

2. Social Ministry

2.1 Crossing Boundaries, Embracing the World: Christian Education for Civil Society

Last year, HKCI, together with different theological seminaries, church congregations and NGOs, addressed different social issues and at the same time did a lot of work on reconstructing and critically rethinking the meaning of Christian values in our community life and civil society. Through networking and setting up different platforms, HKCI has tried to draw Christians from different denominations to join our mission.

2.1.1 Theology Courses

- **Social Policies and Christian Values**

This summer HKCI offered a course on “Social Policies and Christian Values” at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, with 7 students enrolled. In this course, we sorted out several recent real cases and pressing social issues and discuss them with the students (those issues included women and violence, ethnic minorities, poverty alleviation, urban redevelopment, food safety, etc.). Through different cases the course aimed at introducing theories and methods of social policy analysis, rethinking the correlation between social policies and Christian values, and exploring the fundamental principles of connecting our faith and values with the politics and negotiation of socio-political issues.



Students of the Lutheran Theological Seminary who enrolled on a course designed by HKCI 2007/12/14

- **Hong Kong Society: A Sociological Perspective**

HKCI has also offered a course on “Hong Kong Society” at the Ecclesia Bible College. From a sociological perspective, this course tried to illustrate different aspects of Hong Kong society, including identity, class, gender, ethnic and globalization. With a critical reflection on the relationship between churches, the colonial government and capitalism, a much more solid sociological reflection can be made to help us construct our contextual theologies and enhance pastoral practices.

- **Ecumenical Summer Internship Programme**

Students received ecumenical leadership training at the Second Ecumenical Summer Internship Programme. There were eight students enrolled. Six of them were from theological seminaries; the other three were from different congregations. The first term of this course was organized by HKCI, the Student Christian Movement of Hong Kong (SCMHK), the Hong Kong Women Christian Council (HKWCC) and the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC). We are honoured to have the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) joining us as one of our partners in this second term. Students’ horizons were broadened not least through contextual analysis and theological reflection.

2.1.2 Christian Formation

- “Light Our Lamp on Its Stand Rather Than Under the Bed” was the second inter-denominational Christian formation programme jointly organized by HKCC and HKSCM. Ten Christians from two churches joined and actively participated in the reflection and discussion of the relationship between social practices and the Christian faith (bible,



Retreat camp: Heritage and Ministry of HKCI at Its 20th Anniversary 2008/8/3

doctrines, spirituality, etc.) through different activities such as a seminar, a training camp, local and overseas visits, etc. This year a series of workshops on youth ministry were included in the programme. We hope that the participants, after receiving the training, can bring what they have learned about ecumenical faith and social concern back to their churches and fellowships.

- **Heritage and Ministry in the 20th Anniversary of HKCI**

A retreat camp was organized to gather members and friends to review and reflect on the different issues at the time of the 20th Anniversary of HKCI. Topics included “Christian Social Concern for 20 Years: Tradition and Reflection”, “Dialogue between China and Hong Kong over the Past 20 Years” and “Global Violence and Religious Freedom”.

2.1.3 Contemporary Message and Inter-faith Dialogue

- **Civil Prophets**

A series of sermons about contemporary issues were prepared by members and staff of HKCI and published in the Christian Times and Kung Kao Po simultaneously (a Protestant and a Catholic weekly newspaper respectively). In order to provide an alternative voice and spiritual renewal of the Christian faith, a new platform of religious dialogues named “Prophets and the Enlightened” was formed by our

group members. Some of them have a Buddhist background. As a result, we have jointly held a series of “inter-faith dialogues” on such themes as “Education on Life and Death: A Dialogue with Muslim”, “Is Sex Evil? A Dialogue with Buddhism”.



“Is Sex Evil?": a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue 2008/7/26

- **Solidarity Night**

Solidarity Night is an informal meeting where local NGOs and their corresponding communities of concerned partners can sit down and talk about how to build, mend and reinforce their relationship. Themes included “Solidarity with the Structural Iron and Steel Workers”, “Women in District Council Elections”, “Ethnic Minorities”, “Recipients of CCSA and Social Service Unit”, “Women Sewing Machine Operator”, “Small-scale Local Food Producers and Consumers”, etc.



Gene V. Robinson delivering a talk in Hong Kong
2008/10/20

- **A Society without Violence**

Last year our social concern mainly focused on issues concerning violence. As for Burma, there has been an interfaith prayer organized by Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist organizations. A workshop about peace and violence has been organized for women who had joined the “1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005” campaign. As for the issue of sex minority and sex discrimination legislation, we have organized a seminar with the Hong Kong Institute of Education and the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, CUHK on “Sexual Orientation and Human Rights”. In collaboration with HKWCC and Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong, we invited Gene V. Robinson, a gay bishop of the US Episcopal Church in New Hampshire, to share with us his life and witness and the vision of the reconciliation between religion and the homosexuality.

- **Youth Development Group**

Co-organized with HKSCM, the Youth Development Group aimed to build a platform of discussion for young pastors, social workers and youth from social movement organizations. In this group, we have discussed issues including chastity movement and the discourse on youth,

family members with different sexual orientations, and CCSA and work ethics.

2.1.4 “Colours in Peace” Multicultural Community Project

As a continuation of our concern on racial harmony in Hong Kong, this project has entered its third year. For this project we have recruited a group of youth participants from different ethnic backgrounds to enhance mutual understanding. The focus of this year is on the Race Discrimination Ordinance which is coming into effect. Besides a series of activities for the promotion of racial harmony, we have designed and conducted a survey on the Race Discrimination Bill. The results of the survey have been released to the public and the government by way of an open forum and a statement made at the Legislative Council.

2.2 Alternative Economy Programme

- **Love Community Network**

In order to continue our concern on the issue of globalization and further our reflection on the relationship between ecology and economic life sustainability, this programme is an attempt to deepen our understanding of the current distribution and redistribution of local land resources and community resources. We have gathered together nine local small-scale producers and ten churches to form a “love community network”, aiming at supporting each other and promoting an alternative way of living to the churches and the general public which can get rid of the cage of capitalism.

- **Collaboration with Local Churches to Respond to Community Needs**

HKCI have developed networks with local churches and government social service units which may benefit the community, especially those which explore different available resources to meet the needs of our neighbours. Also, a programme called “Community Network Rebuilt” was launched to encourage youth participants to find out the urgent

needs of the community through observation, and to look for ways to take follow up action with respect to the corresponding District Council. A workshop called “Organic Life in Community” was also organized for Sunday schools and secondary schools.



Promoting the alternative economy programme 2008/1/26

2.3 Publications

- **Books**

Two titles were published last year. The major one is an anthology entitled *Conflicts and Integration: Church and Society in Hong Kong after 1997*. With their different expertises, a decade of experience after 1997 and in the context of the “one-country, two systems”, explained and elucidated issues of the church-state relationship, Christian identity and the interaction of civil society, and the duty of churches with respect to the underprivileged and marginalized people. Reprints of *Caring Ministry to the Bereaved* have come out this year to meet the needs of readers.



The Chinese journal *Reflection*

- **Reflection**

Last year Reflection explored these themes: “Public Responses of the Sex Column of the Chinese University Student Press: Sex, Morality and Freedom of Speech”, “Hymns and Worship: Spirituality and Consumerism”, “Aged Society: Problems of Retirement Protection and Social Stereotyping”, “Social Enterprises: Their Prospect and the Role of the Church”, and “Beijing Olympic Games: Nationalism, Human Rights and Global Justice”.

- **Bimonthly Newsletter**

HKCI also publishes a Chinese and an English newsletter for local and overseas readers bimonthly to keep them informed of our current projects and concerns.

- **Social Policy and Ministry Reflection Series**

HKCI has helped organized research and study groups for lay Christians, so as to engage them in conducting social research and corresponding theological reflection. A series of documents entitled “Social Policy and Ministry Reflection” are issued as a result on an ongoing basis, which are welcomed by interested Christians and students. The additions to the series this year dealt with such issues as single-parent families, racial discrimination, and democratization of the political system.

Davy Wong and Connie Leung



Booklets of the Social Policy and Ministry Reflection Series