

# THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

## EDITORIAL

*Globalisation has transformed virtually all aspects of modern life – our jobs, our culture, and our relationships with one another. It brings new stresses, new challenges and new opportunities. For the children in well-off families, globalisation may mean more opportunities to travel, to meet people of different culture, to experience lifestyle of different countries and to get access to the Internet. But for those from working class families, they may be victims of progressive impoverishment and disempowerment due to globalisation. Rebecca Wong Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council*

*The problem is that globalisation does not breed global citizens automatically. While education can be an agent to promote global citizenship for all, we must not neglect the poor and the weak who are disadvantaged in this supposedly levelled playing field. And the economy should not be the only master that a global citizen serves; rather it is the respect for wider humanity that every child of the future should embrace. R.W. Gillett (retired Anglican priest)*

The theme of a consultation held in Seoul in October 2007, organised by the

Easter 2008

International Anglican Family Network in co-operation with the Anglican Church of Korea, was the effect of globalisation on different regions in SE Asia. The 19 delegates who attended from Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore, Australia and China described the impact on their families and communities. Although they acknowledged some benefits from globalisation, such as the sense of being part of one world and the wider availability of goods, the overwhelming sense was of its negative impact on society, community and, particularly, the family. The opening up of markets, especially in less developed countries, has devastated local industries as multi-national corporations have replaced indigenous businesses. Freedom from regulation for business means that jobs have become insecure, people have short-term contracts and have to work longer hours sometimes for less pay.

These changes are affecting family and community life:

- There has been a growth in migrant workers and it is estimated they now represent nearly 3% of the world's population. Many of these have been forced to migrate through poverty. They often have fewer rights, lower standards

of medical care and less legal protection in the countries they move to. Families may be split up as members move to seek work, with inevitable strains on their relationships despite the possibilities of an increased income. Half of migrant workers are now women.

- The number of international and cross-border marriages is increasing. And globalisation has facilitated a rapid growth of "the bride trade" together with its associated abuses.
- In many countries, there is a widening gap between the poor and the wealthy.

There is also a deeper concern – that globalisation has an impact on people's psyche and spirituality. People's lives have become part of the market place, which is no longer about buying what you need but experiencing your own life becoming a market commodity. This can lead to the triumph of individualism over community; greed instead of sharing; materialism rather than relationships or spiritual values. (For a Report of the Consultation and the delegates' recommendations for action see [www.iafn.net](http://www.iafn.net) or contact the Network Office.)

The first section of this newsletter reflects the views and expertise of the delegates to the Consultation and tells of the effects of globalisation from the perspective of different Asian countries. The second section contains material from other parts of the Anglican Communion. Articles from an African perspective and from Bangladesh echo the concerns about problems facing poor migrant workers and the impact on their families. Some of the devastating and horrific effects of the international market on local people are made clear in an article from Argentina.

The Church should not be passive in the face of these things but should challenge them more vigorously. As the Consultation delegate from Australia pointed out, globalisation is probably here to stay as a dominant force in the world's economy and society. So a key issue is how best to identify its shortfalls and address them and how to harness its potential to benefit societies' poorest members. These are questions for all global citizens and particularly for those who seek to follow the teachings of Christ.

## ASIA PACIFIC MISSION FOR MIGRANTS (APMM)

### The Case of a Migrant Family

Luisa (not her real name) was born and raised among a peasant family in the southern part of the Philippines. Her family income comes from a parcel of agricultural land that her father inherited from his parents. Despite hardships, they were blessed with the fruits of their labour. But increasingly, Luisa's family found it difficult to make ends meet. Her father complained of the rising costs of fertilisers, pesticides and other agricultural products. Aside from this, the implementation of trade liberalisation in the country caused more serious problems: imported agricultural products, cheaper than the local ones, flooded in. For example, the market price of locally produced garlic and onions was almost double that of the foreign imports. Luisa's parents were forced to give up farming and her father went to the city to look for a new job. Luisa, for her part, ended up working as a foreign domestic worker in Hong Kong; her elder brother went to Saudi Arabia to work in construction and the family who used to live together suddenly changed to a family of migrants.

Asia is considered to be the centre of growth and development with the highest rate of economic growth in the world. But, in contrast, the majority of the world's poor can also be found in this region. And those countries with the most dramatic growth rates like China and India are also home to millions of the world's poorest. There are only small enclaves of prosperity amidst widespread poverty and uneven development and we see sharp contrasts between those few socio-economic groups that have benefited in some limited way from globalisation, and the vast majority that suffer from its adverse effects.

Under the auspices of "free market globalisation", global powers such as USA aggravate the plunder, underdevelopment and poverty of poorer countries in the Asia-Pacific. The "free market" forced countries to dismantle mechanisms and abandon programmes for the protection of local economies as well as support for marginalised sectors of society.

The influx of cheap subsidised food and agricultural products from rich countries

will result in more bankruptcy of peasant agriculture and fisheries. The view of APMM is that the national inheritance and traditional ways of working will be eradicated to give way to the unrestricted plunder of natural resources, and the flooding in of cheap industrial and agricultural products from monopoly corporations will result in bankruptcies of uncompetitive local production, causing more job losses and unemployment.

The UN Population Division estimates the migrant population in 2005 at between 185 and 192 million people – up from 175 million in 2000. Nearly half of them are female. This continuing flow of people seeking jobs outside of their homelands is principally a result of the unabated conditions of poverty, landlessness and unemployment in many underdeveloped nations, and the differences in living standards between countries. In fact, since 1980 these "push factors" of emigration have intensified.

The International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development recommend "managing" this migration through generating rapid economic growth in the countries of origin and so inducing migrants to stay at home of their own free choice rather than migrate under economic compulsion.

However, governments of sending countries instead of attending to these developmental issues and causes of forced migration, are managing migration in a different way. Export of labour, of people, has become a cornerstone programme for national development, with remittances being sent back becoming a major factor that consistently cushions the decline of many national economies.

### Asian Migration

Asia is currently the primary source of migration of all forms to most of the world's immigrant-receiving countries. Almost one-third of all immigrants in Australia are from Asia, with China, the Philippines and India among the largest sending countries. Similarly, 33% of immigrants in Canada and 24% in the US are from Asia. However in real terms, migration flows have actually shifted in recent years and in some cases, international migration is actually decreasing in favour of internal migration. Although the numbers are increasing, Asians now represent a smaller proportion of the migrant stock and more Asians are finding job opportunities within Asia itself rather than moving to the Middle East, the original main destination for Asian migrants since the 1970s.

An increase in the number of undocumented workers is another striking aspect to Asian migration. Trafficking of persons is a huge and largely unreported problem. It is estimated the region accounts for one-third of the global trafficking flow.

### Women Migrants

In 2001, women accounted for some 47% of all migrants in Asia. For many years, most female migrants have come from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka where women make up between 60% and 80% of all migrants.

Women are still predominantly entering (or being entered into) the services and welfare sectors. Some skilled migration patterns have been observed but only if admission policies are specifically developed, for example recruitment of nurses and caregivers for the US and Canada.

They are preferred as domestic servants, entertainers, workers in sweatshops,

hotel workers, shop attendants. The large numbers of women working as domestic servants and “entertainers” are the most vulnerable to abuse and human rights violations, including mental and physical maltreatment, rape and murder.

The demand for female migrants in the Middle East has increased, particularly in the service industries, through the creation of low and unskilled jobs that migrant women are willing to take while the local population is reluctant to do so. They are paid lower than the minimum wage and work longer hours. These jobs are filled by women from the developing countries of Asia, principally Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. The majority tend to work in private households as domestic workers, but also in the hotel and entertainment industries, the latter sometimes being a euphemism for commercial sex.

Hong Kong opened up its market to foreign domestic workers in the late 1970s. For the Hong Kong populace this meant encouraging more and more women to be part of the labour force – especially as foreign domestic helpers. But in 1987 New Conditions of Stay restricted the rights of such immigrants to negotiate their contracts or to stay more than two weeks in Hong Kong when their contract was terminated. This ensured a faster turnover of the easily available and vast pool of cheap women migrant labour, putting more pressure on them in favour of the employers. It often forces the migrant women to accept inhuman treatment and sub-standard living conditions, so that local employers and the national economy can directly benefit from their under-recognised and under-valued work.

### Effects of Forced Migration

One of the most painful experiences of this forced migration and commodification of migrants is their separation from their loved ones and families. Their loneliness and cry to be with their families is never assuaged, even by the income they can get from working abroad. The long physical separation sometimes ends in broken homes. Their separate lives bring about different experiences and values that affect family relations.

For some, being separated from the motherland heightens their appreciation of their home, but for others exposure to consumerism and commercialism in the host countries has brought about changes to their life styles and different attitudes towards their compatriots of “lower” standing.

### Children

For the children and youth who are left by their parent/s in the home country, the social impact is unprecedented. Many grow up with their guardians, not really knowing their parents, and their sense of belonging to a family is tarnished. The only sense of identification with their migrant parent/s is monetary – they are the ones who send them greeting cards on their birthdays and money for special occasions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the

separation from their parents often breeds low grades in school and social vices such as drug addiction.

### Work undertaken by Asia – Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)

Experience has proved that welfare services are short-term solutions, and more can be achieved by uniting people in their endeavour to improve their situation.

So the main focus of the work is to empower migrant workers through knowledge about the causes of migrant labour and what they can do to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation. APMM also provides a social service programme for the specific counselling and welfare needs of migrant workers.

As a migrant centre in the region, APMM is committed to provide the necessary assistance for the migrant workers to establish self-help groups. These can lead to the formation of a movement both in their country of destination with strong links with the movement in their country of origin and towards the establishment of an international movement of immigrants.

## JAPAN

Although Japan does not issue residential status visas for unskilled foreign workers and these workers, if employed, become classified as “illegal”, Japan has been one of the major destinations for migrant workers.

From 1987, facing the impending population decline, a rapidly ageing society and demands of low-wage service sectors, Japanese financial circles requested the Japanese Government to accept foreigners as trainees. This was obliquely accepted in the case of foreign trainees and those with Japanese ancestry. The result has been a major growth of the number of migrant workers since the 1980s; in January 2006 it was estimated there were 510,000 such workers in Japan mainly from Brazil, China, Korea, and the Philippines. Some

220,000 of these were undocumented and so not covered by the Labour Standards Law and many were forced to work as ordinary workers under the pretext of being in training – most of them on an hourly or daily basis. Many are women, mostly working as “entertainers” in clubs and snack bars and vulnerable to prostitution. Male migrant workers can be found in construction sites of buildings, houses and factories performing the “Three D” jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult) that are shunned by the Japanese people, particularly the younger generation. Although the Japanese government silently recognises that the Japanese economy needs foreign workers, they do not enact laws for their protection other than the “trainees” and those with Japanese ancestry.

Japan is currently experiencing a serious depression, with an unemployment rate the highest in 60 years, and foreign workers are the first to be affected. Many lose their jobs and others have their hours cut. They have no security such as compensation when injured, no social benefits such as health insurance or protection against unfair dismissal.

### Stateless Children

As more migrant workers reside in Japan and form relationships – often with those from their own country – children are born who are undocumented. Undocumented workers’ children, and those who are not legitimised by their Japanese fathers, often have difficulty in being registered with the local government because of their parents’ fear of deportation. From the moment of

their birth, these children are considered as illegal residents. They live under constant stress and many have nowhere to stay or to go to school. In 2000, we interviewed 600 foreign children and found that there were 152 who had no alien registration. The Nagoya Youth Centre, which is run by the Chubu Dioceses of the Episcopal Church in Japan, campaigns for these children and supports them through schooling, clubs and advice. The foreign workers' issue is no longer just one of the workplace but of human rights for them and their families.

## SINGAPORE

Singapore is a small island with a population of about 4.5 million people, most of whom live in high rise flats built by government. With no natural resources or hinterland for economic support, the only resource we have is people. As part of the globalisation strategy, Singapore has to develop its citizens towards the new knowledge-based economy in which information and knowledge, rather than material resources, drive activities and countries are linked to one another via fast-growing information technology. Many companies are investing abroad and the demand for Singaporeans to work overseas has brought changes to people's lifestyle, values and relationships within the family.

For the wives and children, it can be a culture shock if it is the first time they are staying in a foreign land. There may also be practical issues, such as learning a new language and schooling for the children. For families who can adapt to the changes, it can be enriching in learning more about another culture and forming new relationships. Families who share a similar faith with the local community can benefit from a smoother transition to the new environment. But some wives, cooped up in their homes minding their children and cut off from other contacts, may become emotionally distressed.

For men who work abroad for long periods, some may face sexual temptations and they need to be constantly in touch with their family in Singapore to cope with the loneliness and pressure of work.

As for the families remaining in Singapore, the responsibility of parenting children will solely rest on the spouse – usually the wife. Despite the fact that Singapore women are now receiving higher education and getting well-paid jobs, the expectation is still that it is the men who

will go abroad to work. The stress on the wives is compounded if they also have full-time jobs and are also looking after aged parents. The frequent absence of the father means there is less bonding with the children – a heavy price, despite the increased material benefits which may result from his working abroad.

### Values and lifestyle

Over the last five years, there have been tremendous changes in the values and lifestyle of the young people. The measure of success has been equated with the five Cs which stand for cash, credit card, car, condominium and career; and not so much on the quality of life and relationships. In pursuing this dream of five Cs, people are motivated to learn and upgrade their knowledge and skills so as to be more marketable. This can be at the expense of time with their families and some companies are shortening the number of working days or allowing employees to work from home.

Globalisation has not only brought about economic growth but also consumerism, and young people have become the target of most commercial advertisements. They are big spenders – unlike the older generation which values thrift and saving.

### Marriage and children

There is a growing trend for graduates getting married at a later age or choosing to remain single. And the stress from the high cost of living, coupled with stress at work are factors which explain why many married couples have no children or delay having them. The very low birth rate is a serious issue, as Singapore's population is ageing fast. By the year 2030, one in every four people will be aged 60 or over.

With the last economic downturn, Singaporeans no longer experience job security; jobs are often on a year's

contract and renewal is subject to performance. As married couples are caught up in the rat race, they have less time to nurture their relationship. In 2006, the ratio of divorces to marriages showed that one in every three marriages ended in divorce. This has serious consequences for the children and more effort will be needed to prepare people for marriage and parenthood to ensure that the home is a secure base where individuals can experience warmth and love.

### Computer Literacy and Addiction

About 90% of households have computers with internet facility. The computer has replaced television to become a vital part of our life at work, leisure and education. There is an increase in youths involved in Internet gaming and some have resorted to stealing to pay their debts

Globalisation is here to stay. Information technology has brought different countries closer at the click of the mouse. With economic growth, we are enjoying affluence and convenience. But this is not reflective of the quality of life and healthy relationships. There are alternative five core values: contentment, character, commitment, community and compassion. These will help to develop a resilient and cohesive society comprising healthy families. They are the base camp to give security and meaning for our young to venture forth to activate their dreams.

## The digital age and its effects on children – Hong Kong

Hong Kong as a metropolitan city has embraced digital development without any reservation. This has enabled the fast development of cable TV, which effectively brings distant events over the world to the homes of most families. Undeniably the mass media has acted as an effective agent of globalisation, bringing cultures of different parts of the world to Hong Kong. Local children are therefore exposed to etiquettes, clothing styles, food cuisines throughout the world.

In addition, the Internet access exposes

young people to all the knowledge resources but also to risk. According to a recent survey, a quarter of young people interviewed spend more than four hours a day on the Internet, and some even spent more than nine hours. A lot of the time was playing Internet games and downloading songs, but some also viewed indecent material or engaged in Internet gambling. The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups investigated how young people aged from 7-20 spent their summer this year. About 80% indicated that the Internet would be the most frequent thing they did in the vacation and about 30% planned to use the Internet for more than four hours per

day. Hong Kong social workers are particularly concerned at the Net bar where users can access the Internet at a price of US \$2.5 for three hours, mainly using it for online games, viewing obscene pages or trivial chatting rather than the pursuit of knowledge.

This suggests that children have not seized the new opportunities to better equip themselves for being global citizens. They may be playing Japan-made play stations, using Korean-made mobile phones, dressed in US-made jeans, carrying French-made handbags, but their mindsets are far from global.

Rebecca Wong, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council

## MARRIAGE MIGRATION

### HONG KONG

#### The Impact of Cross-Border Marriage

In the last 50 years, Hong Kong owed much of its prosperity to its unique role of acting as the gateway to mainland China. Overseas investors used it as the springboard to enter the Mainland whereas the Mainland Government took advantage of its ability to acquire money and expertise from Hong Kong. With the opening of China, this indispensable role of Hong Kong is vanishing. Compared to cities in China, the living costs in Hong Kong began to look prohibitively high. With globalisation, logistics services in China have gradually approximated world standards and this, together with the lower labour costs, have attracted businesses to move. In the past 20 years some 60,000 factories in Hong Kong have migrated to the Mainland.

The changing economic structure has resulted in increased cross-border flows of people in the Hong Kong-China border region. The number of cross-boundary passenger trips recorded by the Hong Kong Government indicated continuous increase over the past few years with more being for business and work purposes. Government statistics showed that in 2006 102,000 Hong Kong citizens (3% of the working population) worked in the Mainland, representing a 29% increase in five years.

Working in the Mainland has indirectly induced cross-border marriage. In the 1990s, there were already around 2,000 cross-border marriages each year. But since 2004, the number rose sharply and

in 2005 the figure climbed to 29,800. The majority of the wives were from the Mainland. Correspondingly, the number of babies born to Mainland mothers in Hong Kong has surged from several hundred a year in the late 1990s to 15,000 in 2006.

Cross-border population mobility and marriages have given rise to two major non-traditional family forms. First, the wife, who is a Mainlander, stays in the Mainland with the husband working in Hong Kong and visiting her periodically. Second, regardless of the place of origin of the wife (a native Hong Konger or one who immigrates to Hong Kong from the Mainland), the couple settles in Hong Kong but the husband continues to work in the Mainland.

No matter which form is taken, it is quite clear that when the couple have a child, they will strive to bring or leave the

children in Hong Kong rather than in the Mainland, hoping they can achieve better schooling and prospects. These children, though structurally speaking they grow up in dual-parent families, in reality lack the care of one parent. In this case, where the mother stays in Hong Kong, the child still lacks the care of the father who has to work frequently in the Mainland. Worse still, if the mother stays in the Mainland, the child would be taken care of mainly by the grandparents.

It has been argued that with globalisation people no longer necessarily assign primary value to the biological family. Technological changes such as e-mail and the telephone allow the maintenance of sustained social relationships outside the boundaries of local space and time. However, in Hong Kong, the functioning of these family forms is far less satisfactory. First of all, the relationship

## KOREA

established by two people with different cultural backgrounds and maintained through periodic visits proved to be vulnerable. Second, the absence of a parent in the family presents an insecure environment for the children, who consequently suffer because of inadequate care. In 2007 there have been a number of incidents where children of Mainland/Hong Kong cross-border marriages were lost or injured through accidents when they were left alone. Many social workers in Hong Kong believe that these were just the tip of the iceberg. Many working-class families living in remote areas in Hong Kong are poor and lack the resources to provide care and support for their children.

In addition, we are also concerned about the rising incidents of family violence in Hong Kong. In the first six months of this year, 3,702 incidents were reported, representing an average of 20 cases per day. A number of these were between the female immigrant from the Mainland and her “old and poor” husband in Hong Kong. Tension often arises because of cultural difference between the couple and the wife’s disenchantment with the economic reality of the family in Hong Kong. How can we expect that the children can grow up healthily in such a family environment? In recent years, rates of student suicide, school bullying, teenage violence and substance abuse have reached alarming levels in districts where families with immigrant mothers are numerous. I do not mean to blame them or label them, but the situations of the children cause us concern.

Social service agencies in Hong Kong are aware of the problems and provide different services supporting these families. We provide inter-country counselling services and cross-border support services. By setting up office in the Mainland, social workers can provide counselling services to cross-border couples before their partners come to Hong Kong. Counselling service and mutual support groups on marriage and childcare are provided in Hong Kong. Women’s shelters have been set up to provide protection to women who are abused by their husbands.

### **Women Migrants by Marriage are our Citizens**

One of the most popular terms regarding family in today’s Korea is “multi-cultural” family. But this is without any serious consideration about what the central components of multi-cultural families are and without properly including women immigrants by marriage or their families – the constructive agents of a multi-cultural family.

In Korea there is a “Basic Law of Healthy Family” and the family first outlined in it was the nuclear family, preserving the view that the traditional patriarchal family system is normal and healthy. With the progressive women’s movement, the definition was widened under the term “alienated family” to cover other types such as the single parent family. But immigrants by marriage are sidelined. Unless the family by international marriage is accepted as a “normal” family in a fast-changing society, the multi-cultural family is nothing but a cover which cannot conceal the reality that its members are still doomed to live a second-class, alienated life.

Prejudice against international marriage in Korea begins with the “blood purity” myth – a myth because of the long history of foreign invasions. In a modern context, Korean women married to US servicemen following the Korean War – and their children – were viewed negatively and largely forgotten.

The second wave of international marriage in Korea beginning after 1990 is mostly between Koreans and other Asians and is being viewed differently. Since 1995, Chinese women in a massive number came to marry Korean men as a result of the campaign to “support the single Korean men in rural areas”. In 2005, international marriages accounted for 11.3% of all marriages. And this wave, unlike the first, is now on the Government’s agenda. For these marriages are largely between Korean males and foreign females. The Korean people think it is natural for the foreign

females to be treated as Koreans and their children as Korean second generation. So the proper measures to protect them are being set up. But there is no policy to support those families from international marriages between Korean females and foreign men. One of the reasons for the increased number of international marriages in Korea is the unbalanced sex ratio which means that more men are having difficulty finding Korean wives at their economic and cultural level. The conventional custom of providing a home and income feels to some Korean men as too much of an economic burden and so they choose marriage with a woman from a Third World country – through the commercialised marriage market.

The grooms often come to treat their immigrant partners not as an equal, but as someone they can do anything to because of the deep-rooted image of the women they have got through the process of purchased marriage. The biggest challenge these migrant women face is domestic violence. According to a recent report, 12% of the women have suffered domestic violence. Over 35% of calls through our Centre’s hotline are reportedly about domestic violence. It is even worse where the husband deserts his wife. If a divorce is through agreement, the woman is subject to deportation even in the case of the husband’s sexual violence, alcoholism, or mental disorder. Korean law guarantees the migrant women the right to stay only if they can prove the divorce was not their fault – which is very difficult to prove. The number of divorces from international marriages is growing fast. Many of the women who come to Korea for marriage come from cultures which were more gender-equal and most of the cultural conflicts come from the women being forced to accept the Korean patriarchal culture. This becomes a major factor in divorce.

### **What needs to be done?**

Language education for these women should be a top priority to lessen their isolation.

The women should also be treated as women who migrated to fulfil their own dream for a better life and we should respect their culture, diversity and human rights.

We need to look at the women immigrants as citizens who have full rights to their citizenship. If this was done we could create the foundation for a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, coexistent society.

## PHILIPPINES – BRIDE TRADING

Bride-trading is the recruitment of brides through a third party. It used to be done through the mail but now is more often brokered over the Internet. In bride trading, women are advertised in catalogues for marriage.

One example is Diana. Age or size does not matter as long as he is a foreigner and will whisk her away from her fishing community in the southern part of the Philippines. "I'm looking for a foreign guy who will love me and help my family" she wrote on one of the many Internet marriage sites. She is aged 20 and is one of many Filipinas who have signed up to matchmaking sites seeking romance and more importantly a ticket to find a better life overseas.

It is estimated there are about 300,000-500,000 Filipinas who left the Philippines as mail-order brides of foreign nationals over the past ten years. With the advent of technology, contracting marriage through the Internet has never been so easy. Many websites offer catalogues of hundreds of Filipina prospective brides, some of them as young as 14, for a fee ranging from about US\$2 to US\$60. Most of these websites are based in the United States.

The global industry of mail-order brides is booming. While a small number of agencies offer introductions to women from countries like Russia, Denmark and other European countries, the majority of sites focus on women from Third World countries like the Philippines, and Filipinas outnumber prospective mail-order brides from any other country. The US Immigration and Naturalization Service, in a recent report, estimated that the number of marriages between Filipinas and American men through the Internet services had doubled in the past decade, now totalling 6,000 annually.

The practice of bride-trading may have existed in the Philippines since the 1950s but it was only after the Vietnam War that it has become a business. Some of the soldiers returned with Filipina wives and this encouraged their friends to look for brides from the Philippines. The cause of the phenomenon of the mail-order bride is part of the massive migration of Filipinos from conditions of poverty, unemployment and chronic political turmoil in their country. Under the Labour Export Policy of 1972, people became just another export commodity like sugar. The Philippine Government now depends heavily on the taxes and fees generated from migrant workers. This policy has resulted in the movement of over eight million Filipinos, the majority of them

women, to 186 different countries worldwide.

In most cases, women are pushed overseas to provide livelihood for their families and escape from poverty. Many women view marriage as a much better situation than simply working as a domestic servant.

Although many mail-order marriages are successful, there are lots of marriages that are unhappy or even abusive, often as a result of language or culture barriers. Stories and reports of terror are widespread. Most of these brides are vulnerable to abuse – physical, emotional and psychological.

### **A form of trafficking**

Bride-trading is also linked to trafficking, and used as a "legal" way to import women who are then forced into unpaid or underpaid domestic work, sweatshops or the sex trade. Some human traffickers recruit victims through direct offers of marriages, negotiating directly with the woman or her family for a promise of marriage, after which she is delivered to a brothel or sweatshop by the "husband" who is rewarded with a cash payment.

Bride-trading is also considered as sex trafficking as it treats women as a commodity to be sold to foreign men. The purpose is not to find lifetime loving partners for women but to supply foreign men with a wife to be treated as a sex object, domestic worker and all-round slave. The very process of allowing men to

hand-pick their partners from a sea of faces and measurements is built on the commodification of women.

The mail-order bride is just a manifestation of the sex trade. There are lots of women who say they are happy in these marriages, but it is still nothing more than the buying and selling of women. Many of those who join online services in the hope of marrying into a life abroad end up as sex workers.

Aside from trafficking, women who enter mail-order marriages often experience abuse by the husband and his family. The very process of taking a woman from her community, transporting her to a new country and making her dependent on a foreign man (about whom she knows very little) in a foreign land makes her ripe for exploitation.

In addition, mail-order brides are often not given protection in their husband's country. It represents a thinly veiled exploitation of poverty, with the power dynamics favouring the men from the start.

### **What is being done?**

In 1990, the Philippine Government, alarmed at complaints that these agencies were luring women into the sex trade or forced domestic labour, enacted a law to ban mail-order bride services. This simply drove the mail-order business underground. The Internet seems to have bypassed this law and there is little enforcement by the authorities. Most

Globalisation has provoked mixed reactions in Australian society. Some point to the deleterious impact of global markets on domestic culture, the nature of jobs and values. Others point to the benefits of increased gross domestic product, employment opportunities and living standards. As globalisation is most probably here to stay as a dominant force in the world's economy and society, a key question is how best to identify its shortfalls and address them and – most importantly – how to harness its potential to benefit societies' poorest members.

The entry of increasing numbers of women into the paid workforce is also having an impact on the roles of family members, particularly in caring for dependents whether they be children or older parents. There has been a rapid rise in demand for child-care and paid carers, functions that were once performed within families. But women continue to take the brunt of domestic responsibilities in Australian families, even when they may be the primary breadwinner.

The decline in male employment, particularly in “unskilled” industries, has also compounded family dynamics, diminishing the role and status of fathers and husbands and often creating significant relationship tensions.

### Poverty and the Distribution of Wealth

Hand-in-hand with changes to workplaces has been the impact globalisation has had on wealth and income for Australian families.

Australia is a relatively prosperous country and access to global markets for Australian goods has helped to make it more so in recent years. However, there is growing evidence that the distribution of wealth has become increasingly uneven, with extended levels of poverty for some groups and communities combined with very high income growth for others. This disparity creates unhelpful and unfair divisions. The evidence of such inequities is highlighted by the following:

- A significant growth in the number of children living in two-income families, together with increasing numbers who live in families where no adult is in paid employment. This not only creates financial inequities but concomitant problems for both family groups – the “over” and the “under” employed.
- The unsustainably high levels of disadvantage experienced by particular sections of the population – particularly indigenous Australians.

With birth rates declining, much of Australia's population growth is resulting

from inward migration coupled with increased life expectancy. Australian families are also changing, with the number of “reconstituted” families increasing as a result of consistently high levels of divorce and family separation. There is also a relatively high proportion of single headed (predominately female) households.

One of the impacts of such changes is the alarming rates of domestic violence, particularly in some segments of the population, and the even more disturbing rates of child abuse and neglect of children and young people.

### Response of Anglican Organisations.

Anglican agencies, operating under a national umbrella, *Anglicare Australia*, form a network to assist families, working both at parish level and large-scale programmes. They deliver services to combat the onset of disadvantage, strengthen family resilience and relationships as well as advocating fairer public policy. *Anglicare's* reports have highlighted the lower life expectancy and poverty of Australia's indigenous community – arguably they have been the greatest casualty of globalisation. Another major concern is the problems of isolated rural communities where a combination of the withdrawal of services and the impact of climate change and drought has left them vulnerable and unsustainable. This has hastened the drift of people – particularly the young – to the city.

The growing number of Australian families in conflict has led to specialist services being established to maintain safe and positive relationships between separated parents and children. Through the Children's Contact Service, separated parents who remain in conflict – often with violent and abusive outcomes – are assisted to re-connect with children through supervised contact sessions and helped to manage future access visits in a less fractious manner. In addition, a state-wide parenting order programme, *Kids Are First*, helps parents experiencing difficulty in communicating with each other after divorce and separation. Issues of grief and anger from past relationship tensions often spill over into a failure to protect children from ongoing aggression and violence. *Kids Are First* offers mediation, counselling and works through small groups to discover better ways for separated parents to relate to children and each other.

More importantly, *Anglicare's* response has been to build the independence and capacity of families and communities to deal with the demands of day-to-day life. For example, *The Annexe*, an outreach in a small, rundown, shopping centre, was established to connect with local parents and children in surroundings which were

websites are not located in the Philippines, so prosecution is impossible.

Another law, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act was passed in 2003. This prohibits introducing or matching women to a foreign national for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour or involuntary servitude. A permanent network of government agencies and non-government representatives has been set up to proactively implement this law and some Senators have passed a resolution to investigate its violations and to seek US government help in looking into the “dating websites” which show Filipinas.

### Church response

Through the Migrant Workers Ministry, the issue of bride trading and trafficking is part of the concerns being shared with communities and congregations during information, educational and advocacy campaigns.

As well as fuller enforcement of the laws, more international co-operation is needed as bride trading is not just the issue of the country of origin but also of the countries which are receiving them.

familiar, accessible and non-stigmatising. Building on services initially aimed at local primary school children – including a breakfast club and after-school activities – *The Annexe* has become a local hub for parents. It offers an informal place to meet as well as a venue for organised activities from free use of computers to health information seminars, art and craft, budget cooking and support groups for parents. Its success lies in activities being participant-directed, building lasting connections and emphasising strengths and assets. In its own small way *The Annexe*, together with other outreaches established by *Anglicare* in the region, are helping to rewrite the script for parents and a community which is usually characterised for its deprivation and deficits rather than the qualities and abilities of its citizens.

So the approach adopted by a large number of Anglican community services in such areas has been to slowly build the capacity of local families through engagement and involvement in programmes that build life-skills, independence and mutual support. Increasingly, Anglican agencies are also facilitating efforts to build connections for people in impoverished communities to economic opportunities. The best way for families to be protected from the ravages of poverty is to be in a position to benefit from the economic growth being fuelled by globalisation.

As John Howard, the former Prime Minister, noted in 1999:

*Globalisation... is creating deep social pain and political costs as sensitive sectors are opened up to outside competition and go*

*through difficult adjustments. The human costs are hurtful and governments have a responsibility to help people through the process.*"

Equally, other institutions and people have a responsibility to help people through the process. This is not just about the redistribution of wealth and opportunity, although this is central to the solution. It is about sustaining families and relationships as a cornerstone of our community and society, in supporting positive and constructive dialogue and an assertion of values that foster respect and tolerance.

## KOREA

### Market Economy and Globalisation

Economic globalisation means market expansion not just geographically but now vertically – that is into new spheres such as mentality and spirituality. It also pushes itself towards a limitless competition not bounded by state, racial or cultural boundaries or ethical principles. The state has to be subordinate to the demand of capital. This means the destruction of families, migration, and illegal trafficking are written into the process and structure of globalisation. "Let the market decide," is the cry, "it will be much faster and much more effective." This undermines the value of spiritual life and faith.

The view that the business sector has to thrive at all costs leads people to think it is natural that society pays a high price for economic success. The desire of businesses to increase competitiveness leaves little room for compassion. There is no such thing as a fixed wage and a huge gap opens up between the CEO who is paid hundreds of millions of dollars annually and a part-time worker hired temporarily for a minimal wage. As a result we see increasingly unstable employment and job insecurity. In Korea, the problem of "non regular" workers is huge, but employers still demand flexibility in employment.

Unstable employment has direct effects on the relationship of family and community – this becomes unstable too. Flexible employment means joblessness can happen to any member and can lead to people migrating from home and their families to seek work elsewhere. Such indefinite separation will certainly harm their family's integration and welfare.

### Crisis and possibility of family

Despite these pressures, the family is still the foundation upon which migrant workers can preserve their identity and adapt to the new situation. In globalisation, family is the most important support the members can get. The Church must work to protect and help the family in such struggles and through its theology of a new expanded form of family, based on the community of those who want to actualise God's will on earth, help open a new path beyond the commercialised competitive world view pushed forward in the process of economic globalisation.

### Help from the Church – Shalom House

The Anglican Church of Korea has made a major response to the needs of migrants and refugee workers through the work of *Shalom House*. Located in the furniture-making district where many migrants work, *Shalom House* is on the same site as the Anglican church and the clergy house, and so speaks of the Church's commitment physically, emotionally and spiritually.

*Shalom House* offers support, advice and advocacy to migrants and also has special events. One of these is a Health Day when any migrant can call in and receive a free medical check and necessary medication. This service is provided by doctors and nurses who belong to the Anglican Church of Korea giving their time free at the weekend and is very popular with migrant workers.

## REFLECTIONS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COMMUNION

### MIGRATION AND THE FAMILY – BANGLADESH

Migration is an important issue related to globalisation and the cause of changes in family life. It brings both positive and negative changes.

Bangladesh has a very patriarchal family structure. The father or elder son (in absence of the father) is the only responsible person for income in the village. Many young people who have no cultivable land have traditionally come to cities for work. Nowadays with increasing globalisation and knowledge of other countries, many people want to go overseas and earn more money by doing any kind of job. People think that it is an easy way to get rich. The families of migrant workers expect money to be sent back and dream of building a large house and being able to marry off their young daughters. Migrant workers send vast sums home to help their families, helping the country to earn foreign currency. The amount of money Bangladesh receives in overseas remittances is many times larger than what it receives in development aid. Finally some of the workers shift their family and settle overseas as immigrant citizens.

On the negative side, migration can be said to contribute to poverty, dowry, early marriage, trafficking and HIV/AIDS transmission. Often, in order to go abroad, people sell their property or take a loan from local money lenders with high rates of interest. Others demand a high dowry. As a result of a family member going overseas, many families become ever poorer and wait for remittances to be sent from overseas to maintain their

livelihood. Often workers migrate through an agency or middleman. They are open to fraud and deception and can lose their money – becoming ever poorer. Others, in an attempt to go abroad, are trafficked and many women and children end up trapped in this way.

There is a high demand in the villages for migrant workers as bridegrooms. Parents arrange marriage for their son asking for a higher dowry payment. Despite this, many young girls' fathers want their daughters to marry a migrant worker as they hope the wealth will help them have a better life. However, after marriage the husband often returns abroad and the wife stays in the father-in-law's house. They are badly treated and many live a terrible life. Sometimes wives become pregnant immediately and as many are only young girls, become teenage mothers. Many migrant workers get infected by HIV or other STDs and their wives and children also become infected.

Affected families then suffer from social stigma and discrimination.

In this complex situation, the Church of Bangladesh Social Development programme (CBSDP) works to support community members. It plays a vital role in raising awareness among the village people about trafficking and HIV transmission. To prevent trafficking, CBSDP helps villagers to find out the current and correct information for migration in a legal way. CBSDP also fight against the early marriage and dowry.

Thus while migration can bring benefits to the family life economically, it also creates some significant issues that we need to look out for and guard against.

### GLOBALISATION AND THE AFRICAN FAMILY

'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh.' Genesis 2:24. God's intention was that a man and his wife would live together physically, helping each other. One 'flesh' does not tear apart and survive!

In the modern world traditional gender defined roles are changing. Women have become heads of families and career women. Economic pressures sent Zimbabwean women frequently to other

countries such as South Africa, Botswana and Zambia.

To sustain themselves and keep themselves 'safe' during these travels, some women were forced to engage in relationships with local men. The implications for families were devastating: HIV/AIDS, divorce and separations and suffering for the children.

By the end of the 1990s, African economies could no longer cope with the needs of their populations for reasons

such as bad governance and natural and man-made disasters. Men, women and children left their countries in greater numbers to eke out a living and support their families. The one 'flesh' that God intended at Creation had begun to tear apart. The family as the Africans knew it had changed.

Many people from Africa living in the UK have left very young babies back home to be brought up by friends and relatives while they work overseas. Many women

from my country have not seen their children for many years. To compensate for their absence, parents overseas buy expensive clothes and toys for their children – a poor substitute for parental presence and support. Relatives who act as guardians for these children often do a very good job but cases of abuse/ill treatment of these children have been reported.

Those who have claimed asylum have had to forgo attending funerals or even weddings of their children back home because they cannot return. Erstwhile respectable women have turned to dubious means of making money due to the harshness of life in an environment where support systems do not exist.

Many families have broken up because of the work schedule here in the UK, where husband and wife barely meet and very young children have to be at the child minder's to allow both parents to work and study. African children brought up this way have a different culture to that of their parents, resulting in a lot of friction between the two generations. Most immigrants from Africa make many sacrifices with the hope of resuming

proper family life when they return home.

The Church needs to carry out research into the issues facing families and individuals working away from their homelands and find ways to address these. That way it may be possible to support families to remain together and

the African child to retain his 'African' values and traditions while making a meaningful contribution in the multicultural society where they live.

## MIGRANT WORKERS IN UK

**"I got a new job... I now work as a sandwich board!"**

There is a short silence on both sides of the telephone receiver, and then we both start to laugh.

It's Traiche, one of my clients, a Macedonian, who arrived in England a few months ago, calling me from a phone box. His English is not good, and he knows he could speak Macedonian with me, but one of my rules is always to try to speak English, make mistakes, laugh and learn!

"Are you OK with that?" I ask, knowing that Traiche is a mechanical engineer, who would love to work in his field.

"Yeah, right now, I am on a break. I share this job with another person, a Bulgarian... We can only do it for two hours and then we must take a break... It's exhausting, my arms ache, but it's ok. Plus we get our lunch for free!"

We laugh again.

"Must go now. Thank you, anyway!"

"What for, Traiche?"

"Well, you are always there for me...and you did help me with my CV, which I've

now sent around..."

"Fingers crossed then!"

Short silence.

"What... does that mean?"

"Just good luck, Traiche, good luck!"

I get a few calls a week from people like Traiche, and every time I put the receiver down, I feel elated, as if I have done something good, and it's all worthwhile. And I feel the presence, almost like He is winking at me, saying "well done!"

It all started in 2006, with a casual conversation between myself and the then Nottingham Workplace Chaplain about new arrivals, immigrants from Eastern Europe. A few months later I became a volunteer Lay Chaplain.

I was passionate and aware of some of the challenges and issues facing these migrant workers. The original vision was for us to offer pastoral care and friendship to them but deeper research and networking have revealed a far greater need and opportunity for church engagement.

After making several contacts with institutions and agencies within the City

and beyond, to tell them of our work and learn from them, I really got started.

They are not coming in hundreds, but there are quite a few out there we have helped – and continue to do so. They are getting more confident and are using their own experiences and skills we can give them – such as teaching them how to write their CVs and how to present themselves at interviews. Sometimes, just a listening ear is enough and a few comforting words from a relative stranger who happens to be able to speak their own language. Sometimes, celebration is in order. And a call from someone like Traiche just thanking you for being there for them means "Mission accomplished!"

*Editorial note: A sandwich board is a means of advertising whereby a man carries a placard over his front and back naming a product.*

## OPPRESSION FROM THE GLOBAL MARKET – ARGENTINA

Six-year-old Vanessa was born into a humble Wichí Indian family in the small village of Chofwayuk in the dry tropical forests of northern Argentina. Her early years were happy ones spent playing with her siblings. Most of all, she loved helping her mother look after her baby brother Jeremias.

Family life changed abruptly the day the bulldozers arrived to knock down the forest. As the trees crashed down, Vanessa's world was literally wiped out. The beautiful trees were replaced by a barren ocean of soy beans, patrolled by giant agricultural machines and bombarded from the air by crop dusters.

Just when things seemed they could get no worse, an irritation in one of Vanessa's eyes was diagnosed as cancer. Her father, Eduardo, took her to the city where doctors had to remove the eye. She put on a brave face, and recouped some of her beauty with the aid of a glass eye. Eduardo believes the disease was caused by the pesticides used by farmers on their crops.

The loss of the forest made family life more and more difficult. Vanessa's parents could no longer find the plants, fruits, honey and animals that provided them with much of their diet. When bulldozers arrived to knock down one of the last patches of forest near her community, Eduardo decided enough was enough. He sought help from local authorities, but when this drew a blank he decided to take direct action. With the rest of his community, he stood in front of the advancing bulldozers – which certainly generated a response, but not one they desired.

Riot police came to the village, beat up the peaceful protestors and arrested all the men. Terrorised by what she witnessed, Vanessa grabbed her baby brother and ran off into the forest. In tears, she wandered aimlessly, dragging Jeremias as she was not strong enough to carry him. She became disoriented, and lost for several hours. Eduardo, back home after his ordeal with the police, found the children in the late evening. They were bruised and cut by thorns but otherwise all right.

The family recounted the day's events, trying to make sense of the injustice they had suffered. At that same moment, in a lawyer's office a few miles away, a court injunction was being signed that would make it a legal offence for Eduardo and some other community members to go within 50 metres of the plot being deforested. In practical terms, this now means Eduardo has to break the law in

order to travel to and from his village.

The misfortunes of families such as Vanessa's are often linked to the lives of those of us who live in the developed world. International demand for cheaper crops finds a willing partner in the insatiable greed of agribusinesses that supply products regardless of environmental and social costs. Left unchecked and fuelled by our own consumer demands, these economic forces play havoc with the wellbeing of family life halfway round the globe.

**Church Action Editorial Note.** *For the last 45 years, the Anglican Church in Northern Argentina with support from the South American Mission Society (SAMS) has worked alongside the indigenous Wichí and Chorote communities in their struggle to gain legal recognition of their rights over the land where they have lived from before the Conquest in XVIth Century. This work is currently conducted by the diocesan programme of social justice known as Asociana, which is made up of lawyers, anthropologists and social workers, who work alongside Wichí leaders. Three years ago, the writer of this article, Dr Andrew Leake learned to pilot a light aircraft. This has enabled him to produce evidence through photographs he can take from the air, demonstrating the extent of the deforestation that is taking place. He also takes Indians with him in the plane so that they can see for themselves what is happening to the forest they depend on. In this way, they have been enabled and equipped to challenge Provincial government policies and to promote their own just claims for the conservation of the forest areas.*

### A PRAYER FOR GLOBAL FAMILIES

#### Almighty God,

We pray for families who struggle for a sufficient income amidst the changes being brought about by the globalisation of trade, industry and communication: and the pull towards migrant working which this brings.

Grant that consideration of local needs may never be crowded out by global goals;

that excessive consumerism and the exploitation of women may never be accepted as the price of global working;

that close and loving family life may never be jeopardised by the demands of global business;

through Jesus Christ, carpenter and Saviour.

**Amen**

**Revd John Bradford**

**THE NEXT FAMILY NETWORK NEWSLETTER** will be a special issue for the **Lambeth Conference**

**IAFN** International Anglican Family Network

**IAFN HAS MOVED**  
**Change of postal address**  
C/o Anglican Communion Office,  
St Andrew's House,  
16 Tavistock Crescent,  
Westbourne Park,  
London W11 1AP, ENGLAND  
email: mail@iafn.net  
Tel: +44 (0)7948 332697

Visit the Family Network website: [www.iafn.net](http://www.iafn.net)

The views of individual contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the International Anglican Family Network.