

# ACCANews

Official Semi-Annual Newsletter of Asia Christian Counselors Association, Issue 20/1



## Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of ACCANews, the official semi-annual newsletter of the Asia Christian Counselors Association!

ACCA was established on 3 Mar 2018 with the national Christian Counseling Associations of India, Philippines, Indonesia, China and Malaysia as the Founding Members. The vision and mission of ACCA is to shape and promote Christian counseling to all the countries in Asia with an approach that interfaces psychology, theology, spirituality and missions, so that what we do is more authentic to God's Word and contextualized to our local needs.

Since our inception, Singapore, Mongolia and Thailand have joined as new members of ACCA while the national body of Australia has joined as an Associate Member. On 19 Oct 2019, we held our second Consultation with key Christian Counseling leaders from nine countries with potential to join us as new members. They are Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Hong Kong, Bhutan, Japan, Pakistan and Vietnam.

Our Third Asian Christian Counseling Conference took place in Bali, Indonesia, on 17-19 Oct 2019, attended by over 400 participants from 20 countries. The focus was on integrating spirituality in Asia Christian counse-

-ling. After emphasizing on a deeper interface between psychology and theology in Kuala Lumpur and Chiang Mai, the Bali conference focused on spirituality as its integration will add to our identity, values and efficacy in Christian counseling.

Our next conference will be held in Singapore in 2021 with the theme "Integrating Asian Christian Counseling in Missions". The Bible tells us that Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor (Isa 9:6), was intentionally missional in His counseling, going beyond helping people gain human wellness to leading them realize their need for salva-

-tion through the Savior because sin is the root cause of all our psychological problems. For example, we see that when Jesus counseled the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), He led her to believe in Him as the Messiah. After that, many other Samaritans of that town also believed in Jesus as their Savior.

If we as Christian counselors miss out on this objective in missions, there is no fundamental distinction between the secular counselors and ourselves. That is why missions

## Members:

*AKKI (Indonesia)*

*PACC (Philippines)*

*NACC (Malaysia)*

*ACCI (India)*

*CCCC (China)*

*ACCS (Singapore)*

*MCCA (Mongolia)*

*CCAT (Thailand)*

## Associate Member:

*CCAA (Australia)*

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is incorporated as one of the four core components of the ACCA logo. So, in the Singapore conference, we want to vision-cast and motivate both professional and lay Christian counselors to be involved in missions. At the same time, we also want to expose our participants to the major mission agencies that they can connect with.



Photo: Consultation with key Christian counselors leaders from potential member countries in Asia

Given that in the Eastern context, albeit with its own cultural diversity, faith here is more publicly acknowledged while we are generally less restricted by man-made professional counseling standards and ethics (except for the most globalized Asian cities), so there are both opportunities and challenges in shaping and setting the pace for Christian counseling in Asia towards missions. As lifestyles, values and trends are fast-changing, we want to explore innovative and creative ways that Christian counselors can engage with the emerging needs in order to represent Jesus relevantly and effectively to Asians.

You are invited to write to [president1@asiancca.org](mailto:president1@asiancca.org) to offer your views, especially in proposing the right speakers for our plenaries and workshop tracks in our next conference in Singapore and planning the follow-up actions.

## Submission of Proposals to Speak at Conference

The Fourth Asian Christian Counseling Conference will be held in Singapore scheduled tentatively for 8-11 Sept 2021. The theme of the Conference is "Integrating Asian Christian Counseling in Missions". Submission for proposal to speak at the Conference is now open. You are also welcome to recommend to us other suitable speakers.

1. Proposals must align to the theme of the Conference, "Integrating Asian Christian Counseling in Missions".
2. Content comprises a substantial interface of psychology and theology, and not just on psychology alone.
3. Not more than one speaker from the same organization or ministry will be accepted.
4. To submit to [president1@asiancca.org](mailto:president1@asiancca.org) the synopsis of the subject and CV of the speaker.
5. Closing date: one year before Conference.

## Mentoring of Potential Members

ACCA will pursue our mission and objectives through equipping and strengthening the existing national Christian counseling bodies and facilitating the set-up of new national organizations in the Asian countries where they are not already existent.

For this purpose, the existing national members have volunteered to mentor the potential new members in various Asian countries with the following emphasis:

- a) encouraging the leaders in forming their formal committee and applying for registration of their association;
- b) guiding them on the structure and launch of membership;
- c) emphasis on accountability of their finances, official submissions and the like;
- d) assisting in initial activities such as having a national conference, helping them to source speakers, advise on how to manage pricing, logistics, etc;
- e) upholding them in your prayers.

At the ACCA 4<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting held in Bali, Indonesia, on 19 Oct 2019, it was decided that the following national organizations will mentor the potential new members in the following countries:

PACC (Philippines) – Cambodia

ACCS (Singapore) – Thailand

AKKI (Indonesia) – Hong Kong

CCCC (China) – Mongolia

ACCI (India) – Sri Lanka, Nepal



Photo: ACCA Fourth Board Meeting

## Books by Asian Authors

Whilst acknowledging the contributions and limitations of Christian counseling knowledge and techniques from the West, given our differing focus and contextual realities, we need to develop our own resources that are uniquely Asian.

Indeed, what will bring us together as Asian Christian counselors are our Eastern identities, common theological persuasions, economic and environmental struggles and the urgent need for more Christian counseling resources that embrace the sufferings and pains of Asia.

We Asians must rise up to meet our local needs! Hence, more Asian Christian counselors are encouraged to engage in thinking and writing, especially with regards to the many portions of the Bible that contain much of folk psychology presently left untapped by Christian counseling interpretations, to develop a deeper interface of psychology and theology that is spiritually and culturally-sensitive, holistic, existential and transformational for professional practice, people-helping and ministry in Asia.

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ACCA invites Asian authors to list their books on Christian counseling or related subjects in our website for free promotion. The books must contain a substantial interface of psychology and theology and not just only psychological content.

The following information are to be submitted to [president1@asiancca.org](mailto:president1@asiancca.org) :

- a) Title and synopsis of the book (max. 200 words)
- b) Photo of the front cover
- c) Name and CV of the author (max. 150 words)
- d) Price in USD
- e) Where to order the book

Note: You may submit as many books as you wish. However, selection of listing is solely at ACCA's discretion.

## **Short Article:**

### **Creative Mission Platforms for Asian Christian Counselors**

By Dr. Edmund Ng, President, ACCA

Our world is in constant flux and to be relevant, the church will have to depart from her traditional approaches to do missions and try out innovative and creative ways to connect and influence. As trends are changing fast and indiscriminately, we must not only try to meet needs where changes are already taking place but better still, anticipate and be there before it happens. How then can we represent Jesus Christ to the peoples of Asia where lifestyles and values are fast departing from the stereotypes of what we know before?

To start with, ACCA through its members is connected with thousands of professional and lay Christian counselors across Asia who already have the knowledge and skills as people-helpers to care for the souls of people and they can be motivated and mobilized for informal, group and communal counseling to care for the salvation of lost souls. We have to think of our role in missions outside the box beyond the traditional member care services for missionaries. At the same time, we also want to expose ourselves to the existing mission agencies that we can connect with to obtain the necessary know-how and support in doing mission work.

Mike Barnett (2005), writing on *Innovation in*

*Mission Operations*, listed the most traditionally-used "creative-access platforms" as related to student, tourist, educator, sports developer and businessperson. No doubt, Christian counselors can serve as educators and practitioners in mental health services in foreign environments.

However, most countries are increasingly tightening their restrictions and monitoring the activities of even "legitimate tent-making" Christian missionaries more severely. For instance, Fritz Kling (2010) in his book *The Meeting of the Waters* told of an incident where a laptop was stolen from a missionary, apparently for financial reasons but soon afterwards, five missionary friends who were listed in the laptop were called in for official government questioning. What is more alarming is that in the emerging era of 5G, they do not even need to steal a laptop as lots of private electronic data can now be easily tapped.

Therefore, Asian Christian counselors ought to come together and brainstorm for more innovative ways to present the Gospel in Asia and beyond. For example, are there some creative ways we can tap on the latest trends in social media as a platform for mission work? If so, we can

reach out to millions of young people around the world even from the privacy of our own bedrooms through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and whatever digital platforms with their unique subcultures and large followings.

The encouraging news is that the Barna surveys reported in 2017 that our post-truth, high-tech, always-on contemporary culture augurs well for virtual relationships in digital counseling and that the millennials and Gen X are more interested in counseling than the Boomers and Elders. So there is a glorious, God-given hope for our young people, provided we know how best to connect with them at their frequencies.

Hence, one mission project that may be worth trying out would be to gather a dedicated interdisciplinary team made up of a Christian counselor, missionary and someone well-versed with the latest slang words and Internet memes for the purpose of mentoring a pair of Christian e-girl and e-boy who are hot and have clout over thousands of their followers, so that these “online influencers” can intentionally impact the lives and values of their peers and lead them to Christ, if necessary, one at a time.

Kling (2010) said it aptly that the church “will increasingly need to try out experimental, innovative and even uncomfortable ideas” (p. 20). To do this, we must be vigilant in tracking the latest trends in social media through noticing the incremental blips and connect the dots before they add up to form the next major shifts.

Indeed, the apostle Paul said in 1 Cor 9:22 that we are to be “all things to all people”. Asian Christian Counselors ought to be ready and flexible to make the following switches anytime: from secular counseling based on psychology to Christian counseling interfacing psychology and theology, with the Bible as the final authority; from Christian counseling to secular counseling with Christian values without even mentioning the name of Jesus; from professional practice to informal counseling in ministry; and from one-to-one clinical practice to communal setting.

ACCA wants to see Asian Christian counselors not just as qualified people but properly-trained, skilled and spiritually mature people-helpers with a heart for others, reaching out in love and compassion, not only for their wellbeing but also for the salvations of the souls.

#### References:

- Barna. (2017). *Barna Trends 2018: The Truth about a Post-Truth Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Barnett, M. (2005). Innovation in Mission Operations. In M. Pocock, G. V. Rheenen, & D. MacConnell. (Eds.) *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (pp. 209 – 244). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Kling, F. (2010). *The Meeting of the Waters*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

## Submission of Short Articles for ACCANews:

ACCA invites the contribution of short professional articles on Christian counselling written by Asians for publication in ACCANews. Kindly email to [president1@asiancca.org](mailto:president1@asiancca.org) the following details:

- i) Article in Word format (max. 1,000 words);
- ii) Content comprises a substantial interface of psychology and theology, and not just on psychology alone;
- iii) Short C.V. of the writer (max. 150 words);
- iv) Author’s email address for feedback from readers.

## News from Member Countries

### AKKI (Indonesia)

On 6 Dec 2019, AKKI met up with five other Christian counseling associations in Indonesia to form a national consortium with the objective of collaborating together in all counseling activities and programs and becoming the legitimate national institution of professional certification in the country. The ground was laid during the ACCA Asian Christian Counseling conference in Bali when key officers of these associations came together to chair various plenary and workshop sessions. Please pray for us as we structure our procedures on how to work together in the coming six months.



Photo: Heads of Indonesian Christian Counseling Consortium

### PACC (Philippines)

PACC had our year-end planning, R & R, and Christmas party on Nov 29-Dec 1. Two new members joined the Board. For 2020, we will be embarking on the training of community lay counselors. PACC will also be partnering with the Department of Social Welfare and Population Commission as the accredited service provider for Pre-Marriage Orientation Counseling courses with Part 1 scheduled for Jan 28-30 and Part 2 for May 4-6. Three seminars with continuing education credits have been planned for Feb, Jun and Aug. We will be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of PACC in July 2020 while our annual conference is planned for Nov 2020. The theme is on Building Competency in Christian Counseling in the Philippines- Integrating the Physical, Emotional & Spiritual Well-being.



Photo: PACC's Year-end Retreat

### NACC (Malaysia)

NACC has been conducting regular workshops on various counselling topics both at our office and in churches. We also engage with the Government and we had the Deputy Minister of Women, Family and Community Development officiating at our annual conference in 2019. The Board of Counselors, Malaysia, which is under this ministry, has also recognized our workshops for earning accreditation hours. Registered counsellors can now attend our workshops for their Continuing Professional Development to renew their licenses. More recently, we have also gained accreditation from two local seminaries for our lay Christian counselling programs. We praise God for His hand in leading our ministry in Malaysia!



Photo: NACC promoting Christian counseling to churches

## ACCS (Singapore)

ACCS ended 2019 with a Thanksgiving Dinner celebrating God's faithfulness for the last 15 years. Our guest speaker shared on the history of Christian counseling in Singapore since its formation in 1966. He inspired us to move forward into 2020 with greater vision and direction. To increase awareness of the association, ACCS is now preparing for our first National Christian Counseling Conference scheduled for 7-8 May 2020 and the Fourth Asia Christian Counseling Conference in 2021. Along with that, the ACCS Ethics Sub-Committee has been formed to formulate our Code of Ethics to be presented and launched in 2020.



Photo: ACCS's Thanksgiving Dinner

## ACCI (India)

The general body of ACCI elected a new Executive Committee on 5 July 2019. Dr. Susheel Tharien was re-elected as the President while Dr. Reupah Philips was elected as the General Secretary, with Mrs. Sharon Joseph as the Joint Secretary and Dr. Renny Samuel as Treasurer. At the next Executive Committee meeting, a new post of Promotional Secretary was created and offered to Dr. Chackochen Mathai. The new initiative is to create more opportunities to recruit new members for ACCI and strategize ways to provide benefits to the members.



Photo: Members of Executive Committee

## MCCA (Mongolia)

MCCA was established on 20 Aug 2019. We were officially registered as a non-profit, non-governmental membership organization at the State Registration of Mongolia. We have just formulated and approved our membership regulation and application procedures. We are planning to organize the first training in January 2020 to introduce MCCA to churches of Ulaanbaatar. We are hoping to cooperate with the Assembly of God Mongolia and Mongolian Evangelical Alliance. Meanwhile, we are also targeting to provide two seminars for lay counselors and psychologists in the first half of 2020.



Photo: MCCA's recent Board meeting

## CCAT (Thailand)

CCAT hosted the organizational leaders' retreat on 27-28 Oct 2019 to build relationships and discuss our joint effort in training in the near future. There were 15 representatives from seven different organizations that came. Dr. Esther Wakeman led our time together at the retreat. We praise God for the completion of the registration process of CCAT on 12 Nov 2019! On 15 Dec 2019, our CCAT board members had a mini-retreat to discuss and strategize the plans for the 2020 activities. We celebrated the registration of CCAT and our Christmas lunch with the CCAT advisory board.



Photo: CCAT Christmas lunch