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# The Third International Confucian-Christian Conference Held in Boston

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Aboriginal and Islander Commission. An Executive Committee will oversee youth, women's issues, evangelism, promotion and communication, and relationships with people of other living faiths.

The first president of the N.C.C.A. is Archbishop Aghan Ballozian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Rev. David Gill, general secretary since 1988 of the Australian Council of Churches, will continue in that position for the N.C.C.A.

*Raúl Fernández-Calienes, Uniting Church in Australia*

#### **Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue in Switzerland**

The fifth meeting of the fourth phase of the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue was held in Kappel am Albis, Switzerland, July 23-30, 1994, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and several Classical Pentecostal churches and leaders. Co-chairs were the Rev. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Assemblies of God, Pasadena, CA), and Fr. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B. (St. John's University, Collegeville, MN); co-secretaries were the Rev. Ronald Kydd (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Keene, Ont.) and the Rev. Heinz-Albert Raem (P.C.P.C.U., Vatican City). Others on the steering committee include the Rev. James D. Jenkins (Church of God, Cleveland, TN) and Msgr. John A. Radano (P.C.P.C.U.).

Presentations were made by Fr. Karl Müller, S.V.D. (St. Augustin, Germany) and Robeck, on respective views on evangelization, witness, and proselytism. The goal of the dialogue is the deepening of mutual understanding and respect, not organic or structural unity. There was mutual reaffirmation of the importance of this dialogue to discover areas of agreement, convergence, and disagreement, as well as areas needing further study.

On both sides, the responsibility for evangelization is a central feature of theology and practice. Both see it as encompassing missionary proclamation to nonbelievers and outreach to those who have been exposed to the gospel but have not embraced it wholeheartedly. Differences arose over the definition of those who do not demonstrate living faith and other ways to communicate the gospel with sensitivity. However, there was agreement that evangelization should never involve coercion or the use of means that are incompatible with the gospel message. Prejudices persist on both sides. One step toward overcoming them is to recognize the principle that one group should not compare its ideal with the other group's weaknesses.

The discussions were held in a spirit of candor, mutual trust, and appreciation. The formal sessions were preceded and followed by devotional services led by both teams. The group was honored by a visit from Prof. Emer. Walter Hollenweger (University of Birmingham), a recognized authority on global Pentecostalism, who visited one afternoon to share stimulating observations on the future of Roman Catholic-Pentecostal relations.

Additional Pentecostal participants included the Rev. Cheryl Bridges Johns and the Rev. Steven J. Land (both Church of God, Cleveland, TN), the Rev. Steve Overman (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Eugene, OR), the Rev. Raymond M. Pruitt (Church of God of Prophecy, Cleveland, TN), and the Rev. Miroslav Volf (Evangelical Church of Croatia, Osijek, Croatia). Pentecostal observers included Dr. Karen Carroll Mundy (Church of God, Cleveland, TN) and the Rev. Huibert Zegwaard (Broederschap van Pinkstergemeenten, the Netherlands).

Other Roman Catholic participants included Fr. Norbert Baumert, S.J. (Frankfurt/M.); Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap. (Rome); Fr. John Haughey, S.J. (Loyola University, Chicago); Fr. Hervé Legrand, O.P. (Institut Catholique, Paris); the Rev. John Redford (Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, England); and Sr. Helen Rolfson, O.S.F. (St. John's University, Collegeville, MN).

*from press release*

#### **Third International Confucian-Christian Conference Held in Boston**

Following trends established in two preceding international conferences, held in 1988 (Hong Kong) and 1991 (Berkeley), the Third International Confucian-Christian Conference was held at Boston University, August 25-28, 1994. Here I will report on its nature both as an individual event and as a third phase in an ongoing dialogue that is now in its tenth year, if we begin counting from

the year when planning for the first conference began (1984). The report will discuss who participated, themes and issues addressed explicitly by participants, and implicit concerns that emerged, some of which will inform future conferences—including the Fourth International Confucian-Christian Conference, scheduled for 1997 (possibly in Vancouver).

Names of thirty-five scholars were found on the formal list of conference participants, with about a dozen others observing. The work of inviting scholars, planning the program, etc. fell mainly on the shoulders of the North American coordinator, John Berthrong (director of the Institute for Dialogue among Religious Traditions, at Boston University), and the East Asian coordinator, Peter K. H. Lee (director of the Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, Hong Kong). Representation of groups of scholars was similar to that of previous conferences. Approximately half of the participants were East Asian (Chinese and Korean) Christians, most of whom expressed a deep grounding in Confucian culture, ethics, and/or spirituality. Anglo-Christians were fewer in number, about half a dozen, but all shared their East Asian counterparts' interest in Confucianism, including some whose Christian orientation has been avowedly influenced by Confucian ideas (e.g., John Berthrong, Paul Martinson, Robert Neville, and Frank Whaling).

Another group of about a half dozen Chinese and American scholars included persons better known for studying the Confucian tradition than for being confessing "Confucians." While some such scholars were conspicuously absent (having attended the first two conferences), such as Judith Berling and Rodney Taylor, others were invited for the first time, such as Philip Ivanhoe and Lee Yearley. This leaves, finally, a small but important group of contemporary Neo-Confucians: Cheng Chung-ying, Liu Shu-hsien, and Tu Wei-ming. Their importance transcended their numbers because, individually, each was a featured speaker and because, as a group, they alone represented a specifically (non-Christian) Confucian tradition.

With only one presentation occurring during each of the fifteen time slots over the course of four days, this relatively small group was able to interact formally and informally in effective ways. Building on the experience of the previous conferences, there was a mixture of formal papers (which the first conference had featured) and group discussions inspired by brief informal presentations (which marked the second conference). The host institution and the conference coordinators also tried to learn from previous experience by giving more attention to *interreligious* dialogue between Confucians and Christians (as opposed to the internal *intra*religious dialogue of Confucian/Christians).

The content of the conference was built around the theme/title "Confucian and Christian Contributions to the Coming Civilization." Shared concern for the human future has become a key theme for various dialogues among religions, including the centennial 1993 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. This is a good trend, since it takes various dialogues beyond theological differences into the realm of practical solutions to shared human problems. E.g., the first paper expressed Liu Shu-hsien's thoughts on "World Peace from a Confucian Perspective" and was followed by a Christian reply from Paul Martinson. Various shared values that should have a place in defining the human future were later presented by others, such as Confucian *ren* (benevolence) and Christian love (Frank Whaling), civility (Wm. Theodore deBary), and "concern" itself as a profound feeling underlying the Confucian as well as Christian ethos (Peter Lee, Tu Wei-ming, and others). This was, in part, a continuation of the previous conferences, showing that the concepts *ren* and love (human as well as cosmic or divine) are evolving as a major bridge between the Confucian and Christian traditions.

Another theme—immanence and transcendence—has also become increasingly central to the dialogue, but more as a point of controversy than of convergence. The presentation of Confucianism by today's Neo-Confucians as a tradition maintaining the position of "immanent transcendence," stressing mainly inward access to transcendence, is not easily grasped, let alone embraced, by some Christians in dialogue, while others find it compatible. A final theme that has been important for all three conferences is that of dual religious citizenship, or "Confucian/Christian" dual identity. It is important because so many of the participants feel dually grounded in the two traditions. However, this theme was more a part of the "subtext" than of the "text" of this conference, since it did not get much explicit coverage.

Another part of the subtext was the issue of conflict resolution, which repeatedly surfaced even though there were no presentations on it. This issue of conflict resolution was considered important not only because religious traditions must conduct civil and productive dialogues but also because powerful nations and groups must learn to resolve conflicts peacefully. Robert Neville

brought explicit attention to the issue by defining three levels at which he thought it was (without sufficient awareness) being addressed: (1) disagreement over how to attain certain ends through governance, (2) disagreement over how to attain the wisdom necessary to decide what ends to achieve, and (3) disagreement over how to develop the kind of community and common discourse that can make possible the discussion of ends, governance, etc. Neville's comments followed Cheng Chung-ying's attack (in his presentation "Global Ethics and the Ethics of Futurity") on calls for procedural rationality from such European thinkers as Habermas and Apel, and a passionate defense of procedural rationality by Lee Yearley.

Interestingly, the final conference panel produced another, somewhat unexpected conflict over the relative value of religious and secular ethics. This panel was a "dialogue" between Tu Wei-ming and Peter Berger on "Confucianism and Christianity in the Third Millennium." Tu, representing a tradition usually called "humanistic," defended the need for a religious grounding of ethics. Berger, ostensibly the Christian representative, argued that religion perhaps adds "legitimation" to a system of ethics, but that in deciding on issues that affect the human future we can and should use a distinctly secular ethics.

A final "subtext" issue never far from participants' minds was that of global ecology, which was not explicitly covered by any panels. It surfaced at the very end of the conference with the presentation of a proposal by Mary Evelyn Tucker (Department of Religion, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA 17837) for a 1996 conference on Confucianism and ecology. Interested persons are encouraged to inquire about this future conference.

*Christian Jochim, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA*

#### COCU Reports Progress

An early-September, 1994, press release from the Consultation on Church Union reported that the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (meeting in Indianapolis, August 24-September 2, for its tri-annual convention) had voted to affirm that denomination's continued membership and active participation in COCU, though the 200 bishops and 900 deputies were unable to enter into covenant communion on the basis of the *Churches in Covenant Communion* document. The church's Standing Committee on Ecumenical Relations is to work with Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers in an effort to initiate relationships between Episcopal parishes and sister congregations among COCU member-denominations for common worship, study, and local mission.

Further, the General Convention referred both COCU documents (*The COCU Consensus* and *Churches in Covenant Communion*) to the Inter-Anglican Ecumenical Office of the Anglican Consultative Council, for its consideration and response.

Earlier this year, the Presbyterian Church (USA) had reaffirmed its commitment to COCU. In June, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church approved the plan at its Assembly in Memphis, TN. The International Council of Community Churches had voted affirmatively in 1990, with the Presbyterians affirming it in 1993. The remaining member bodies will consider the plan at their national gatherings over the next two or three years.

*from COCU press release and In Common newsletter*

#### North American Academy of Ecumenists Meets in California

Meeting at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, September 23-25, 1994, the North American Academy of Ecumenists discussed the theme, "Gospel Shaping Culture: Dynamics of Unity and Division." While the full range of gospel, culture, and unity issues came under discussion, particular prominence was given to ecumenism in the evangelical culture. Fuller's president, Richard Mouw, addressed "Gospel, Popular Spirituality, and a Culture of Need," which engaged contemporary debates about popular religion that have been sparked by the writings of Mark Noll and David Wells in the evangelical community and by liberation theology in the Roman Catholic community.

Mary Ann Donovan (Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley) discussed the ecumenical