



ACUCA NEWS

ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN ASIA
*"Committed to the mission of Christian higher education of uniting all people
in the community of service and fellowship."*



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Climate Change and Solidarity

The following is the first article in a series that explores the theme for our upcoming Student Camp and General Assembly. It was written by Dr. Budi Widianarko, Rector of Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU), Semarang, Indonesia.

Anthropogenic or man-made climate change, simply known as climate change has become a catchword, not only among scientists, but also in the conversations of lay persons across communities and nations. In his popular book, "Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive"-Jared Diamond (2006) affirmed climate change as one of 12 processes of ecological suicide which might bring the world to collapse. Of these 12 processes, there are 8 processes which have been attributed to the collapse of past societies, such as the Mayan cities in Central America, Great Zimbabwe in Africa, Angkor Wat and the Harappan Indus Valley cities in Asia. These 8 processes include deforestation and habitat destruction, soil problems (erosion, salinization, and soil fertility losses), water management problems, overhunting, overfishing, effects of introduced species on native species, human population growth, and increased per capita impact of people. Ironically, humans do not seem to have learnt from the past. Further, Diamond (2007) asserted that instead of reducing the number of these suicidal processes, modern civilization yields four additional processes, i.e. the buildup of toxic chemicals in the environment, energy shortages, full human utilization of the earth's photosynthetic capacity, and human-caused climate change.

It has become common knowledge that the uncontrollable emissions of green house gases (GHGs), i.e. carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) by various human activities are the culprits of climate change. In the last 250 years, human activities such as deforestation, burning of fossil fuels and intensive agriculture have significantly elevated the concentrations of GHGs. In 2005 concentrations of CO₂ (379 parts per million, ppm) and CH₄ (1774 parts per billion, ppb) in the atmosphere have exceeded the natural range of the last 6500 years (IPCC, 2007). In its fourth evaluation report (2007), the Intergovernmental Panel

on Climate Change stated that the temperature rise since the mid 20th century is very likely due to these elevated levels of GHG concentrations. In the same report, IPCC also showed that increased emissions of GHGs have been associated with an average global temperature rise of 0.3°C-0.6°C since the end of the 19th century at the end of 21st century emissions of GHGs will further induce a global average temperature rise of 1.4°C -5.8°C.

The rise of average global temperature has been projected to induce a range of environmental and health impacts, such as water scarcity as well as water destructive redundancy (e.g. flood), ecosystems destruction, degradation of coastal areas, health problems and food shortages. Food production will be impacted particularly by the shift in the planting season. Sea water rise will threaten human settlements and agricultural activities along coastal areas, leading to numerous economic and health problems. An increased frequency in extreme weather will also threaten agriculture and food production, as well as human health.

While the discourse of climate change has occupied so much space in the local to global arena, there is one dimension, however, which is left behind. The solidarity dimension is somewhat neglected in this discourse. At the global level, climate change is not a uniform process, especially in terms of causes and impacts. The contribution of GHG emissions by countries varies. Likewise, different countries will face different impacts, depending on their geographical position and features. Interestingly, or ironically, countries with larger GHG contributions will not necessarily face a higher impact. In terms of contribution to the problem, a great variation of per capita GHG footprints between countries clearly entails the issue of solidarity.

Since climate change is one of the most

significant faults produced by human civilization, it is natural that humans have to mitigate it. A concerted action by nations and communities is therefore needed to deal with it. However, the existing climate related initiatives at the global level seem still far from perfect. Countries still fail to bring the notion solidarity to the meeting room.

Rigoberta Menchu, a Peace Nobel Laureate from Guatemala, once said that "Nothing is larger than life coexistence". Life-

coexistence is also easily found in many Christian teachings. If coexistence is the most important aspect of life, it is imperative to promote the value of solidarity in facing climate change. Clearly, the current attitude of countries toward the common challenge of climate change tends to deny the most important aspect of life, i.e. life coexistence. In this case, education, especially Christian Higher Education has a deep moral obligation to put the value of solidarity in all efforts to combat climate change.

Historical Connections

Meiji Gakuin University and Korea

Within the context of the exchange agreement signed between Yonsei University of Korea and Meiji Gakuin University of Japan, Professor Jeong Min Suh of Yonsei (Ecclesiastical History) spent the year 2008 at Meiji Gakuin University to research Japan-Korea Christian ecclesiastical history. In a dialogue held between Professor Suh and Meiji Gakuin University President Haruki Onishi, published in "Shirokane Tsushin vol. 450", a spirited exchange of views took place on the role Korean students who studied at Meiji Gakuin University, (Japan's oldest Protestant university) played in the making of modern day Korea.

The discourse between the two academics exposed and shed new light on the following intriguing yet relatively uncharted episodes of modern Korean history:

* A Meiji Gakuin missionary, concerned over possible deportation of a Korean man who sought political asylum in Japan after the Gapsin Coup of 1884 in the final days of the Joseon Dynasty, mediated the young man's relocation to the United States of America.

*The American Bible Society's Reverend Henry Loomis, a missionary who nurtured strong ties with Meiji Gakuin University, recommended translation of the Bible to Hangeul to a Korean student named Yi Su Jung. In the footsteps of James Curtis Hepburn, translator of the Bible to Japanese, Jung later completed a Hangeul version of the Bible, which in turn resulted in Korea becoming a rare nation where a vernacular



version of the Bible existed prior to the arrival of the missionaries.

*Horace Grant Underwood, who was taught Hangeul by Yi Su Jung, also completed a Hangeul version of the Bible co-authored by Henry G. Appenzeller. In 1915, Underwood established the Joseon Christian College, predecessor of Yonsei University.

*Korean alumni of Meiji Gakuin University consist of a stellar cast: one of which went on to become a politician in Korea; one who guided the democratization of Korea and later sought political asylum in the United States of America; another who based himself in China and actively played the role of both journalist and historian of Korean-US relations; and one who established the Christian Academy in Canada, later on to become a WCC committee member to provide guidance and leadership in various ecumenical activities.

*Meiji Gakuin University is alma mater to a number of Korean literary figures well known in the arena of poetry, novels and critique.

*The authors of the Korean Declaration of Independence from Japan, announced in Tokyo in 1919, consisted mostly of Meiji Gakuin University graduates and students.

These facts alone stand as proof that Christianity indeed played the role of facilitating internationalization within the Asian region. Just as this dialogue shed new light upon historical facts buried in time in the

context of Korea-Japan relations, we believe that the role of Christian universities in Asia gathering under the ACUCA banner lies in revealing the realities of history, with Taiwan also placed in the perspective.



News from Providence University

The Office of International Affairs blessed and sent 40 students to: Doshisha University, Japan, (6); Woosong University, Korea (12); and Ateneo de Manila, Philippines (22) for Intensive Language Programs for three weeks during the winter break. The programs mainly provide skills on communications and opportunities for students to explore and experience the local culture by visiting historical places. We wished the best for our well motivated-students!



Students who participated at the Ateneo English Intensive Program enjoyed their sessions, activities, food, weather and the cordial hospitality of their host school.

■ Signing of Memorandum Agreement

Providence University in Taiwan welcomes Saint Paul University Philippines in Tuguegarao to be part of our 120 international academic partner network. Both Catholic institutions established mutually beneficial relations and have agreed to start to facilitate the exchange of students and scholars. The Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement of Exchange Programs were signed by the respective Presidents; Dr. Matthew Min-Teh Yu, Ph.D. and Sister Remy Angela Junio, SPC, Ph.D.

Sister Remy Angela Junio, SP, President of St Paul University in Tuguegarao, Philippines signed the Memorandum of Agreement witnessed by Sister Editha Ben, SP, representing Providence University, Taiwan and some key administrators from St Paul University.



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2010 ACUCA STUDENT CAMP 19–22 July 2010, Keimyung University, Daegu, Korea

Students from ACUCA institutions from seven Asian countries will converge on Keimyung University's campus in Daegu, Korea between July 19 and July 22, 2010 for the biennial ACUCA Student Camp. The theme for this year's conference will be **The Earth: Our Choices, Our Actions and Our Impact**. The key objectives of this camp are:

Objectives

- To enhance the understanding of core Christian beliefs in the context of environmental issues
- To raise awareness of critical, Asia-specific environmental issues among young Christian leaders,
- To help young Christian leaders take the initiative in protecting and preserving God's creation.

Country Presentations

Students are given an opportunity to investigate how their Christian faith relates to environmental issues, while also examining the individual situation in their own countries, through our round of Country Presentations. Students from respective ACUCA member countries are required to make and deliver a presentation on one of the sub-themes of the camp:

- Christian belief and its role in God's creation
- Critical environmental issues in your region/country
- Christian initiatives for sustainable development

Each presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in duration, followed by a 5 to 10 minute 'Question and Answer' session. Full papers for this presentation should be sent via e-mail to the ACUCA Secretariat secretariat@acuca.net in Microsoft Word document format (maximum 750 words) before **25 June 2010**.

Group Discussions

During the camp, students will have an opportunity to participate in a number of discussions and activities related to the main theme. It is our belief that Christian Faith and practical action on preserving our environment are not mutually exclusive. Discussions will be focused on the following topics:

- Understanding our role in God's creation

What is God's will for his earth and what is our role in preserving and sustaining it? What are the details of our mission and what does it mean to our belief?

- Awareness of Environmental issues in Asia

What are the critical and important issues in your region/country? What are the problems resulting from climate change, exploitation of natural resources and unfettered development in Asia? What are the potential outcomes of the lack of awareness of environmental issues?

- Active Christian Stewardship

How can we connect our Christian belief to the environmental issues at hand? What can we do on a day to day basis to practice our stewardship over God's creation?

Cultural Night

All students attending the camp from respective ACUCA member countries are required to participate in the Cultural Night on 21 July. This cultural night is an opportunity for students to show us all an element of their specific culture, including performances such as dance, drama, singing, etc.

Registration

To find out more information on this camp, including our online registration facility, please go to acuca.net. International Office staff can assist students the simple step by step process. A special low rate registration fee of \$50 US Dollars each for the duration of the camp will be charged for the first two students to register from each institution.

The registration deadline is **June 10, 2010**. We hope to see you in Daegu this July!

Student Mobility Scheme Reports

ACUCA Student Mobility Scheme (SMS)

The ACUCA Student Mobility Scheme (SMS) provides a great opportunity for ACUCA member institution students to travel to and study at a university in our region. We have followed the progress of a selection of our SMS students. Two of our students: Ms. Lee Dal Youb of Keimyung University, Korea and Mr. Li Tak Sung of Lingnan University gave some insights into their experience abroad. Both students studied at International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan.

>>> Dal Youb:

- What did you study and what kind of activities did you take part in while abroad?

Since my major is Japanese I was dying to go to and study Japanese in Japan. Thanks to this program I could travel to Tokyo, saving a lot of money. At ICU I took part not only in academic classes but also in KOTO club, which is a Japanese traditional instrument club. At the school festival I participated in a KOTO performance. It was such fun and I'll never forget that time.



- What advice would you give to fellow students at ACUCA universities who are thinking of student exchange?

I strongly recommend participating in the SMS. It is a very good chance to study abroad, since you can choose among many universities and you can learn not only English but also other foreign languages like me. (I studied at International University in Japan so I could learn both English and Japanese too.)



- Have you been changed by the experience, and if so how?

Yes, my Japanese ability has definitely improved. Teachers at ICU were great and thanks to them I could enjoy and learn Japanese more easily than in Korea.

>>> Tak Sung:

- What did you study and what kind of activities did you take part in while abroad?

I studied Japanese 6, German AII and Perceptual Psychology at ICU. I participated in the Gakuennsai (学園祭) and helped to run a store with the AK section.

- Was it difficult adjusting to life abroad, and if so what were some of the difficulties?

I did not have much difficulty in adapting to life in Japan, a country that shares a similar cultural background with China. I did have some difficulty with the German and Psychology courses at the beginning as these lectures, which were conducted in Japanese.

- What was the most positive experience that you had at your host institution?

I was delighted with the group of local students (the AK section) who welcomed me at the airport. I enjoyed a lot of happy times with them. This was a true inter-cultural exchange.

If you wish to find out more about getting your university involved in the SMS, please go to acuca.net for more details.



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