

JPW BULLETIN

Newsletter of the Justice and Peace Workers (JPW) Network of Asia-Pacific

October – December 2005, No. 4

"The Justice and Peace Workers Asia-Pacific Forum is a proactive network of solidarity among women and men working with Catholic Justice and Peace organizations and affiliated groups and organizations in the region..."

A Silent Moment

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A Silent Moment

In This New Year

In this New Year,

We look to an end to violence and war.

We pray for peace, understanding and reconciliation.

In this New Year,

We hope for a future where all can have enough.

We pray for prophetic voices to speak for the poor and the marginalized.

In this New Year,

We will feel the pain of those dying from preventable diseases.

We pray that antiretrovirals and other medicines can be available to all.

In this New Year,

We will breathe air and feel alive.

We pray to improve our stewardship of God's creation.

In this New Year,

We wish to start anew.

We pray for wisdom to acknowledge mistakes and move on.

In this New Year,

We believe that with God's help, it is possible.

We pray for justice to reign and dignity for all people.

by Jill Rauh

Education for Justice

What's Going On in Asia?

Hong Kong

HKJP against Death Penalty

On 30 November 2005, the Justice and Peace Commission of the HK Catholic Diocese (HKJP), joined other members of the Joint Committee against the Death Penalty (JCADP), such as Amnesty International Hong Kong and Grassroots Cultural Center, to hold a candle light vigil to protest the use of death penalty. The action was part of a worldwide initiative, started by a Catholic group, Community of Sant'Egidio, in November 2005, to express opposition to death penalty.

In the candle light vigil, participants protested against the execution of the Australian national Mr. Ngyuen Van Tuong in Singapore. Mr. Nguyen was arrested for importing 396.2 grams of heroin to Singapore and was convicted under the Misuse of Drugs Act, which carries a mandatory death sentence.

JCADP and HKJP are also concerned with the widespread use of death penalty in the People's Republic of China. In October 2005, JCADP has urged the HK government to play a more active role in coordinating the information between Chinese authorities and the family of detained Hong Kong citizens.

Source: <http://www.hkjp.org/article/cnweekly051023.htm>

India

Activities of the NCJPD

The National Commission for Justice, Peace and Development (NCJPD), Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) has been engaging in various issues, such as child rights, Church concern for the marginalized, rights of the dalits and tribals and right to education, as well as activities, like training on rights based approach and common action plans with the religious JP Commissions.

COMBATTING CHILD RIGHTS VIOLATION:

In September, a two-day seminar was organized to understand the situation of child rights violation, as well as to schedule an action plan to combat these violations. The sessions were given by Bishop Peter Remigius, the Chairman of the NCJPD, Fr. Nithiya, Dr. Gathia, Archbishop Vincent and Bishop Anil Couto of Delhi. At the end of the seminar, it was noted that child rights violation is present in different sectors and forms: displaced children, abortion of girl child, street children, sexual and physical abused children, children induced to drugs, and mentally and physically challenged children. In response, it was planned that within one year, the participants of the program would combat these violations through: promotion of education; empowerment of children to fight for equal rights; use of the church institutions and media to advocate for child rights; lobbying with government agencies and networking with like minded groups and individuals. To combat discrimination against the girl child, they planned to conscientize parents and build public opinion on the issue.

CHURCH CONCERN FOR THE MARGINALIZED:

In response to discrimination based on colour, creed and ethnicity, the NCJPD is addressing the caste system in India, together with CBCI Commission on Scheduled Caste (Dalit) and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) which addresses their issues.

As it was found that most of the uneducated in India are socially and economically marginalized people and Christians of dalit and tribal origin, this year's Justice Sunday message was also on the same theme to respond to the issue. Moreover, the forthcoming theme of the General Body meeting of the Bishops will be "Catholic Education and the Church's concern for the marginalized". The NCJPD with other Commissions will be conducting consultations and meetings in all the 12 ecclesiastical regions of the country. At the meeting planned for 8-15 February 2006, more than 200 bishops will be participating and working on an action plan to focus on education of the marginalized.

NCJPD INITIATED ACTION PLANS:

In the past year, the NCJPD initiated an action plan in the Kerala region through its 4 zones, concentrating on the issue of the recent self-financing of educational institutions which further marginalizes the dalits and tribals who are already under poverty and structural violence. In addition, the 4 zones of Kerala are also planning to deal with other different issues in the state level, ranging from farmers suicide in the Northern zone, child labour and erosion of social values in the Central zone, land rights of dalits and migrant workers in the Eastern zone and sea sand mining in the Southern zone.

In collaboration with Karnataka Regional JP Forum, the NCJPD organized a consultation on 27-28 September, with the aim for the Diocesan Commissions for Justice and Peace and each religious congregation's JP Commission to work together in addressing justice issues, conflicts and human rights. As a result of the input sessions and group discussions, a common action plan was proposed for Karnataka region, including training programs, women's empowerment, documentation, networking, advocacy and lobbying, peace-building, and education for human rights.

RIGHTS BASED APPROACH (RBA) TRAINING:

As a continuation of the August 2004 National training held on the Rights Based Approach (RBA) training to social justice and peace, the NCJPD and the Western Regional JPD Commission organized a two-day training in Mumbai last in July 2005. Participants came from Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat; they analysed various forms of injustices and planned to take this training to the local people in their local languages for wider knowledge and empowerment for the people. On 22-24 November, a training was held in collaboration with a team for training in RBA and Catholic Social Teaching. The previous participants from the 2004 program were also active in giving sessions and taking up issues.

Source: CBCI-NCJPD

Japan

JCCJP's Activities for Peace

As part of the campaign to mark the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II, the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace (JCCJP) has prepared some English information on the current conditions in Japan, including its activities related to building peace in the country and the Asian region.

In response to the message of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, entitled "The Road to Peace Based on Nonviolence, Now Is the Time to Be Prophetic," the JCCJP organized a peace campaign from 23 June 2005 to 1 January 2006. There will be various activities such as publication of booklet "Message of the 60th year since the end of World War II", picture-campaign and commemorative lectures, as well as other seminars and support for other groups working on peace and non-violence.

The information describes the changes in political situation, including the bad amendment to the Constitution especially the Article 9 and the Fundamental Law of Education, the history

textbook issue, sex slave issue and discrimination against foreigners and migrants.

On the historical awareness and history textbook issue, right-wing people ignore issues of the previous war, while countries which suffered criticize these nationalists. In response, the JCCJP has announced a petition protesting against adoption of the controversial history textbook and sent it to 10 of the Boards of Education in Japan. Meanwhile, responding to the historical awareness on modern history in Asia, historians at the civil level from China, Japan and South Korea joined forces to produce a combined version of the region's modern history; the JCCJP is supporting their efforts by promoting the book worldwide.

In order to promote awareness on the truth about sex slaves for soldiers during the war, a museum (The Women's Active Museum on War and Peace) was inaugurated on 1 August 2005, aiming to show the realities of wartime violence especially on women. The JCCJP has made its contribution and support for establishment of this museum.

On the issue of realignment of the US Military Forces, which begins to make serious impact on Japan, especially local people in Okinawa who dislike existence of the Military base, local people and civil organizations keep on protesting against this plan. The JCCJP supports and participates in this protest move. It appeared that the U.S. forces cannot ignore local sentiments and resistance movement, and seem to be examining an alternative place.

Among the human rights issues observed was that foreign workers and criminals are being treated and monitored on the same level. The JCCJP is supporting the activities of the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees, and People on the Move which is in charge of this issue. This is also an issue of concern because of the new technology of control introduced by the Immigration Bureau which is making the Japanese society an increasingly monitored society.

Other recent activities of the JCCJP are the "31st National Meeting of Japan Council for Justice and Peace" held on 23-25 September in Yokohama. (Theme: "Don't ignore something worth caring about") and the "Justice and Peace Fact Finding Mission" in Tokyo, Okinawa and Hiroshima, held on 20-28 November.

Full text of the report of JCCJP is available upon request. Please contact hotline@acpp.org for English version.

Source: Japan Catholic Council for Justice & Peace (JCCJP)

JCCJP hosts Justice and Peace Fact Finding Mission 2005

Following the resolution reached during the JPW meeting in Pakistan, the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace (JCCJP) organized the Justice and Peace Fact Finding Mission (FFM) on 20-28 November 2005 in Okinawa, Hiroshima and Tokyo. The objectives of the FFM were: 1) to understand the impact of the growing US military presence in the region, 2) to know the impact of the present policies against the people's struggle for peace, freedom and democracy, and 3) to identify a way to consolidate and strengthen a justice and peace network in the region, in collaboration with different actors working for non-violence, peace and reconciliation.

There were 11 participants from Hong Kong, India, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea and USA, including bishops, religious priests and nuns, and lay people. The program of FFM included visitations to the Yasukuni Shrine and the War Museum in Tokyo to experience the militarism promoted by the present government; the Peace Memorial and museum in Okinawa islands where 75% of the US

bases in Japan are located today; and the Atomic Bomb Museum, Peace Park, and Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims in Hiroshima to be exposed to the horror of atomic bomb, as well as the desire of the people for lasting peace in the region. They also met with people in those communities who shared their testimonies, including resource persons who are actively involved in peace-building.

A recurring theme during this mission was the protection of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which has been the basis of democracy and peace movements in Japan, promoting a culture of peace and absolute denial of violence to solve conflicts in the past 60 years. The Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan is a sign of hope and a prophetic statement to other nations that still rely on military superiority as means of security.

After the evaluation and planning of the program, the participants produced a statement and action plan where they expressed on-going solidarity with brothers and sisters who are working for a universal culture of peace rooted in justice. They pledged to continue to educate each other on specific political issues that they experienced in the FFM. Grounded in the concern for human dignity and the integrity of creation, they pledged to collaborate in advocating policies and peace within the Church and before the governments. Among the common action plans agreed were: the continuous support for Japan's peace campaigns; appealing to the Japanese authorities and diplomatic representatives on the issues of the FFM; translating the statement into different languages to make it known within the Church; and writing solidarity letters to support activists working for peace.

For a copy of the Justice and Peace Fact Finding Mission statement, please go to:

www.acpp.org/jpwb/FFM_Statement.pdf

This FFM is part of the JCCJP's campaign for peace, and commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This is also the first international meeting which was hosted in Japan by the staff and members of JCCJP, and all the participants are very appreciative of their planning, organization and all aspects of the program by the dedicated staff.

Source: JCCJP, ACPP sources

Pakistan

Christian Leaders urge Pakistan President to repeal Blasphemy Law

Christian religious leaders in Pakistan wrote an open letter to the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to call for justice, proper investigations and above all an assurance that "Christians in Pakistan are citizens like the rest", after a series of events in Sangla Hill, Nankana district, Punjab.

On 12 November 2005, an angry mob of around 2,000 people vandalised and set fire to three churches, a nuns' convent, two Catholic schools, the homes of a protestant pastor and a parish priest, a girls' hotel and the homes of some Christians, all in the village of Sangla Hill. The attacks were sparked by a presumed and baseless case of blasphemy that Yusaf Masih, a local Christian, had set the Quran on fire. Although the parish Priest, Fr Samson Dilawar, informed the police on Friday night about the potential threats twelve hours before the attack, the police only came in force three hours after the violent crowd had dispersed.

The incident sharply reveals the ineffectiveness of the new rules of the Blasphemy Laws, hence, the leaders called "once more" for the laws to be repealed, saying that their shortcomings have been revealed "yet again". All schools belonging to Churches were closed on November 17, as a mark of protest.

The letter was signed by Mgr Lawrence John Saldanha, Archbishop of Catholic Archdiocese of Lahore and President Catholic Bishops' Conference, Reverend Alexander J. Malik, Moderator of Church of Pakistan, Victor Azariah, National Council of Churches in Pakistan and Col. Gulzar Patras, Territorial Commander of Salvation Army.

Source: AsiaNews, NCJP

NCJP's response to Sangla Hill incidents

Joint Resolution and Action Plan of Christian Organisations: National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) Pakistan organized a National Consultation Meeting on "Ending Religious Intolerance" on 4 December 2005 at Lahore, Pakistan, in the background of the Sangla Hill incident in which churches and Christian properties were destroyed and burnt on 12 November 2005.

Church leaders and representatives of civil society organizations, including NCJP, Commission for Peace and Human Development, Centre of Legal Assistance and Settlement (CLASS), All Pakistan Minorities Alliance, Christian Study Centre - Rawalpindi, Justice and Peace Commission (MSLCP)-Multan, Adal and AWARD- Faisalabad, Human Development Centre- Toba Tek Singh, participated to discuss strategies to weed out religious intolerance. The meeting was followed by a press conference, presented with a joint resolution and plan of action of Christian organizations.

The representatives agreed that the Sangla Hill incidents are merely one manifestation of the alarming level of religious intolerance prevailing in the country being fueled by hate speech and discriminatory laws. They condemned the present government in failing to repair the situation, as well as hiding facts from the people of Pakistan by concealing the extent of the abuse of Blasphemy Laws. Hence, the participating organizations urges the government:

- ◆ To apprehend the instigators of the mob violence who were responsible for abusing religion and law at Sangla Hill without delay.
- ◆ To make public the findings of the Judicial Inquiry immediately.
- ◆ To set free all innocent persons including Yousuf Masih who was clearly victimized due to his religion.
- ◆ To repeal Blasphemy Laws, Hudood Ordinances and other discriminatory laws and articles of the constitution.

They also vowed to undertake a movement to inform people of Pakistan about the alarming conditions of intolerance and violence due to religious apartheid in the country. They resolved to take all peaceful and lawful measures to combat religious intolerance till its end.

40 days after the Sangla Hill incidents:

On 20 December 2005, the Christian Community held two prayer meetings at Sangla Hill, one in the compound of United Presbyterian and the other in the Catholic Church. About 1,000 Christians participated in the prayer, when the Christian community at Sangla Hill completed 40 days of mourning, as practiced in the culture.

The NCJP, in collaboration with Joint Action Committee for Peoples Rights, held a peaceful protest against the government. Ms. Asma Jehangir, UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Tolerance and Chairperson of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Joseph Francis of CLASS and Mr. Peter Jacob of the NCJP addressed the participants on the following concerns and demands:

- ◆ As the abuse of Blasphemy Laws is susceptible to creating lawlessness, it should be repealed.

- ◆ To promote interfaith harmony, the discriminatory laws and policies should be removed.
- ◆ Instead of making claims and rhetoric promises to promote interfaith harmony, government of Pakistan should embark on practical steps and identify extremists and bring them to court.
- ◆ Government of Pakistan should refrain from practicing their own will and desire in all national affairs and allow the real spirit of democracy to prevail in the interest of the common people.

Source: National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) Pakistan

Philippines

JPICC- AMRSP' s Activities on WTO

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international trade body that wrought corporate globalization. This institution which supposedly promotes free trade, has in fact contributed to the concentration of wealth in the hands of the rich few, growing inequality within and between nations. In December 2005, at the 6th Ministerial Meeting held in Hong Kong, trade ministers will gathered to approve amendments on trade policies, including agreements on Agriculture, Services and trade-related intellectual property rights. It is believed that these will further benefit the transnational corporations and further risk national and local economies, affecting workers, farmers, indigenous peoples, women and other social groups, health and safety, the environment and animal welfare.

In response to the challenges of the neo-liberal policies of the WTO, the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) and its 7 mission partners, as a Church group, has organized a campaign to show its common stance and efforts to educate the basic sectors and the religious on how WTO has affected the lives of the people. They have expressed commitment to carry out its avowed mission to be in solidarity with the poor, and are challenged to address the grave implications of WTO policies to the basic sectors and the Philippine nation as a whole.

The aim of the campaign is to come up with a common statement against the policies and lobby to the Philippine government delegates to promote the interest of the Filipino people during the meeting; to conduct educational activities among the basic sectors and the religious about WTO and how they affect the lives of the people (social, political, economic and cultural aspects); and to participate in the international campaign against WTO in December, in order to broaden the network with other Church/inter-faith groups working for peace, justice and human rights.

Among the build-up of activities are: discussion/forum about the WTO and Peasants in September; solidarity with peasants and forum on General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) in October; a Forum on WTO and its implications to the basic sectors in November and human rights activities in December. 11 representatives of AMRSP participated an ecumenical conference in Hong Kong, as well as other related people's movement during the People's Action week on 11 -18 December 2005.

Source: JPICC-AMRSP

Singapore

Think Centre – Human Rights Day Message

On the International Human Rights Day, 10 December, Think Centre has reiterated that human rights should be viewed as a vital part of civilization. In particular, they emphasised the sanctity of life: the right to life is the most fundamental form of rights. To enable coming generations to better appreciate the value of human life, Think Centre recommends human rights

education for all to be well-informed of international perspectives on human rights charter.

Based on these beliefs, the Centre has urged the Singaporean government to: institutionalize human rights education in schools and the community; and abolish mandatory death penalty in Singapore. Since drug-trafficking related death penalty is a prominent problem in the country, the Centre also urged the government to empower the Judiciary with discretionary power on drug trafficking sentences.

Full text of the message is available at

<http://www.thinkcentre.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=2680>

Death Penalty in Singapore

In Singapore, the Campaign against Death Penalty continues. Mr. Sinapan Samydorai, President of Think Centre, reaffirms that death penalty is the ultimate violation of the most fundamental human right, i.e. right to life. The call has been expressed on numerous occasions by the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Committee, the Economic and Social Council and Security Council. Moreover the right to life is also defended by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 6(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which strictly restricts a sentence of death to be imposed only for the "most serious crimes" such as intentional murder.

Think Centre is currently campaigning for 2 Africans, Mr. Iwuchuku Amara Tochi and Mr. Okele Nelson Malachy, who are on death row due to drug trafficking. To support the campaign, please visit <http://www.thinkcentre.org/>

Source: Think Centre

Thailand

CCJP Thailand's Seminar on Building Understanding among Different Religion

The conflict in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand - namely Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat - has been escalating everyday since it started nearly two years ago in January 2004. A majority of the people living in these provinces are Muslims who speak a southern dialect and the Yawi-Malayu language. In most parts of Thailand, people are Buddhist and speak Thai.

Several factors shaped this crisis, including inequality in development opportunities; misinterpretation of religious teachings; misunderstanding and mistrust due to the lack of ability to understand different languages and cultures; illegal activities; abuse of the authorities and laws, etc. In fact, socio-economic and political factors are the key causes of this conflict but not religion.

However, not many people understand clearly the causes of the conflict and are led to believe that it is a religious one.

In order not to fall prey to misunderstanding and to the criminal elements who wish to ignite violence, revenge and hatred among different sectors in the society, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP-Thailand) supported Surat Thani Diocese - in the southern region - to seek the truth and plan for a proper action.

Through the invitation of Bishop Joseph Prathan Sridarunsil, CCJP-Thailand helped contact resource persons to share their experiences at a seminar for priests, religious and lay Catholics on 26-28 October 2005.

The seminar was held at the Pastoral Center, Surat Thani. There were 121 participants - 33 priest, 28 religious and 60 lay people. Dr. Sukri Wangputae, a Muslim scholar, shared about Islam and the situation in the south from the view point of Muslims. Fr. Ignatius Ismartono SJ, from the Commission for Inter-religious

Dialogue and Ecumenical Affairs of Bishops' Conference of Indonesia, shared on the topic ' Living in a predominantly Muslim country: Indonesia' .

The important point, highlighted throughout the seminar, was the need to understand ourselves and to understand others. ' Being together with adherents of different religions, believers listen to and at the same time let themselves be addressed by the faith and life of faith of others. A believer tries to understand and to be open to be enriched by others without being afraid of losing one' s own, or of robbing the richness of others,' Fr. Ismartono wrote in his paper.

Fr. Ismartono also suggested some actions that need to be taken for the situation to change; i.e. to transform the atmosphere of hostility to tolerance, dialogue and true sister-brotherhood. These actions include visiting the conflict areas; advocating and conducting deeper study of the cases; exchanging of inspiration and developing respect; and collaboration.

In his paper, Fr. Ismartono also shared that the Catholic Church in Indonesia, for example, provided guidance to its believers on the issue through pastoral letters.

After taking part at the seminar, CCJP concluded that it has a big role to play in order to support the local needs, understanding and strengthening the unity of the people of Thailand. However, the key player is indeed each and everyone.

(CCJP-Thailand thanks the ACPP Bangkok Desk for translating the paper and interpreting the sharing of Fr. Ismartono at the seminar.)

Source: ACPP sources

Events

The following are excerpts from various sources and information channeled to ACPP-Hotline Asia.

Ecumenical Conference on WTO

On 8-11 December 2005, activists who are concerned with the influence of World Trade Organization (WTO) gathered at Wu Kai Sha YMCA Youth Village, Hong Kong to discuss and share their experiences of privatisation in various aspects from their countries.

The Conference was co-organized by more than 10 local and regional NGOs, including Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee, Hong Kong Christian Institute, Justice and Peace Commission of the HK Catholic Diocese, Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples, and Asian Human Rights Commission.

The Conference covered keynote inputs, workshop discussions and participation in local rallies. Workshop topics covered corporate social responsibility and labour, religion & globalization, human security, food sovereignty and others. On 11 December, the participants, numbering more than 200, joined activists and peaceful protesters from other parts of the world in the rally organized by the Hong Kong People' s Alliance on the WTO before the commencement of the Ministerial Conference of WTO from 13-17 December 2005.

Statements on WTO and message to Faith Communities are available upon request.

HL Training Workshop 2005

The Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples (ACPP) held its *Hotline Asia (HL)* Training Workshop 2005: "Mobilizing Solidarity for Social Justice Advocacy" on 10-13 October 2005 at the St. Gabriel Provincial House/Assumption Personnel Development Center, Bangkok, Thailand. This regional training workshop was held for the *HL* staff and network to strengthen the network of individuals and their organizations who play an active role for justice and peace efforts at the national level.

The Workshop aims to stimulate awareness and understanding of existing human rights advocacy process, explore related communication and networking skills to enhance the participants' actions related to their social justice activities and concerns in the local and national level, and identify effective actions or campaigns which are appropriate to the local situation. It is hoped that the participants can also play an active part in *HL*' s role of providing accurate information and appropriate actions regarding unjust situations and human rights abuses that can be helped by international mechanisms in their countries.

There were 19 participants from 9 countries: Bangladesh (1), Hong Kong (4), India (4), Indonesia (1), Nepal (1), Pakistan (5), Philippines (1), Sri Lanka (1) and Taiwan (1). Most of them were from the Justice and Peace Commissions of the Bishop' s Conferences and the Religious Superiors, Church based organizations and JPW network, like Caritas and other NGOs with human rights focus.

Using a case study on asylum seekers in Australia, they went through a process of advocacy from information research to human rights analysis, campaigning, lobbying at different offices and the use of Urgent Appeals and the media. There were inputs on the rights-based approach (RBA) including international human rights mechanisms, principles of campaigning, lobbying and press conference, as well as sharing of participants' skills and experiences through discussions and group work. It provided the participants a chance to gather, learn and network with each other for solidarity with action.

The main resource person for the workshop was Mr. Andre Frankovits of the Human Rights Council of Australia, while the facilitating team composed of Mr. James Tan, Ms. Katalee Sikharangkura, and Ms. Linda Noche of the ACPP.

At the end of the workshop, participants were able to answer some of their questions and expectations, ranging from the direction to address issues of poverty, the role of international campaigning on justice and peace issues and how to work against abuses of multinational companies. One of the participants was inspired to gather young people who are interested in *Urgent Appeals* in his area, while some have expressed the need to organize similar workshop in their own countries.

Human Rights Education / Resources

2006 International Human Rights Training Program (IH RTP)

The 27th International Human Rights Training Program (IH RTP) will be held from 11 June to 30 June, 2006, in Montreal, Canada. It is an annual three-week event organized by Equitas (formerly Canadian Human Rights Foundation), which brings together over 120 participants from approximately 60 countries. It is an intermediate-level program that provides a unique opportunity for human rights workers and educators to deepen their understanding of human rights and of the essential role of human rights education in effecting social change.

The Program aims at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to undertake effective human rights education, building a global culture of human rights and also emphasizes the transfer of learning and on follow-up activities. It is mainly designed for human rights workers and educators working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Hence, priority in selection will be given to candidates affiliated with NGOs and CBOs. In a limited number of cases, candidates affiliated with other types of organizations involved in human rights education, such as national human rights institutions and educational institutions, will also be considered.

The deadline for application is 16 January 2006. For detailed Program information and application form, please go to: <http://www.equitas.org/english/programs/IHRTP.php>

2006 Social Justice Diary

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) has published the 2006 Social Justice Diary, that includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days that celebrate particular aspects of social justice. A social justice theme is developed each month, providing a social justice program for the full year. Information and ideas for prayer and reflection are also included.

The cost of the Diary is \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage. To download an order form, please go to: http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html

Oak Fellowship in Human Rights & Environment

Every year, the Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights hosts a human rights professional to teach and do research on his or her area of expertise, while spending a semester as scholar-in residence at the Colby College.

The Oak Fellowship provides an opportunity for prominent practitioners in international human rights to spend a semester (September - December), providing time for reflection, research, writing, and teaching. It is also expected that the Fellow will return to his or her human rights work after the fellowship.

For 2006, the Oak is soliciting nominations and applications for the Oak Human Rights Fellowship, particularly a human rights practitioner working on environmental issues that affect the rights of individuals and communities. Possible areas of expertise include, but are not limited to: exposing or mobilizing against environmental dangers to human health, preserving ecosystems on which traditional communities depend, environmental justice, indigenous rights and the environment, rehabilitation and compensation for environmental damages, and the application of rights-based approaches to environmental protection.

Applications are encouraged from those who are currently or were recently involved in "on-the-ground" work at some level of personal risk.

Nominations and applications should be sent to:

Kenneth A. Rodman, Director or
Kate O' Halloran, Associate Director
Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights
Colby College, Waterville ME 04901
Email: oakhr@colby.edu
Phone: 207-859-5310
Fax: 207-859-5229
Deadline for Application is on 13 January 2006.

More information, including application, is available on the Institute' s website at: http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/goldfarb/oak/

Primer on WTO

The Documentation, Research and Training Centre (DRTC), Institute for Community Organization Research (ICOR), in collaboration with Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples (ACPP) have published a Handbook on WTO 'Free Trade or Fair Trade?' Topics include globalization and the impact of WTO on farmers, migrants and women, as well as the Church's response to the WTO Trade Policies. There are input, case study and questions for group discussions to help in the reflection on these topics and issues.

This initiative was conceptualized at the Annual Advisory Committee Meeting of Hotline Asia in April 2005, as a response

to the various issues of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is hoped that the contents and reflections in the Handbook will allow people to reflect and act on different issues like globalization, farmers and migrants, even beyond the decisions of the Ministers meeting in December 2005.

The publication is available in soft copies through e-mail and in print. Please contact hotline@acpp.org or drtc@vsnl.com if you are interested to get a copy.

JPW Exchange Corner

JP Worker: ACHA Star Awardee

In recognition of his invaluable services to the people of Pakistan and his years of selfless work to promote communal harmony among them, the Association for Communal Harmony in Asia (ACHA) has awarded the ACHA Star Award to Fr. Bonnie Mendes of the Human Development Centre (HDC), Toba Tek Singh, Pakistan. It is the first time for Christians in South Asia to receive this award.

Fr. Bonnie has been actively involved in justice and peace work at various levels since the 1970s, as Executive Secretary of OHD/FABC, Secretary of NCJP Pakistan, Exco member of APHD and founding member of the Ecumenical Coalition for Third World Tourism. At his current work at the grassroots level, he continues to work with the same spirit as before. Recently, he participated in the JPW meeting in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, as a resource person and local participant.

At the acceptance speech for the awarding ceremony on 15 October, Fr. Bonnie appreciated all the partners that helped the HDC's work on inter-faith harmony and peace. He stated that the HDC believed in empowering communities to create an enabling environment for peace-building, and has been developing a participatory vision over the years. He expressed the efforts of the local people towards peace, as well as acknowledged the hard work done by his colleagues.

Association for Communal Harmony in Asia (ACHA) is a non-profit organization, based in Oregon, USA. They are dedicated to promote peace in South Asia and harmony among south Asians of all ethnic, religious, regional and national origin regardless of where they live. Every year, the ACHA invites nomination for the ACHA Star Award for individuals and organizations which have performed meritorious work in promotion of peace and communal harmony among South Asians. More information of the ACHA and the star award can be found at <http://asiapeace.org>.

Next JPW Meeting in 2007

After discussions among the JPW Co-organizing Team, and with different partners and potential hosting organizations, it was decided that the next JPW networking meeting for Asia and the Pacific will be held in November 2007, to be hosted by the CBCI National Commission for Justice Peace and Development in India.

This is expected to give the co-organizing team more time to discuss thoroughly about the theme and strategies for solidarity and collaborative actions among the JPW. Meanwhile, the other JP Workers will also be able to implement other action plans which have been discussed in the last meeting in Pakistan. Before the actual JPW meeting in 2007, it was understood that the JP Workers will continue to communicate and collaborate with each other on different justice and peace issues, especially those that need each other's solidarity action.

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