

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

KAWT, Japanese Women Theologians, and Korean Women Theologians in Japan jointly held a conference on the theme of Peace, Life, and Woman from January 13-17, 1989; in Japan. We also discussed our Christian responsibilities for the present world, and the problem of discrimination against Koreans in Japan.

KAWT and other women organizations in Korea have struggled for the reunification of Korean people. The struggle will face a lot of obstacles, but we will not give it up. Please keep your concern for our cause. Your support will always be a great encouragement for us.

Your sister in Christ,
Yoo, Chun-Ja
General Secretary, KAWT
(Korean Association of
Women Theologians)

Dear sisters,

We are working mainly for the welfare of the tribal women. There are many tribal villages where there are no facilities for drinking water. The tribal women have to collect from very long distance their drinking water. In some cases they have to steal drinking water in the night from a long distance. So we are giving much importance on drinking water.

Our area is draught-prone area. There are no facilities for irrigation, so we are giving much importance on renovation of irrigation tanks and construction of irrigation wells.

We are giving much importance about the awareness program of the tribal women.

With best regards.

Yours faithfully,
Anath Saren
For Secretary
Vivekananda Adibesikalyan Samiti
West Bengal, India

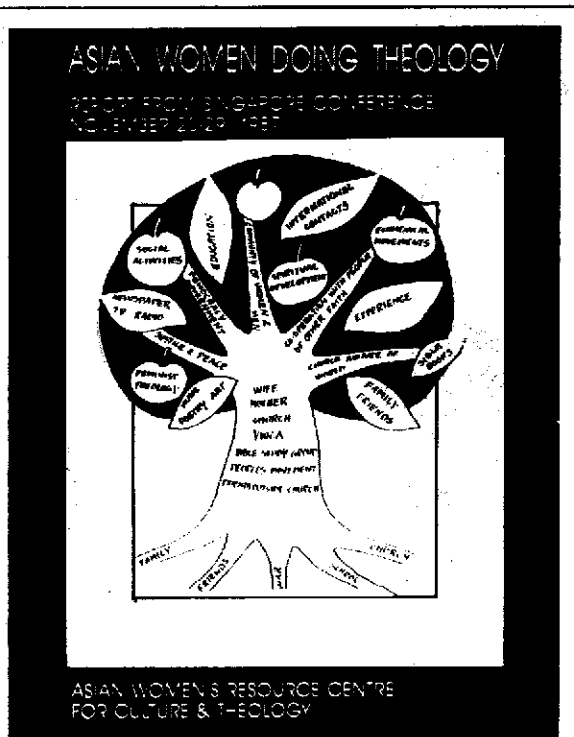
NEWS RELEASE

The first publication of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology has come out. **Asian Women Doing Theology: Report from Singapore Conference, November 20-29, 1987** is the title with 370 pages. The authors of the articles are all the participants of the Singapore Conference, in the form of individual as well as composite work. It covers their reality of socio-economic, political, religio-cultural and psychological aspects and biblical reflections on the situation. The five theological titles are "Who is Jesus?", "Who is the Holy Spirit?", "Who is Mary?", "Who is the Church?", and "What is Asian Women's Spirituality?". It also includes morning worship and the liturgies used during the conference.

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Editorial

Easter greetings to our readers from the current guest editors from the Philippines. It is our joy to present this issue of *In God's Image* which centers around the meaning of the Easter event for Christians in general and for Filipino Christian women in particular.

For Christianity the world over, Easter is the pivotal and most solemn feast of the year. It is not a single day but a whole season commemorating the major events in the history of salvation culminating in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It includes Jesus' saving passion and death as well as the sending forth of his Spirit "to renew the face of the earth." Although Easter focuses on the redeeming activities of Jesus Christ, it speaks of our contemporary experience as well. For Christians throughout the world, it celebrates our deliverance from the slavery of sin, the ushering in of fresh life, and the hope for a renewed creation.

For Filipino Christian women, the significance of this feast has deepened as they have gradually become more conscious of the experience of the Easter event in their own lives. Living in the only country in Asia where the population is over ninety percent Christian, these women have a profound devotion to the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for this paschal mystery gives meaning to our struggle and suffering and promises ultimate liberation as well. Oftentimes, however, the weight of the people's pain and frustration from their experience of overwhelming poverty and multiple forms of oppression obscures the hope of any victory. The fact of militarization, the lack of an equitable land reform program, the high cost of commodities coupled with low wages, the heavy militarization in many areas of the country, the violation of human rights, laws and decrees that favor the rich and powerful, the destruction and pollution of the environment—all this spells a life of hardship for the majority of the people. And this is particularly true for the women, who are the double victims of oppressive systems, policies and practices.

But despite the multiple oppression and discrimination that women suffer on the basis of gender, class, political affiliation, cultural and religious background, in society and in the Church, there are signs of hope. A small but growing number of Filipino women are be-

coming aware of their true situation and are increasingly involved in efforts towards their own liberation and the full humanity of all. For them, Easter is taking on its full and authentic meaning. It now signifies the hope of a new creation; the empowering of women and other dominated groups; the righting of unjust relationships; the transformation of individuals in Church and society; the birth of a more just and peace-filled social order. It is this meaning of Easter that is reflected in the different contributions found in this issue of *In God's Image*.

The first part of the journal consists of essays that reveal the growing social awareness and commitment of Filipino women—women who see that if life is to change for them and for future generations, they must actively engage in the work of personal and societal transformation. A new breed of Filipino women is emerging. Lydia Lascano's "Signs of New Life" focuses on grass-roots women and those in solidarity with them; the interview with Lita by Emelina Villegas shows the determination of a woman worker to change the workers' lot and strive towards more mutually respectful relationships despite the odds; the jointly authored article on the women of Nirilisan, by Myrna Arceo and Arche Ligo, is a testimony to the women of a small rural village who discover and make effective use of "women power" to improve their situation; Teresa Dagdag delineates the need for women to unite in their cause for justice and to bond with one another to effect change; Emma Cantor's report on the women's day rally sponsored by the National Council of Churches of the Philippines affirms that churches must indeed give recognition and support to women's worth and contribution to deserve the name "Christian." These efforts in creating new life are succinctly summarized in Mary John Mananzan's centerfold photo feature entitled "Woman: Committed to Life."

The second part is a collection of faith reflections that show how women involved in the church and in theology are viewing and living their faith in a new, more life-giving way. The essays are written from the perspective of women committed to the struggle for new life, the full humanity of women and men alike. Being part of the struggle, both personal and societal, has led Mary Rosario Battung to discover God as a tender Mother. Using the

Bible as her basis, Elizabeth Dominguez reflects on human sexuality from a woman's viewpoint and arrives at compassionate and non-moralistic conclusions. The three remaining essays by Virginia Fabella, Janette Hassey and Rosella Camte-Bahni, though each with a different focus, feature Mary Magdalene as a symbol for womanhood and discipleship. Usually portrayed in the past as a sinner and the object of shame, Mary Magdalene is "rediscovered" as an inspiration for her faith, strength, and courage, her unswerving loyalty and following of Jesus, who singled her as his first emissary to announce New Life.

It is thus with an earnest desire to share the Filipina women's experience of renewed life in the midst of pain and struggle that the present guest editors readily accepted the task of preparing this Easter issue. There is an additional reason, however. Our regular readers will recall that since last year, *In God's Image* has changed its mode

of operation which relied primarily on a regular staff in Singapore. Now it draws on a wider range of women throughout Asia to edit different issues of the journal. This style of work has allowed for and promoted the creativity and resourcefulness of a greater number of Asian women. As part of the Women's Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) dedicated to the promotion of theology from the perspective of Third World women, we have been challenged.

We have enjoyed putting this collection of materials together; we hope you will enjoy reading it. We wish all our readers of *In God's Image* a joyous and hope-filled Easter season.

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