

**Asia-Pacific Students and Youth Gathering
Cipayung, Indonesia 7-14 December 2004**

ASYG 2004 Message: Together in Action for Peace and Reconciliation

Living in Community

Two churches in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia were bombed and attacked and victims were undergoing rehabilitation while we gathered on the theme “Together in Action for Peace and Reconciliation” in Cipayung, Indonesia. We, the 104 students and youths from 16 countries in Asia and Pacific, belonging to 6 ecumenical organizations namely, the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, Christian Conference of Asia, International Movement of Catholic Students Asia-Pacific, International Young Christian Students Asia Secretariat, World Student Christian Federation Asia-Pacific Region, World Young Women Christian Association and friends from the Asian Methodist Youth Network, Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism and International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs met from 7-14 December 2004 through the EASY Net (Ecumenical Asia-Pacific Students and Youth Network). In a threatened and violent world, we shared as a learning community, enabling each other and lighting the flame of hope and love in us.

We were inspired through our interaction with friends who served as our resources through keynote presentation; thematic workshops (on Globalization and Economic Justice, Peace and Human Security, Education and Culture, and Interfaith Dialogue and Ecumenism); synthesis and analysis, and faith reflections. We were warned against the false prophets of peace: empire, militarization, globalization and fundamentalism and were called to resist the impact of these false prophets in our society. We were challenged to go to the marginalized, listen and stand with them. We shared the life of the “least” of God’s children through our exposure in the communities of farmers, survivors of the “May 1998” riot, street children, laborers, interfaith village and Muslim students. We celebrated our diversity and formed a community, creating further awareness of our interconnectedness. We lived the ecumenical spirit during the ASYG.

Visioning Collectively

In the context of globalization, the world’s wealth and resources have become more unevenly distributed. Globalization has brought further poverty, widened the digital divide, and severe ecological destruction. Globalization with the instrument of Information and Communication Technology provides effective communication yet also enables the control of the rich and powerful from a distance over the weak and poor. Globalization has brought about homogenization of culture, values and market. It has a deep impact on the culture, ecology, education and tradition of many countries, particularly the poor ones. People are commodified; even peace is bought or sold.

In multi-religious and multi-cultural Asia Pacific, we see rising intolerance and exclusivism. The current U.S policy of 'war on terrorism' is creating more conflicts in the Asia Pacific region fanning the *flames of* religious fundamentalism. It also intensifies the militarization of the region that has tremendous effects on individuals and societies – politically, socially, economically and culturally. Human security is being ignored and violated.

Education is a life long process by which a community transmits its culture to its next generation to help its members live a happy and meaningful life. However, our schooling is ignoring the holistic education process that promotes learning and provides knowledge, skills,

values and beliefs based on the balance among material, natural, personal and spiritual dimensions of life. It is increasingly commodified and inaccessible for the underprivileged.

In spite of these, we envisioned a just world free of racial, gender, class and caste barriers, human rights violations, promoting holistic development, human rights and respecting all of God's creation. We hope for a world that seeks to love their neighbor as themselves and sees the whole world as their neighbor.

Taking Action

In order for us to live in peace, and move closer towards our vision we commit to the following actions and invite our friends and fellow students and youth to join us in:

Networking and Partnership Building

- Build and sustain networks to strengthen civil society.
- Promote teamwork and cooperation within EASY Nets.
- Create support groups (e.g. support for migrant workers).

Communication and Information Sharing

- Create open communication channels (e.g. newsletters, parish notice boards, e-groups).
- Share information on local and international societal issues creatively (e.g. photo exhibits, presentations etc.).

Social education

- Raise awareness on societal issues through various means e.g. campaigns, workshops, protests, and training/formation.
- Promote holistic education covering material, emotional, personal and spiritual dimensions.
- Develop appropriate curriculum addressing the issue of discrimination.
- Read newspapers and use mass media critically.

Interfaith conversations and cooperation

- Celebrate diversity through social gathering and other forms of interaction, promoting "conversations of living": creating fellowship and understanding in an everyday way.
- Deepen our faiths, respect other faiths and culture and empathize with others.
- Organize interfaith actions and community forums facilitating conversations and communication between and among people.

Advocacy

- Dissent against racial and caste based discrimination, political fundamentalism, oppressive and exploitative policies, negative impact of globalization etc. (e.g. Protest on WTO meetings).
- Advocate for formulation and/or implementation of people-centered social, political, economic, cultural policies with regard to environmental protection, prostitution, tourism, trafficking of women and Children, corruption, poverty alleviation, human rights, etc.

Sustainable Lifestyle

- Support local and eco-friendly products.
- Practice simple living.

On the bombing of churches in Palu, Indonesia:

We demand that the Indonesian government, PGI and local EASY Net (ENISY) organize a fact-finding mission on the tragedy. We also express our solidarity and prayers with the victims of the bombings in General Santos, Mindanao, Philippines.

Journeying Together

We leave with a heavy heart due to the tragedy that occurred in our midst. On the other hand, we rejoice for the community of hope and love formed among us, inspiring us to take on more challenges. We have been motivated to go beyond our boundaries, allowing peace to dwell in us that we may ourselves become symbols and bearers of love, peace, and reconciliation.

We will overcome violence with God's peace.

Peace is action. Peace begins with each one of us!