



# World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100  
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 22 791 6111 Fax: +41 22 791 6099  
Email: [media@wcc-coe.org](mailto:media@wcc-coe.org) [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6285  
Direct e-mail: [Beth.Godfrey@wcc-coe.org](mailto:Beth.Godfrey@wcc-coe.org)

Rev. Prof Dr David Vásquez-Levy  
President  
Pacific School of Religion

Rev. Dr Sientje Merentek-Abram  
Dean  
South East Asia Graduate School of  
Theology

Geneva, 27 November 2024

Dear Rev. Prof Dr David Vásquez-Levy,  
Dear Rev. Dr Sientje Merentek-Abram,

It is with profound sadness that we have received the news of the passing away of Rev. Prof. Dr Choan-Seng Song (C. S. Song) at the age of 95. With the wider ecumenical fellowship, we give thanks to God for the creative and inspiring work of this Asian theologian, who served the World Council of Churches as associate director of Faith and Order from 1973 to 1982.

After graduating in philosophy at the University of Taiwan and theology at the University of Edinburgh, and having obtained his PhD at Union Theological Seminary in New York, Choan-Seng Song was elected president of Tainan Theological Seminary, and served from 1970 to 1973 as secretary for Asian ministries of the Reformed Church in America.

Among his many other activities for Faith and Order at the WCC, he edited the Faith and Papers *Giving Account of the Hope Today* (1976); *Growing Together into Unity* (1978); and *Confessing our Faith Around the World* (1980).

Choan-Seng Song later served as professor of theology and Asian cultures at the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley, USA, and was president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1997–2004.

With his emphasis on challenging the Western-centric theological framework and his articulation of an Asian Christian theology, Choan-Seng Song can be said to have inspired the notion of “broadening the table,” which is so vital for our current ecumenical work. As he wrote in *Growing Together in Unity*, Choan-Seng Song reminds us that “issues such as liberation, racism, feminism, cultural and religious pluralism put the problem of the unity of the church on a very different level.”

As an advocate of human freedom, social justice, and contextualization, Choan-Seng Song developed an inclusive vision for theologizing. Through his spiritual and social reflection in *Third-Eye Theology*, he offers a synthesis of Asian religious terminology and concepts

with biblical testimony, while his *Theology from the Womb of Asia* is a major contribution to the decolonization of theological thinking.

Choan-Seng Song's pioneering theological work continues to inspire ecumenists and missiologists alike to give witness to the compassion of Christ who stands with the oppressed. We give thanks to God for the life and work of this outstanding and inspiring theologian, who was a champion of all who hunger and thirst for justice and peace, and offer our condolences to his family and to his colleagues at the Pacific School of Religion and at the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology.

"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26).

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Pillay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jerry" being more prominent and the last name "Pillay" written in a smaller, more connected script.

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay  
General Secretary  
World Council of Churches