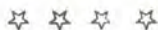


## “Together for Justice Through Education & Development Asian Women’s Institute Indonesia Conference”

The Asian women’s Institute (AWI), which groups nine institutes for women’s studies in Asia, held in Satya Wacana Christian University Salatiga, Indonesia, a conference whose 58 participants came from the following countries: India, Pakistan, Lebanon, South Korea, Japan, Philippines, U.S.A., the Netherlands and Indonesia. They included men and women principals, presidents of colleges and universities, program directors, researchers, lecturers, professors, lawyers and other intellectuals involved in women’s activities and problems in Asian countries. The conference lasted from June 28 to June 30, 1988; it had seven sessions, four of which were plenary, the others, in groups. The general topic discussed was: “Together for justice through education and development.” The addresses given, the topics discussed, revolved around a common problem: the discrimination done against women in the family, in society, in the fields of labor, economy, civil and criminal laws. While the constitutions of Asian countries agree on proclaiming their adherence to the principles of democracy, freedom, equality and justice for all citizens without discrimination regarding sex, race or class, there is a general complaint that those principles are not applied in actual life. Sex discrimination in basic human rights exists everywhere but owing to divergences in the nature and amount of discrimination, this report will present a few **representative** addresses and lectures, in the form of summaries, which will throw some light on the negative and the positive aspects of the women’s movement.



**Abstract of the Keynote address by Patricia Magdamo** staff member of International Ministries, the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.



Dr. Patricia Magdamo.

“For all the consciousness-raising and the shared recognition of the needs of women in our own contexts, great social disparities continue to exist in much of Asia. Social instability and conflict have made our task, so much more difficult”.

While we acknowledge the benefits of awareness and self-study, we admit the difficulty of changing deep-rooted attitudes. It seems that the more things change the more they remain unchanged.

What does the Asian Women’s Institute want to be?

We have been producing an educational elite, i.e. opportunities for equal education in gender segregated societies. Many of our graduates are doctors, lawyers, politicians, educators, etc. Education is supposed to change people, to give them a greater sense of having a stake in the welfare of their community and nation. What values are inculcated in our graduates?

It seems that modern values of secularism, democracy, socialism, and professional ethics are coming under increasing strains.

The call for values education for the 5200 institutions of higher learning in **India** is a serious matter because these institutions prepare future leaders. Our youth are impatient with social disparities and hypocrisies. There is confusion and disillusionment. Our challenge is to use what we have to build a community of equality for men and women, to overcome the polarization of the elites and the marginalized persons of our lands.

The answer to the above question lies in the application of universal values, i.e. equality before God in participation and in value: care for the world’s resources, care for other people, reconciliation and renewal, a shared vision of God’s justice and power. Our duty is to fight ignorance, poverty, homelessness, superstition, hunger, tyranny, instability — evils which are more oppressive to women than to men.

### Challenge of Authority

Technology can be a double-edged sword. It can be used to build up or to destroy. The same is true of authority which may take the form of domination or even tyranny.

Authority has its **value** in the form of influence in the political and social sphere; also when it takes the form of knowledge, experience, charisma and ability to help. But authority should be challenged and fought when it is patriarchal or hierarchical, when it is exercised through domination. Only the paradigm of authority as **partnership** offers a possibility of a community of men and women who live and work with the knowledge of justice as wholeness, when all people are of equal value before God.