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Dec. 5th, 2005

Dear friends and colleagues,

Greetings and blessings to you in this season of advent from the executive board of ICPCC.

Before the year is coming to an end, I would like to share with you some informations about the important congresses and conferences of this summer and fall of 2005. Also we have met as executive board with some members of the coordinating committee and several representatives of the associations and would like to communicate to you some decisions and plans for the years to come. This is also an invitation to visit the news in the website and participate in our exchange of informations, ideas and planning of activities.

- 1. The 8th Asia-Pacific Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling met in Hong Kong SAR, China from August 7 – 11, 2005.** There were participants from about 20 regions of the world and especially from Hong Kong projects, universities, hospitals and churches. Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Ernest Wu as the president of this congress, the local organizing committee, and especially Ms. Patty To, who prepared so well and made it possible for the participants from abroad to feel well informed and cared for. This was a congress of outstanding lectures and presentations, and allowed participants to be informed well about the newest developments in all the Asian-Pacific regions. Also, we had interesting field visitations in hospitals, seminaries, CPE centres, Counseling centers and projects, and wonderful lunches and dinners for meeting and talking, exploring the history of Hong Kong and enjoying the great landscape. A publication of the lectures and workshop inputs is planned and will show the high quality of work that is done by teachers and trainers of PCC in the Asia-Pacific region,

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especially in China and other continents. One of the workshops highlighted the importance of “Contextually Sensitive and Culturally Appropriate CPE” and gave a strong signal for the future development of indigenous models of PCC. The next congress will be planned for Taiwan. The new president of the Asia-Pacific Committee is Rev. Dr. Daniel Susanto, Indonesia.

- The 10th Conference of the European Council for Pastoral Care and Counselling** was held from August 19th – 23rd in one of the oldest cities in Sweden, Sigtuna. While I was impressed in Hong Kong that many buildings are higher than fifty stories, Sigtuna feels more like a dolls house than a city with it’s one street of small shops, small houses, beautiful coffee shops, many lakes and country-side surrounding. Also the style of the conference -which also addressed the issue of spirituality - was quite different. Whereas in Hong Kong we heard one interesting presentation after the other, the European conference opened up time and space for reflections, contemplation, encounters, rituals, small groups and a few workshops and lectures that invited more the meditative resources of our traditions and present developments. The place we stayed helped in this process of “exploring a spirituality of our time”: it is a centre which was built like a modern monastery and allows for secular as well as for sacred space to be experienced. Participants came from many European regions but some were represented only by one or two persons, and some did not come at all. There were discussions on how the future development will be enhanced and promoted. Thanks to John Foskett the history of the European development and the International Council was published in a small book so that the memory of the roots of our work does not get lost (The gossip of God’s siblings, email: jfoskett@btinternet.com). Thanks to the past president Rev. Kirsti Alto and the committee for preparing this inspiring conference. The new president is the Greek Orthodox Father Adamantios Avgoustidis, and the next European Conference will be held in Belgium in 2009.

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- The 10th Congress of SIPCC took place in Düsseldorf** in October, and we congratulate this Society under the leadership of Rev. Helmut Weiss and Klaus Temme together with many others for their outstanding way to promote the development of theory and practice of intercultural and inter-religious work during the past ten years by their yearly conferences with colleagues from all around the world, by the publications of books on Intercultural PCC and on Ethics and Practices of Spiritual Counselling in various Faiths, and by organising study trips.
The subject of this 18th International Seminar on Intercultural PCC, also celebrating the 10th anniversary of the organisation, was on “Intercultural and Interfaith Communication”; for a detailed report of this, and of other SIPCC-activities, please inquire at www.sipcc.org .
- Regional congress in Africa and South America are planned for July of 2006.**
The African congress will be gathering in Nigeria from July 23rd to 29th.
Please contact Emmanuel Larrey or Wilhelmina Kalu to get more information or contact the web-site!
For the Meeting of PCC-experts in Latin America, please contact James Farris of the Universida Metodista de Sao Paulo, Brasil: theology@uol.com.bra .
- Meetings of members of the Executive Board and Co-ordinating committee were held in Hong Kong and Düsseldorf, and a meeting of the planning group for the next ICPCC World Congress took place in Sigtuna.

A short summary of some of the results of the **Executive Board Meeting in Düsseldorf:**

- ICPCC sees it's own unique mission amidst many other organisations of care in that we as pastoral psychologists and spiritual care givers connect:

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- knowledge and experience in the field of enhancing relational quality among people and peoples with
- clear social-political analysis and co-operative action/reflection to enhance life and work situations,
- and spiritual traditions and innovations that open up resources for healing and - renewal
- ICPCC promotes concepts and spiritual-psychological-social practices which deal with the multifaceted challenges for women, men and children, for projects and larger systems that suffer especially from catastrophies, unjust structures, economic changes, violence and trauma and offers models of “archeology of knowledge”, of remembering, of understanding, empowerment and change – to name but a few themes out of many.
- ICPCC is interested in the future development of regional associations, especially in Africa, India, China, South America, the Pacifics and Eastern Europe which have to struggle with huge distances to meet and with few financial resources
- ICPCC greets some new member associations in Japan, Thailand and Hungary. Welcome in the council!
- ICPCC wants to strengthen the ties to all member associations, individuals and participants of international/national congresses by enhancing the informational input and exchange via web-site, and also by a brochure – thanks to Klaus Temme and Steven Voytovich. Please offer any papers or information you want to publish to them.
- ICPCC wants to strengthen the co-operation between the international bodies and the regional councils and conferences. It would like the constitutions of all levels of work to include paragraphs of this co-operation and connection.
- ICPCC is thankful for the associations which have paid their dues in this year due to the intense work of our treasurer, Klaus Temme who has also strengthened the ties to members by writing letters and sending out forms.

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- ICPCC wants to enhance the co-operation with other health care and counselling organisations.
- ICPCC wants to strengthen the work of its committees by **inviting all associations to elect their representatives for the next Council Meeting in 2007.** All representatives of associations are invited to participate in a **Pre-congress in Dresden, from August 4-7 in 2007.** There will be time for exchange about the situation in the different regions and empowerment, as well as preparations of the elections during the Congress in Poland; also there will be council meetings during and directly after the Congress. The elections for the new term of the respective bodies of the ICPCC will be held during the Congress. A program and invitation will be sent to all associations in 2006.

6. The next World Congress of ICPCC will be held in Krzyzowa, Poland from August 7 to August 14, 2007.

Helmut Weiss is the convenor of this 8th Congress. He will send a program in 2006 after the final program is discussed and completed by the European planning group, which he initiated to support the planning process and the whole endeavour of the Congress, as a supranational Europe-wide body.

We remember the great 7th Congress in India in 2004 and thank our Vice president Dr. Nalini Arles for her great job in being the convenor of that congress which had to be prepared twice, since it had to be cancelled in 2003 and delayed to 2004! At the Executive Board meeting in Düsseldorf she presented the Congress final account statements, approved by an Indian Accounting Agency, and handed all documents over to the Executive Board of ICPCC. She and colleagues from UTC, Joseph George and others, gave us a great opportunity for learning and meeting, also getting to know the work done at UTC as a side effect. By the

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way: Dr. Joseph George has recently edited a book in which the work of United Theol. College in Bangalore becomes visible “ The God of All Grace”.

We hope that in the midst of moving events in catastrophies and political changes, still there is the experience of mutual awareness, listening, caring and action; times and places of mourning and letting go and of resistance, resilience and courage to change. As we enter the season of Christmas and New Year, may your life and work be blessed in the name of the Love of the Holy who is around us, within us and with us as we connect to each other.

Sincerely, yours

Ursula Riedel-Pfäfflin

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