

# ACUCA NEWSLETTER

Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia

“Committed to the mission of Christian Higher Education of uniting all people in the community of service and fellowship.”

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## ACUCA MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

### HONG KONG

Chung Chi College  
Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Lingnan University  
Hong Kong Baptist University

### INDIA

Christ University  
Lady Doak College

### INDONESIA

Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia  
Atma Jaya Yogyakarta University  
Dhyana Pura University (Undhira)  
Duta Wacana Christian University  
Krida Wacana Christian University  
Maranatha Christian University  
Parahyangan Catholic University  
Pelita Harapan University  
Parahyangan Catholic University  
Petra Christian University  
Sanata Dharma University  
Satya Wacana Christian University  
Soegijapranata Catholic University  
Tarakanita School of Communication and Secretarial Studies  
Universitas Katolik Widyamandira  
Universitas Kristen Indonesia

### JAPAN

Aoyama Gakuin University  
Doshisha University  
Hiroshima Jogakuin University  
Hokusei Gakuen University  
International Christian University  
J. F. Oberlin University  
Kobe College  
Mamoyama Gakuin University  
Kwansei Gakuin University  
Meiji Gakuin University  
Mamoyama Gakuin University  
Nanzan University  
Osaka Jogakuin University  
Seinan Gakuin University  
Sophia University  
Tokyo Woma's Christian University

### KOREA

Ewha Womans University  
Handong Global University  
Hannam University  
Keimyung University  
Sogang University  
Soongsil University  
Yonsei University

### MYANMAR

Myanmar Institute of Theology

### PHILIPPINES

Assumption University  
Ateneo de Manila University  
Central Philippine University  
De La Salle University  
Philippine Christian University  
Silliman University  
Trinity University of Asia  
Filamer Christian College  
Miriam College  
St. Paul University  
De La Salle Dasmariñas  
La Consolacion University  
Philippine Women's University  
Wesleyan University Philippines

### TAIWAN

Aletheia University  
Chang Jung Christian University  
Chung Yuan Christian University  
Fu Jen Catholic University  
Providence University  
Soochow University  
St. John's University  
Tunghai University  
Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages

### THAILAND

Asia-Pacific International University  
Assumption University  
Christian University of Thailand  
Payap University

## Message from the President

Without adequate warning, the Covid-19 pandemic, has created demands on higher education previously acknowledged as both challenges and prospects of 21st century education. Before the outbreak of this health crisis, many of our colleges and universities may still have been in transition from a predominantly in-person classroom instruction (mark of a 20th century education) to a blended form of learning or even a full online learning. Then the Covid-19 virus kept us from doing our business as usual and forcibly accelerated the adoption of distance learning. Skills set and competencies required in teaching and learning needed review and adjustment based on current needs of the time. As identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning, the four key skills needed today are creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. With abundance of information readily available to our learners who are mostly digital natives, 21st century skills need to go beyond an ability to access electronic information. Rather, the focus should be more on making sense of that information, using it in creative ways, sharing it based on converging interests, and working together to achieve progress and development in our society.

For us in Christian institutions, the pandemic has compelled us to explore the religio-cultural, socio-political, historical and economic circumstances that shaped our educational mission, goals and services. The same contexts that spurred our growth are the same aspects that fuel the disparity among our Christian institutions notably in such area as access to digital technology and equity in opportunities and resources in higher education. Now, more than ever, we need to stand strong together to keep our vision and goals alive despite, or more aptly, because of, the global crisis we face.

But what are the lessons to be learned from such a disruption to our leadership and management of Christian educational institutions? How did we navigate the turbulence encountered in this period of pandemic such that we were strengthened in our resolve to preserve institutional continuity and stability? Which best practices can readily be adapted? What are some sociocultural, economic and geopolitical sensibilities we must take into account in our change efforts and processes so we can stand firm and hold on to our Christian principles and identity? How are such lessons to be shared with others, beyond the immediate confines of our campuses? What are the range of networks and vehicles of communication that can facilitate mutual learning in the spirit of genuine cooperation and collaboration? How can these considerations redound to the benefit of our students and revitalize our Christian universities as we march towards the 21st century teaching and learning realities?

So many questions. To some of us, right now, we may be short of answers. But we can be each other's mentors. Together, we can find solutions.

For us who abide and dwell in the shelter of the Lord, we claim the promise that God will raise us up “on eagle's wings/Bear (us) on the breath of dawn/Make (us) to shine like the sun....” No matter how dark it gets, there will always be morning!

Let us courageously welcome the dawn together!

Sincerely,

**BETTY CERNOL MCCANN, PH.D.**

*President, Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia (2019-2021) and Silliman University, Philippines*



## News from the Secretariat

## ACUCA welcomes 5 new member institutions

During the June 2020 Executive Committee meeting, the officers and the members of the executive board warmly welcome five new Christian academic institutions into the fold. Hokusei Gakuen University, Tokyo Woman's Christian University, Widya Mandira Catholic University, and Universitas Kristen Indonesia have been accepted since June 22 into the now 69-member association. The fifth Christian institution is the Wesleyan University-Philippines which was formally accepted during the 24<sup>th</sup> ACUCA General Assembly last November 7, 2019.

**Hokusei Gakuen University** is a private university located in Sapporo, Japan. It traces its roots to 1887 when a missionary of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, Sarah C. Smith, founded the Smith Girls' School. After several expansions, the Hokusei Gakuen University was founded in year 1962. Hokusei which means north star was derived from the biblical reference "Shine like stars in a dark world" and points to the Protestant educational philosophy of the university. Headed by its President, Dr. Ikuo Daibo, the university has grown to around 4,000 students across three undergraduate schools: humanities, economics, and social welfare. It also provides a variety of study-abroad programs and welcomes international students to its campus.



Hokusei Gakuen University campus located in Sapporo, Japan

Meanwhile, **Tokyo Woman's Christian University** is a higher learning institution for women located in Tokyo, in Japan. Founded in 1918 with a modest beginning of 76 women, the enrolment grew gradually to include international students. Currently, with a total approximately 4,000 students, 12 majors in School of Art and Sciences, Tokyo Woman's Christian University has constantly provided its female students with precious opportunities for higher education based on Christianity promoting the liberal arts studies essential for women to be positive and independent. Headed by its President Dr. Kazuhiro Mori, Tokyo Woman's Christian University's goals have been the education for women in liberal arts for women in liberal arts, the promotion of

internationalism and global outlook, and the advancement of Christian principles.



Tokyo Woman's Christian University campus located in Tokyo, Japan

**Widya Mandira Catholic University** (Universitas Katolik Widya Mandira) is a private higher education institution, founded by a Catholic Foundation known as Yayasan Pendidikan Katolik Arnoldus (Arnoldus Catholic Educational Foundation) in 1982 and located in the city of Kupang (Timor), eastern Indonesia. It is recognized by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, and also accredited by the National Board of Accreditation for the Tertiary Education (Badan Akreditasi Nasional - Perguruan Tinggi or BAN-PT). The University has a population of over 8,000 students. Headed by its President Rev. Fr. Dr. Philipus Tule, SVD, the University constantly holds its vision to be an educational and academic community, which is excellent and creative based on Christian and local values with global orientation. Widya Mandira is much more than just a name. Hidden within this name (Widya means knowledge and Mandira means tower), there is a special meaning and mission to be a "Tower of Knowledge". It is the University's mission to serve with heart, based on the Gospel of John (10,10): "... that they may have life in abundance" (Ut Vitam Habeant Abundantius).



Widya Mandira Catholic University in Kupang, Indonesia

Located in Jakarta Indonesia, **Christian University of Indonesia** (Universitas Kristen Indonesia) was founded in 1953 as a result of the establishment of Indonesia Council of Churches shortly after the independence of Indonesia in 1945. With a total student population of more than 4,300 students, the university maintains two main campuses:

Campus A is located in Central Jakarta and Campus B in Cawang, East Jakarta. Headed by its Rektor, Dr. Dhaniwara Harjono, S.H., M.H., M.B.A., Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI) continues to pursue its mission of improving the quality of its graduates with integrity and competency in their fields to be able to compete in the global era. On October 15, 2018, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. H. Joko Widodo attended and gave an opening speech at the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universitas Kristen Indonesia.



UKI Rektor, Dr. Dhaniwara Harjono with the President of the Rep. of Indonesia, Ir. H. Joko Widodo

**Wesleyan University-Philippines** is an autonomous university which offers 45 degree programs; of which, 13 have licensure examinations. It was founded on July 1, 1946 as Philippine Wesleyan College. Today it has over 10,000 students in two campuses, Cushman Campus in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, and Maria Aurora Campus in the Province of Aurora. Under the leadership of President Benjamin D. Turgano, the university continues its mission of providing its brand of quality education imbued with Wesleyan spirituality. Its priorities are its (a) strong advocacy for the care of the environment; (b) commitment to uphold and defend liberal arts education; and determination to reposition the university to be able to navigate its directions as a Christian university in the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



A traditional "dance of thanksgiving and celebration" by Tribu Wesleyan during the University's 74th Foundation Anniversary. In many ways, this photo defines the education in WUP which aims not only to fill the basket – the minds of its students -- but to instill in them the values of hardwork, the importance of community, and the reliance upon God's grace.

## News from the Secretariat

### ACUCA Executive Committee holds virtual meeting for the first time

June 23, 2020

Because of COVID-19 the officers and the members of the Executive Board could not meet in person during its regular Executive Committee. The June 22 meeting represents the first virtual regular executive committee meeting this year. This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Present in the meeting were: Dr. Betty McCann of Silliman University, ACUCA President (Philippines); Dr. Kim Kitai who represented Dr. Kwang-Sup Lee of Hannam University, Vice President (Republic of Korea); Professor Ricky Won who represented Professor Roland Chin of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Treasurer (Hong Kong); Dr. Sr. Anne Therese Falkenstein of Providence University (Taiwan); Dir. Glen Chatelier together with Pres. Bro. Bancha Saenghiran of Assumption University (Thailand); Dr. Rektor Neil Semuel Rupidara of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (Indonesia); Dr. Fr. Jacob Rajcani who represented Prof. Nozomu Yamada of Nanzan University (Japan); and Dr. Fr. Viju Devassy who represented Dr. Fr. Thomas Matthew of Christ University (India). The ACUCA President was assisted by Dr. Wilma Tejero as the new ACUCA General Secretary and Ms. Glynnis Casiró, the SMS-FMS program coordinator. Also present during the meeting was Rev. Tse Hung, the university Chaplain of HKBU. Among the items taken were the confirmation of the SMS scholars for the Spring and Fall 2020 and the acceptance of the new member institutions to the association. Also deliberated and acted upon by the Executive Board was the request of Hannam University to delay its assumption of office as the next ACUCA President for one year thereby extending the ACUCA presidency of Silliman University until December 31, 2021. Dr. Kim Kitai explained that aside from the extraordinary and unusual condition brought about by COVID-19 which hinders in person meeting between Hannam and Silliman, the former is in the middle of transition of Presidency as Dr. Kwang-Sup Lee has just assumed his Office a few months back as the new president of HNU. To provide support to Hannam, the Executive Committee approved the said request and that the amendments to the Constitution and By Laws will be presented during the next General Assembly.

### 3 SMS applicants accepted to the Student Exchange Program this Spring and Fall 2020

June 23, 2020

The General Secretary announced that the three applications for the SMS scholarship for the 2020 Spring and Fall semesters were acted favorably by the Executive Board during its June 22 regular meeting. They are: Dylan Scott Low of Payap

University (Thailand) to Providence University, Taiwan as the host institution; Zi Kun Zheng of Wenzao Ursuline (Taiwan) to Sophia University, Japan; and Christine Setiawati of Soegijapranata (Indonesia) to Tunghai University, Taiwan.

### ACUCA President announces new Vice President

April 27, 2020

Dr. Kwang-Sup Lee as the newly installed President of Hannam University (HNU) of South Korea automatically serves as the Vice President of the Association of Christian University and Colleges in Asia (ACUCA), announced ACUCA President, Dr. Betty Cernol McCann, who also serves as the incumbent President of Silliman University of Dumaguete City, Philippines. Dr. Kwang-Sup Lee succeeded Dr. Duk-Hoon Lee whose term of office as HNU president ended last February 29, 2020. As ACUCA's Vice President, Dr. Lee will assist the ACUCA President; act for the President in her absence; and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President of the Association.



Dr. Lee obtained his Ph.D. degree in Polymer Chemistry from Freiburg University in Germany and Master of Science (MSc) degree in Polymer Chemistry from Korea University in Seoul South Korea. He completed his college education at Hannam University, graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Science (BS) in Chemistry in 1984. Prior to his position as President of Hannam University, Dr. Lee served as a full professor at the Department of Advanced Materials and Chemical Engineering at Hannam University from 1992 to 2020. He was the Dean of the College of Life Science and Nanotechnology from 2008 to 2010, Dean of the Graduate School from 2009-2010, and Director of the Institute of Hybrid Materials for Information and Biotechnology from 2006 to 2014 of the same university. Dr. Lee also held various key positions outside of the university. He served as senior research scientist at Korea Research Institute of Chemical Technology from 1987 to 1992 and as director of Brain Korea 21 Center for BT-IT Hybrid Nanomaterials from 2006 to 2014. He travelled outside of Korea in various periods as: visiting scientist at the Institute for Lasers, Photonics, and Biophotonics University at Buffalo in New York U.S.A.(1990-1991 and 2005-2006); visiting professor at Naval Research

laboratory in Washington D.C.(1998-1999); and research professor at Jilin University in Changchun China (2015-2020).

### ACUCA President announces new General Secretary

April 15, 2020



Dr. Wilma Milo Tejero has been designated General Secretary of the Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia (ACUCA), announced

Silliman University (SU) President, Dr. Betty McCann, who also serves as the ACUCA President.

Dr. Tejero takes the place of Dr. Jenny Lind D. Elmaco who took on a post at the Austrian Embassy – Manila in early April 2020. To date, ACUCA is composed of 69 Christian colleges and universities from Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Myanmar, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. As ACUCA's General Secretary, Dr. Tejero will serve as the secretary of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee; manage and supervise the office of the Association; carry out the decisions of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly; maintain contact with member institutions regarding the implementation of projects sponsored by the Association; manage the finances within the provision of the budget and submit semi-annual financial statements and audited financial report to the Treasurer; present to the General Assembly and the Executive Committee a report on the activities of the preceding year(s) and proposals for the programs of the coming year(s); and, with the consent of the President, convene the General Assembly.

Dr. Tejero obtained her Ph.D. degree in economics this year from Hannam University in South Korea. She holds two Masters degrees, a master of arts (MA) degree in economics from Ateneo de Manila University in 2006 and master in business administration (MBA) degree from Silliman University in 1997. She completed her college education also at Silliman, graduating with the degree of bachelor in business administration (BBA) in 1994. Dr. Tejero served as the chairperson of the Economics Department of SU College of Business Administration from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2015- 2016. She went on study leave from Silliman to pursue her Ph.D. program at Hannam University in 2016. Dr. Tejero will serve as the General Secretary until the turnover of ACUCA presidency from Silliman University to Hannam University, South Korea.

## News from the Member Institutions

### New HKBU-led Study Unveils COVID-19 Transmission Patterns

May 13, 2020

With the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in lockdowns in different parts of the world, from the US to many European nations, there have been intense debates on when and how we can safely reopen the economy. New research led by Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) computer scientists has used a data-driven modelling approach to answer the time-critical question of when the stringent social distancing and quarantine measures against COVID-19 can be loosened so that normal life and economic activities can be restored in a safe manner.



Photo: Leader researchers Prof. Liu Jiming (left) and Dr. Liu Yang (right) of the Department of Computer Science of Hong Kong Baptist University.

The research team developed a novel computational model that explicitly characterizes and quantifies the underlying transmission patterns among different populations throughout the various phases of the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on the model, the research team carried out a prospective analysis of the different work resumption plans, revealing the respective economic implications and the levels of disease transmission risk associated with each plan.

The original research was titled "What are the Underlying Transmission Patterns of COVID-19 Outbreak? An Age-specific Social Contact Characterization", and it was published in The Lancet's EClinicalMedicine journal. The model was developed by a research team from HKBU's Department of Computer Science, and the study was led by Professor Liu Jiming, Chair Professor of the Department, in collaboration with the National Institute of Parasitic Diseases of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The research team will openly share their data-driven computational modelling and analytical tools with public health policymakers and researchers around the world, and this will enable them to capitalise on these tools for decision making using their domestic epidemiological data.

### Assumption University of Thailand provides mental and spiritual counseling to students

May 10, 2020

Having been alerted to the threat of the coronavirus since early February of 2020, the Assumption took immediate steps to mitigate the spread of the virus on its campus by activating to a fuller extent its Online Learning Management System. The system allows video conferencing of faculty members with their respective students on specified time and ensuring that the activity of teaching and learning goes on uninterrupted on an ad-hoc basis. "The full-online learning mode for its degree programs took effect on March 16, 2020 following the recommendation of the Thai Council of University Presidents and such is expected to continue to be implemented during the first semester, June – October 2020", Dir. Chatelier said. Its students from China and other parts of the world were advised to remain in their home countries and requested to participate in the virtual classes instead.



Sensitive of the difficulties that the students may be experiencing, the university administration extends various forms of assistance. Specifically, to monitor the well-being of its students, the university provides mental and spiritual counseling services to those who need them. Within Academic Units, the Coordinators for Student Services activated online systems of Counseling particularly for two types of students, the international students who were stuck overseas, unable to report back to the University, and for those international students who were in Bangkok, unable to go home. In both cases the strategies carried out were to feed information on updates via the University website, the faculty website, and through the website of the office of International Affairs ([www.oia.au.edu](http://www.oia.au.edu)). The University's Department of Student Affairs through its seasoned counselors provided immediate counseling to students via Zoom platforms and through teleconferences. The students, Thai and non-Thai were also offered counseling options through the neighboring Buddhist temples, Christian Churches while the two Chapels on either of the campuses were open all through the day for those who needed to seek silent prayer and spiritual recourse. Characteristic issues which arose among students were fear of isolation during the lockdowns, inertia issues due to lack of

exercise, separation from loved ones, and sometimes dietary stress. The University's Campus Ministers and the Chaplain were ready at all times to react to student calls for either counselling, or advice on faith issues and personal matters.

At the level of the Graduate Schools, the program in Counselling Psychology set up hotlines, and immediate Zoom access for the Graduate students who needed attention. The dialogic value of the interactions between student stress reach-outs and the capacities of the staff and faculty to relate to them during the COVID 19, underscored one of the values of the Catholic identity of Assumption University. The university is indeed "alma mater" particularly when its students are in need or distressed. "We cannot fulfil entirely the students needs but we are there to listen, to cheer up, to empathize, to offer suggestions and possible solutions," Director Chatelier shared. The University emerges as neighbour, not mere structure, as comfort provider, not, merely knowledge facilitator. The University is coach, mentor and fellow traveller in the pathways, unseemingly, as they are, in the COVID 19 crisis. University President Rev. Brother Bancha Saenghiran, in the best stroke of the Good Samaritan extended to all Undergraduate enrollees a 25% Scholarship till October 2020, while assuring all Faculty and Staff of equitable emoluments, with no deductions whatsoever.

"Let it not be left unsaid that we prevail in our faith in God our Father, and in Jesus our Lord and Savior to stand with us in these times, and to help us extend our hands of assistance to those who need it in our community and elsewhere," Director Chatelier said.

### IR Thermographers Installed at Tunghai University to Fight COVID-19

May 1, 2020

To alleviate the long queue of students for temperature-taking during peak hours, Tunghai University of Taiwan installed three infrared (IR) thermographers on March 12, 2020 at three major entrances of the university. This was made through the generous donation from Tunghai Women's Association in Taiwan.



(Please go to page 5)

### IR Thermographers installed ... from page 4

The IR thermographers are developed by the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science & Technology (NCSIST). Multiple technical teams from NCSIST led by the Materials and Electro-Optical Division Director Dr. Yi-Cheng Cheng and Dr. Guo-Ren Chang, are stationed on campus to facilitate the launch of the epidemic prevention.

The NCSIST utilizes its in-house technology of room temperature IR imaging to develop these lightweight thermal imagers. The high-resolution room temperature IR thermal imaging module, in combination with NCSIST's patented algorithm in IR measurement, ensures measurement accuracy within 1 degree Celsius. The performance is much better than those of like products of major international manufacturers.

Tunghai University of Taiwan has been taking all necessary measures to follow the advisories of the National Health Command Center since the outbreak of the COVID-19. The administration is grateful to university faculty and student community for abiding on the university campus COVID19 control measures and for taking all necessary adjustments during such challenging times.

## Silliman University provides temporary shelter for hospital staff

April 11, 2020

Silliman University (SU) continues to support efforts in the fight against COVID-19, this time providing a temporary housing facility for Silliman University Medical Center (SUMC) hospital's staff living outside of Dumaguete City, Philippines.

Dr. Betty McCann, SU president disclosed that Vernon Hall, a regular dormitory of the University, is now used temporarily by these medical staff

after their duty instead of experiencing the difficulty in going home and reporting back to work with the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).

A total of 58 beds have been made available. The healthcare staff's stay will depend on when the ECQ will be lifted. Dr. McCann assured the community that those staying at Vernon Hall are healthcare staff not exposed to persons under investigation (PUI) and persons under monitoring (PUM).

Roberto Montebon, SUMC Foundation Inc. president said "We thank Silliman University for responding to our request to allow us to use Vernon Hall as a place where our staff can be temporarily housed in a convenient, safe, and secure place so that they can be ready always to be at the frontlines in this war against Covid-19. This is important because healthcare workers at the forefront of this pandemic need to be supported even as they keep their enthusiasm and energy to protect the community and the public. Many cities have responded to this global situation by providing dormitories, hotels, gymnasiums, etc. as temporary housing facilities to healthcare workers for free. We are grateful that SU responded to our call."

Earlier, the University's College of Nursing, Civic Welfare Training Service with the Office of Community Engagement and Service-Learning, and Nutrition and Dietetics Department produced and distributed thousands of face masks and face shields to all community, district, and city hospitals in Negros Oriental Province; rural health units; city and provincial health offices and in the SU campus for its frontliners. The initiative aims to address the shortage of proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare providers amid the COVID-19 pandemic, SUCN Dean said.



Face shields made by volunteers from Silliman and the Philippine Nurses Association Negros Oriental Chapter

Meanwhile, the Silliman University Chemistry Department produced ethyl alcohol sanitizers to be distributed to medical frontliners. The initiative aims to address the shortage of disinfectants on the market.



The sanitizers were made using the formulation recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Moreover, the SU Pharmacy Department made the design and protocol on labeling the sanitizers (Source: SU Office of Information and Publications).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### The General Secretary extends deadline for FMS applications.

The General Secretary extends deadlines for FMS applications until December 31, 2020. The heads of the member institutions are requested to encourage their respective unit heads to nominate Faculty Visiting Scholar and to contact the Secretariat the soonest possible time.

### Key Dates for SMS Applications

Applications for Spring 2021 up to August 15, 2020

Application for Fall 2021 up to March 15, 2021

### ABAC JOURNAL calls for Papers and Reviewers

The Editor-In-Chief of Assumption University's ABAC Journal calls for papers and reviewers for its special issue, the June 2021 Lessons from COVID-19. The deadline for full paper submission is February 28, 2021.

Founded in 1980, **ABAC JOURNAL** is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal, published twice a year in June and December. It publishes high-quality research in business management and related fields in the humanities and interdisciplinary social sciences. Abstracted and indexed in **TCI Tier 1, ACI, and SCOPUS**, the journal aspires to be an intellectual platform for researchers, academics, and business entrepreneurs from East and West in sharing insight based on interdisciplinary research, single-field research, innovation and best practices in business and related fields, with the ultimate goal of economic sustainability for all. Follow this link for more details.

<http://www.assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/abacjournal/index>

## Reflections

## Staying On Course Together



**Betty Cernol McCann, Ph.D.**  
President, Silliman University, Philippines  
June 22, 2020

Colleges and universities face a sudden and major disruption with the outbreak of the coronavirus. The COVID19 pandemic triggered not only a global health crisis but also economic and social challenges, as well as deep psycho-spiritual anxiety and despair. Today, Christian educational institutions are pressed to organize new resources and find the resolve to weather the storm, thus opening some pathways to a shelter in which creative and constructive initiatives can be explored.

Due to the pandemic, colleges and universities must resort to cancelling in-person classes and moving to alternative learning systems. Within higher education, programs for flexible learning are fast-tracked, while extensive retooling and capacity building are undertaken in the areas of human and physical resources related to information technology. Partnerships with public and private agencies are being pursued in the acquisition of skills and equipment, and the enhancement of goodwill in the communities we serve.

Today's students will have a different school experience - social distancing restrictions will cause alternative forms of instruction, staggered days on which students attend classes, virtual counseling services and psychosocial support interventions, creative internships and remote graduations, to mention some. Given the disruptions caused by the pandemic, existing management and operational processes must be given rigorous review, and new approaches must be explored that address both continuity issues as well as the challenges of a not-so-certain future.

As a Christian institution of higher learning, Silliman University remains committed to carry on its ministry of teaching, healing and witness, especially at this time of the pandemic. As a teaching-learning community, we ask ourselves:

- What immediate challenges are we facing due to Covid19 and what preventive as well as proactive measures can we take?
- What will the new realities for our own university look like?
- What can we do within our own institution to prepare for the post-Covid19 scenarios

There will always be answers that look good on paper. We must sift through these to find realistic strategies to help us through the rough-and-tumble times. We will find ways to catapult us into new situations, on the lookout for innovations that will not allow us to slide back to our not-so-relevant old ways of doing things.

These are trying times that will test our resolve: to hope more than despair, to advance more than retreat, to have courage more than fear, and to trust more in the capacity of people to work together towards a common goal.

It is important for us to focus on a sense of the future, and to remind ourselves that we are in this with others. The Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia (ACUCA), inspired by the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, has demonstrated the efficacy of working together towards a common purpose. Our special charge is to reflect the Christian character of our institutions through cooperation, mutual support, and encouragement. How can we fulfill this charge during this Covid19 crisis? Let not the pandemic defeat us; let our faith and Christian character define us.

**About the Author:** Dr. Betty McCann currently serves as the President of the Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia (ACUCA). She served as the Vice President for Programs of the United Board for Christian Higher Education (UBCHEA) from 2007 until her optional retirement in 2013 where she had general oversight of grant programs and special projects to over 100 universities and colleges in Asia.

## Wash-Hand Theology



**Rev. Samuel Ngun Ling, Ph.D. D.D**  
President, Myanmar Institute of Theology  
Myanmar

June 28, 2020

*Old Testament Reading: Exodus 30:17-21;*

*"Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. Whenever they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting the food offering to the Lord, they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come"*

Based on the above Old Testament reading, one can understand that washing hands with water was a part of the divine ordinance for priest Aaron and his descendants to follow for generations so that they were to be saved and secured from the dangers of death. I have thought over how washing of hands got connected to liberation from death in Biblical time. Why did priest Aaron and his sons need to wash their hands to be liberated from death? Was there any suspicion of the spread of pandemic Corona virus in this Old Testament time? Of course, it was not. But the fact which I would like to point out is that washing hands in Old Testament time was a kind of divine ordinance – the requirement of God for men to do for a certain purpose, although we do not know why God required them to wash their hands. The meaning could be either to prevent any biological virus from infection or to remove all sin-virus polluted mind-sets that could encapsulate human hearts and souls. The later would mean making oneself liberated from pollution of sin and evils.

*New Testament Reading: Matt.27:24-25*

*"When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. You see to it."*

How about the practice of washing hands in the New Testament teaching? Shall one think about what Pilate means when he washed he hands, "..... he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood."...."It is your responsibility!". All the people answered shouting, "His blood is on us and on our children." Here Pilate found out very clearly that Jesus was not guilty and so allowing the crowd to kill him on the cross would be a great danger for his soul. So, in order to free himself from the judgement and condemnation of the people, Pilate washed his hands to liberate himself from the legal judgement of the law. Washing of hands here had a symbolic meaning of standing for the truth and justice. Although no one knows whether God would forgive Pilate for handing over of Jesus the innocent to the crowd to nail him on the cross, we learn that washing hands here means upholding of the truth and justice for one's liberation of life. In this sense, the spiritual significance of washing hands would be a symbol of spiritual, moral, ethical transformation of life - a life that stands for truth and justice.

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