



**Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI)–2020**  
***'We are Called to be Stewards of Renewal and Restoration for God's Creation'***

The Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) is a month-long ecumenical formation training programme organised by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) to train young prospective Asian church and ecumenical leaders. AEI will be conducted through a virtual platform (online) in 2020, facilitated by a team of prominent and internationally recognised ecumenical theological educators as well as professional leadership development trainers.

The month-long online training's main focus will be the formation and development of the talents of future Asian ecumenists and church leaders, based on biblical and theological foundations. The training will offer opportunity for the participants to imbue them with the spirit of ecumenism, and sharpen their insights and perspectives on stewardship for God's creation.

AEI–2020 will have two components: the first will focus on ecumenical leadership formation of prospective ecumenists and Asian ecumenical leaders while deepening the participants' knowledge of ecumenism and the ecumenical movement grounded in biblical and theological bases, in the contexts of emerging Asian socio-economic and geopolitical realities. The second component will focus on the attainment of deep insights on the specific thematic thrust, 'We are Called to be Stewards of Renewal and Restoration for God's Creation'.

The contents of the training course are designed to build the capacities of the participants by enabling them to learn about wider ecumenism so that they will be able to effectively and contextually respond to the call to be stewards of renewal and restoration for God's creation. The experiences gained from various stages of the academic sessions during four weeks of AEI–2020 will equip the participants with greater clarity and commitment to ecumenism, as well as widen the horizons of their vision for the oikoumene and their stewardship in caring, nurturing, and partnering in God's mission of the renewal and restoration of God's creation.

## **The Theme**

The theme of the AEI–2020 is ***'We are Called to be Stewards of Renewal and Restoration for God's Creation'***.

In the beginning, God saw that all God had made was very good (Genesis 1:31). However, God's creation is now disfigured and chaotic. Our ecology, our economy, our social structures — essentially, our entire humankind — is in crisis. Soaring poverty in many parts of the world threatens the lives of millions. As poverty escalates, there is a decline in the provision of health, a lack of educational facilities, and a negation of human security. The most vulnerable groups in society — women, children, people with disabilities and rare illnesses, and people on the move — will be the ones most gravely impacted. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated some of these long-standing issues. As such crises alter human life, societies are expected to adjust and re-invent themselves to ensure the holistic wellbeing of every human being.

From the beginning of the creation, God's initiatives and actions have always been to restore and save God's creation. This is evident in the history of Israel, in Jesus' life and works, and today, through the Holy Spirit. It is the will of God to make God's creation pleasant and excellent ('*towb*'—Hebrew; '*kalós*'—Greek), and there is a constant reminder for human participation in this divine act of bringing the broken creation back to its original purpose. God is calling us as stewards of renewal and restoration of God's creation.

Renewal is the ongoing process of repair and recommencement. Renewal leads us to experience the presence and power of God in which we were created. Restoration is the act of returning to former condition. God restores people and situations, often turning around negative circumstances to work for good. In the Bible, the Psalmist cries out, "Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the South..." (Psalm 126:4). The Restorer God assures and reminds God's people, "They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations..." (Isaiah 61:4). In the contemporary Asian context, restoration is much needed.

Steward, a 'manager', who is responsible for the goods and property of another. A steward is not, therefore, an owner, but one who is responsible for the care of the 'property' of the owner. It implies accountability and wisdom in the management of resources. God's mandate 'to serve and to preserve' the creation places human beings not in a superior position over creation but in a position of service to it. Therefore, stewardship of God's creation is not merely for human beings' interests and desires, but in humble service to the entirety of God's creation. Our care of God's creation is an answer and response to God's initiative to reconcile, renew, and restore the vulnerable and wounded creation into 'a new heaven and a new earth' in which God dwells (Revelation 21:1–4).

## Objectives

The objectives of AEI–2020 are:

- to enable a select group of young prospective ecumenical leaders in Asia to learn about ecumenism and develop a wider ecumenical vision in the emerging contexts; and,
- to equip potential church leaders to perceive the emerging realities and issues in Asia with biblical theological undergirding, and to effectively and contextually respond to the call to be stewards of renewal and restoration of God's creation.

## Who can apply?

- Young people between the age of 25-35 years; pastors, graduates, or postgraduates in theology, social sciences, church workers, or lay members from CCA member churches, councils, and related organisations with basic theological backgrounds, who are recommended by the leadership of the sponsoring body;
- Those who are fully committed to attending the AEI–2020 on a full-time basis (please refer to the AEI–2020 Schedule in the section below); and,
- Those who are interested in leadership development and ecumenical formation, especially in widening their ecumenical perspectives. .

## AEI–2020 Schedule

The AEI–2020 will be held in November 2020. Beginning on 2 November 2020 (Monday), sessions will be conducted every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday till 30 November 2020 (Monday) through Zoom and/or Google Meet. Therefore, selected participants are expected to make the necessary arrangements to access and secure their own stable internet connection and devices (laptop/desktop computer/iPad/smartphone, etc.) throughout the deliberations of the AEI–2020.

There will be two sessions on each working day of AEI (Mon., Wed., and Fri.). Each session lasts for 60 minutes (45 minutes lecture and 15 minutes discussion/reflections). In total, there will be about 26 sessions during the entire duration of the AEI.

### **Application and Selection process**

Those who are interested to apply must send the following documents together:

1. The duly filled application form for AEI–2020 (which can be downloaded from the CCA website – [www.cca.org.hk](http://www.cca.org.hk)).
2. A Curriculum Vitae with details on academic qualifications, personal details, and work experiences, if any.
3. Letter of recommendation/ endorsement from the applicant's member church/council/ ecumenical organisation/institution.
4. A scanned copy of the applicant's ID/Passport.
5. A 2"x2" photograph (scanned digital copy)

The completed AEI–2020 application must be sent along with scanned copies of all supporting documents to [cca.aei@cca.org.hk](mailto:cca.aei@cca.org.hk). In case email correspondence is not possible, applicants are advised to fax the application form and other documents to +66-53-247-303.

The deadline for receiving the complete application form with all supporting documents is **10 September 2020**. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

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

Ten best-performing students of AEI–2020 will be selected to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of CCA which will be held in 2021. CCA will cover the international travel, board and lodging, and registration fee of each selected student from AEI–2020 session.