

International Conference on the Asian Ecumenical Movement

「亞州合一運動」國際學術研討會議

12th – 13th April, 2018 (Thursday – Friday)

二零一八年四月十二至十三日（星期四至五）

12th April Full Day LT 2, Yasumoto International Academic Park, CUHK
四月十二日 全日 香港中文大學 康本國際學術園五號演講廳

13th April Full Day Conference Hall, Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Shatin
四月十三日 全日 沙田 道風山基督教叢林 會議廳

The Conference will be conducted in English

會議將以英語進行

Introduction

Three years ago, the Centre for Catholic Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong started a research project on Hong Kong Ecumenical Movement, with an objective to investigate Christians' understanding of and viewpoints on the ecumenical movement in Hong Kong.

The project is in its final stage and the Centre would like to share some of our research findings and to exchange opinions with scholars who are also interested in Ecumenical Movements and Reformation in Asia.

This conference has invited speakers from varied communities and traditions working in and upon Asian contexts. 18 invited scholars will present papers on their research on the topic.

This Conference is sponsored by the Faculty of Arts of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres, Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Christian Council and Areopagos Foundation, Norway.

Goals of the Conference:

1. To invite reports and reflections on the Ecumenical Movements in Asian countries;
2. To understand the impact and evolution of the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther five centuries ago.

Conference Schedule

Day 1 :12 April

Venue: LT2, Yasumoto International Academic Park, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

08:30 – 09:00 ● **Registration**

09:00 – 09:10 ● **Welcoming Speech**

Prof. TAM Wai Lun (Department of Cultural and Religious Studies,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

09:10 – 09:35 ● **Speeches by the Guest-of-Honour**

Rev. Dr. SO Shing-yit Eric (Hong Kong Christian Council, Hong Kong)

Ms. Theresa Lumo KUNG (Diocesan Ecumenical Commission,
Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

09:35 – 10:05 ● **Introductory Speeches**

Dr. TONG Wing-sze (Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Hong Kong)

Rev. Dr. Louis Keloan HA (Centre for Catholic Studies, Department of Cultural and
Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

10:05 – 10:15 ● **Souvenir Presentation and Group Photo**

10:15 – 11:30 ● **Session I: General Perspective (I)**

Moderator: *Rev. Dr. TAI Ho-fai Nicholas* (Lutheran Theological Seminary,
Hong Kong)

1. *Rev. Prof. LAI Pan-chiu* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):
*Divine Love and Human Love: An Asian Ecumenical Revisit of Luther's Heidelberg
Disputation 1518*
2. *Rev. Prof. AHN Kyo Seong* (Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary,
South Korea):
*The Asian Ecumenical Movement in Historical Perspective: with Special Reference
to its Contribution to Ecumenism*

11:30 – 13:45 ● **Noon Break**

13:45 – 16:00 ● **Session II: Doctrine and Theology**

Moderator: *Rev. Dr. Patrick TAVEIRNE* (Centre for Catholic Studies, Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

1. *Rev. Prof. Simon Kam Man WONG* (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan):
A Dogmatic and Liturgical Examination of Ancestor Remembrance in the Light of Karl Rahner's Theology of Symbol and its implications on Ecumenism in the Chinese-speaking World
2. *Dr. Marina Xiaojing WANG* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):
Edinburgh 1910 Onward: Cheng Jingyi, Vedanayagam S. Azariah and the Ecumenical Movement in Asia
3. *Rev. Dr. Ambrose MONG* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):
Joseph Ratzinger's Approach to Ecumenism
4. *Prof. Philip FUENTES* (University of Santo Tomas, The Philippines):
A Call for Re-Interpretation of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome: Towards a Ministry of Unity and Love

16:00 – 16:30 ● **Tea Break**

16:30 – 18:15 ● **Session III: Social Development**

Moderator: *Rev. Prof. LO Lung Kwong* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

1. *Rev. Prof. CHENG Yang-en* (Taiwan Theological College and Seminary, Taiwan):
Post-colonialism, Ideological Divide and Emergent Civil Society: Current Challenges for Ecumenical Movement in Asia
2. *Rev. Lizette Pearl TAPIA* (Union Theological Seminary, The Philippines):
Community, Solidarity, and Subsistence A reflection on the ecumenical movement in the Philippines
3. *Rev. Moumita BISWAS* (National Council of Churches in India, India):
Christian Women Reformers in India: Strategies of Transformation

~End of Day 1~

Day 2: 13 April

Venue: The Conference Hall, Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Shatin

09:00 – 09:15 ● **Registration**

09:15 – 11:00 ● **Session IV: Regional Case Studies (I)**

Moderator: *Rev. PO Kam-cheong* (The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, Hong Kong)

1. *Rev. Prof. BATAIRWA Paulin* (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan):
Is Ecumenism a Feature of Taiwanese Christianity? Methodology in view of a Preliminary Assessment
2. *Ms. LUK Chi Lan Iris* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):
Bishop Ronald Owen Hall and the Ecumenical Movement in Hong Kong
3. *Rev. Dr. Arata MIYAMOTO* (Japan Lutheran College, Japan):
Ecumenical Trace and Future in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Japan

11:00 – 12:00 ● **Tao Fong Shan Guided Tour**

1. Christ Temple, 2. Big Cross, 3. Labyrinth

12:00 – 13:00 ● **Lunch**

Venue: Tao Fong Shan Pilgrim's Hall, Shatin

13:00 – 15:15 ● **Session V: Regional Case Studies (II)**

Moderator: *Rev. Prof. Simon Kam Man WONG* (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan)

1. *Rev. Aswin FERNANDIS* (The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India):
The Organizational Solidarity of the Christian Community in India, both with the Orthodox Churches and Western Christianity (Churches of Reformation), in a path way to Ecumenical union
2. *Prof. Karel STEENBRINK* (Utrecht University, The Netherlands):
Christian Divisions in the Perspective of the Muslim majority and the Pancasila State Ideology of Indonesia

3. *Rev. Dr John ROXBOROUGH* (University of Otago, New Zealand):
Asian Agency, Protestant Traditions and Ecumenical Movements in Asia, 1910 to 2010, with special reference to Malaysia and Singapore

4. *Rev. Dr. Sivin KIT* (Malaysia Theological Seminary, Malaysia):
Speaking Truth in the Midst of Divisiveness: The Merdeka and Malaysia Day Statements of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM)

15:15 – 15:45 ● **Tea Break**

15:45 – 17:00 ● **Session VI: General Perspective (II)**

Moderator: *Rev. Prof. LAI Pan-chiu* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

1. *Rev. Prof. Jan Sihar ARITONANG* (Jakarta Theological Seminary, Indonesia):
The Impact of Denominationalism/Confessionalism on the Ecumenical Movement in Asia

2. *Rev. Prof. Kuncheria PATHIL* (Jeevadhara Theology Centre, India):
Future of the Ecumenical Movement

17:00 – 18:00 ● **Conclusion and Closing Discussion**

Moderators:-

Dr. TONG Wing-sze (Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Hong Kong)

Rev. Dr. Louis Keloan HA (Centre for Catholic Studies, Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

~End of Conference~

Abstract of Presented Papers

● Session I: General Perspective (I)

1) Rev. Prof. LAI Pan-chiu (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):

*Divine Love and Human Love: An Asian Ecumenical Revisit of Luther's
Heidelberg Disputation 1518*

This essay examines Martin Luther's thesis on divine and human loves articulated in his Heidelberg Disputation (1518).

It argues that Luther's thesis was intended to be a criticism against Aristotelian philosophy and the related scholastic theology represented by Thomas Aquinas, but Luther's criticism was not entirely fair to Aquinas.

Through making references to the contemporary studies of Luther and Aquinas, this essay attempts to articulate a dialogue between Luther and Aquinas, and to explore the significance of this dialogue for the contemporary ecumenical movement in Asia.

2) Rev. Prof. AHN Kyo Seong (Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, South Korea):

*The Asian Ecumenical Movement in Historical Perspective: with Special Reference to its
Contribution to Ecumenism*

On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee, especially significant in Asian culture, of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), which was established in Prapat, Indonesia in 1957, it may be the proper way of celebrating the historical moment to review the history of the Asian ecumenical movement, highlighting its contribution to ecumenism.

Admittedly, like any other movements, the Asian ecumenical movement has merits and demerits, and yet it has some special features to contribute to the development of ecumenism in many ways.

Firstly, it initiated the regional ecumenical movement which soon became the *trend du jour*, displacing the existing two-layered (international-national) structure of the ecumenical movement.

Secondly, it paved the way for cutting-edge ecumenical theologies which reflected the reality of Asian peoples including various types of theology of peoples.

Thirdly, it opened new land for the innovative ways of theologizing such as ‘contextualization’, whose mastermind, Shoki Coe, was a famous Asian ecumenist, and became fertile fields for producing many other indigenous and ingenious theologians and ecumenical workers.

Fourthly, it fleshed out the challenges of new theologies in the Asian society, resulting in the evolution of strategy from Urban Industrial Mission (UIM) to Urban Rural Mission (URM), etc.

Lastly, it built up the close relationship between Asian churches, which previously clang to mother churches rather than sister churches, giving birth to the partnership in both ecumenical relation and ecumenical mission.

In short, facing the diverse challenges of the Asian realities such as imperialism, post-colonialism and the Cold War, and neo-liberalism, the Asian ecumenical movement continued to make history, and the rest is history.

● **Session II: Doctrine and Theology**

1) *Rev. Prof. Simon Kam Man WONG* (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan):

A Dogmatic and Liturgical Examination of Ancestor Remembrance in the Light of Karl Rahner’s Theology of Symbol and its implications on Ecumenism in the Chinese-speaking World

This article aims at arguing against the statement that ancestor “worship” is idol worship. To begin with, I will argue that the term ancestor “worship” is a mistranslation. The correct one should be ancestor remembrance.

I will do a historical review of the Chinese Rites Controversy, which racked the Catholic Church in the Qing Dynasty. In 1939, the Church judged that ancestor “worship”, used to be idol worship but gradually lost its religious significance, has been transformed into a cultural event. Consequently, the Catholic Church allows the Chinese faithful to participate in liturgy of ancestor remembrance.

I will use Karl Rahner’s theology of symbol as the critical framework for a dogmatic and liturgical examination of ancestor remembrance. I will argue that the faithful of idol worship believe in the real presence of their gods in the idols. Hence, an idol is in itself a real symbol. On the contrary, the spirits of our ancestors are not present in the liturgy of ancestor remembrance, which, therefore, is but a secondary symbol, culturally and historically conditioned, to express our filial respect to our ancestors.

Furthermore, I will argue that our ancestors are not gods but members of the Church in heaven. The Church on earth and in heaven constitute one Church in the mystical body of Christ. I will conclude that ancestor remembrance is but a cultural and liturgical expression of our filial piety, which is in full harmony with the teachings of the scripture and magisterium of the Catholic Church.

2) *Dr. Marina Xiaojing WANG* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):

*Edinburgh 1910 Onward: Cheng Jingyi, Vedanayagam S. Azariah and
the Ecumenical Movement in Asia*

This paper discusses two individuals connected to the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, Cheng Jingyi (1881-1939) and Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874-1945), who had prominent symbolic and actual significance to the development of the ecumenical movement in Asia in the early twentieth century. Through the case study of these two key figures in Asian ecumenism, this paper explores how the idea of ecumenism had been introduced and applied from the West to the Asian contexts, and how it had been re-shaped out of the concerns of Asian Christians since the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. This paper argues that although the 1910 Edinburgh Conference is frequently remembered as a milestone in the world ecumenical movement, the rationale of its promotion of co-operation among missions was in general evangelistic. The ecumenical vision that proclaimed by both Cheng and Azariah from the 1910 Conference onward, by contrast, had taken a rather different path from the western style of ecumenism and reflected an indigenous understanding of ecumenism and ecclesiology. This vision was brought into greater contexts in Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and was eventually realised through the formation of the Church of Christ in China (1927) and the Church of South India (1947).

As a worldwide missionary conference, the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference provided a platform for a broader discussion of Christian indigeneity and interdenominational co-operation. Among the 1,215 official delegates at the conference, there were 20 delegates from the so-called ‘non-western world’ at that time, 19 of whom were from Asia. For the first time in the history of the modern missionary movement and in the course of the spread of Christianity globally, these ‘non-western’ delegates made their native voices being heard to the western audience. It was their contributions at the conference that put the 1910 Conference in a ground-breaking position for its significance for the world ecumenical movement and the development of world Christianity.

3) *Rev. Dr. Ambrose MONG* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):

Joseph Ratzinger's Approach to Ecumenism

In ecumenical endeavours, while he was still Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's preference was for a slow, "realistic and theologically attentive, approach." As a result, he was very critical of shortcuts towards unity.

Critical of the various approaches to ecumenism that relied on sociological or political models, Ratzinger believed it was unlikely that full Christian unity would happen in the near future. Ratzinger's understanding of ecumenism is based on his insistence on the priority of logos over ethos and the priority of the universal church over particular churches, and it is conditioned by his critical attitudes towards pluralism and relativism. His approach to Christian ecumenism is also influenced by his concern over the decline of Christianity in Europe.

However, as we shall see, the situation in Asia is different in many ways. This paper seeks to review Joseph Ratzinger's writings on the ecumenical situation, focusing on the Lutheran Church. It proposes a practical and broader approach to ecumenism in view of the fact that Christianity is a minority religion, existing among ancient and diverse religious traditions in the Asian continent.

Pastoral involvement in the lives of the faithful is particularly urgent in Asia where the majority of people live in poverty and lack the basic necessities of life. While agreeing with Ratzinger that ethos without logos cannot endure, ecumenical efforts must not be too dogmatic and abstract but must be directed to the welfare of people.

4) *Prof. Philip FUENTES* (University of Santo Tomas, The Philippines):

*A Call for Re-Interpretation of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome:
Towards a Ministry of Unity and Love*

Almost half a millennium after the Great Schism (1054 A.D.) took place in the Church of Christ –the division between the Western Church (The Roman Catholic Church) and the Eastern Church (The Greek Orthodox Church) – that undermined not only the unitive aspect but also the holiness of the Church, a series of divisions ensued and this time it happened within the Roman Catholic Church. This series of separations is called Reformation Era. And this year, 2017, marks the 500th anniversary of this painful event in the life of the Church of Christ.

Before the turn of the third millennium, a sign of hope for a possible unity of all Christians was foreseen brought about by the ecumenical movement. Realizing that this anomaly undermines the Christian proclamation of the gospel-truths, in the early years of the 20th century, Christian churches and Protestant denominations initiated the ecumenical project, in which the Catholic Church would officially embrace in the Second Vatican Council.

While substantial agreements between the Catholic Church and the Christian Churches and ecclesial communities have developed, several issues persist, needing further examination and clarification. Although the ecumenical movement has already made some progress towards the achievement of Christian unity, there remains a critical issue, a fundamental stumbling block which is at the heart of the ecumenical project of *koinonia*. In *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope John Paul II identified the question of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as one of the five major areas that need fuller exploration for bringing about the goal of ecumenical progress. Thus, he invited all concerned to participate in a “patient and fraternal dialogue” to help “find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation.”

In this paper, I intend to survey and examine a number of the responses, specifically the responses by the Christian Reformation leaders and theologians with a view to assessing the level of reception of the encyclical letter and of the papal office across the Christian Reformation world. This study attempts to highlight the significant contribution of ecumenical dialogue in relation to the attitudinal and paradigm shift that have happened both in the Catholic and the other Christian Churches.

● **Session III: Social Development**

1) *Rev. Prof. CHENG Yang-en* (Taiwan Theological College and Seminary, Taiwan):

Post-colonialism, Ideological Divide and Emergent Civil Society: Current Challenges for Ecumenical Movement in Asia

In this paper I will first review and evaluate briefly the influence and impact of the Ecumenical Movement in Asia during the past 70 years, including her salient achievements (e.g. common witness, social and political engagement) and shortcomings (institutionalized structure, centralization, lack of persuasion among younger generation).

Then I will discuss three aspects of the current challenges for ecumenical movement in Asia: first, the continuing engagement with and handling of the complex colonial past, especially with the development of de-colonizing attempts in South Asia and South-East Asia and post-colonial approaches in East Asia; second, the critical test of the ideological divide (e.g. Anti-Communism and Cold-War milieu, nationalism and ethnic tensions, globalized market economy and ecological crisis... etc.) which not only hampered the pursuit and witness of ecclesiastical unity but even attested to the fact that ecumenical movement can sometimes result in harsh conflicts and divisions; lastly, in face of the emerging civil society, how is ecumenical movement preparing to react to the rising of civil power and is it possible for the political engagement of the ecumenical movement take the form of making common cause with other civil groups and movements, with the realization that the church is one amongst several social actors and religious bodies?

2) *Rev. Lizette Pearl TAPIA* (Union Theological Seminary, The Philippines):

Community, Solidarity, and Subsistence A reflection on the ecumenical movement in the Philippines

Reflecting on the future of ecumenical movement and theology for my context, I must consider the following questions: First, how can a church be responsive and relevant in a context where Christianity is already the dominant religion? Second, for whom will the church construct and live out proposed theological and ecumenical tasks?

In a society that is characterized by foreign domination, the rule of the elite, and mass poverty, there is a need to take seriously the issues of social classes, power dynamics, justice and common good. Thus, I would adopt Robert Schreiter's listening to culture but instead of using 'culture' I would use 'community' and in place of the 'foreigner' I will use 'church.' Then the inquiry would be: First, how

does a community, a marginalized community at that, look at the concepts of ‘creation,’ ‘redemption,’ ‘salvation,’ and ‘peace?’ Second, what must be the attitude and perspective of the church to be informed and listen to the voices and cries of the people in the community? Third, are the members of the community able to analyze their social, political and economic situation to critically engage in conversation with those outside of their community like the church, and vice versa?

Then, I shall present my reflections in three parts: First, “From Culture to Community, second, “Not Development but Solidarity,” and lastly, “Not Prosperity but Subsistence.”

3) *Rev. Moumita BISWAS* (National Council of Churches in India, India):

Christian Women Reformers in India: Strategies of Transformation

There is a long tradition of Reformation in history of Christianity even in Asia. In the ever changing topography of social and geopolitical realities reformation movement takes place in contextual grounding.

The 16th century Reformation opened up a window of opportunity for women to express themselves, read the Bible, and interpret Christianity, reform church and society. Women had a most significant impact upon the Reformation, and the social changes that came about in turn changed the place and role of women in the centuries to follow. In India Christian mission movement like Zenana Mission played a crucial role in liberation and emancipation of women. In this paper an attempt will be made to reflect the role and strategies of Christian women reformers in India in the 19th, 20th and 21st century who reflected their Christian faith in action not only to emancipate and empower women but to promote women in decision making process in church and society and claim their rights to life and dignity.

The scope of the paper is narrowed by highlighting on role of Indian Christian Women ecumenist and reformers like Pandita Ramabai who worked to save widows especially child widows and used education as a tool of liberation. Dr Shanti Solomon who used prayer reflected in action as a strategy to promote justice, peace, healing and reconciliation and started the global prayer movement ‘Fellowship of Least Coin’. Mary Roy a Syrian Christian woman who challenged church and community regarding discrimination against women in the matter of inheritance because of the continuance of the religion based personal laws despite the guarantee of equal status under Article 14 of Indian Constitution. A methodology will be used to sight biblical parallels and compare with reformation strategies of these women.

● **Session IV: Regional Case Studies (I)**

1) *Rev. Prof. BATAIRWA Paulin* (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan):

Is Ecumenism a Feature of Taiwanese Christianity?
Methodology in view of a Preliminary Assessment

Ecumenism – as an epistemic and practical tradition in the West - refers to the process of bringing together Christians of different denominations, confessional and theological backgrounds in view of a more intense, vivid, rationalized and visible unity of the Church or Body of Christ.

Looking through the ecumenical lens, Christians constitute a complex minority within the Taiwanese people. Because of historical links, groups or ecclesial communities stemming from mainline churches of the West naturally encounter ecumenical challenges similar to those faced in traditional churches. Taiwanese ecumenical awareness however needs also to account for the yearning and search for ecumenical unity among evangelical and charismatic groups, Pentecostal movements, as well as the autochthonous free churches whose growth is rather steady compared to the offshoots of mainline churches. Now, can ecumenism be said a feature of Taiwanese Christianity?

Since the task evoked here requires ample time and energy, my intention in this initial stage will consist in defining the method for a preliminary assessment of the question.

2) *Ms. LUK Chi Lan Iris* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong):

Bishop Ronald Owen Hall and the Ecumenical Movement in Hong Kong

Bishop Hall had substantial contributions to post-WWII reconstruction of Hong Kong. Local scholars who are interested in researching Bishop Hall, had made good use of enormous primary sources of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Archives to pay a tribute to him. However, in order to analyze Bishop Hall's contributions to Hong Kong ecumenical movement more comprehensively, taking the archives of Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan into account is decisive for this research.

According to Bishop Hall's idea of adventure of friendship, he acted as a middleman, pioneer and facilitator between the Catholics and Protestants to deal with a variety of post-war Hong Kong social problems when Hong Kong ecumenical movement had not yet been popular and widely developed. More importantly, being the founders of Chung Chi College and the Christian Study

Centre on Chinese Religion, he was enthusiastic to build the dialogue platform and cultivate mutual respect among the Theologians, missionaries, professors and students.

Bishop Hall's contributions laid down the foundation of developing Hong Kong ecumenical movement as "Unity" instead of "Uniformity".

3) *Rev. Dr. Arata MIYAMOTO* (Japan Lutheran College, Japan):

Ecumenical Trace and Future in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Japan

For Lutherans, 2017 is a significant year: the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) has committed to historical events of this year. Although there are many events and conferences related to the commemoration, it is clear for JELC to make a basic principle to do commemorate Reformation 500. JELC decided not to do for self-celebration and take into consideration that the time of reformation was the time of division. The commemoration is an opportunity for reconciliation with others.

I would do presentation about several events between Lutherans and Catholics in Japan. One of them is the commemoration that JELC and Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan co-organize for Reformation 500 at Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki, the southern island of Japan, in this fall (Nov.23 2017). We are aimed at offering our commemorating prayer of Reformation 500 toward reconciliation. However, our prayer is also directed forward beyond reconciliation within two churches. Lutherans and Catholics came to decide Urakami cathedral as the gathering place of the commemoration. The Urakami of Nagasaki, where is one of oldest and biggest Catholic community in Japan, is also "ground zero" of NAGASAKI atomic bomb in August 9th, 1945. Standing on the place together for prayer means that we move forward from our own reconciliation to working together for making peace. Through the report occurring in Reformation 500 of Japan, I would contend about the future and issues of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

● **Session V: Regional Case Studies (II)**

1) *Rev. Aswin FERNANDIS* (The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India):

The Organizational Solidarity of the Christian Community in India, both with the Orthodox Churches and Western Christianity (Churches of Reformation), in a path way to Ecumenical union

The Church in India has had a long tradition of ecumenism and also stands out as front-runner in the ecumenical journey. Christianity came to India in an ecumenical form - in terms of One Church, socially conscious, open to all faiths and persuasions and affirming the unity of God's creation.

According to tradition, St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus, came to India in 52 A.D. and initiated a church. It was truly ecumenical in the sense that it was not a denominational church and it had a very open and friendly relationship with the predominantly Hindu society. In feudal central Kerala, the society at that time was dominated by upper castes and hence the early church was very much upper caste in nature. However St. Thomas's ministry was not confined to upper castes alone. It transcended the barriers of caste as is visible in his ministry in Tamil Nadu (south east of India). So it was ecumenical in essence and in practice.

I approach the Topic in three steps. Firstly, I would briefly present the history of Christianity in India, its political social status which gave a way for spreading Christian faith among the high caste Hindus, who did not change their caste practices even after conversion to Christianity and how the social structure changed after the arrival of Western Christianity.

Next, I would briefly discuss about the role of Orthodox Church in India along with Western Christianity, especially the Churches of Reformation that laid the foundations of the expressions of wider Christian Communalism.

Thirdly, I would like to focus on the Ecumenical dialogue happening in India in the Asian Context, which creates a dialectic space to understand what they have in common and only then weigh the significance of their differences. Presently, the wholeness of the life of the Church and salvation is diverted more towards the social/political status.

To conclude, I would like to speak on how cultural assimilation is one aspect that must become an important part of the how Christian churches can express its belief structure in the language of the local culture, taking into consideration the context of Asia. It has been this dichotomy introduced between the gospel and a culture that has led many to view Christianity as a "foreign religion" and a threat to local stability and harmony.

And I pray and trust that Almighty God will bless this Consultation so that it will be the harbinger of a fruitful and promising engagement between all the participants.

2) *Prof. Karel STEENBRINK* (Utrecht University, The Netherlands):

*Christian Divisions in the Perspective of the Muslim majority and
the Pancasila State Ideology of Indonesia*

Until independence in 1945, the Christian missionary movement and local churches could prosper thanks to Dutch colonial support, especially in the field of education. In the first decades after independence they survived without many problems, as if their origin from the colonial situation had been forgiven.

Under the second president, Soeharto (1966-1998), we see a sometimes gruesome and non-compromising anti-Communism, which made the position of all great religions in the country stronger. Not only Muslim institutions, but also Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities took advantage from this national religious revival. This was also the period when the centuries-old prejudices between churches quickly disappeared.

There were some spectacular ecumenical results around 1970: 1° a joined translation of the Bible was accepted, 2° ecumenical Christmas celebrations became popular and even grandiose events in all major towns of the country; 3° exchange of seminary professors between denominations began; 4° there were serious consultations between leaders of churches as to the challenge of stronger and less tolerant groups of Muslim and their influence on government measures (like the 1978 ban on new foreign missionaries and economic subsidies; the 1982 fatwa against Muslim participation in Christmas festivities and many more like the introduction of sharia rulings for Muslims against the public Pancasila Ideology and its pluralistic ethics).

This presentation will map the network of relations between the big and sometimes extremely small churches against the background of a politically and religiously also divided Muslim majority.

3) *Rev. Dr John ROXBOROUGH* (University of Otago, New Zealand):

*Asian Agency, Protestant Traditions and Ecumenical Movements in Asia, 1910 to 2010,
with special reference to Malaysia and Singapore*

Ecumenism in Asia has involved movements concerned with repairing the damage of Christian divisions and facilitating a commitment to Christian mission in contexts marked by strong religious cultures, conflict, poverty, and inequality. The divisions to be addressed include those between Western and Eastern traditions, as well as those within the Western Christian tradition exported to Asia as part of colonialism and Christian mission.

As well as being sources of ongoing fragmentation, Protestant traditions deriving from the rupture in the Western church at the time Reformation have been sources of attempts at repairs in those relationships, and contributors to the formulation of an understanding of Christian mission appropriate to Asian contexts.

The story is one of both international movements and local agency, and its history has raised questions about securing trust, the development of appropriate structures and governance, and the navigation of sensitive political contexts.

Reflection on these issues and their historical roots in this paper relates particularly to Malaysia and Singapore, but also connects to the wider Asian experience of both the Reformation and the Ecumenical Movement.

4) *Rev. Dr. Sivin KIT* (Malaysia Theological Seminary, Malaysia):

*Speaking the Truth in the Midst of Divisiveness: The Merdeka Day and Malaysia Day Statements of
the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM)*

As a religious minority of a population of about 30 million people, Christians are confronted with conditions that often hinder healthy interreligious relations and social cohesion in the multicultural and multi-religious yet Muslim Majority Malaysia.

In recent years, controversies with a religious dimension such as the ‘Allah’ controversy and other political developments have brought to the public awareness legal, political, cultural, and religious constraints affecting harmonious relations between citizens. In such a context, the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) as an ecumenical organization consisting the Roman Catholic Church,

the Council of Churches of Malaysia and to the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship has emerged as an important Christian voice in the public sphere.

The aim of this paper is to analyze how the CFM articulates and expresses concerns affecting Christians and the nation in ways that have implications for Christian ecumenism and the wider relationship with people of other faiths.

The analysis will focus on the public statements issued by the CFM during the yearly commemoration of the independence of Malaya (1957) and the formation of Malaysia (1963) from 2010 -2017 taking into account key events that inform its content. The public discourse of the CFM demonstrates a voice with a pastoral and prophetic tone that offers insights into the struggle for Christian witness under restrictive conditions. It also may serve as an important ecumenical resource and arguably an interreligious invitation for the cultivation of national -- and possibly even international -- solidarity in Asia and beyond that transcends ethnoreligious centric interests.

● **Session VI: General Perspective (II)**

1) *Rev. Prof. Jan Sihar ARITONANG* (Jakarta Theological Seminary, Indonesia):

The Impact of Denominationalism/Confessionalism on the Ecumenical Movement in Asia

Most of the church organizations in Asia were initiated and founded by missionary societies that came from western world. Many of those missionary societies emerged from denominational-confessional churches (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, Evangelical, Pentecostal-Charismatic, etc.) although are not necessarily institutionally-based. From the time of International Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 (followed by Jerusalem 1928, Tambaram 1938, etc.) those missionary societies tried to cooperate and to build common understanding on mission (including evangelism and church planting).

The founding of World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 and East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) in 1957 (in 1973 renamed Christian Conference of Asia, CCA) were also intended to build cooperation and basic concept of the task and calling of the various churches. However, there are many denominational-confessional churches in Asia do not join WCC and CCA. They would prefer to found their own communion or fellowship, like World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) and to strengthen their confessional characteristics.

WCC as well as CCA does not intend to underestimate or neglect denominational- confessional characteristics of the churches. They even build cooperation with some confessional council like Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and World Council of Reformed Churches (WCRC), since they acknowledge the contribution of those confessional streams on the ecumenical movement.

This paper will inquire the positive and negative impact of Denominationalism or Confessionalism on the Ecumenical Movement in Asia, rooted in the concept of some reformers (especially Martin Luther and John Calvin) on church unity and referring to several countries in Asia.

2) *Rev. Prof. Kuncheria PATHIL* (Jeevadhara Theology Centre, India):

Future of the Ecumenical Movement

The ecumenical movement is facing today a deep crisis and the future of the movement cannot be predicted, though some emerging trajectories may be identified.

In the first part of this article, the author presents the traditional approaches to ecumenism on the part of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, the agency of the ecumenical movement representing most of the denominational Churches today.

In the second part, he indicates some of the problems, challenges and ambiguities the movement encounters today, and in the third part, he draws some of the trajectories that are emerging, though the new directions are not definitive but mixed up with several ambiguities and uncertainties

List of Participants

Presenters:-

Hong Kong:-

1. Rev. Prof. LAI Pan-chiu (The Chinese University of Hong Kong):
2. Ms. LUK Chi Lan Iris (The Chinese University of Hong Kong):
3. Rev. Dr. Ambrose MONG (The Chinese University of Hong Kong):
4. Dr. Marina Xiaojing WANG (The Chinese University of Hong Kong):

India:-

1. Rev. Moumita BISWAS (National Council of Churches in India):
2. Rev. Aswin FERNANDIS (The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church):
3. Rev. Prof. Kuncheria PATHIL (Jeevadhara Theology Centre):

Indonesia:-

- Rev. Prof. Jan Sihar ARITONANG (Jakarta Theological Seminary):

Japan:-

- Rev. Dr. Arata MIYAMOTO (Japan Lutheran College):

Korea, South:-

- Rev. Prof. AHN Kyo Seong (Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary):

Malaysia:-

- Rev. Dr. Sivin KIT (Malaysia Theological Seminary):

Netherlands, the:-

- Prof. Karel STEENBRINK (Utrecht University):

New Zealand:-

- Rev. Dr John ROXBOROUGH (University of Otago):

Philippines, the:-

1. Prof. Philip FUENTES (University of Santo Tomas):
2. Rev. Lizette Pearl TAPIA (Union Theological Seminary):

Taiwan:-

1. Rev. Prof. BATAIRWA Paulin (Fu Jen Catholic University):
2. Rev. Prof. CHENG Yang-en (Taiwan Theological College and Seminary):
3. Rev. Prof. Simon Kam Man WONG (Fu Jen Catholic University):

Guests of Honor:-

1. Ms. Theresa Lumo KUNG (Diocesan Ecumenical Commission, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong)
2. Rev. Dr. SO Shing-yit Eric (Hong Kong Christian Council)

Moderators:-

1. Rev. Prof. LO Lung Kwong (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
2. Rev. Dr. Patrick TAVEIRNE (Centre for Catholic Studies, Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
3. Rev. PO Kam-cheong (The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China)
4. Rev. Dr. TAI Ho-fai Nicholas (Lutheran Theological Seminary)

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1. Rev. Dr. Louis Keloan HA (Centre for Catholic Studies, Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
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