



Christian Conference of Asia

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Condolence Message

To:

Members of the family of Dr S.A.E. Nababan
Members of the *Huria Kristen Batak Protestan* (HKBP) in Indonesia
Member Churches of the PGI

c.c: Rev. Dr (Ephorus Emeritus) Willem T.P Simarmata, Moderator, CCA

It is with great sadness that we received the news about the demise of Ephorus Emeritus Dr Soritua A.E. Nababan this afternoon. On behalf of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and its member constituencies across Asia, I express our heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved family, the HKBP, and the PGI.

I have had the privilege and opportunity to associate and work closely with Dr Nababan since 1993 when I joined the CCA for the first time at its Secretariat in Hong Kong. Dr Nababan was then the president of the CCA. When I joined the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, Switzerland as Asia Secretary of the WCC, and subsequently served as the Director of the International Affairs of the WCC, I had many more opportunities to again work with Dr Nababan who was then a President of WCC.

I always admired Dr Nababan and valued very much his support to my ecumenical journey. I, along with my family, was privileged to receive his friendship and affection. During my thirty years of experience in closely associating with the Asian ecumenical movement, I have never seen another ecumenical leader in Asia who has been consistently contributing and providing leadership in both the church and the ecumenical movement with utmost commitment and sincerity. It is precisely for these reasons that Dr Nababan's ecumenical contributions in Asia and at the global level have been widely recognised.

Dr S.A.E. Nababan, a person with unique qualities, talents, and creativity to respond issues and challenges in church and society, was known for his firm positions based on his convictions and courage to speak the truth to authorities or the so-called powerful, whether in the ecclesiastical or ecumenical field. An ardent crusader for the unity of churches and supporter of people's struggles for justice and peace, he accompanied several people's movements and communities in their struggle for social justice in Asia. Known for expressing his views and opinions fearlessly and candidly at international ecumenical forums, Dr Nababan often questioned the dominance of the Western churches in the ecumenical movement and also critiqued missionary paternalism.

Dr Nababan had strong views on the nature and function of an inclusive global ecumenical movement and expectations regarding its attitudes towards the churches in the global south as well as inter-church relations; but the tenacity evinced in his opinions or the views often expressed have to be viewed as expressions of his commitment and convictions with regard to promotion of the true spirit of ecumenism.

He was involved in the ecumenical movement in Indonesia, Asia, and at the global level in various capacities. Dr Nababan's association with the CCA dates right back to the founding Assembly of the East Asia Christian (EACC) Conference, the forerunner of CCA, which was held in Prapat, Indonesia in 1957 where he had served as a youth representative of the local organising committee. With the passing away of Dr Nababan, the last remaining participant of the 1957 Prapat Assembly of EACC/CCA also left this world.

Dr Nababan became the first youth secretary of CCA in 1963 and continued until 1967. He was a member of the Presidium of the CCA from 1990 to 1995.

He had served the WCC in various capacities as President of the WCC (2006–2013); Vice-Moderator of WCC Central Committee (1991–1998); Moderator of the Council for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC (1968–1985); and a member of the WCC Central Committee (1983–1991).

He was ever-ready to open debates, to offer the CCA or the WCC as an open space for ecumenical reflections and actions and to make known his own positions candidly without any hesitation. His work with churches and the ecumenical movement over the decades has fostered cooperation among Christians of different confessions as well as among people of different religions. He was always committed to affirming "Asian-ness" and Asian identity, be it in the church, the ecumenical movement, or in the secular world. I am sure no other Asian church leader has contributed as much to the global ecumenical movement, consistently for more than seven decades, as has Dr Soritua Nababan. These noble values, qualities, and unique capacities of Dr Nababan made him a unique personality, chosen specially by God. God endowed him with manifold gifts. Many in Asia will cherish the leadership and memory of Dr Nababan.

We thank God Almighty for Dr Soritua Nababan's life and witness.

May his memory be eternal.



Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary
Christian Conference of Asia