH INSTITUTE COURSES AND SEMINARS IN 1983 - (Tentative)

TRAINING COURSES

Course For Trainers
Indonesia — for two weeks in July.
Purpose: Development of a Participatory Methodology Where Participants Share as Equals

Workshop on Uses of Herbal Medicine
Philippines — June 10-19
Purpose: Development of a Document on Herbal Medicine

International Seminar on Community Health and Development
Japan and Korea — August 15-September 20
Purpose: 1. To rethink the concept of community health as a community action programme.
2. To seek suitable methodology of training the front-line health worker using a participatory approach.

SECOND-LINE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS SUB-REGIONAL COURSES

South India
Two months in August and September.

Nepal
Two months in October and November.

Philippines
Two months in November and December.

ACUPUNCTURE

Japan
One and a half to two months, arranged at the convenience of participant on individual basis.

WORKSHOP FOR PROJECT DIRECTORS

Japan
October 15-25
Purpose: To discuss future directions of community health projects, the problems of training community health workers to move in these directions.

For further information contact: Dr. Hiromi Kawahara
987 Minamiyama, Nissin Cho
Aichi Pref. 470-01 Japan

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