

Justice and Peace

Newsletter of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Thailand)

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Message from Bishop Bunluen Mansap,

BISHOP OF LIBRABRAMHANG, BISHOP CHAIRMAN OF CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

On the occasion of term completion of Fr. Wichai Phakattanasri as president of the Board of Directors and Secretary General of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), and welcome to Associate Professor Dr. Wisai Na Pongtep, as interim Secretary General of CCJP.

"The work to promote justice and peace in society is a challenge. We alone cannot accomplish it. We need to cooperate with all people of goodwill, and in particular we need help from God."

The Second Vatican Council has expanded the vision of the Universal Church to help us realize the significance and urgency of proclamation of Good News on human dignity, respect and protection of human rights and promotion of justice for peace in society. The first apparent and concrete effort in this regard is the establishment of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 1963 with a mission to promote human development and raise awareness of Christians in human dignity and rights, and to cooperate with all people of goodwill in the world. Thus, the Church in different regions and countries has become interested in, tried to understand and taken action in this area. This is also true for the Church in Thailand when the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand has set up Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in 1973, which has begun its operation in 1978.

Since the beginning until its 26th year, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of Thailand, as CCJP, has undertaken activities on promotion of justice and peace and human rights in Thai society. It is encouraging to say that partners who have walked the road and grown with CCJP in the past could now and who are board and staff members of all generations, play the important role in driving the work on justice and peace of CCJP to attain its goal.

On this occasion, Fr. Wichai Phakattanasri as the Secretary General and President of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, has completed his term on Tuesday, February 24, 2008. During the past 12 years, CCJP has always got encouraging support from the Society of Jesus and Fr. Wichai. He has given advice on the work and provided guidance on spirituality in the name of the Board of Directors. He has been invited numerous persons, as well as representative of CCJP in meetings, seminars and advocacy domestically and abroad. With ongoing commitment and determination of Fr. Wichai, the objectives of CCJP's work are effectively accom-



Bishop Bunluen Mansap performing Mass.

(Continued on page 2)



pledged, which has become witness on the work to support justice and peace in Thai society for over a decade.

On the capacity of bishop chairman of CCJP, I would like to express my sin-

cere thanks to the goodwill and generous support the Society of Jesus and Fr. Vitthal have always given to CCJP. On this same occasion, I am also pleased to welcome Associate Professor Walai Na Pombejy as an interim Secretary General. She is also one of CCJP's good partners who is determined with convincing spirit and has long been advocating human rights as a chairperson of Human Rights Study Pillbox, which is one of the projects of Human Rights Program of CCJP. With her goodwill, Associate Professor Walai Na Pombejy will play a crucial role in the

future direction and operation of CCJP. I wholeheartedly hope that all of you continue to support Associate Professor Walai Na Pombejy.

May God bless you all who have taken part in the building of "Home of Our Father" in this world, which is the dwelling place of humanity who needs grace, respect, love and mutual aid as a big family of our Heavenly Father.



Bishop Bhanua Manngaj

Bishop of Ubonrathasani

Bishop Chairman of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

Associate Professor Walai Na Pombejy

Interim Secretary General of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

Current Positions

- Advisor of APNBYE of UNESCO
- Advisor of UNESCO Associated Schools Network
- Chairperson of Human Rights Sub-Committee of CCJP
- Member of the Human Rights Study Sub-Committee under National Human Rights Commission

Educational Background

- 1958 Bachelor Degree in Arts (Distinction), Chulalongkorn University
- 1962 Master Degree in History, Sorbonne University, France
- 1971 Doctoral Degree (Distinction) in History, Sorbonne University, France.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Walai Na Pombejy, Interim Secretary General of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

Professional Background

- 1962-1968 Lecturer at History Program, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
- 1968-1979 Assistant Professor, Chulalongkorn University
- 1979-1983 Associate Professor, Head of History Program, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
- 1983-1993 Specialized in Education for Peace and Human Rights, UNESCO

Accomplishments

- Textbooks and readings on social science subjects for secondary education.
- Textbooks on civilization and history for under graduate education.
- Researchs and writings on peace and human rights.
- Help in contributing and editing a handbook on "Road to Human Rights Study".
- Joining in an editorial committee and writing articles for human rights newsletter of National Commission for Human Rights.



CCJP co-organized with religious organizations, i.e. Sektika Dharma and Council of Muslim Organizations in Thailand in collaboration among religious organizations and discussion on current situation, as well as presenting a common action plan among organizations of the 3 religions.

1. A seminar on “Do not allow Violence in the South to be Religious Conflict”

With Sektika Dharma Group and Council of Muslim Organizations in Thailand on January 28 at 14 October 73 Monument. This discussion was focused on an attempt not to allow violence in the South to become conflict between religions, which would lead to common solution of the problem by all religions. The panel discussion was led by representatives of 3 religions, i.e. Buddhism : Venerable Kittak Kittaporn (the Buddhist monk from Sektika Dharma Group said the southern violence, if not handled properly, could become not only a problem challenging the authority of the government but also ignite interreligious conflict. In his view, the present government is trying to use brute power and violent means to solve the solution in the south, which he said can only bring dire consequences. He advised and asked followers of the various religions to use the occasion to come together and to use their religious teachings to avoid a crisis.

Christianity : Father Wichai Phokhateri ; secretary of the Commission for Justice and Peace said those who killed the Buddhist monk intended to damage religious institutions and to cause diversity in society. He urged people to understand that the instigators of the violence are “a group of people who want to use religion as a tool to achieve their objective he said that to keep the pain they



Dr Q/ Petchak Phokhateri, Mr Kenneth Sene, Mr Randy Madar and Venerable Phra Kittak Kittaporn held a panel discussion on “Do not allow violence in the South to be Religious Conflict”

inflicted and the violence they began from spreading, “there is a need for healing” and agreed that the government must deal decisively with the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Islam : Mr.Scandaj Madar of the Council of Muslim Organizations of Thailand urged the government to move decisively to stop the violence and bring those who are behind it to justice before it escalates into interreligious conflict. He cautioned all, however, to act “with prudence and intelligence to avoid falling prey to the aim of the instigators who want this violence to become a conflict between people of different religions.” After the seminar, a press conference was to condemn violence and call for solidarity and solution based on religious teachings.

2. CCJP co-organised a seminar on “Entertainment Complex (+Casinos) from Buddhist, Christian and Muslim Perspectives”



Professor Jemsak Puthong shared his ideas on impacts of the government's initiative to liberalise casinos on society.

With Sektika Dharma Group, Motta Dharma Raksa Foundation, Konol Kramthong Foundation and Senate's Commission on Social Development and Human Security on February 8, at a conference room on the fourth floor, multi-purpose building, Thammasat University. The panelists were representatives from 3 religions: Madar from Senate from Motta Dharma Raksa Foundation, Professor Jemsak Puthong the senator of Senate Commission on Social Development and Human Security, Father Wichai Phokhateri, secretary of CCJP. They shared their ideas on impacts of the government's initiative to liberalise casinos on society from Buddhist, Christian and Muslim perspectives.

Each resource person has shared his concern on state policy on liberalisation of gambling, which would create social problems, especially on morality and ethics. They all feared that free gambling would attract people to be addicted to gambling and other vices even more. Therefore, the state should not only look at pure economic interest.

3. Co-organised a seminar on "Curbing Southern Fire from Muslim Perspective"



A seminar "Curbing Southern Fire from Muslim Perspective" from the left, Mr.Dee Tadmara, the leader of Justice Commission from Pattaya Province, the Buddhist monk and the Muslim Academics.

On April 22, at 14 October 13 Monument by listening to sharing and perspective on current situation in the 3 Southern provinces from politicians and academicians. The resource persons have proposed the following recommendations.

- Before going to work in the Southern provinces, state agencies must learn and understand differences in faith, culture and religions with due respect.
- State agencies should co-ordinate with local politicians and administrators to mutually solve the problems, such as members of the Parliament, senators, sub-district chief and village chief.
- All faithful should work together to solve the problem based on their faith and religious teachings.

This seminar was attended by 80 people who are priests, nuns, Buddhists, lay Christians and Muslims, as well as different media.

A discussion on "State Policies: Solution or Creating Social Problems"

At present, several policies introduced by the government with an aim to address poverty of Thai people. Yet, most people do not understand its policies and do not have a chance to take part in decision making on policies that would directly affect them. It was to give knowledge to Christians and general public to clearly understand various state policies. This discussion was held on January 31 at Chula Kasorn Conference, St. John University. There were about 80 representatives from Catholic organizations, schools and Religious communities attended this seminar. The seminar to help church people understand what is behind the government proposals. The seminar participants could then give their respective organizations a more complete picture of government proposals to make better decisions about them.

Sanayapan Intat of a women's foundation in Chiangmai told the seminar about the effects of legalized prostitution. She asserted that registering prostitutes will not benefit society because it does not address criminal issues involving people or organizations associated with prostitutes, nor does it address the issues of sex workers being attacked, having sexually communicable diseases or jobs for their future. Registering prostitutes merely dehumanizes people and lessens their dignity, she insisted.



Mr.Gulhom Aranya told about the various policies to deal with social problems since the government came to power.



[3-4] Sanayapan Intat from Women's Foundation in Chiangmai, Ab.Luan Dethapachai from Human Rights Commission of Thailand, Ab. Surayorn Gatella and Mrs.Charmol Ananthanaval

Surayorn Gatella of Bangkok-based Campaign for Democracy talked about an entertainment complex proposal featuring a casino. Nothing that Thai society used to teach that gambling is a vice, he asked what it should now teach their children. "Should Thai teach their children it is right to gamble?" he asked.

Gulhom Aranya, former election commissioner of Thailand and president of the Peace and Culture Foundation, told the seminar that since coming to power in February 2001, the government outlined various policies to deal with social problems. He mentioned the "war" to crackdown on illegal drug, corruption, social insurance, a 30-bath medical scheme, withholding farmers' debts. And giving each village 1 million bath for development.

Seminar on Papal Message for World Day of Peace on "Religions Teach Peace"

On May 31 at the Political Science Faculty, Chulalongkorn University. The seminar provided an opportunity for religions faithful to study and gain understanding on teachings of Papal Message and learn teachings of each religion related to promotion of peace, so that the participants would apply the teachings to build peace.

The activity included opening prayer by representatives of 3 religions, study of Papal Message for 2004, and a panel discussion on "Religion Teaches Peace" by Buddhist, Christian and Muslim representatives, with Asst.Prof.Dr.Wilai Na Pansuphak as a moderator. About 50 Buddhist, Christians and Muslims attended.

Venerable Kittakul Kittisopano maintained religions have become "institutions," falling away from their founders' intentions in the process. The question today, the Buddhist monk said, is how to make religious followers step out of the world and become true religious practitioners.

Jesuit Father Vincent Bayeva-chinnont also called followers to move beyond rituals and to address issues in society. Religions have a duty to motivate followers to give more attention to poor and marginalized people, he said.

Muslim scholar Phallean Jar-jodain identified inequality, oppression, injustice and poverty as the reasons the world today has no peace. They are fostered, he said, by an economic system that stresses profit and interest, and breeds corruption.

The speakers made reference to Pope John Paul II's message for the 2004 World Day of Peace, titled "An Ever Timely Commitment : Teaching Peace."



Dr. Vilas Panyachinnont, Piyarat Vitanai, Pichan Jayakul and Venerable Kittakul Kittisopano hold a panel discussion on "Religion Teaches Peace."

Keynote address by Asst.Prof.Dr.Wilai Na Pansuphak



CCJP co-organised a public discussion on "Free Trade Agreement: Trend and Impacts on Catholic Schools"

CCJP co-organised a seminar with Social Ongoing Formation Centre and Catholic Commission for Human Development on June 26 at St. Gabriel Foundation, Soi Thonglor. The purpose was to understand free trade agreement and its impacts on various sectors, especially service. It aimed at sharing ideas on the roles and functions of education in Catholic schools and institutions and impacts of free trade agreement. The seminar also wanted to identify common stand to reaffirm Christian spirit in Catholic educational system.



Dr. Vilas Panyachinnont, Josephine Chantongkule, Sumrit Pongthong, Charvut Anthonakul, Sr. Sr. Amy Water Sanchinnont and Dr.Chayon Panchito.

CCJP organised a seminar for school administrators on “Human Rights Education”

On February 20 at Chantaburi Diocesan Centre, Sriracha, Chantaburi. The diocesan school management committee. The seminar was held for deputy head teachers, education desk, pastoral and student affair desks from various diocesan organisations, altogether 52 people. The seminar was held so that the participants would get information and understand and see a sense of a need for human rights education, as well as playing a role in promoting human rights education in educational institutions. The topics of this seminar included 1) human rights concept, 2) human rights education by Ms. Paivara Polpetich, and 3) practice of human rights in educational institutions by Asst. Prof. Dr. Waihi Na Pombhej.



1. About 50 participants were present, teachers from Catholic schools and personnel from Catholic Commissions.
2. Teachers attending training at Santivithaya school, Chiangrai.
3. A teachers training activities.
4. Ms. Paivara Polpetich provide understanding on basic rights.



Training workshop on “Human Rights Education”

was held on March 17-20, at Santi Vittaya School, Chiangrai. CCJP got a contact from Sr. Annie Ware Somsacharn to organize a training workshop on “human rights education” for teachers in all subjects and levels of Santi Vittaya School, altogether 50 people. The training was conducted in two parts. The first part was to provide understanding on basic rights, which was given by Ms. Paivara Polpetich and Ms. Sararat Prasertsom. This included topics on human rights in our life, human dignity, the principle of equality and ban on discrimination, women’s rights and rights of the child. The second was on integration of human rights into teaching plan, which was given by Asst. Prof. Dr. Waihi Na Pombhej and included topics on human rights in educational institutions, integration of human rights into teaching plan, development of teaching plan, as well as presenting and improving teaching plan for application.

CCJP gave a presentation on “Human Rights in Catholic Educational Institutions”

on April 21 at St. Joseph Uppatham School, Sampran, Nakhonpathom, by an invitation of non-formal and leisure education desk. The objective was to support teachers and all those who are responsible for teaching to understand principle on organization of educational direction along new theories, so that they could provide learning process for children on “human rights in Catholic educational institutions” properly, correctly and efficiently. There were 27 people who are members of non-formal education organizing committee, teachers in students affair desk and interested people from Education Department of Archdiocese of Bangkok.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Waihi Na Pombhej presented “human rights” to the teachers of St. Joseph Uppatham school, Sampran, Nakhonpathom.

Social and Human Rights Situation in the First Half of 2004

By Sangphet Srirachan

SITUATION OF LIBERTY IN THE SOUTH

The Southern region, especially in the 3 Southern border provinces, i.e. Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, always experience ongoing violence, such as burning of schools, planting bombs at state offices, as well as murdering state officials, even Buddhist monks, and so on. It seems, however, that the state could control the situation to some extent. Although it could not completely bring back peace, but it was able to curb the violence from spread all over.

The state declared that the violence was created by terrorists and separatists, but until now the state could not produce clear evidence that it was the work of terrorist or separatist groups.

It was only when an arsenal of the fourth development division, Princess Narathiwat Rattha Nagarindra Garrison, in Joh I Rang District, Narathiwat Province, was raided and over 100 machine guns were looted, together with burning of over 20 schools, both of the events occurred not very long from one another. The event has taken the life of 4 officials. The culprits of both events were not known and there is no evidence as trail left behind, even if state officials have tried very hard, but without any success. This situation forced all parties to guess or come up with assumption just to create more confusion. In the face of ignorance and violence, while it was not sure where over 100 guns were kept or for what purpose they were used, the state has immediately declared a state of emergency in the three Southern border provinces and recruited armies to control the situation. It has also declared strategies to develop economy and society together with dumping of over 25,000 million Baht for this purpose in the next 3 years.

The reaction of local people was a feeling of conflict and distrust and un-



willingness to cooperate with state officials. Regard this feeling, after assessing the overall situation, it could conclude that they are upset with the state of emergency because this allows search of buildings when the state is suspicious of connection with the violence. These buildings include private homes or even religious places, such as Bob Noh school, which is very sensitive in the eyes of Muslims. This also includes arrest and accusation of human or guns of having connection or being involved, which has created conflict in community members who respect and recognize these people.

These incidents have not just occurred, but the people have experienced this situation and behaviors for a long time. It is even worse when these long standing and complex problems have never been resolved, which are social problems and profoundly related to culture specific to the areas. Furthermore, the prevailing poverty has created common feeling as "second class population".

The King was very concerned with the situation and solution in the South. His Majesty has asked the government to address the situation with 3 main principles through "approach, understanding and development".

Another violence burst out on April 28, 2004, when officials suppressed the unrest in Sangkhle, Pattani and Yala, resulted in 108 deaths tolls while 5 officials were also killed. The most violent kill-

ing occurred at Krue Se Mosque in Pattani, where 32 people were killed.

This incident has caused uneasiness in the public, especially local people. There was widespread of criticism that the operation of the state was excessive, taking so many lives, although all of them were not armed soldiers, but young people who were children of the Southern people. All had only one gun, and the rest are knives and wooden stick, while officials were fully armed.

It was getting clearer that there were people and groups who tried to create violence and find allies for their operation, and linked it with religion, society and culture, as well as history of the South as factors to mobilize young people who were affected by many problems mentioned earlier as mobilizing issues.

Those who were at the back and tried to create violence, could not be identified. Analysts said that apart from looking at these culprits as terrorists, we had to look at conflict of business interest in areas of various influences, such as black business groups, drugs, trade in border areas, smuggling and arms trade and politician groups.

Having assessed solution proposed several times by mass media and public forums, we can conclude the following recommendations:

1. The state should lift state of emergency to promote people's rights and freedom and to prevent unjust or illegal action of officials, which has created





lated, fear and suspicion, hindering them from giving co-operation.

2. Local people have demanded genuine participation in all aspects and at all levels, namely policy makers and budget, in manage and care of local communities, including participation of civil society.

3. The people demand equal treatment as Thai people with prestige and dignity.

4. Operation of state officials needs a more effective process for accurate assessment of facts and intelligence.

5. The state should promote and develop occupations and economy in the 3 Southern border provinces.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A LAWYER: MR. SOMCHAI NIARAJIT

It has been over 6 months up until now that Mr. Somchai Niarajit, a famous lawyer, has disappeared. Although the police have arrested 3 culprits, who were police, but legal case and investigation did not make any progress, because all the 3 culprits reaffirmed their intention to speak only in the court (the first hearing will be held in November 2004). It seems that the government does not give any importance to this case, because it continues to allow low ranking officials to deal with the case.

Somchai Niarajit is a lawyer and a chairperson of Muslim lawyer club who



has been fighting for human rights until he has got award of lawyer of the year 2003. He had played a key role in giving legal aid and assistance on human rights to people in the 3 Southern border provinces who were arrested and accused with the charge of rebel, maintaining army and arms for the purpose of rebel, theft and separatist movement since 1978. Being involved in legal aid to cases of national security that many believed he was kidnapped.

Somchai disappeared on March 12, 2004, at a food shop on Kamkhamhong Road, near Hua Mark Police Station. Before he disappeared, he has lodged a letter to the Prime Minister demanding for investigation on a case of school burning.

The disappearance of Somchai affected the reputation of the country on human rights violation because this kind of event normally occurs in a country ruled only by dictators. It is also a case that frightens the people because even a lawyer might also be kidnapped. Worst still is that the culprits are police. How



can normal people be confident and secured and feel safe in their life and properties.

Society also made a more demanding the government to give a priority and speed up this case seriously and inform the public regularly. In addition, it has to end threat and kidnap of innocent people in the three Southern border provinces, especially state officials who are accused as culprits. The state has to protect lawyers and those who fight for human rights in the three Southern border provinces, and behaviours of state officials that threaten the people. Finally, the state has to change its policies to resolve violence in the three Southern border provinces, because its present policies lack clarity and humanitarianism.



SUCCESSOR OF MR. CHANON WAR-ASORN

In 1995, villagers of Ban Nuk, Ban Nuk Sub-District, Maung District, Panchaburichikan, have got together immediately to protest the government when it approved Gulf Power Generation Company to operate Ban Nuk-Hin Grand lignite generate power plant in their sub-district.

Mr. Chanon War-asorn was elected by the villagers as a chairperson of Ban Nuk Conservation Group. He had led villagers to protest against the project for a long time and met with violence in various forms done by state officials and people whose interest was threatened. Eight years have passed that the villagers have struggled with unity and firm stand and public relations to disseminate proper information resulted in better understanding in the public that villagers had good

intention, and so they gave support to this protest. At the end in 2003, the government of Thaksin Shinawatra, the Prime Minister, has made a decision to terminate this power plant project.

When the project on power plant construction was avoided, Mr. Charoen was a leader investigating the case that influential interests cooperated with state officials to illegally issue title deed on public land that is allotted as ground for animal grazing along canal, altogether 931 aic of land.

On June 21, 2004, at 21:00pm, Charoen returned from giving information on public land to the commission on corruption prevention and suppression, House of Representatives. While getting off a public coach operating between Bangkok and Prachabhikhar, he was shot by 2 people with 9 and .38 mm. Pistols, altogether 11 shots. Charoen died at once at the bus stop in Ban Nok, Ban Nok Sub-District, Muang District, Prachabhikhar.

The death of Charoen has created panic in society as a whole. Mass media from various branches were interested in reporting this news. At the same time, popular organizations have taken action demanding the government to arrest the culprits and those behind the killing of 16 cases of community leaders occurring during the administration of this government, especially the case of Mr. Charoen when popular organizations demanded legal action to be taken against the movement behind this killing. They also demanded the government to review its policies and measures in "immediate realization of local influence". In addition, they demanded the government to introduce concrete policies to give protection to people who are fight to protect community rights and address conflicts on the use of resources of the country and end violence by the state.

Villagers group of Ban Nok has come to Ministry of Justice demanding the Special Case Investigation Department, because it was case if the action of police could arrest the movement behind this killing. However, the Special Case Investigation Department did not respond to this demand giving an excuse that it was beyond its role.



On June 29, 2004, police has arrested two gunmen and tried to expand the case to arrest a former candidate for Representative and member of provincial administration organization of Prachabhikhar, who was indicated as paying money to both gunmen. Yet, the police could not arrest this man saying they were in the process of collecting evidences.

It seems that the case has been resolved, but society still has a question whether the gang that killed Charoen has more connection or not. However, villagers of Ban Nok continue to investigate the case of public land of Chai Thong Canal and reaffirm to carry on the intention of Charoen.



FTA : Free Trade Agreement in Thailand

By Thanapak Navabhasanaki

The present government under the leadership of Thaksin Shinawatra, the Prime Minister, has a clear policy to set up free trade area as its economic strategy for Thailand in international trade and investment. This is evident when looking at acceleration of bilateral free trade agreement with different countries, such as Peoples' Republic of China, In-

dia, Bahrain, United States of America, Japan, Peru and Australia. It declared to the public several times advantages of free trade agreement that it was an opening of foreign market for Thai products so that consumers in these countries to buy cheaper goods. It was also a stimulus for economic sector of Thailand to increase its capacity to compete in world market, etc.

However, as the Thai government speaks up to sign free trade agreement

with different countries, especially United States of America, a question and concern was raised out by economists, scholars and non-government organizations. Various commissions of the Senate responsible for economy, commerce, industry and finance have issued declaration questioning operation of the government why it sped up trade talks without studying long term impacts on society, culture and environment. There was only a study only on economic and trade aspects. It

lacked a process of participation from popular sector, farmer organizations, consumer organizations, and so on. The government focused on competitiveness of private business sector and lacked measures to cope with impacts on all aspects, which could lead to the problem of food security since Thai farmers could not compete against cheap goods from abroad. They are forced to stop their production of food crops. Furthermore, the government has not sought consent or approval from the Parliament in using framework of negotiation that trade partners of Thailand have to do.



First Wave of Impacts from FTA

In the free trade agreement concluded with China since mid 2003, Thailand is required to reduce its tariff on 156 items of vegetable and fruits down to 0%. On the other hand, Thailand has to open its market to temperate fruits from China. Import of apple from China rose 152%, Chinese pear rose 139%, potato 11.70%, garlic 100%, and grape and or-

ange 27%. Although this helps Thai people to consume cheaper fruits from China, but it seriously affect Thai agricultural sector, especially small farmers who grow similar fruits and vegetable that China exports to Thailand, because their products cannot compete with Chinese in terms of price.

Concerning talks with other countries, such as Bahrain, Japan and India, the negotiations to reduce import tariff met with difficulties since it could not come to a common agreement. These countries want to protect their interest as much as possible, which is contrary to Thailand, as it is willing to remove all obstacles to enable smooth and successful talks by accepting its domestic laws to prepare for tariff reduction for its negotiation counterparts.



Thai People are not Pleased on FTA

A study group on free trade agreement under the name of FTA Watch, which comprises scholars and activists from educational institutions, constitutional

independent organizations and non-government organizations, has studied and analyzed free trade agreement of Thailand. It has analyzed pros and cons of FTA concluded with various countries and came up with impacts on different sectors, such as agriculture, industry, trade and service, investment and health.

It has also come up with recommendations for the government on concluding FTA with other countries. It has also organized forums with several popular organizations and networks of small farmers all across the country to caution the government to consider impacts on agricultural sector and to stop talking on free trade agreement with United States, Australia and New Zealand, since it sees that Thailand will be losing more than gaining. Yet, this voice did not get any attention from the Prime Minister, who is speeding up FTA with the remaining target countries. Recently, it has concluded FTA with Australia and New Zealand, despite the fact that the FTA Watch and networks of small farmers across the country have urged the government to stop concluding the agreement.

This report of CCIP is another voice informing the public of situation on human rights in Thailand that it is being deteriorated by the hand of national leader who is concerned only his interest.



OF thousands of words, images, and impressions

By Thanaphol Niratthasundari

During the past year, there were several changes taking place. CCIP did not have any fulltime coordinators, since Mr. Rangsit Inanrong, the former coordinator of CCIP, has resigned to study master degree in human rights. Dr. Wichai Picharoen, the former chairperson of the Board of Directors and secretary general of CCIP, has finished his term. There was also readjustment of operational structure of various desks of CCIP to be more effectively in coping up with the work on justice and peace by giving emphasis on coordination and cooperation with religious organizations, be they Buddhist, Christian and Muslim, so as to apply religious teachings on the road to peace in world society, since domestic and international situations at present seem to be characterized by an ever more violent with religious conflicts, especially the situation in Thailand



Door to Mosque in Palani is under renovation after the shooting incident on April 28, 2004.

Of thousands of words, images, and impressions

at the moment. The situation in the South is still marked with ongoing violence and Thai government is not able to curb it, because it resorts to only military operation and injection of more budget for development, on which Muslim scholars said this was not a right solution because part of the problem is the misunderstanding or lack of proper understanding on differences of belief, culture and religion of local people. From a seminar to mobilize ideas for solution of problems in the three Southern border provinces, several local scholars, including Muslims, all agreed that one effective way is to support all religious faithful to help address the problem based on teachings of each religion.

Apart from problems at Southern border provinces, situation on human rights violations by this government is still alarming, starting from threatening of freedom of press. These situations are critical when mass media could not report facts and social problems occurring in the country to the public. There are also stories of local communities struggling to demand their rights on farmland, conservation of community environment, on which they have to face dark influence that threatens the lives of human rights advocates, etc. We at CCJP take it as a mission to be the sign of the times to motivate and rattle all Church organizations so that they will be aware of social problems and mutually reflect on the mission of Christians that they cannot be indifferent on problems of fellow human beings. On the contrary, we all are working towards building justice and peace in society.



Recently observation on the politicians. Clarity that robes authoritarian style of Thai politicians - with a gun in his hand and his feet stepping on people's back.



Light and hope for Justice and Peace in society.



This picture belongs to the classroom whose husband died in one of the recent wars in the north of Thailand. The picture reflected her deep thinking : Why did people kill each other? Why my son's father was killed?



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