

Editorial

The world's eyes are on the Philippines as brutal assassinations and abductions of those who are critical of the government go on amidst international and local outcries against Arroyo administration, which is accused of letting such atrocities continue and even possibly masterminding them. One of the principal voices against Malacañang Palace, **Rex Reyes Jr.**, the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, has shared with *Asian Christian Review* his perception of the situation and how the NCCP has been responding to the "repression and militarization" of the present government. While not easily optimistic about the future of the country, Reyes still sees a hope in the "growing number of people asserting their rights," and does not cease to exhort churches to be "movements rather than monuments" in manifesting their faith in a "God who cares and wills abundant life for all people."

Christianity under suspicion and even in a shadow of oblivion is the focus of attention in this issue's *Viewpoints* article, "Recent Changes in North Korean Christianity" by **Kim Heung Soo**. Although experts in North Korean religions tend to dismiss or suspect Christianity in the country as a product of governmental policies and manipulations, Kim draws our attention to small remnants of "real" Christians who have survived even under the "extremely intense persecution." Kim then illustrates how the place of Christianity in society has improved especially in the past two decades, and how its survival in the future is tied with its relation with the state's sole ideology, Juche philosophy.

The first of four main articles, "Contextualization and Localization of Christianity in China: Inter-Cultural and Inter-Religious Dialogues" by **Zhao Dong** treats the issue of inculturation in mainland China. After reviewing the history of Chinese Christianity which is rich in attempts and efforts of inculturation, Zhao notes that contemporary China has been witnessing an explosive revival of religions and "spiritual awakening," triggered by the decline of the ideological authority of the Communist Party and a resulting moral and spiritual vacuum. With the communist regime starting to appreciate the moral force of religions to counter corruption and unite society, it is high time for Christianity to further its "contextualization and localization" in China, argues Zhao, vindicating the "Local Color" movement and efforts to adapt to the Chinese practical mentality as the keys to the future.

K. C. Abraham addresses the issue of "eco-justice" in his "Ecology: Some Theological Challenges." Abraham notes that "ecological crisis raises some fundamental questions to our value system and life style" still dominated by the modernist ideology of progress. As our social landscape and basic human condition have altered with the development of new informational technologies,

it is becoming even more urgent to reconsider who controls technology and for what purpose. In order for a theology to be able to address such question and redirect society, Abraham argues for a re-reading of Scripture “with the eyes of the subjugated Earth,” and, while admitting an anthropocentric tendency in the Bible and tradition, salvage “positive insights” in the Christian tradition. Drawing extensively on Leonardo Boff’s insights, he thus seeks to lay a foundation for an ecologically sensitive theology.

It being a rare undertaking in Asia, **Sharon A. Bong** in her “Not ‘for the sake of peace’: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred Body” describes how the sexual minority “negotiate the tension between living out their sexuality and spirituality” in the context of South Eastern Asia. Relying mainly on four persons’ accounts among those of thirty GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer) persons whom she interviewed, Bong first discusses how they typically seek to achieve peace by suppressing their sexuality and complying with the “heteronormativity” primarily sanctioned by family and religions. What these accounts demonstrate are, however, that the true peace comes when they acknowledge their own sexuality and live it out, confronting the social and religious heterosexism. The profound peace they paradoxically attain through conflicts questions in turn, argues Bong, religions themselves in their relation to sexuality.

The need for dissent and healing process in people’s struggle with the structures of domination is the underlying theme of the last article, “Dissent and Healing: Reflections on Freedom and Equality on the Way to the Defeat of Global Capitalism” by **Gabriele Dietrich**. The article, which is a lecture originally given in honour of another Indian theologian, Dhyanchand Carr, touches on various social and theological issues such as Dalit feminisms, ethnic strife in Sri Lanka, church corruption, people’s resistance against capitalist projects, nuclear armament, among others. Praising her colleague Carr for his unceasing and uncompromising pursuit for justice on such various fronts, Dietrich stresses the need for dissent and healing, and calls for renewal of our faith in resurrection and resistance to the rule of Mammon in the world.

We hope that these contributions from various parts of Asia will enhance theological exploration and endeavour of Christianity in Asia and beyond.

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July, 2009