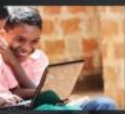


# ASIA

COMMUNICATION  
SUNDAY  
2014

STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY  
TO BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



## **WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION**

### **Vision**

Communication for All

### **Mission**

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) is an international organization that promotes communication as a basic human right, essential to people's dignity and community. Rooted in Christian faith, WACC works with all those denied the right to communicate because of status, identity, or gender. It advocates full access to information and communication, and promotes open and diverse media. WACC strengthens networks of communicators to advance peace, understanding and justice.

- See more at: <http://www.waccglobal.org/who-we-are/our-organization/vision-and-mission#sthash.k2Ha7Y8g.dpuf>



**Prof. Rev. Dr. Samuel W. Meshack Ph.D. (Com)**  
**Chairperson**

### **Greetings:**

On behalf of the Asia Regional Executive Council of the World Association for Christian Communication, I greet you. God has granted us another year to celebrate the Asia Communication Sunday 2014. It was started in the year 2009 in a small way but with a great enthusiasm to promote the Vision and Mission of WACC among all the churches in Asia and thanking God for WACC and its mission to those who are struggling for their human dignity and rights. By God's grace and mercies, slowly it gained solidarity with other regions of the WACC. It is rightly acclaimed as the gift of WACC-Asia to the Global WACC. We thank the President and all the officers and the Directors and the General Secretariat under the General Secretary for their encouragement in promoting our vision for WACC and all those who contributed for this resource booklet.

The Day of Pentecost in the Christian calendar is the day of the birth of the Church. If tower of Babel is the birth place of Communication, where it is seen as a place of many language that has created chaos and dispersal of people, the Pentecost is uniting the People of different languages to come together, where the people, in the power of the Holy Spirit, went forth into the streets of Jerusalem to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in many tongues (Ref. Act.2:5-11). Through the succeeding centuries, the evangelization mission spread to utmost corners of the earth, as Christianity took root in many places and learned to speak the diverse languages of the world, always in obedience to Christ's command to communicate the Gospel to every nation (Ref. Mt 28:19-20).

The age of the great discoveries, the Renaissance and the invention of printing, the Industrial Revolution and the birth of the modern world: these too were threshold moments which demanded new forms of evangelization. Now, with the communications and information revolution in full swing, the Church stands unmistakably at another decisive moment in history of its mission.

The new media of communication with all its technological advancement has made many changes. Knowledge based and knowledge-based skills are increasingly replacing physical-labour based skills in all walks of life. The post-industrial revolution, the electronic or digital revolution is greatly affecting the nature of learning and the production of knowledge and transforming the world in unforeseen ways, creating global network that people can use to converse, hold meetings, run virtual universities, conduct business, and transmit voice, data and images of all kinds. Even from remote villages one can now call distant corners of the world and watch on television events happening thousands of miles away. Simply, the world is fast becoming borderless.

While the new media of communication can never replace that profound experience of God which only the living, liturgical and sacramental life of the Church can offer, it can certainly provide a unique supplement and support in both preparing for the encounter with Christ in community, and sustaining the people in their journey of faith. The cyberspace, a new frontier of this new millennium is full of the interplay of danger and promise. The Church the new world of cyberspace is a summons to the great adventure of using its potential to proclaim the Gospel message. As the *Duc in altum* rightly calls it, following the Lord's command to "put out into the deep" (Lk 5:4). However, the Church recognizes the impact of digital technology on a rapidly changing society and the World Association for Christian Communication seeks to express the gospel in terms that are relevant to this new digital age. It is important and challenging for us to bridge this gap, as the changing way of communicating

with each other presents new challenges in communicating the work of the church and its institutions in communicating the Good News of Christ in our age.

Pope John Paul II asserts: “Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Cast your nets into the deep for a catch.” Let us cast our nets as netizens to build democratic citizens.

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## COMMUNICATION AND POWER: A MEDITATION



Dr. Dennis A. Smith  
WACC President

As WACC, we celebrate that communication is the essence of life and that human beings are called to be in communication with all of humankind and with all of creation.

We believe that God communicates with us with special clarity and fullness in Jesus of Nazareth. We also believe that Jesus communicates God's nature when he defends and holds up as models the excluded and marginalized. Women and children, the sick and tormented, despised foreigners and sinners, the rural poor - even traitors: Jesus embraced them all and called them his next of kin.

In his stories and in his actions, Jesus lived out a revolutionary concept of power. Power, Jesus showed, is best used not for amassing wealth or destroying your enemies, but rather for serving and protecting the powerless, the excluded. Power, in the way of Jesus, is emptying oneself so that all may have life, and have it abundantly.

The world in which we live operates under a different concept of power. Today, fewer governments, fewer corporations and fewer people have more and more power, and that power often is used to silence others and to make them invisible.

Think back for a moment to the history you learned in school. Think of times when the powerful broadcast stories and images that portrayed marginalized groups as “the other”?

Sometimes “the other” was a group that challenged their power and wealth.

Sometimes the powerful, to hold on to their power, needed to manufacture “the other” and present them as the enemy.

Think of photos, videos and news stories that help to manufacture “otherness” and portray “the other” as a threat. Even religious institutions and traditions can help to stigmatize “the other”.

Think of cases in your community where “others” have been silenced and made invisible.

Manufacturing “otherness” is an ancient and ugly craft. Considering today’s huge information and technology conglomerates and their close ties with partisan political groups, I suspect it is more widely used today than ever before.

**Two approaches to life; two understandings of power.**

Recently I was in Chile visiting a Presbyterian ministry to the Roma people. As in many countries, Chile's Roma community continues to live a nomadic existence. Although they have lived in Chile for more than a century and are Chilean citizens, they suffer persecution and have little access to public education. If other members of a community invade public lands, they can usually negotiate with the authorities to have electricity and water installed. But if a band of Roma sets up their tents on public lands, they will soon be visited by the police and told to move along.

As I talked with leaders of the Roma community, they made clear that they have three demands: access to education in their own language, access to water and electricity, and access to security. Access to such basic social services is their right as Chilean citizens. But they recognized that they had little knowledge of how to advocate for their rights with the Chilean authorities.

I was pleased to be able to put them in contact with Rev. Benjamin Rodriguez, a Chilean Methodist minister who is also vice president of the National Association of Community and Citizen Radio Stations of Chile (ANARCICH). Benjamin is a long-time member of WACC. In this next year he will work with Roma community leaders so they can tell their stories on local radio stations throughout Chile and learn how to advocate effectively for their community. Pray for them!

Who in your community is being silenced or made invisible? How can you work with them as they seek to claim their communication rights?



As WACC, we have seen that communication – and unfettered access to communication technologies - strengthens the ability of people – especially the silenced and those made invisible - to identify and respond to threats to life.

In this way, we follow the way of Jesus.

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## **STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**



Rev. Dr. Karin Achtelsetetter  
General Secretary, WACC

Great expectations have been raised by digital media platforms which, for the first time in the history of communications, have given a public voice to ordinary people. In the past, newspapers, radio and television were

largely owned and operated by commercial enterprises or by governments. Despite claims to editorial independence, the majority of media outlets were controlled ideologically and economically.

During the 20th century the enlightened concept of “public service” led to the establishment of entities such as the British Broadcasting Corporation in the United Kingdom and the concept of public service broadcasting in the Federal Republic of Germany. The aims of public service broadcasters were accessibility and appeal, attention to minorities, contribution to a sense of national identity and community, and emphasis on good programming rather than sheer numbers. Public service broadcasting flourished in many countries until pressure from media conglomerates owned by entrepreneurs and politicians brought about its decline.

That scenario began to change from the mid-1990s, when the Internet opened the way for user-generated content via a variety of digital media platforms. Professional media producers immediately seized the opportunity to broaden their markets using such technologies, but proponents of alternative communications together with social activists also saw the potential to claim a public voice. With their relatively low-cost accessibility, diversity and independence, digital media platforms today are the nexus of a wide range of perspectives on key issues challenging society and the world.

Governments were not slow to recognize the political and social implications of access to such technologies. Many less than democratic regimes and even some that were seen as bastions of democracy sought ways of restricting access and banning content. Questions of censorship and surveillance quickly arose, along with issues of ownership and control and “net neutrality” (the conflict between universal access and privileged access to the Internet).

WACC's vision of "Communication for All" is marred by any kind of restriction on communication freedom. The digital divide has come about due to limitations placed on technical infrastructure, financial investment, and capacity building, as well as the vested interests of governments and multinational corporations. Such barriers must be overcome if people are to have equal access to communications. As WACC's principles of communication emphasise:

"In many communities, the incorporation of emerging communication technologies into daily life multiplies voices while creating spaces where the silenced and invisibilized may address grievances. Communities use these technologies, together with more traditional media, as powerful tools with which they can demand accountability and celebrate their particular identities... On the other hand, media and technology conglomerates, often in partnership with governments, practice surveillance and exercise unprecedented levels of control over citizens. Furthermore, interconnected monopolies control news, opinion and entertainment, often in the pursuit of narrow ideological agendas."

WACC's vision is based on the Good News of redemption through Jesus Christ, but also on a firm belief in the centrality of communication rights to restoring voice and visibility to vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people in a spirit of genuine solidarity, hope and love.

As WACC also affirms: "In today's world, communication must be lifted up as a fundamental human right and communicators called to practice an ethics of freedom and accountability. Freedom of expression must be respected

and community groups assured access to technology and to media platforms... Together, such principles assure that a diversity of voices and images remain before the public and that the public can develop healthy criteria for discerning how those voices and images may contribute to the common good."

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# LITURGY FOR ASIA COMMUNICATION SUNDAY 2014

**Theme: “Strengthening Access to Technology to Bridge the Digital Divide”**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us worship God: IN THE NAME OF THE TRIUNE GOD; GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT  
A-MEN

Leader: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

**People: Loving God and Creator of all, we come to you today deeply grateful for your creation. As we look around us we are amazed at the greatness and majesty of all that you have made. Nature around us speaks of your greatness - the vast expanse of the sky, the mountains, trees, lakes and streams speak of your great design. You have given us such beauty in the colors of the rainbow, the beauty of flowers and fields. We come before you with reverence.**

Leader: God said: “Let there be light.” And there was light in all its spectrums – UV lights, X-rays, Gamma-rays – light with its enormous power.

**People: We praise you, O God for the light and the source of energy and all its potential for the showered upon the universe for the good of your creatures.**

Leader: Then God said: ‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky.’ There came to be a universe of galaxies with intricate complexities.’

**People: We praise you, O God for your wonders of creation, discovered and undiscovered, seen and yet to be seen, yet sharing the benefits from cycles of sun and moon and all galaxies, the rays they emit to experience your wonders in this age of ours.**

Leader: God created human beings in the divine image, in the divine image God created them:

And the human beings grew in wisdom, intellect and freedom, and learned to discover the incomprehensible power and knowledge of God. In reverence we love their creator.

**People: We praise you, O God**

**For creating us in your divine image and entrusting us with stewardship of all you have made.**

**Enable us to work with you to extend your creativity in the world for the benefit of all;**

**Enable us to rest in you to grow ever more confident in your goodness, and to celebrate that goodness evolving throughout all creation.**

Leader: Your works declare glory and splendor, and you call us humble ourselves in magnifying your Glory.

**People: Renew us in the waters of baptism,  
refresh us with the winds of your spirit,  
and sustain us with the bread of life.  
That we may see your beauty of creation  
The newness of your creation  
And the usefulness of all for the good of your people.  
In Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

*(Adopted from the Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving for Science and Technology Sunday written by Olivia Masih White, United Church of Christ)*

**HYMN OF PRAISE:** Stars and planets flung in orbit,  
*(Tune – Once in Royal David's City)*

Stars and planets flung in orbit,  
galaxies that swirl through space,  
powers hid within the atom,  
cells that form an infant's face:  
these, O God, in silence praise you;  
by your wisdom they are made.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,  
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,  
beast and fish and swarming insect,  
soaring bird, rejoicing, free:  
these, your creatures, join in chorus,  
praising you in wordless song.

Humankind, earth's deepest mystery,  
born of dust but touched by grace,  
torn apart by tongue and colour,  
yet a single, striving race:  
we, in whom you trace your image,  
add our words to nature's song.

Christ, the Word before creation  
as creation's final goal,  
once you came for earth's redemption;  
by your Spirit make earth whole:  
then, O God, the new creation  
will your praise for ever sing.

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

Leader: O gracious God, while praising you for creating the human beings in your own image and giving all human beings a common genetic makeup regardless of race/caste, gender, ethnicity and nationality:

**People: We thank you for your unfathomable wisdom in creating us. Make to be responsible stewards in preserving your divine image in us and serving all with your concerns.**

Leader: Gracious God, We thank you for the social media impacts the forming, shaping, and nurturing of faith communities, and enabling Christian communities articulate the Gospel in fresh new ways using new media, multi-media, and social media in public discourse and community proclamation.

**People: We thank you Lord for your unfathomable wisdom and the new ways of reaching communities proclaiming the Good news of Christ.**

Leader: Gracious God, we thank you for the social media such as blogging, Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, which are helping us strengthening social relationships that have built community and theology on social relationships for centuries.



**People: We thank you Lord for the promise of New Heaven and New Earth, we experience on earth through the New Media of communication in building our social relationships.**

Leader: O Gracious God, we are amazed by the inventions and use of technology – for all the scientists, technologist, engineers, students and professors who work diligently to unfold your holy mysteries and ask your blessings on each one of them.

May these technological developments and the new media of communication be used for the good of all and to alleviate suffering from the world.

**People: While we stand in awe and wonder at the mystery of your knowledge to your children, We thank you for strengthening our faith in your creative power.**

**We are grateful for this wonderful creationn and for being a part of your blessing.**

**Thanks be to you O gracious God. A-men.**

#### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

#### **VOICE 1: ICT AND CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY**

South Asia, home to more than one billion people, is also a region where information and communications technology (ICT) usage and adoption are growing exponentially. India alone has 52 million internet users and 362.3 million mobile phone subscribers – 15.3 million new subscribers were added in June 2010. Bangladesh has a total of 59.98 million mobile phone subscribers and sold about 230,000 PCs and 65,000 notebooks so far this year. Another populous country in the region, Pakistan, has 18,500,000 internet users and was set to hit 100 million mobile phone subscribers by August 2010.

The pace and the extent to which these products are penetrating society pose two types of problems. One is increasing cost, scarcity and consumption of energy through ICT tools or products that have an impact on the environment; and the other is the life cycle of ICT products and management of waste that has a considerable effect on health, safety and the environment.

Many countries do not have much longitudinal data on the extent of e-waste. Heavy use of ICT devices is one reason, but another important reason is that these countries are increasingly being used as a dumping ground for different electronic products. One study shows India generates around 300,000 tonnes of e-waste annually, which is estimated to grow to 1.6 million tonnes... Apart from this, an additional 50,000 tonnes of e-waste are illegally imported into the country. The informal sector processes close to 100% of the total amount of e-waste in India by recycling and backyard scrap trading.

A recent study in Dhaka, Bangladesh, shows that the city produced close to 16,000 tonnes of PC e-waste and 2,600 tonnes of mobile phone e-waste this year alone. According to a Dawn Newspaper report, more than 500,000 used computers (or 50,000 tonnes of e-waste) are dumped in Pakistan every year.

ICT penetration is increasing in the countries of Asia in general, but these countries do not have much information on e-waste management systems and recycling processes. Countries in the region are being used as dumping grounds for used computers, monitors, mobile phones and other electronic items. (*Partha Sarkar, 2010 – ICT and Environmental Sustainability, Global Information Society Watch*). This brings concerns of environmental pollution and ecological imbalance and strengthening our threats to the future of the world.

*(Silence for reflection and seeking God's forgiveness.)*

***People: Lord, forgive our irresponsible use of the technology you have given us as a gift. Make us to understand the problems we are creating in using the gifts and be sensitive to preserve and use your resources of the universe responsibly.***

***(Chant) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

## **VOICE 2 -- ICT AND POVERTY**

Widening of the gap between so called 'haves' and 'have-nots' is a global phenomenon. However, In Asia this gap is even bigger and more worrying. ICT is creating a distance-less world where communication is becoming instantaneous and has placed immense power into the hands of, so far, of the haves and elite. It is impacting on all dimensions of life: education, health, quality of family, culture, leisure and arts, scientific and technological world. The way people do business globally goes beyond our imagination. It is helping economies expand at an unprecedented rate, and competitiveness has become the motto of the day. Rich countries will continue to become richer and rich people will become richer faster than ever before resulting into a gigantic ocean of the world's poor. ... Unprecedented growth in science and technology are in the hands of minority urban elite; but huge oceans of impoverished poor suffering from illiteracy, ill-health, malnutrition, overpopulation etc. The creation of knowledge is the basis for new prosperity. Access by the poor to high tech opportunities is the issue. Rather than using ICT for empowering the poor with knowledge and equip them with productivity skills, the poor have been marginalized and do not have access and control over them, leading them to greater misery. We forget to understand that communication poverty is the root of the economic, social and other poverty. We forget to bring down the ownership, use and control of

selective digital technology from the elite, business and government regimes to the level of communities and the poor they serve.

*(Silence for reflection and seeking God's forgiveness)*

**People: Lord, forgive us our ignorance in using your gift to the benefit of a few and marginalizing the poor still more. Enable us to understand that it is vital to bring information to the doorsteps of the poor in order to empower them to overcome communication poverty which is crucial to overcome economic, social, cultural and other forms of poverty.**

*(Chant) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.*

### **VOICE 3            DIGITAL DIVIDE AND MIGRANTS**

Proportional to the massive growth of the migrant populace, now numbering at 232 million (United Nations, 2013), is the rise in number of violence committed against them. From violations of the contract to wage deprivations, physical abuse to downright inhumane treatment, migrant workers are subjected to what we now call modern-day slavery.

In 2013 alone, the world was witness to countless attacks on the rights, lives and dignity of migrant workers. To cite one, the *nitaqat*, or localization of labor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has brought its government to crack down on thousands of undocumented migrant workers, arresting, detaining and deporting them in big numbers.

The digital divide remains wide still with the limited access, knowledge and usage of migrant workers to digital technology. The creation, production and distribution of digital technology remain in the hands of the

few and subjected to laws and conditions that powerful institutions like the WTO dictate. (*Adapted from Migrant Workers, Their Rights and the Digital World Prepared by the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), ACS 2014*).

*(Silence for reflection and seeking God's forgiveness)*

**People: Lord, forgive us for our lack of understanding of the problems faced by the Migrants in several countries in Asia and in other parts of the world. Teach us to be sensitive to their issues in this world of Technological development that forced labor is taking an ugly place and challenge those structures and people who are denying their rights.**

*(Chant) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.*

#### **VOICE 4 -- DIGITAL DIVIDE AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Communication and Information says that, the gender divide is one of the most significant inequalities to be amplified by the digital revolution, and cuts across all social and income groups. Throughout the world, women face serious challenges that are not only economic but social as well as cultural – obstacles that limit or prevent their access to, use of, and benefits from ICTs.

While the region's online population grows rapidly, women's presence in this new communication space still lags behind. Access to this new medium is particularly difficult for women in poorer and less urbanized areas where telecommunications infrastructures are poor and unaffordable. Lack of skills, training and language

accessibility also serve as major deterrents and causes impediments in the promotion of communication rights.

**People: Gracious Lord, forgive us for our incapacity to feel the suffering voices of women and our tendency to live comfortably with injustice.**

*(Chant) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.*

**All: (Absolution)**

**God, the maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen:  
who has placed us in his creation, and commanded us to care for it;  
whose works declares the glory and splendor, calling us to praise and reverence.**

**Where we have degraded or destroyed earth's bounty, may forgive us.**

**Where we have taken beauty and majesty for granted, have mercy upon us.**

**Where we have become estranged from the creatures with whom we share this planet,  
may grant us peace.**

**In the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the new order. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING:**

Reading From Acts of the Apostles 2: 5-11

Gospel Reading: Mt 28:19-20

**HOMILY:**

**HYMN OF THE DAY:**

## A CREEDAL AFFIRMATION:

1. We believe that all creations have their beginning in God through God's creative word, the Communication of God. God saw that all he created were very good (Gen. 1:31), hence we affirm that:

The universe with all unique creations is the handiwork of God for the well-being of humanity.

2. We believe that the New Technology is a response to God's command to till and to keep the land (cf. Gen 2:15) that God has entrusted to humanity." Hence we affirm:

That technology itself is not inherently good or evil, but the *expression* of a good, God-given human quality.

3. We believe that the new media of communication is a means of creating new relationships;

Hence we affirm that the new media of communication is God's gift to fulfil God's purpose to relate to each other and that these connections facilitate forms of co-operation between people of different geographical and cultural contexts that enable them to deepen our common humanity."

4. We believe that the new media of communication and communication technology is a means to promote "a culture of respect, dialogue and friendship" within it.

Hence we affirm that the content and relationship of the new media of communication and the technology should be at the service of promoting dignity and rights of all human persons.

5. We believe that it would be a "tragedy" if the continuous development of new media should contribute only to increasing the gap separating the 'haves' and 'have-nots' from the new networks that are developing at the service of human socialization and information.

Hence, we affirm the need to call for a movement to represent the poor and marginalized through these new media—and for those people to have access to new media in order to affirm their human dignity and rights.

6. We believe that human beings are a mixture of the dust of the earth and the breath of God (Gen 2:7)

Hence, we affirm that there should be no devaluing of either the physical or spiritual circumstances of human life, but that people in the totality of their existence must be addressed. What God has joined, let no one separate.

7. Because God has made us to be in relationship with God and one another and share responsibility for the welfare of all (Gen 4:9, 19) we affirm our belief in Triune God, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit who taught us that

We cannot turn away from those in suffering or need or denied of their rights and dignity but must in compassion and solidarity recognize our belonging to the one family of God, and hence our responsibility for others.

Hence, we pledge to be active participants with the church and movements such as World Association for Christian Communication and all who stand with the struggling and marginalized people for their human dignity and express their rights to communicate and maintain integrity with creation and preserve the bonds between the Creator and the Creatures.

We pledge to find ways to offer our new technologies to God as a fitting and appropriate offering of ourselves. In as far as we are identified with our communications system as we clearly have with writing, the offering of our literary liturgical creativity to God has been both fitting and appropriate acknowledging the



challenge for the future is to be open to the ways in which God may be seeking to enable us to do this with the Information and Communication Technologies. Amen.

### **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

Leader: Merciful God, Lord of Life,

Lord of Peace, Justice and Reconciliation

We bring before you our supplication, seeking your favour in hearing our prayers.

**All: Kumba yah! my Lord, Kumba Yah (3)**

**O Lord, Kumba Yah!**

**Some one's crying Lord Kumba Yah! (3x)**

**O Lord, Kumba Yah!**

Leader: Someone's crying Lord, somewhere

The some is not one or a few, but several millions Lord

The somewhere is not one place Lord, several places

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tibet, (include the country or place specific to your concerns ...) all over Asia, Africa, Latin America, Pacific, or even Europe and America... *(include the place of your own ...)*

Those who are marginalized because of their identity with class, caste, religion/faith, economic status, gender and nationality, those who are suffering due to migration to other lands increasing their sufferings as aliens, women deprived of their dignity and rights, more so the digital technology widening the gap between the haves and have-nots.

There are tears of fears and suffering

There are tears of weakness and disappointment  
There are fears of insecurity  
God of justice and peace  
Wipe their tears and May they find security in your presence.

**All: Some one's dying Lord, Kumba yah (3)**  
**Oh, Lord, Kumba yah!**

Leader: You have created all human beings in your image  
You have given your resources as gifts to the human beings for the well-being of humanity  
But people killing each other in exploiting your free gifts of technology and becoming agents of oppression.

God of justice and peace redeem your children from the exploiters and strengthen your agents to work towards peace and harmony to enjoy all your free gifts with dignity and honour.

**All: Someone's shouting Lord, Kumba Yah (3x)**  
**Oh, Lord, Kumba yah!**

Leader: Someone's shouting Lord!  
Shouting out boldly with courage  
Some have made their choices  
ready to challenge the oppression  
ready to offer his/her very existence  
in confidence and commitment  
to fight death surrounding humanity and the creations

to bring fullness of life to the whole creation using your gifts of technology – blogs, facebook, twitter, youtube and all other means of communication that build relationship.

Someone is shouting Lord for their right to communicate, freedom of express.

Empower them and strengthen them to shout and challenge for peace and Justice.

**All: Someone's praying Lord, Kumba yah! (3x)  
Oh! Lord, Kumba Yah.**

Leader: Someone's praying Lord,

We join hands with them in praying with tears

- In frustration and weakness
- In strength and endurance
- In confidence and commitment

We are shouting and wrestling

- As Jacob wrestled with the angels
- As Elisha wrestled with Elijah
- As the Samaritan woman wrestled with Jesus

Who were touched

Who were marked

And became a blessing.

We are praying Lord  
Spur our imagination in using your gift of the social media  
Sharpen our human will that it should be used for the well-being of all

- Touch us to be touched
- Renew us to renew
- Bless us to be a blessing

In seeking to spur our knowledge for the good of human beings through technology  
may we also seek the well-being of the planet through which you are sending the spectrum that could  
strengthen our communication for relationship and good of all.

**All: We are singing Lord, Kumba yah (3x)**  
**Oh! Lord, Kumba Yah!**

Leader: We pray for the whole church and the world, for WACC and all those supporting us in our mission to the  
marginalized in strengthening their voices, struggling with them for their right to express and communicate.  
In giving thanks for your goodness, for your love made known to us in Christ, for your truth confirmed in his  
death and resurrection, for your promises to us and all people, keeping hope alive

**All: Lead us O God, to march forward into our relationship**  
**Stimulated by hope, strengthened by faith and directed by love**  
**To play our part in the liberation of all people**  
**In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

**FINAL BLESSING:**

May the God of all creation  
Give us clear eyes to see the whole world  
So that we may never take for granted the gifts God has given us  
Or think they belong to us alone.  
May God grant us open hearts to reach out from our comfort zones  
and open our gates to walk in new solidarity with our neighbours in using the Technology for the good of all.  
Now may the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bless you all. Amen.

**CLOSING SONG: We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the lord.**

We are One in The Spirit,  
We are One in The Lord. (2x)  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

*Chorus*

And they'll know we are Christians by our love,  
By our Love,  
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will work with each other,  
We will work side by side. (2x)  
And we'll guard each man's dignity  
And save each man's pride.    -*Chorus*

We will work with each other,  
We will work side by side. (2x)

And we'll guard each man's dignity  
And save each man's pride. - *Chorus*

We will walk with each other,  
We will walk hand in hand. (2x)  
And together we'll spread the News  
that God is in our land. -*Chorus*

Prepared by Rev. Dr. Samuel Meshack, Chairperson, WACC-Asia

## STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY GOES HAND IN HAND WITH USERS' EDUCATION



Dr. Praxedis Bouwman  
Vice-president WACC global  
Chair, WACC Europe

### **Teach the generations, Psalm 78:1-8**

My daughter in law was pregnant of her first child. When she and her husband announced the pregnancy my husband and I were excited, it would be our first grandchild. Since the daughter in law had a somewhat troubled relationship with her parents, specifically with her mother, I thought of us -grandparents to be- taking up a role of being the experienced parents answering questions about pregnancy and giving birth, about raising a child.

Yet that did not happen! In fact that period was marked by a –fortunately- temporarily divide between the younger generation and us. A digital divide! No questions nor insecurities shared with the older generation, but internet as the answer to everything. We could only shake our heads in puzzlement, witnessing them falling into the trap of the one dimension of internet as guide. The young couple only read what they wanted to read, built their opinions on that, without reading or hearing different perspectives. The latter is exactly what happens when consulting elder people, sometimes you hear what you don't like, but it helps sorting things out, it helps shaping an authentic way of dealing with issues.

As I am reflecting here from a European perspective, some figures for understanding. In Europe 79% of all households has internet access, 62% uses internet daily and 10% one time a week minimum. Even in Bulgaria (54%), Greece (56%) and Romania (58%) the access is undoubtedly higher than in certain regions in Asia. I myself am speaking from the country which has the highest internet access of Europe, 95%. 83% of the Dutch uses internet daily. It means that all administrative, but also social processes are dominated by digital processes. I can't remember myself when I dropped a paper transfer in the mailbox of my bank. I had my first PC some 25 years ago, and bought one prepared with the software for internet access 14 years ago. That was the moment that I started using internet banking (how smart of the bank to sell those PC's with an enormous discount). Nowadays it is nearly impossible in the Netherlands to hand in tax returns in a handwritten form! So who would I be to say something wise about the fight for access to technology, than only support and facilitate those in the world who do not have that access? To again and again raise this issue in my environment, to raise awareness in an overall self-satisfied group of Dutch, Europeans. Why do 'we' not ship technology in masses to the parts of the world in need, as the circulation of (mobile) technology is so high in my part of the world (every one to two years a new mobile device, to keep track with quicker, more MB's, access to clouds)?

The digital divide cannot be described as in between two groups, those with and those without access. The divide exists on many levels. Quite common is the thinking in four elements: motivation (internet-dropouts, technophobes and lower educated are less motivated), ownership (the material access), digital skills and usage (higher educated



people use internet differently compared to less educated individuals). To add to the usage: a divide exists in terms of administrative/informative usage on the one hand and entertainment on the other.

While bridging the digital divide via strengthening access to technology, I would like to advise to not make the same mistakes others have done. To save individuals, families and communities from another divide, the one of usage, I would strongly advocate to take education in usage within the fight for access to technology.

In the Netherlands libraries are playing a huge role in educating people, but also with limited success, as many people cannot find the library anymore. I see a huge role for all forms of communities to pull together for advocating access and user-education, yet I would like to challenge church- and church related communities even more to pick up that role, as equality is one of the key words of the Gospel. And in order to contribute to life affirming and sustainable communities without divide, I see the platforms of church networks as digital advocates at large.

Coming back to my daughter in law, I can tell you the divide is gone. She and our son, digital natives, found out that face-to-face communication with us as digital immigrants is more sustainable. And for finding information on internet it becomes handy to also approach issues from different perspectives. And above all: not to believe everything on internet, because it is on internet, is true.

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## STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Dr. Philip Lee

Deputy Director of Programs, WACC

“Strengthening Access to Technology to Bridge the Digital Divide” is reflected in an important initiative under *WACC’s Strategic Plan 2012-2016*. WACC is promoting digital platforms and citizen journalism as a means of advancing the democratic participation and active citizenship of marginalized peoples and communities worldwide.

It is expected that projects will address local needs, challenges and opportunities and work with citizens’ groups to use digital media for coalition-building and to create functional networks of citizen journalists to exchange information, knowledge and good practices.

WACC’s strategic objective is to help remove obstacles to the public communication of problems and their potential solutions and to provide access to relevant information in order for people to participate in shaping local and national priorities. The objective is one of inclusion.

In Asia it seems that there are particular difficulties in rural areas and especially for women, who are hampered by lack of training in digital literacy, socio-economic constraints on owning ICT equipment, inconvenient location of community ICT centres and sometimes by lack of confidence.

Towards the end of 2013 the United Nations launched an interactive map of the information superhighway to show policy makers and investors the location of the missing links in the digital divide in the Asia-Pacific region. Commenting on the evidence presented by the map, Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said: “In Asia and the Pacific, what we call the ‘digital divide’ is in fact an income divide, a gender divide, an education divide and a knowledge divide.”

In this context, increased connectivity can help bridge those gaps by making better use of today’s information and communication technologies to empower people to organize and to improve their lives and livelihoods.

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## **MIGRANT WORKERS, THEIR RIGHTS AND THE DIGITAL WORLD**

Prepared by the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)

[www.apmigrants.org](http://www.apmigrants.org)

On a regular Sunday, whether it is in Seoul, Hong Kong or Taipei, one would see at least one migrant worker with a smart phone in hand. He or she would either be talking to someone in his or her native tongue, tapping on the keyboard and probably sending an email, whatsapping or updating a Facebook status, or happily looking at the screen while chatting with a Bluetooth mike or earpiece.

Migrant workers in their millions now belong to the world populace that is continually enthralled with and religiously following the fast-developing world of digital technology. They recognize the importance of having this gadget – a

smart phone, a laptop or a tablet – in order to get connected with the world, or at the minimum, with their families back home while creating their own virtual community online through social networks.

Their ownership and utilization of this gadget, however, do not correspond automatically with the full realization of their communication rights. Communication rights, by definition of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), go beyond the right to communicate or freedom of expression to include “areas such as democratic media governance, media ownership and control, participation in one’s own culture, rights to education, privacy, peaceful assembly, and self-determination (Meshack, 2012).”

Proportional to the massive growth of the migrant populace, now numbering at 232 million (United Nations, 2013), is the rise in number of violations committed against them. From violations of the contract to wage deprivations, physical abuse to downright inhumane treatment, migrant workers are subjected to what we now call modern-day slavery.

In 2013 alone, the world was witness to countless attacks on the rights, lives and dignity of migrant workers. To cite one, the *nitaqat*, or localization of labor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has brought its government to crack down on thousands of undocumented migrant workers, arresting, detaining and deporting them in big numbers.

The *nitaqat* in itself may serve greatly the interest of many KSA nationals but the crackdown only placed migrants in greater harm yet failing to address the root causes of irregular migration, or how and why documented migrant workers become undocumented in the duration of their stay in the KSA. News reports carried statistics of migrant workers facing deportation, the law in the KSA that many of them have violated, and the government’s plan with the *nitaqat*. Nonetheless, it lacked in presenting the conditions by which migrant workers are subjected to, the Kafala

sponsorship system and the problems it poses to migrant workers, the oppression and exploitation that push them in a situation of conflict, and the dearth of services or mechanisms that they can access in times of need.

Such an incident did not register in the United Nations' 6<sup>th</sup> High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development that happened in New York, USA last October 2013. What was discussed was the future of the migration for development paradigm through the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and how labor migration can truly serve in the over-all development of economies.

While beautifying the GFMD and its neoliberal agenda, national policies of both migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries are fashioned to adapt to the migration for development paradigm but leaving out the conditions that push the phenomenon of forced labor migration (or what is known to some as necessity-based migration) and the many unaddressed conditions that migrant workers and their families face in host countries.

Trade agreements such as the TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) facilitate the flow of global labor migration yet international conventions like the International Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families remain only in paper, only ratified by less than 50 governments, many of which are migrant-sending, and not developed into national laws that ensure the protection of rights and freedoms of migrant workers.

The environment, both at the global level and in the countries where the migrant workers come from and are currently working in, remains constricted and limits the movement of migrant workers. How then can one ensure the full realization of communication rights of migrant workers when their basic rights are denied them?

Such an environment however brought forth the development of movement of migrant workers. The formation of the International Migrants' Alliance, a global platform run by and made for grassroots migrants, for example, and the

growing cooperation between grassroots migrant organizations and supportive advocates and service providers are evidence that such a system of oppression is being challenged.

Migrant workers then use the digital frontiers in making their issues known. Take the case of Erwiana, an Indonesian domestic worker gravely abused and inhumanely treated by her employer in Hong Kong for eight months before being sent back home to Indonesia in such a state of physical suffering.

While in the Hong Kong International Airport awaiting her flight, she was seen by fellow Indonesian domestics who would be taking the same flight as she was. They took photos of her current physical state using their smart phones and uploaded them on Facebook.

Through the social network, people got to know of Erwiana's case, helping grassroots migrant organizations to get in touch with her and take her case, providing the media with information about her situation, as well as prodding the governments of Hong Kong and Indonesia to respond accordingly. In such a short period, the campaign to call for justice for Erwiana broadened and gathered huge support. A mass demonstration announced on Facebook only a few days before Sunday drew more than 10,000 people, mostly migrant workers.

Erwiana is one of the many millions of migrant workers who, despite having a smart phone, was denied her basic rights and maltreated by her employer, abandoned by her recruitment agency and would only be attended to if not for the attention given by her fellow migrant workers.

Digital technology becomes then an instrument for migrant workers to relay their stories to the world, and not only to their families and friends. It becomes a refuge for them, finding comfort in it knowing that there are many like them who experience the same situations as they are and are fighting to assert their rights and challenge their governments and the system.

However, one needs reminding that while by-products of this technology are in the hands of the migrants and those who can afford them, the ownership, control and supervision of communication technology remain in the grips of only a handful of big business corporations. With the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA) enforced, there are greater chances for monopoly of patents, denial of technology transfer and even negative environmental, social and economic impact on people and countries.

We have seen how powerful states have used technology in gathering intelligence and spying on people and governments. Repressive laws in some countries now consider communicating critical views on governments on the net as a cybercrime while inhibiting access to public information.

With bigger resources, anti-migrant institutions, organizations and individuals use technology as an instrument to project migrant workers as scapegoats for the economic crisis or social discontent and promote xenophobia and other anti-migrant propaganda. Such misinformation creates and influences public opinion thus fanning anti-migrant sentiments among the locals and making greater the divide between them and the migrant workers.

Even in the digital world, those with more financial resources have greater power and control. And migrant workers are subject to racism, prejudice and discrimination not only in the real world but also in the virtual.

The digital divide remains wide still with the limited access, knowledge and usage of migrant workers to digital technology. The creation, production and distribution of digital technology remain in the hands of the few and subjected to laws and conditions that powerful institutions like the WTO dictate.

We should challenge this system that governs and influences both digital technology as well as migration. Alternatives to the neoliberal paradigm should be developed in order for human rights of migrant workers and other marginalized sections of society, including communication rights, are recognized, protected and practiced.

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## **THE NUCLEAR ISSUE AND THE PROPHETIC WITNESS OF THE PCT**

Prof. CHI Bong Chi (Victor Hsu)

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

On October 1, 1992, the PCT issued a courageous, anti-nuclear declaration. This was in response to a government proposal to build a Fourth Nuclear Power Station. Thanks to the support given by the people to this declaration, the Fourth Nuclear Power Station remains unconstructed some 21 years later. But the PCT and the civil society remain vigilant to thwart any plans by the government to pass any new legislation to commence the construction. It has been a 25-year struggle against death by the unsafe nuclear energy. This is the story of the quest for the Lord of Life in the wake of immense pressure by the government to inflict environmental degradation on Taiwan's indigenous people through deceit and bullying.

The anti-nuclear declaration of the PCT was theologically and biblically based. Referring to Psalm 24 and I Cor 4:2, the declaration begins:

*We firmly believe that the whole universe is the creation of God, and that humankind is called to protect the integrity and harmony of the whole natural order. Therefore, we need to change our present human-centered behavior, allow nature to be self-sustaining and so insure the ongoing welfare of succeeding generations.*



Since 1992, this declaration has served as the basis for a national mobilization of anti-nuclear activities until this day. For example, in 2013 when the government attempted to resurrect the proposal, the PCT led a national demonstration with a “walk” around the island of Taiwan. In the end, the plan was temporarily shelved, again.



The PCT mobilization action was also directed at the nuclear waste dumping. In the mid 1990’s the government deceitfully informed the residents of the Lanyu Island that the hundreds of drum barrels being buried in the island contained bad fish. However, the PCT helped exposed the deceit by the government to dump the nuclear waste in Lanyu. Subsequently, the residents of the island, with the support of the PCT and anti-nuclear non-government organizations, took the protest to Taipei by throwing many of these drum barrels in front of the Presidential Palace. These drums were draped with the slogan: If it is safe in Lanyu, it is safe in Taipei!

The demonstration about Lanyu and the 4<sup>th</sup> nuclear plant was heard in Japan and Korea. A three-person delegation came to Taiwan in August 2013 to express their desire to establish a partnership with the PCT and with Taiwanese civil society to mount an effective international campaign to support Taiwan’s opposition to “#4”. They also asked the PTC to

participate in strategizing towards the WCC Assembly which would be a rare but very significant occasion to mount a public mobilization against nuclear energy. The three persons were:

Dr. Kim Yong-Bock, Director of Life and Peace Institute, Seoul

Dr. Choi SeungKoo, Secretary General, No Nuke Asia Actions, Japan

Mr. Lee Daesoo, Asia Citizen's Network for Peace

The PCT General Secretary, LYIM Hong-Tiong, gave strong support to setting up a three-country network set up taking into account the importance of strategizing effectively both before and during the WCC Assembly.



The Assembly had several activities including Pre-Assembly meetings among youth, women and indigenous peoples, Ecumenical Conversations, Madang Seminars, and Madang Exhibitions. A one day meeting was convened by Dr Kim Yong-Bock hosted by the NCC-Korea on September 7. Accordingly, the PCT group was led by Associate General

Secretary, CHI Bong Chi (Victor Hsu) and the members included Rev. Supina Nakaisulan, an official PCT delegate to the Assembly. Other participants included Asia Citizen's Network for Peace, Korea Christian Network for World Without Nuclear Power and Weapon, No Nukes Asian Actions, NCKK, Tohoku HELP, and YMCA.

In Busan, the three countries cooperated and collaborated at the Madang exhibitions through Tohoku HELP, the Korea Network, and the PCT. Each exhibition reflected the concerns of the other two countries with the sharing of material and displays. Japan showed continuing and worrisome vulnerability of the Fukushima Daiichi plant. Latest news was that the entire complex including the other three reactors would collapse with an earthquake of 5.5 on the Richter scale. It also brought displays about those who were victims of the atomic bombings in 1945 known as the "Hibakushia."

The Korean civil society ramped up its activities. For example, forty days prior to the Assembly there was a fasting vigil. Demonstrations were held across the country to draw attention to the danger of nuclear plans. During the Assembly a special demonstration was held at Jeri plant not far from Busan. This became a "Jericho" style march around the nuclear plant. The ecumenical officer from the PCT, Mr. Yeh, spoke words of encouragement to the demonstrators. During the Assembly on the weekend a sit-in candle-light vigil was organized in front of the Busan City Hall.

For the Madang seminar, the PCT was represented by its Associate General Secretary, CHI who updated the packed conference room about the numerous anti-nuclear activities since 1992, against nuclear power plant and against nuclear waste dumping. The head of the Tao Foundation, Ms. Simavivo, who led the anti-nuclear waste dumping in Lanyu, talked about her own personal experience and updated the international gathering about her continuing vigilance against any attempt to desecrate her sacred island home.

In the wake of relentless pressure by the government and by the island’s business interests, the PCT will continue to be alert to any all measures that will represent injustice and a threat to peace in Taiwan and to the people of Taiwan, especially the indigenous peoples.

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### **COMMUNICATION FOR ALL: SHARING WACC’S PRINCIPLES**

WACC believes that communication plays a crucial role in building peace, security and a sense of identity as well as in promoting justice, mutual accountability and transparency. Communication, WACC believes, contributes to the common good. This conviction has led WACC to articulate seven guiding principles:

- Communication is a spiritual exercise
- Communication builds and shapes community
- Communication enhances participation
- Communication promotes freedom and demands accountability
- Communication celebrates cultural diversity
- Communication builds connectedness
- Communication affirms justice and challenges injustice.

The first principle “Communication is a spiritual exercise” seeks to encourage inter-faith study and dialogue.

The second, “Communication builds and shapes community”, asserts that genuine communication calls for mutual accountability and trust.

Under “Communication enhances participation”, WACC asserts that inclusive and participatory communication leads to transparency and mutual accountability leading to a more just and peaceful world.

“Communication promotes freedom and demands accountability” affirms that freedom of expression must be respected and community groups must be assured access to technology and to media platforms.

“Communication celebrates cultural diversity” underscore the fact that communication is especially vital when cultural memory, language, religion, gender, age, ethnicity or race are denigrated or denied by members of other cultural groups.

Finally, the new Principles emphasize the need to build connectedness, to affirm justice and to challenge injustice.

“Communication for All” is WACC’s vision, recognizing communication rights as inherent in all other human rights, and restoring voice and visibility to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in a spirit of genuine solidarity.

In 1984, Hans W. Florin, then General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), guided the development of a statement of WACC’s core identity intended to shape its life and work. Two years later, WACC’s directors adopted the *Christian Principles of Communication* (1986), affirming that communication creates community, is participatory, liberates people, defends and promotes human cultures in all their rich diversity and speaks prophetically to power. Fr. Michael Traber was the key drafter of those principles.

It was WACC’s hope that the *Christian Principles of Communication* would challenge its members “to disassociate themselves from power structures which keep the poor in a position of subservience” and to promote “genuine reconciliation by means of which the dignity of all people can be reaffirmed.” The aim also was to encourage members to contribute, as people of faith, to the emerging debates on communication rights and communication

ethics, as well as to advocate for truth and justice in a world where information and communication systems often sustained an unjust status quo.

A quarter of a century later, the world is both different and unchanged. Political, economic, social, and cultural structures have been transformed by globalization and technological innovation. Yet urgent questions of justice and equality remain to be addressed all over the world, not least in those countries suffering repression, conflict, and poverty.

To that end, WACC has revised and updated its principles to reflect contemporary realities. WACC affirms that communication is a spiritual exercise, builds and shapes community, enhances participation, promotes freedom and demands accountability, celebrates cultural diversity, builds connectedness, affirms justice and challenges injustice.

- See more at: <http://www.waccglobal.org/who-we-are/our-organization/principles#sthash.jf6K7s5q.dpuf>

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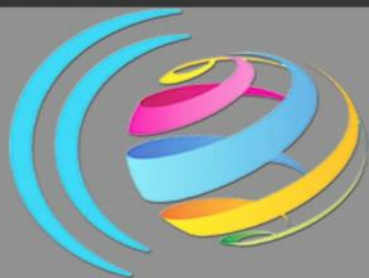


"Hong Kong Creation Care kick-off"









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