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GREAT COMMISSION NEWS

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848 Stewart Drive, Suite 200, Sunnyvale, CA 94085 Email: info@gcciusa.org Website: http://www.gcciusa.org Tel: (408) 636-0030 Fax: (408) 636-0033

The Korean Church and WCC, WEA, & Lausanne Movements (Part 2)

From Personal Experience of Prof. Bong-Rin Ro

he 10th WCC General Assembly will be held in Busan, Korea in October 30-November 8, 2013. There have been extensive debates between the churches that support and oppose WCC. A theological debate was planned on October 8, 2012 in Seoul between Dr. DukSung Choi (Director of Church History Research Center in Busan) of the opposition, and Dr. Hyung-Kee Lee (honorary professor of church history at Presbyterian Seminary-Jang Shin) of the supporting side. However, Dr. Lee decided not to participate in the debate due to pressure from his denomination (Tong-Hap).

In the first part of this article, the author laid out some historical events and development of WCC, especially as they impacted the churches in Pacific/Asiatic region. In this second part of the article, the author will continue to delineate these development as well as that of the WEA Movement.

3. WCC Growth Period (1950-90)

Since the formation of WCC in 1948, WCC, especially through its IMC and Faith and Order ministry had experienced rapid growth. Since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century, the Protestant denominations have experienced multiple schismatic divisions and brought disappointment and confusion to many Christian leaders and laity.

Dr. Carl McIntyre, a renowned fundamentalist in America, established the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC-1941) and International Council of Christian

Churches (ICCC-1948) to severely criticize WCC as "a Satanic organization" and created much confusion within the Christian Church around the world. Dr. McIntyre played a significant role in the division of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Korean Evangelical Christian Church. The author wrote his doctoral thesis at Concordia Lutheran Seminary on the topic of "the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hap Tong vs. Tong Hap) in 1959." (Division and Reunion of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1969.8) The author himself was literally shocked to know many tragic consequences of the church division at the grass-roots level. WCC utilized these schisms in the Protestant Church to promote unity among Christians and expanded its ministry. In the midst of Christian disunity and conflict within the Protestant denominations, WCC emphasized the unity of the church during 1950s and expanded its ministry around the world. Consequently, 348 denominations that represent 500 million church members have joined WCC.9 Many evangelical denominations have also joined WCC up to the present time.

Another reason for the rapid growth of the WCC movement was through the massive literature program. With the large amount of financial assistance from the mainline denominations in Germany, United Kingdom, and North America, WCC produced tons of magazines and books and distributed them to every corner of the world. During 1960s and

Rev Bong-Rin Ro, PhD. is Professor of Christian History and Missions, Hawaii Theological Seminary.

1970s the ecumenical liberal theology became very popular within seminaries and churches in Europe and North America. On the other hand, when the author was a seminarian student in America, he noticed the minority status of evangelical seminaries in America in comparison with that of the mainline denominational seminaries. Certainly, we can call the period between 1960s and 1980s as "the WCC Period."

Nevertheless, WCC which experienced the rapid expansion began to decline due to its liberal theological problems of emphasizing religious pluralism, universal salvation, liberation theology, and salvation today theology. The theology of missions was changed from the message of spiritual salvation to the message of social salvation. As a result, the foreign missionary movement sharply declined in mainline denominations along with the church membership decline. WCC today is very much different from the time when the author began to work for ATA in 1970.

4. Present Problems of WCC: Membership Decline and Financial Crisis

The continual membership decline of WCC related mainline denominations in Europe and North America has brought on financial crisis in the ecumenical movement. The economic condition of most Christian churches in the Third World in comparison with that of the West is still much poorer, but the Christian churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America generally still maintain the evangelical faith. In other words, the evangelical movement in the Third World is much stronger than Christianity in the West. Many evangelical churches in the Third World still belong to WCC. However the conditions of the Asian, African, and Latin American churches are quite different from the present church declining condition and theological issues of the mainline denominations in the West.

1) Effects of Membership Decline

Time magazine carried an article on the decline of mainline denominations in the United States from 1965 to 1989: United Church of Christ: 20%; Presbyterian Church USA: 25%; Episcopal Church: 28%; United Methodist Church: 18%; Disciples of Christ: 43%. The decline of missionaries was from 4,059 (1965) to 1,246 (1987). ¹⁰ This kind of church membership decline has continued until the present time.

More than 9,000 churches in the United Kingdom have been closed in the last 30 years. Due to the decline of membership, the church cannot maintain the building financially and has to sell it. More than 220 churches are closed every year. The church attendance for Sunday worship service in 2009 was 5% of the Christian population. Callum G. Brown states in his book, The Death of Christian Britain, "It took several centuries to convert Britain to Christianity, but it has taken less than forty years for the country to forsake it."

More than 150,000 Germans leave their German Lutheran Church (ETK) yearly. They do not pay their religion tax to the state. Many huge Gothic church buildings in Germany which were built several hundred years ago are almost empty for Sunday morning services, because the number of Christians for worship service is quite small; conse-

quently, these church building are becoming like museums. Therefore, western culture under the influences of materialism, secularism, humanism, moral decadence, and atheism is sweeping away the traditional Christian civilization of the West. Nevertheless, in the midst of the continual decline of the state churches and mainline churches in Europe and North America, there is a growing evangelical movement which brings hope for the future of Christianity in the West.

2) Financial Difficulty and Decline of Activities

The financial difficulty in WCC began to appear at the latter part of 1980s. WCC experienced fiscal deficit from 1986. In 1990 WCC had approximately 300 employees for 19 departments with an annual budget of \$26,000,000, and experienced an 8% deficit. In 1995 only 155 members out of 326 denominations paid the membership fees to WCC that brought the financial crisis within the organization. Most WCC income came from the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (EKD), Netherland Reformed Church, Presbyterian Church USA, Canadian United Church, United Methodist Church USA, and Canadian Anglican Church. The smallest WCC membership fee of a small denomination annually was \$100.14 Dr. Conrad Raiser, WCC General Secretary, emphasized a need of re-organizing the whole WCC structure. 15

There are two basic reasons for the WCC financial difficulty. First, the world economy in general is shrinking. Secondly, the WCC member denominations themselves are facing the financial strain to meet their own financial needs; as a result, they have to either terminate or reduce their payment to WCC in Geneva.

The American NCC office in New York City also faced the financial crisis. In 2001 NCC appealed to the Presbyterian Church USA to use the emergency fund of \$500,000, and borrowed \$400,000 from the United Methodist Church with 7% interest in order to meet the budget. The American NCC appealed to two large evangelical churches (Southern Baptist Convention and National Association of Evangelicals) and the Roman Catholic Church to cooperate. NCC reduced the staff members to 47 by releasing 17 people. This kind of financial strain has continued within WCC and NCC; therefore, the future prospect of the whole ecumenical movement is not bright. 16

III. World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Movement

WEA was established in 1864 in England in cooperation with the representatives from 10 countries in Europe and the United States. Today 132 nations are participating through their evangelical alliances and fellowships like the Korean Evangelical Fellowship (KEF). The number of Christians that belong to different national evangelical alliances within WEA is approximately 450 million. The WEA membership consists of evangelical denominations that do not belong to NCC. WEA has its Asian regional organization known as the Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA), and AEA is also related to national evangelical alliances in Asia. Dr. David Kim, President of Torch Trinity Graduate University, and the former pastor of Hallelujah Church, was elected at the WEA General Assembly in October 2008 to be the WEA Chairman. He will play a very important role for the next

WEA General Assembly which will be held in Korea in October 27-30, 2014.

Besides many national evangelical alliances, WEA has different Commissions in the areas of Missions, Theological Education, Youth Ministry, Women Ministry, IT, and Religious Liberty. Some 10 Directors of these Commissions and other WEA key leaders met annually in Europe and North America to give their ministry reports and to plan for the future ministry. The author placed the WEA Theological Commission office at the ACTS campus in Seoul for six years (1990-96). He had to travel approximately 3-4 months every year to visit theological seminaries and to attend theological consultations in different continents and had the privileges of learning about problems of theological issues and theological education in different countries. Through the WEA Theological Commission the author met many theologians in the Third World, Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand and collected information of theological education around the world. He edited a quarterly WEA magazine, Theological News (8 pages), for 5 years (1991-96) in Seoul, Korea and the WEA Theological Monographs (11 issues) and distributed them to many evangelical theologians around the world. The author also published through WEATC a book, 1995 World Directory of Theological Institutions (213p.), which includes addresses of 4,000 seminaries in six continents and a detailed information of 788 seminaries with statistics of students, faculty, library, degrees, and accreditation, etc.18 The author organized four WEATC theological consultations. 1) The first consultation was held in Wheaton, Illinois on June 1990 on the theme of "Theological Issues in 1990s." 2) WEATC and ATA jointly sponsored another maior theological consultation in Manila on June, 1992 during the time of the WEA General Assembly in Manila. The theme of the consultation was "The Unique Christ in Our Pluralistic World." Dr. Bruce Nicholls, a renowned theologian of WEATC from New Zealand, edited a book in 1993,

"The Unique Christ in Our Pluralistic World" which has been used widely as a theological textbook. 19 3) Another consultation was held on "the Evangelization of the Poor" in October 1993 in New Delhi, India. 4) In September 1994 WEATC and the Korean Evangelical Theological Society (KETS) jointly sponsored a consultation on "Prosperity Theology and Theology of Suffering" at the Torch Center in Seoul. The major papers of this consultation were published in the WEA theological journal, Evangelical Review of Theology (1995).

(Part 3 to be continued in next issue)

Notes

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- 9 Bong-Rin Ro & Bruce Nicholls, Beyond Canberra: Evangelical Responses Contemporary Ecumenical Issues (Oxford, England: Regnum, 1993), 144p.
- 10 Bong-Rin Ro, "Division and Reunion of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, 1959-1968," Th.D. thesis at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, St. Louis, MO, 1969.
- 11 Edward E. Plowman, "Unity how?" WORLD (March 11, 2006), 36.
- 12 Richard N. Ostling, "Those Mainline Blues," Times (May 22, 1989), 94-96.
- 13 Hawaii Christian Week, (Jan. 29, 2011), 8.
- 14 Elijah J.F. Kim, The Rise of the Global South: The Decline of Western Christendom and the Rose of Majority World Christianity (Eugene, OR: wipf & Stock, 2012), 42-361.
- 15 REC News Exchange (Sept., 1991), 5.
- 16 Christian Newspaper (Oct. 12, 1996), 2.
- 17 Christian United Newspaper (Aug. 18, 1996), 5.
- 18 Edward E. Plowman, "Living Dangerously," WORLD (Dec. 9, 2000), 22.
- 19 David Kim, "WEA Leaders' Meeting Will Come to Our Church," The Hallelujah News (Nov. 1, 2009), 2.

Great Commission 20th Anniversary Celebrations

Following joyful and inspiring celebrations in Arcadia, CA (Greater Los Angeles Area) on January 20, in Cupertino, CA (San Francisco Bay Area) on February 17, in Toronto, Canada on April 20, in Sydney, Australia on June 2, and in Hong Kong on June 13, there are two more events scheduled:

Celebration gathering in Philadelphia

Date/Time: 7 pm. September 28
Trinity Christian Church of Greater Philadelphia
217 Ford St., Conshohocken, PA 19248
(610) 828-2838

Thanksgiving Dinner Gala in Seattle

Date/Time: 6:30 pm, October 20

China Harbor Restaurant

2040 Westlake Ave N, Seattle, WA 98109

(206) 286-1688

LIFE TOUCHING LIFE

Reflections on the Fourth Cross-cultural Mission Preparation Training

Christine Fung

y husband and I (Timothy and Christine Fung) are missionaries with Africa Inland Mission International. We have spent eleven years serving our brothers and sisters in Kenya, teaching in Bible Colleges and establishing a public high school among the Turkana nomads. Because of our experiences in cross-cultural ministry, we were invited to be trainers and mentors in the GCCI Cross-cultural Mission Preparation Training program. Although we were mentors, we enjoyed the camp and learned as much as the participants learned from us. In this article, I would like to highlight what I have learned from two unique aspects of the camp.

The first unique aspect of this camp is that it is not only a knowledge-seeking camp, but a formation camp through a holistic curriculum, emphasizing our "being, knowing, and doing." The curriculum includes: knowing and understanding ourselves in a cross-cultural setting, knowing the biblical mandate of missions from Genesis to Revelations, the world history of missions all the way to the present, the contemporary mission trends, and the opportunities in the restricted countries. The curriculum also provides sharing from missionaries the realities of the joy and the hardship in the mission field. It includes how churches could care for missionaries in the field and on home assignment, and how the church could grow a global mindset in the congregation through mission education. The curriculum gives me a complete picture of missions from discerning personally the missionary call, to being a spiritually viable missionary, and to mobilizing and educating significantly the congregation on missions.

Being a missionary, I am in the field serving. I understand the realities of mission in the field and during home assignment. I can share what God is doing in my field and what kind of care is appropriate for missionaries. However, sometimes I do not see the difficulties of renewing and sustaining the vision of mission within the church. The candid testimony from Rev. Samuel Chiang revealed how God revived him and his church through renewing his vision for missions, and also the challenges he faced as a leader to sustain the vision of missions in the church. His testimony identifies the difficulties and practical steps to mobilize his congregation towards world missions instead of allowing the ongoing ministries of the church to derail from that focus. His powerful testimony reminds me to pray for the leaders in the churches for the courage and perseverance in furthering God's mission.

The other unique dimension is that the program is limited to only sixteen participants with at least eight mentors. The idea is to allow maximum participation and involvement from all attendees. In the first session, the ethos of learning was established through the expectation of the training that we the mentors and students will be the future leaders and trainers of cross-cultural missions wherever God places us. The high expectation automatically heightens our learning attitude. Additionally, mentors and participants alike are expected to attend and participate in all sessions whether it is through small group discussion, sharing, or debates. The vigorous process of interacting with each other results in each mentor delivering messages that have high continuity and relevance to the participants' lives. The aim of the program is that, through life touching life, the missionary vision is caught, and that the knowledge does make sense and can be an integral part of the daily lives of the participants.

As a missionary, the vigorous interactions with participants were challenging as I have to be opened to admit my mistakes and failures, in hopes that they can be avoided by the participants. For example: the two sessions about the unique strengths and weaknesses of Chinese missionaries were revealing. In discussing Chinese ethnocentricism, I had to face my pride of being a multi-cultural Chinese, and look down on other Chinese Christians who focus exclusively on evangelization of the Chinese people wherever they are. In admitting my mistake in the small group, it brought an ethos of openness and vulnerability in the small group. In the short five days (July 8 noon to July 13 noon), our relationships have grown in-depth exponentially and the learning is definitely reciprocal between mentors and participants.

By the end of the training, through life touching life, we all have renewed our missionary vision and fervor. With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is my prayer that we would persevere in whatever roles God has given us at this time to do cross-cultural missions for the sake God's kingdom.



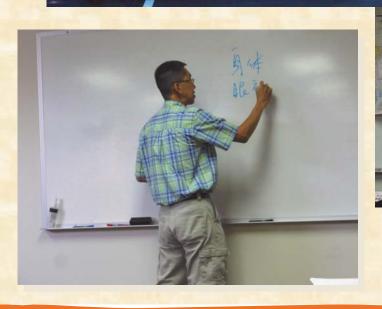
Left: Dr. Titus Loong taught "Mission Movement Development"

Below: Christine Fung told trainees knowing ourselves is the foundation of understanding others



Left: Group photo of trainers and trainees

Below: Pastor Daniel Liu shared his 4-year mission experience in Myanmar



Left: Rev. Timothy Fung shared his experience in language learning

Strides for Lausanne Movement

News release from the Lausanne Movement

The Lausanne Movement has gained clear strides since The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Cape Town 2010).

The Evangelical Fellowship of India hosted Lausanne's first Global Leadership Forum in Bangalore, in June, drawing 350 participants from over 60 nations, selected from the public arenas, churches, agencies and the media. Its main work was to assess progress in issues identified in *The Cape Town Commitment*, and to stimulate further collaborative action towards the goals of its 'Call to Action.'

The Forum Director was Grace Mathews, Vice-Chair of the Lausanne board. 'Our issue groups gathered sharp minds and strategic thinkers,' she said, adding: 'Partnership has remained a core value since our early days under the leadership of Billy Graham and John Stott. So as we did in Cape Town, we plan to make much of the Forum available online to gain wide participation in the discussions.'

The four days each began with Bible exposition from a different continent, accompanied by a multi-cultural Bible study in table groups. The Forum then moved to explore ways in which the church can better engage our culture - in particular, through the local church, through the workplace and through cultural influencers. Evenings brought news from across the continents, with time for unhurried prayer.

At the end of the Forum, Doug Birdsall, Executive Chair of Lausanne from 2004, and now President of the American Bible Society, formally passed the leadership to Korean-American Michael Oh (42), founding president of Christ Bible Institute in Nagoya, Japan. As the newly-appointed Executive Director/CEO, he emphasized his desire to see more younger leaders engaged in the movement.

The first of a series of global consultations on critical issues identified in *The Cape Town Commitment* has already taken place, in Jamaica, looking at the mandate for creation care. Gatherings to explore issues surrounding ethnicity, the 'prosperity gospel' and the gospel and media are currently in the planning stage.

To receive Lausanne Global Analysis to your inbox, a bimonthly review of news and trends relating to world evangelization, or to find Lausanne's growing list of published books, go to Lausanne.org.



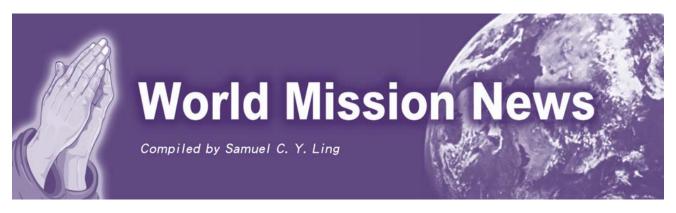
350 participants from over 60 nations gathered in Bangalore, selected from the public arenas, churches, agencies and the media.



Participants were welcomed to Bangalore with a cultural dance performance featuring a variety of dance styles from across India.



Michael Oh, Executive Director/CEO and Doug Birdsall, former Lausanne Executive Chair and current President of the American Bible Society, formally transitioned leadership of The Lausanne Movement during the Global Leadership Forum.



USA: Soon after the Boston Marathon Bombing and the explosions in West, Texas, an agency distributed thousands of a booklet called, "Do You Wonder Why?" to help the children in those communities in coping with the tragedy. The booklet answers four questions: "Does God know and care about me?" "Why do so many bad things happen?" "Why did God allow this to happen?" and "How can I get through this terrible time?" The answers convey the Christian understanding of tragedy: the hope of the gospel, the wonder of a God who loves them, watches over them, and will never forsake them.

<Child Evangelism Fellowship, cefonline.com, 4/24/13>

USA: One of the victims of the Boston Marathon Bombing was 23-year-old Linzi Lu, a graduate student from China. She was involved with the international student ministry at the Boston University, friends with graduate students and faculty members. There are over 500,000 international university students in this country, including some from Muslim nations. The State Department estimated that they consist of 25% of world's future leaders.

<InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, www.intervarsity.org, 4/22/13>

China: At least 188 have died and over 11,500 injured after a 6.6 earthquake in Sichuan Province. Within a few hours, an agency was able to send in 3-4 teams to help provide food and shelter, and clean water by a water development team. The rapid response was the result of experience gained five years ago by the agency working with local churches during the massive earthquake in this province that killed thousands leaving 5 million homeless. The agency has trained the responders and provided funds for them.

<Baptist Global Response, www.gobgr.org, 4/23/13>

Haiti: An agency recently has sent to Haiti and Africa some 250,000 meals for the starving kids. The meals were formulated by food scientists to provide easily-digestible protein, carbohydrates, and vitamins with a shelf-life of three years at a cost of 23 cents per meal. Here, least-developed western hemisphere nation, most people lived on \$2 per day, and over half of the population is illiterate. The agency gives a hot meal to some 150 kids in the Capital that are mostly orphaned, abandoned due to disease, with HIV infection, or affected by political instability and poverty.

<Christian World Outreach, www.cwomissions.org, 4/25/13>

Central Asia: Many men and women are primary family caretakers but they lack skills to help them get a job. For the last 4 years an agency has provided apprenticeship-based vocational training by pairing them with established craftsmen. In addition, they also

can receive literacy training and guidance in other life skills, as well as hearing the gospel. There are 40 men/women per course lasting 9 months with opportunity to earn more than the average income of 55 cents per day in the town. Those trained, in turn, will train others.

<Baptist Global Response, www.gobgr.org, 4/24/13>

Guatemala: An agency is conducting Timothy Leadership Training, bringing 35 lay pastors at a time for a four-day conference. These pastors live off the land and have no resources whatsoever. First, the training focuses on their personal relationship with Lord Jesus. Then they learn skills they need and methods to teach other fellow pastors, how to call on other people and other villages. When they go back, they will not only impact the village but the whole nation. <Paradise Bound Ministries, www.paradisebound.org, 4/25/13>

Burundi: In one of the 5 poorest nations in the world, students after school here focus on household chores leaving little daylight hours for homework. At night they rely on kerosene lamps or wood fires, dim light that parents can scarcely provide. An agency has installed solar panel in the local school last February providing well lit space for the students. This produces significant improvement on the student achievement. One six grade class reaches 98% last quarter compared to 82% the previous one. The school also generates income allowing people to charge cell phones.

<Food For the Hungry, www.fh,org, 4/22/13>

India: India accounts for the most maternal, newborn, and child death in the world, more so among the Dalits, also called the "Untouchables," the lowest caste. Mostly, they live in rural and tribal areas or in slums. They get none of the benefit whether in education or employment. Superstition/rituals and old-wives' tale take place of true medical knowledge. An agency is building a 300-bed hospital hoping to stop the trend of unnecessary death and providing basics of health.

Gospel For Asia Update, www.gfa.org, 4/22/13>

India: Some 70 people from 21 families were rescued from slavery in a rural brick factory. They were lured by promise of steady job plus a hefty payment up front. Once trapped, they were in essence imprisoned, and force to work up to 22 hours a day. One 10-year-old boy told how he had to make 2,000 bricks a day, carrying 8 at a time. One woman had to deliver a child by herself three months ago. An agency brought evidence of the abuse to the officials that carried out the rescue. After helped sending the victims back home, the agency will follow up on their welfare.

<International Justice Mission, www.ijm.org, 4/25/13>



Protecting Our Children and Churches from Same Sex Marriages

n June 26, a Supreme Court decision indirectly negated the California law defining marriage as one between a man and a woman, thus, legitimized same sex marriage in the state. In addition, the Court by a five to four vote ruled unconstitutional the part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act denying same-sex married persons the right to receive federal benefits. These decisions will have serious impact on US society. According to a research report from the Nederland, the homosexual population in that country keeps increasing, ever since the government and society began to accept homosexuality and same sex marriage. Aids cases also has increased. It is reasonable to expect the same fate for the United States.

The present urgent problem for the Chinese Church is self-protection: (1) protecting our children; (2) protecting churches not to be disturbed by homosexuals. At the same time, we need to plan for our future and what needs to be done:

- 1. Protecting our children: Teach in Sunday schools and fellowships the marriage God has designed. Encourage parents to set good examples of marriage between a man and a woman as the blessed and legitimate life style. Point out that same sex marriage as well as abortion is immoral, against nature, and not to be attempted. For children having homosexual tendency, learn how to teach them properly, understand legal restrictions, etc.
- 2. Protecting our churches: There are laws on freedom of speech and self-governing of churches in the United States. Churches can reject the requests of homosexuals to conduct marriage or funeral services. But churches should enunciate clearly their beliefs in the constitution. Otherwise, they may need to adhere to the civil laws in accepting same sex marriages. To rectify constitution, one may consult Pacific Justice Institute (ksnider@pii.org), or Traditional Family Coalition (hori_us@yahoo.com). They are more than happy to help.
- 3. Looking ahead, Chinese Church must continue to teach their congregation various harm and long-term effect of same sex marriage.

SCHOOL BATHROOM BILL

alifornia Assembly Bill 1266, the "School Bathroom Bill," passed the Senate and now heads to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. Governor Jerry Brown will likely sign or veto AB1266 soon. AB1266 will require all public schools to allow gender confused youth to use facilities (including bathrooms and locker rooms), participate in sex-segregated activities, and play on sports teams of the opposite sex based solely on their perceived "gender identity" and not their biological sex.

"As a society, we know we must protect children from harm, but this law is in direct violation of that principle," said Brad Dacus, President of Pacific Justice Institute (PJI). "These politicians have disregarded the safety and privacy of all children, in exchange for appeasing the vocal LGBT lobby," Dacus continued.

PJI has led the opposition to AB1266 throughout its time in the legislature, and also created GenderInsanity.com as a focal point for the opposition. PJI staff attorney Matthew McReynolds also testified in both houses of the legislature in opposition to the bill. In a sign of just how controversial this bill has been, many Senators were unwilling to support the bill and chose not to cast a vote at all, giving it a slim majority. PJI is encouraging all concerned citizens to contact the Governor's office at (916) 445-2841 to tell him to veto this legislation.