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Asian Realities and the Ecumenical Response

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The **contemporary reality of Asia**, as in many parts of the world, is one of deep unease. The irony of the ending of the Cold War is that it has coincided with the unleashing of uncontrollable violence in many parts of the world. The combination of high technology and seemingly medieval tribal conflict has become the pattern of our times. We still see the last vestiges of the Cold War, as, for example, in the nuclear test recently carried out by North Korea. However, the more general pattern of the combination of high technology and medieval conflict is seen particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq. Behind all of this lies the development of a new ideology, particularly in the West, which "legitimizes a culture of violence by invoking God arbitrarily to suit a particular agenda for aggression. As a result, insecurity, fear and anxiety characterize the lives of many people"² throughout Asia.

This culture of unease manifests itself in many different ways. There is the negative impact of economic globalisation, which continues to widen the gap between the haves and the have not. There is also the structural violence of domineering or negligent governments in relation to their populations. Corruption and the abuse of power often manifest themselves in violence. In addition in Asia, there are often structural forms of traditional violence, mainly based in patriarchal societies. These result in gender discrimination, forced labour migration, discrimination against young people and those with disabilities, and discrimination based on race, caste, and class. Surrounding our very life is the violence against the environment.

Against this rather gloomy picture of Asia, positive signs must also be noted. There is a yearning among young people for true manifestations of harmonious and of just communities. In the aftermath of the Tsunami we have observed remarkable efforts to create communities of harmony and trust in various places. Again, the speed of reconciliation after ethnic and communal violence often has been very rapid. Despite

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² Samuel Kobia, quoted in World Council of Churches News Release entitled "Restating the Ecumenical Vision demands Conversion, says Kobia", Geneva, 15/02/2005. Cf. BURTON, J. *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 1-2; 13-24.

incredible violence, there is evidence of a vast amount of resilience among populations who have been deeply wounded.

Against the situation in which we find ourselves, we need to look for the **appropriate ecumenical response**. Within this, we need to hear the voice of God because that is central to our identity as Christians. How do we listen to the voice of God? It is not our task primarily to invoke God for our particular view of the world, but rather, in humility, to sit and listen as that divine voice comes to us.

In the first instance, let us go to the very heart of **our existence as Christians, and as the church**. The inexplicable will of God to be for, and with, humanity implies that the church's life cannot begin to be understood in terms of the structures and events of the world. Equally, God's inexplicable will to be God with, and for, humanity implies that we should always understand our life as Christians theologically. These simple, yet profound, facts derive from the mystery of the triune God not to be God apart from, or separate from, humanity, but rather to make God's very life intersect with the unity of the Son of God with us. Our theological basis as Christians and as the church is in the wonder of God's condescension, in the intentionality of God's solidarity with sinners, that is, with those who find their self-identity solely within themselves, and find their self-justification and sole solace in themselves alone, without any reference to God. The church is called to exist solely through the solidarity of Jesus Christ with those who are alienated from God, by Christ going to the extremes of alienation for humanity, so that humanity might through Him come close to God. At the heart of our faith is expressed the fact that God does not wish to be alone in celebrating the wonder God's inexpressible love for humanity. God in Christ calls into existence an earthly Body of His Son who is its heavenly Head, in order that humanity may responsively rejoice with God in the harmony and peace which God has established for creation.

If the being of the church and its life is predicated upon the grace of Jesus Christ as itself defining God's action in the world for the reconciliation of creation, including humanity, then its life of harmony is that which it receives from Him, Who is its life. The church's very existence will be shaped by the manner in which it confesses this truth to be its very life.

Concern for **human rights**, the lack of which is so central to Asian reality, is a central factor in the understanding of the Christian faith. However, in this matter, where does authority lie for Christianity? Initially it seems simple enough. God is the only and ultimate seat of authority, and all authority for the Christian community is founded in God. A number of general principles derive from what is primarily a doctrine of God. They might be categorised as follows:

1. All humans are made in the image of God. God gives the earth and its bounty to sustain our lives physically. Each person is of inestimable value because their creation is in God's image.
2. Human existence is in community. Thus the Exodus, the escape from oppression, is seen as a communal act of freedom. Individuality has to be seen in a communal context.

3. There is the prophetic critique of all oppressive power structures, especially for widows, orphans and aliens.
4. There is the solidarity of Jesus with the outcast, and the religiously despised.
5. Mercy is to be seen as central to human existence. The greatest struggle which the early church had with the pantheon of Greek gods was with the god of healing, Aescalapius, at Epidaurus in the Peloponnese. Here the commercial nature of medicine was finally overcome by the merciful communal understanding of healing. Medicine was not merely to be a transaction of a commercial nature between doctor and the one seeking a medical procedure, for whatever reason. The interaction was to be one which involved the community as well as the patient, and one where mercy was to be paramount.
6. There is the conviction that human existence in community can be fulfilled only if there is the full ability to participate in the processes of community. Thus, there need to be economic, housing, health and education levels for each individual to have adequate access to being part of the community. The provision of such levels is to be both a community and an individual responsibility.
7. There have been traditions, especially within certain strands of Protestantism, where the state has been regarded as so alien from the will of God so that only its entire replacement is to be the Christian way. In that case the state is regarded as being incapable of reforming itself, and therefore the Christian way must be to replace it.

However, within Christianity, historically a number of factors have played into the situation:

1. There have been tendencies towards exclusiveness. Signs of this can be seen within the New Testament. Classic examples have been the Crusade traditions, Luther's attitude towards Islam (under the rubric of the Turks), and the former, apartheid-era, attitude of the N G K (Dutch Reformed Church) in South Africa towards the indigenous population. In some cases human rights were denied to those of other faiths, in other to those of the same faith, but different race.
2. There has been the separation of church and state responsibilities, seen in a variety of doctrines of the church, including, but not only, certain interpretations of the Lutheran doctrine of the *Two Kingdoms*. The result has often been that concern for civil rights has been ignored within the Churches. The classic example here is the silence of sections of the churches in the face of the Nazi persecution of the Jews in the 1930s. It is significant to recall that the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer's concern for the plight of Jews in Nazi territories was stimulated by his experiences in Afro-American churches in Harlem while he was a student in New York just prior to the Nazi ascendancy.
3. There has been quiescence about human rights in the history of Christianity, primarily where personal pietism has excluded concern for social holiness, the category under which many within Christianity see social justice.

For Christians the primary intellectual task in the area of human rights has been to translate God-orientated language into human-orientated language. We see this with the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century and its aftermath. With the Enlightenment we see radical changes. Human beings were, on the one hand, more important than God. However, on the other, they were not fundamentally different from animals and plants. Both capitalism and Marxism derive from this Enlightenment vision of human beings as autonomous individuals without any reference to the Divine. It has a radical anthropocentrism. It is against this that the Christian faith must present its credentials in the strongest possible way.

We in our time live in a deeply ambivalent age, an age of high technology and of medieval conflict, and an age as strangely confident of the saving powers of the market-place as a previous age was strangely confident of the saving powers of collectivism. In this age, Christians are called to follow Paul in speaking of, and living out, the wonder of God's mercy and reconciliation with humanity. Christians are thus called to a life of praise, which embraces all of our personal and social life, in all its practical, ethical, religious, political and intellectual aspects. That praise will be both culture-transforming and culture-renewing, over against the self-worship of individuals and nations in our time. The way we express theology, the way in which we preach, the ways in which we engage in the worship of God, the ways in which we engage in community services, the ways we live need to express *shālôm* in ecumenical terms.

We live in the world of **Asian realities**, as we have seen above. However, we also see our Christian calling in that world. For the ecumenical response is also a reality in another sense. Let us look again at this word "reality". **Let us look at two senses of the word "reality"**.

In 1942, William Temple, Archbishop of York, became Archbishop of Canterbury. He was dying at the time that he was appointed. He had only two years to go, and died in 1944. He was quite a figure within the life of the United Kingdom. In those two years he produced some of his most remarkable work. His image of the ecumenical movement is particularly powerful. He talks about the vision that we have of the church, and he uses the picture of spectacles, of bifocal spectacles, spectacles that have double lenses. With the lower part of the lens, Temple says, we see the church as it is day by day, all those things that we have to do, one thing after another. With the upper part of the spectacle, we see, in Temple's words, the church "realistically". Temple uses the word in this theological sense, the church as it should be, as it was intended to be: united, confessing its Lord according to the Scriptures, engaged in its common calling, to the glory of God. That is how we see it through the upper part of our spectacles. With the lower part, we see it as we deal with it day by day, and, Temple says, we must live as if the upper part is reality, and the lower part illusion. Normally it is the other way round. We see the church as it is in the world, with the lower part of our spectacles, as reality, and we see through the upper part as illusion. He turned it round the other way, and he said, as it were, "We have to behave as if the church is already united, we have to behave as if the church is already one". His successor, Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, was a much more pragmatic character. He had been Headmaster of Repton School, and saw life as a headmaster does. However, Geoffrey Fisher, who became one of the first Presidents of the World Council of Churches, pulled out of Temple's

theology a number of very pragmatic and important points which are worth our hearing again today. He said that the ecumenical era has arrived when church leaders, whether at parish, regional, diocesan, presbytery, synodal, national or international levels, abandon their denominational meetings to attend the ecumenical ones because the ecumenical ones are where it is really happening, and the denominational ones are the area of unreality. When church leaders go to ecumenical occasions rather than to denominational ones, then the ecumenical world has arisen. Then the upper part of William Temple's vision, in fact, is indeed reality. However, when they go the other way, then they in fact are still caught in that old world. They live in the world of illusion.

So, on the basis of this picture of what reality really is, let us look at the **ecumenical response in Asia**. We first need to look at what that response should be. Then we can look at some practicalities of what we should be doing.

To begin with, what should the ecumenical response to Asian realities be? What does "reality", the upper part of the spectacles, mean in this context?

According to the Basis of the World Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches is a fellowship which does four things:

1. **First**, it confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.
2. **Second**, it does so according to the Scriptures.
3. Therefore, **third**, through it the churches seek to fulfill together their common calling.
4. **Fourth**, they do so to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This is the real world. This is the real world of Scripture. This is the world into which we are called and, in theological terms, this is the fundamental world out of which we have to deal with this question. Let me just for a moment look at these four.

First, the unity of the church is primarily a **response to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ**. It is not what we do; it is what has happened to us, what has been given to us. God in Christ takes the remarkable step of choosing to be God for us and with us. This inexplicable act of God to identify with us is the foundation of what being the church is. God calls us to God's very self. God chooses to be in solidarity with us. God does not wish to be alone in celebrating the wonder of God's inexpressible love for humanity. God in Christ calls into existence an earthly Body of God's Son in order that humanity may rejoice with God in harmony and peace, that harmony and peace which God has given. And therefore we are called to a life of praise, not simply something that comes from our mouths or from our hands, but something that comes from our entire personal and social life, whether that is practical or ethical, religious or political or intellectual. Our intellectual life is an expression of praise. Our political life is an expression of praise. So is our religious life, our practical life, and our ethical life. If that is how we are called to respond to God, then that is all based on our confession of the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. At the heart of the ecumenical movement is the centrality and finality of Jesus Christ. This utterly simple statement overcomes everything else. It is not so much about what we want to do but about what is possible for us under God to achieve. If we look at the concept of

denomination, denomination primarily developed in the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a franchising system by which certain individual traits of particular movements had a commonality. It was anti-ecumenical or ecumenical only in the sense that it created commonality of faith, or a commonality of faith and practice, in a franchised system. It did not itself speak of the wholeness of the people of God. It spoke only in a partial way. As the United States expanded, humanly speaking it was highly successful. It also replicated itself back to the old world and strengthened denominationalism as it existed in Europe. However, it only partially expressed catholicity, as it rather tended to express particular interests. The problem was that, instead of stressing special interests, as in the case of Catholic Orders existing within the whole church, it defined the whole church by its particular charisms. Its charisms, its gifts, may have been in evangelism, or in social justice, or in styles of worship, or in its relationship to society, but they were self-defined. Humanly denominationalism was successful. In relation to this, the Basis of the World Council of Churches is very strong. Its statement of faith calls not just for faith but also for faithfulness in seeing the partiality of each Christian expression, each denomination within the totality. This brings great significance to Christianity in Asia. The Churches in Asia have been, to a large extent, the inheritors of this denominationalism. We can see this in the Churches which are members of the Christian Conference of Asia. Moreover, in Asia we must admit that denominationalism has been successful for us, in human terms, in developing Christianity. On the other hand, some of the most successful experiments in organic union have taken place in Asia. Moreover, it has been the centrality of the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, rather than a convergence of denominationalism, which has ultimately been the way through to organic union. This was so for the Church of South India, for the Church of North India and for the Uniting Church in Australia. Moreover, it was the language which spoke most powerfully over against the dividedness of Asian societies.

Second, the World Council of Churches Basis goes on, “**according to the Scriptures**”. We are not free to define faith, we do not just talk to each other and compare our experiences. We cannot just gather together and engage in comparative ecclesiologies. The experience of the Church of South India (1947), the Church of North India (1970) and the Uniting Church in Australia (1977) was that union would not have come about if the negotiations had continued in convergence ecclesiology, that is, in comparing ecclesiology with another. They had to go back and see how each Church could “reform” itself “according to the Scriptures”. There have been many different experiences within the ecumenical movement. In the 1940s and 1950s, when the European churches were battling for their lives against the totalitarianism of the Nazis and the subsequent totalitarianism of the communists, the Church was happy to be strengthened by Barthian theology. In the 1950s and 1960s, the years of European and North American affluence, theologies were developed which tried to use the secular as a vehicle of expressing Christian theology. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s, new voices came. They were the voices of the Third World, the voices of those whose exploitation was the underside of North American and European affluence, theologies of liberation, and they spoke powerfully to the consciences of people everywhere. Yet, none of these - Barthian theology, secular theology, liberation theology or political theology - are of themselves the whole truth. They are glimpses of the truth, just as in the nineteenth century, denominational experiences were also only partial expressions of the truth. We are called to hear all of those understandings against the background of the

Scriptures. We cannot just go scurrying round the Bible to find out a justification of our own particular position. If that is to be the case, then we should just have a concordance at our elbow rather than the Bible. "According to the Scriptures" speaks for us and against us. It calls us out of the particularity of denominationalism or the particularity of a specific theological trend and forces us to see the totality of it all. Despite denominational and theological differences, "according to the Scriptures" has become one of the great unifying factors for Asian Christianity.

Third, to use the next phrase in the Basis of the World Council of Churches, the churches are called to "**seek to fulfill together their common calling**". We are called to fulfill something. Discipleship is both believing and acting. It is not enough to act, to engage in social activity, and then sit around and theologise about it. Why would we do that? If we do that, our motivation is primarily secular. We look at the culture around us, we see what appears to work, and act accordingly, and then theologise about it later so as to find theological justification for what we have decided to do anyway. That theological way has been one of the great mistaken ways of Christian history. It was the disastrous way of Reichsbishop Müller, the Reichsbishop appointed by the Nazis, who was able to find theological language to justify Nazi idolatry. This year we celebrate the centenary of the birth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1906. It was Bonhoeffer who early on was able to offer his powerful critique of this kind of "justifying theological reflection", when he unmasked what Reichsbishop Müller was up to in the 1930s. However, in Asia we are at all times in danger of following a similar pattern. Discipleship is both believing and acting. It will always have as its distinctive mark that quality of confidence in Christ despite everything. Many things have come on the ecumenical movement since 1948 - the polemics, the attacks, its own stupidity, but in all of that, this discipleship of both acting in faithfulness and reflecting on that has continued. That we are continually called to do in Asia.

Fourth, the churches are called on this journey "**to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit**". In this the Orthodox Churches in the World Council of Churches have been an immense help. Sometimes they are accused of their intransigence, but since the early years of the World Council of Churches, they have constantly stressed a thoroughgoing Trinitarian theology - the worship of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - against what I would call an "unacknowledged Unitarianism", a kind of bland belief in God, without any Trinitarian particularity, of creation, redemption, and guidance. To speak of the ecumenical movement as having as its end "the glory of God" is not just simply to repeat a platitude. It is to affirm that, without its Trinitarian centre, the churches and the ecumenical movement are no more than a tiresome irrelevance. It is this which makes them different. This is crucial to the life of the Asian churches. Let us never forget that it was in Asia, in West Asia, that Trinitarian doctrine was first worked out. We in Asia know how central it was and always will be.

So, what should we in the ecumenical movement in Asia be engaged in, in order to see this ecumenical response carried out in practical terms? For this purpose, I want to raise six points at which I hope to look.

First, there is the issue of **Christian identity**. What can we in practice do about identity? One example of identity is the issue of baptism. There is now a common baptismal

certificate used by many of the churches, and in the covenant which the church leaders who are members of the National Council of Churches signed together in Adelaide in Australia in 2004, a number of churches which are members of the National Council of Churches in Australia agreed to have a common baptismal certificate in that baptism is not a denominational issue. Let me push it a little bit further and take you on a journey about thirty kilometres out of Oxford, in the United Kingdom. There, in the city of Abingdon, a decade ago, the churches of Abingdon, decided that they would act according to the upper vision of William Temple. So the church noticeboards have "The Christian Church" on them, and then, in brackets, "Roman Catholic tradition", or, in brackets "Anglican tradition", or "Methodist tradition", or "United Reformed tradition", and so on. They carry out baptisms, whether adult or infant, on the church's birthday or baptism day, Pentecost (Whitsunday), together in the market square. In the first phase, the clergy of all the churches baptised the candidates, infant or adult, together. Now, each year, one of the clergy, representing all of them, baptise the children or the adults in one common ceremony. All baptisms at other times (for it suits people to have baptisms at other times of the year) are carried out in common. Why? Because to baptise denominationally, to identify oneself denominationally, is of itself idolatrous. How can you relate God's gift of baptism to a particular franchise operator, which is what a denomination is? How can you engage in that kind of activity? And I would challenge us now to see how far we could do the same. We cannot ask any longer, "Which church do I belong to?", but only the fundamental question, "Whose church do I belong to?" This is very much an issue for us in Asia.

Second, I want to look at the issue of the **organic unity of the churches**. The fifties and the sixties saw great advances in that area: the Church of Christ in Thailand, of course, the Church of South India, the Church of North India, the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom, and the Uniting Church in Australia. The most recent, of course, is the formation of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, which is the union of the two Reformed Churches and the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands. These are formal, organic unions. They have great significance. No one has ever suggested that this should be abandoned. They are strong and absolute commitments, because they are the transference of not only soul and spirit but also of property, and hopes, and history, into the continuing movement. They are not easy, they take long periods of time, but they are of great strength and of great hope. They have worked mainly when people have gone back to the roots of their faith, rather than engage in comparative ecclesiology. They can have their disadvantages - the disadvantages that people are very interested in the bureaucratic organisation of new structures, fascinated by them, fascinated by the way the engine works rather than that the car goes. It is very important that we still press on with them. In more recent years, especially around the time leading up to the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, held at Santiago de Compostela in Spain in 1993, the concept of *koinōnia*, of "fellowship" and "solidarity" of churches, became very active. There should be a kind of commonality for intercommunion without full organic union. These have worked in certain situations. Among these are the intercommunion relations that have been worked out through the Porboo Agreement between the Church of England and the churches of the Baltic states, and again through the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the EKD in Germany. Here a form of intercommunion now exists between churches in which historic episcopacy is essential and others where it is primarily functional. This has

been a major advance. However, it can be used as a means of silently acknowledging the continuation of denominationalism as legitimate. These two models must continue to inspire us too throughout Asia.

Third, I want to raise the issue of the **relationship between Roman Catholics and other Christians** in Asia. This is very significant and very important, and I have had the privilege of being a member of dialogues, both national and international, between Protestant churches and the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI, both now as Pope, and as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has, of course, been committed to the unity of the church. How that is developed is the issue. *Ut unum sit*, the document that the late Pope John Paul II produced, and which was also very heavily influenced by the new Pope as Cardinal Ratzinger, speaks of the unity which is a primary calling of the church. It seems to me highly likely that dealings with the Orthodox Churches will be of great significance in the years to come, and that the new Pope's background of Germany will mean that the continuing dialogue over the issue of justification by faith will be increased. That will inevitably lead to further dialogue with the Anglican Communion, with the Methodists, with the Reformed and with other Christians. But, what does this mean in the long term? Can there be any realistic *koinōnia* between the Roman Catholic Church and non-Roman Catholic churches without full, organic unity? Is it possible? Is that something which can exist? We have seen movements with the Orthodox which suggest that there is possibility. We have seen also movements with other churches of the Roman rite not fully integrated with Rome which do give the possibility of that being experienced. And yet, there remain considerable difficulties. Where, then, is this likely to lead? My experience of the last number of years is that, whatever happens, there will still be the yearning for this unity, which primarily will come about through the loosening of the canons as they are presented without them being broken. This has immense significance for Christianity in Asia.

Fourth, we need to look at issues of **practical Christianity, and the provision by Christians of educational, health and welfare services**. Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, Churches provide educational, health and welfare services far above their size in the total population. In Australia, for example, without the churches, the national systems of education, health and community services would simply collapse. When I was President of the Uniting Church in Australia, I had to go and see the Deputy Prime Minister suddenly in relation to one of our community services, and I was amazed that my appointment was fixed up within twenty-four hours. That was simply because our position within the community meant that, either intentionally or unintentionally, we could upset many public programmes. There perhaps is no other country in the world where the churches have such a stranglehold of the provision of much of necessity to the daily life of our fellow citizens. And, therefore, of course, we have entered into a kind of pragmatic ecumenism. This is also so in the educational, health and welfare services of the Churches in Asia. What kind of ecumenism is it? There is thus an enormous opportunity for ecumenical expression in this area. What should we do with our educational, health and community services? On the one hand, it can be a kind of security blanket for our own identity. I am sure in some cases it is. Even if we are not a large part of the community, we can look at our hospitals and schools and see that we have a place in society. However, on the other hand, it may be the most authentic way of expressing ecumenism. Is the interaction between our welfare and educational institutions to be the way of true Asian ecumenism?

Fifth, I want to look at the issue of **the proliferation of Christian expressions**, and especially at the growth of the **Pentecostal movement** and of **evangelical churches and charismatic churches** in our time. Does the diversity of ways in which the Christian faith is expressed at the present time in Asia (including the rise of the evangelical churches and of Pentecostalism) mean that a large section of the Christian community has decided against any form of organic unity or *koinōnia*? Or is this the “new ecumenism”, the “non-organisational ecumenism”? Or has it turned the Christian faith into a consumer smorgasbord? Or is this radical denominationalism, where the particular becomes the whole? However, we must be aware that many Pentecostal leaders, and leaders of evangelical churches, are very conscious of the fragile nature of all that has grown up so quickly. Because of the fluid nature of Pentecostal and evangelical churches, we must of course realise that these churches are our own people too. So our Asian ecumenical endeavours, not only in “faith and order”, but also especially in life and work, need to bear in mind the traditions of Asian Pentecostal and evangelical churches.

Sixth, I want to look at **the relationship of Christianity with other faiths** in Asia. Behind all of this lies the Christian call to mission. The centre of gravity in the issue of mission has vacillated between a concern for the proclaiming of the word on the one hand and social justice on the other. The task of the Church has been to hold both of these together. This has been very important in an ecumenical age. The style of the presentations of the gospel, both in terms of proclamation and social justice, needs to bear in mind the relationship with other living faiths in Asia. Here we need a genuine human conversation where the sincere views of all parties are held. In terms of social justice our interaction with other living faiths will be made more authentic when we together hold to a program like the Millennium Goals. The communal nature of expressing theology in Asia calls Asian Christians in particular to advance, at all opportunities, the eight goals of the Millennial Declaration (MDG) of the United Nations, i.e., to

1. eradicate poverty and hunger;
2. achieve universal primary education;
3. promote gender equality and empower women;
4. reduce child mortality;
5. improve maternal health;
6. combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. develop a global partnership for development ³.

These are indeed expressions of Asian *theologiae in locō*. It is indeed against a common concern for these eight issues that a true dialogue with other living faiths in Asia can take place.

In these ways there can be a genuine interaction between the primary dynamics of the Ecumenical Movement and Asian realities.

³ See http://www.un.org/millennium_goals/