



Christian Conference of Asia

Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) – 2020

‘God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation’

13 August–11 September 2020

Kerala, India

(At three cities in Kerala State- Kochi, Kottayam, Thiruvananthapuram, and at CCA General Assembly venue Kovalam)

Background Information

The Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI), a month-long ecumenical formation training programme, organised and facilitated by CCA, will train prospective Asian church leaders in ecumenism. Conducted by a team of prominent Asian theologians, experts, and professionals as resource-persons/facilitators, the AEI will provide a platform to nurture future Asian leaders.

Twenty-four participants will be selected from among all applicants to the AEI-2020.

The AEI-2020 will be held in conjunction with the 15th General Assembly of CCA. The theme of the AEI-2020 is the same as that of the General Assembly: *‘God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation’*. The training will be held in three different cities in Kerala state of India: Kochi, Kottayam, and Thiruvananthapuram. The final leg of AEI will be held at the CCA Assembly venue, where the participants will have to be the opportunity to participate in the General Assembly of CCA.

The AEI aims to deepen the participants’ knowledge of ecumenism and the ecumenical movement from biblical and theological bases in the contexts of the emerging socio-economic and geopolitical realities of Asia. The contents of the training course will also be designed in such a way so as to build the capacity of the participants and enable them to respond effectively and contextually to the call for dwelling in harmony with God’s creation and affirming the will of God. The experiences gained from various stages of the academic and practical sessions arranged in four different places during four weeks of the AEI will equip the participants with greater clarity and commitment to a common and unified ecumenical vision.

The four components of the AEI: (a) analysis of Asian realities, (b) ecumenical vision based on biblical and theological reflections, (c) community building, and (d) leadership training will provide helpful tools to intertwine the atmosphere and direction of the course and will aid in imbuing the spirit of ecumenism and wider ecumenical vision. Various interactive sessions will include case studies and collaborative peer-to-peer learning as a means to turn knowledge into practice.

Theme

The massive developmental and technological advancements have caused tremendous changes in the world, which are manifested in various ways in Asia as well. Asia has been experiencing rapid and eventful changes.

Despite many positive impacts, the negative impacts are also reflected in different areas of life, including familial, social, and cultural situations. Land, environment, water, and other natural resources are exploited at the expense of economic growth, infrastructural development, and technological advancement. Ecological crises mark the ground reality in many parts of the world and have emerged to be the rampant trend in Asia, with its impacts being observed in many ways. The causes of climate change in the forms of deforestation, destruction of habitat and biodiversity, generation of radioactive and hazardous wastes, poor water quality and supply, non-renewable energy exploration, rampant pesticide use and food insecurity, and environmental distress have been escalating despite some attempts to redeem them. The ramifications of these challenges cross national borders and affect economic, political, and cultural relationships on a vast geographic scale in many parts of Asia. The consequence of these would cause innumerable Asians to suffer due to the devastating effects of cyclones, floods, earthquakes, drought, and acute water shortage, as rises in atmospheric pressure and temperature may result in more fluctuations and unpredictable climatic events. Many Asians and Asian countries are victims of environmental destruction. The magnitude of such devastation in Asia is evident in every country in the region.

As a body of Christ, we are called to witness Christ in the midst of the increasing painful realities of Asia today. If we recall God's blueprint of creation, God saw all that was made, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31). However, the tragic destruction that happened along the way revealed the emotional pain and agony of God's creation. The cry for restoration and renewal of God's creation is clear: *"Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old."* (Lamentations 5:21).

It is expected that the month-long ecumenical training programme will enable the participants to sharpen their biblical and theological perspectives on ecumenism and its wider concerns, as well as result in ecumenical formation and leadership development.

Objectives

The objectives of AEI-2020 are:

- to enable a selected group of young prospective ecumenical leaders in Asia to learn the emerging contexts related to wider ecumenical vision,
- to equip potential church leaders to perceive the emerging realities and issues in Asia with theological undergirding, and to respond effectively and contextually to the call for dwelling in harmony with God's creation and affirming the will of God, and,
- to provide opportunities for selected participants to be with prominent church and ecumenical leaders in Asia during the time of CCA General Assembly and also to gain experiences from full-time participation at the General Assembly which will be held from 3–10 September 2020.

Who can apply?

- Young men and women between the age of 25-30 years; pastors, theological graduates, church workers, or lay members from CCA member churches, councils, and related organisations who will be sponsored and recommended by the leadership of respective sponsoring body;
- Those who are interested to develop their leadership development and ecumenical formation, especially in widening their ecumenical perspectives which will be put to use and practice when they return to their respective countries/regions, and in the future.

Application and Selection process

1. Download the Application Form from the CCA website.
2. Send the duly filled up applications to CCA along with the following documents:
 - a. Curriculum Vitae
 - b. A short description of the applicant's ecumenical and church involvements
 - c. Letter of recommendation/endorsement from the member church/council/ecumenical organisation/institution.

Selection will be based on competence, gender and confessional balances, sub-regional representations, and the applicant's ability to effectively communicate in English.

Scholarship/Travel Bursaries/Registration Fee

CCA will offer scholarships for deserving applicants who are seeking grants to cover the expenses fully or partly.

The minimum cost estimated for covering the expenses of one student of AEI-2020 will be:

Board and Lodging per head for one month	- USD 3,000
Local transportation, medical insurance	- USD 350
Tuition fee	- USD 500
Registration Fee	- USD 100
<i>Total</i>	<i>- USD 3,950</i>

Churches and councils or participants who can afford to pay either full or part of the costs of AEI-2020 are encouraged to contribute.

However, scholarships or travel grants for a few deserving participants will be made available for those who are from South and Southeast Asian countries. Participants from countries and regions from East Asia, New Zealand and Australia are encouraged to find suitable sponsors through their partner churches or organizations to cover the costs for their board and lodging or international travel.

The registration fee of USD 100 is mandatory for each selected participant. This amount must be paid at the beginning of the AEI-2020.

The completed AEI-2020 applications must be sent along with scanned copies of all supporting documents to cca.aei@gmail.com. Please fax the documents to +66-53-247-303 in case email correspondence is not possible.

The deadline for receiving the complete application including supporting documents is **15 March 2020**. Incomplete applications or applications sent beyond the deadline will not be considered.