

THE ASIAN MOVEMENT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (AMCUVI)

In the light of the growing awareness of the importance of Christian dialogue among the many Christian Churches you will find the Statement of the sixth meeting of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity not only a source of information, knowledge and of joy at what has been achieved, but also a challenge for our pastoral ministry in the context of Asian Countries and an invitation to further reading.

The sixth meeting of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU) was held at the Bangkok Christian Guest House, Thailand from 3rd-5th December, 2013 attended by 37 participants representing the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and the Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA).

From its first meeting in 1996, AMCU has consistently asked what more can be done to further the movement towards ecumenical cooperation in Asia, what that cooperation might mean and what it should be about. This has led naturally to the focus of AMCU VI on the document "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" jointly issued in 2011 by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). By its own admission, this document "does not intend to be a theological statement on mission but to address practical issues associated with Christian witness in a multi-religious world". The document consists of seven paragraphs which form "A Basis for Christian Witness", twelve principles which remind Christians of their calling as they seek to fulfill Christ's commission in an appropriate manner, particularly in inter-religious contexts, and six recommendations regarding the ways in which Christians should exercise their Christian witness in a multi-religious world. In its sixth meeting, AMCU spent time wrestling with the question of how to translate these paragraphs, principles and recommendations into the Asian context.

AMCU VI rejoiced in the uniqueness of "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World" which represents the consensus of three major world bodies of the Christian church.

AMCU VI also recognized the challenges in this document which it approached through study of the bible, common prayers, the presentation of papers and group and plenary discussion. As a result of these processes, AMCU participants declared that the document provides crucial and relevant guidance regarding Christian witness in the multi-religious context of Asia. In particular, AMCU participants identified and affirmed the following four guidelines provided by the document:

1. A relational witness.

God is love. God is inherently relational. The document reminds us that our lives must reflect the love of God by being relational. The document invites us to overcome all that divides us, affirming that the Holy Spirit unites all believers. (Here 'relational' means of or arising from kinship, indicating or constituting a relation, particularly the relation between God and humankind.)

2. A common witness

.In countries where Catholic and Protestant churches are sometimes seen as different religions, the principles and recommendations of the document enable and encourage Christians not only to be one, but to be seen to be one“ so in Christ we, though many, form one body” (Romans 12:5).

3. Mission and Witness.

The document finds an inseparable link between mission and witness. Mission is God's mission (Missio Dei) and the document invites us to participate together in the life of the Triune God.

4. A relevant witness.

The document is a profound and simple statement that invites several questions about who is Christ for us in Asia. Inspiring us to solidarity in witness, the document calls us— while walking with fellow pilgrims – to heal and reconcile, to care for the environment, to be concerned about forced migration and the plight of the marginalized and other issues. The participants in AMCU VI strongly commend this document to all the churches of Asia.

Reception and Implementation of the Document

As part of the discussion process, AMCU VI participants met in CCA, FABC and

AEA groups to consider how this document should be implemented. There was agreement that the document be forwarded to other conferences of the churches and be made available to the grass roots for study, dialogue and implementation. AMCU VI participants agreed to the following recommendations:

1. The document should be translated into local languages
2. The document should be made available to theological colleges and seminaries as significant study material,
3. The document should be used to implement a living dialogue based on the Bible, recognizing that Jesus is the focus of mission,
4. The articulated spirit of the document should find its way into bible studies, teaching and preaching for all ages and interest groups,
5. The churches should study the document together and use the document for interfaith dialogue,
6. The churches should respect different cultures and apply the insights of the document in a culturally sensitive way, and
7. The churches should be prepared to accommodate and understand different approaches to implementing the document.

Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)

Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA)

Bangkok, Thailand

5 December, 2013

<http://www.fabc.org/offices/oeia/documents/Final%20Statement%20AMCU%20VI.pdf>