



CSI Life

Magazine of the Church of South India
October 2018 | Pentecost
Volume XVI | Issue 10 | Rs. 150 Per Annum



YOUTH

*IN SEARCH OF A
MEANINGFUL LIFE*



Green School Programme, Vellore



Green School Training Programme at Kanyakumari Diocese





EDITOR'S DESK

Discipleship as political responsibility

Polity is an often-misunderstood concept. Polity, that stems from the Greek word '*polis*' or city, is an idea or process of forming and organising a community - it describes the state of the community. Polity is the science of identity of the people, about distribution and control over identifying, mobilising and managing resources, spaces and opportunity to live and work, whereas politics is the activity and participation involved in organising relationships, people and power. Therefore, the questions on membership and citizenship, role and responsibility of members in a community, decision making and governance, understanding and interpreting concepts such as people, rights, dignity, legislature, constitution, democracy, secularism, fundamentalism and empire are political in nature.

However, the world always lives in between vision and reality, prescription and description, truth and experience. Therefore, we speak of a nexus of politics, religion, economy and empire and we address the issues of denial of rights, dignity, honour, equality, fear of uncertainty, abuse, violence, harassment, marginalisation, destroying trust, dreams and visions, majoritarianism, militarisation, marginalisation, fundamentalism, right-wing nationalism. Christian discipleship is, therefore, a political responsibility. It is a call to live out the politics of the reign of God, a vision of equality, justice, peace and truth. The *ecclesia* is the space where the believing community practices and experiences such values. The *ecclesia* is the hermeneutic of the politics of the reign of God.

Discipleship, therefore, is a political commitment about our identity and who we are; it is a process of self-discovery, a process of envisioning life. Discipleship is about analysing our being and our context, it is a critique, in relation to, over against and compared to the context we live in. Discipleship thus becomes an act of defiance, protest, resistance and subversion in the context that negates the reign of God. It becomes an imperative of practising partiality

with the poor, oppressed and excluded in order to build a solidarity coalition of the marginalised, weak, lost, and the least. It offers an inspiration and vision of demythologising power and authority. Thus, discipleship is the processing, manifesting, and living out the values of the reign of God - love, dignity, equality, justice and peace. Discipleship is about making possible inclusive spaces for all, where everyone has honour, freedom and rights, where everyone is encouraged and accompanied to break the barriers, and overcome fear and violence, and become a movement of empowerment and transformation.

The Fourth Gospel, considered to be representing one of the deepest spiritual streams of the first century Christianity, is in fact, a book which, in no uncertain terms, proclaims very subtly, a clear political theology. It narrates the story of a minuscule minority community which stands firm to the challenges of a brute majority and struggles and strives for a new identity. It comprises a two-level narration: on the one hand it speaks about the story of Jesus and the Jesus movement, on the other it reflects the socio-political and religious context of the Johannine community. For example, the pivotal chapter 9 is about Jesus healing the man born blind, sending him to the pool of Siloam to get washed and see (v.7). However, after a process of enquiry, the blind who could now see is excommunicated from the synagogue. Jesus meets the excluded (v.35) and invites him to his sheepfold.

In the narration of this sign, the Johannine community tells the readers its own story, its being interrogated for answering the baptismal question: Do you believe in the son of man? (v.35) with the affirmation: Lord I believe! (v.38) and being systematically excommunicated from the synagogue for its sent-ness in mission. Those who were forcefully excommunicated from the synagogue lost identity in the community, however they were invited to be part of the

sheep fold of the Good Shepherd (chapter 10). The Johannine *ecclesia* imbibes the vision of an ever-widening borderless *ecclesia*, that goes beyond the ethnic and racial identities, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16). The sending out and building of new life-affirming communities are evidenced in the theological exposition of the concept 'to remain' (*meno*) in chapter 15 through a very pictorial allegory of the vine and the branches. The overtones of a faithful, constantly-committed community as fruit-bearing organism cannot be missed, those who remain in the true Vine, Jesus, and practice self-emptying love are enabled and empowered to be a community of joy which radiates God's glory.

Therefore, one may observe the emphasis on dialogue in the fourth gospel, wherein the Johannine community is engaged in a creative and innovative dialogue of life concerns and justice issues that lead to the formation of a coalition of the excluded and the marginalised. We encounter four sub groups joining together to form the Johannine community a) the disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:19ff.) - John sends his disciples to Jesus, and in v.38 Jesus invites them 'to come and see' - this is considered as a Johannine narration of a section of the Baptist movement merging with the Jesus Movement; b) considerate Jews - in John 3 Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night and confesses his admiration, as the teacher from above. Jesus however challenges him to come to the light, and that Nicodemus indeed comes out at the burial of Jesus, a specific narration of the Johannine Gospel is indicative that such Jews who were considerate to Jesus later joined the Jesus movement; c) Samaritans - John 4 is considered as a narration of the Samaritans becoming part of Jesus movement, subsequent to Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well and she

becomes the missionary bringing in the whole village, as they proclaim that Jesus is the saviour of the world; and d) the Greeks in John 12:20 - Greeks come to meet Jesus, 'we would like to meet Jesus'; the Johannine prologue is fashioned as a fusion of Jewish concepts of Wisdom, Torah, and Greek Logos in an indomitable creative interpretation of the Genesis creation story. In proclaiming that the Word has become flesh and has pitched tent among us (John 1:14), the Johannine community calls all those who have no tents, no space to join in becoming an empowered movement of those excluded and without an identity. Johannine spirituality is intently political as it evolved through a radical discipleship lived out and understood in dialogue with diverse groups, with distinct inner dynamics, hopes and aspirations, yet striving for a unique identity.

The Fourth Gospel in its composition and structure depicts the conflict which the Johannine community was engaged in with the powers that be. John 5 which caricatures the conflict, 'Is Jesus equal to God?' in fact narrates the community's struggle for the right to life and health through the story of Jesus healing the 38-year long sufferer at the pool of Bethesda, and the subsequent discussions. John 6 depicts a profound melting point in the life of the Johannine community, through a powerful question "do you also want to go away?" (v.67) and answered through Peter "To whom shall we go?" One needs to recognise that the question arose in a discourse on the bread of life, during a profound discussion on food rights and food security. John 8 brings to fore the theological exclamation 'Is Jesus pre-existent?' in the context of an exchange on understanding the truth, liberation of the mind, and freedom. "Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly" (7:24) – implores the reader to have an in-depth analysis of the context and the discourse, and identify the resistance and subversion manifesting as messianic protest in order to do justice. In John 10, Jesus's proclamation that he and the Father are one (v.30) is a profound truth made plain by a simple principle of love. John 3:16 renders the breadth and vastness of God's 'giving' as God's self-emptying love, poured out in the form of God's only Son. John 10:18 renders the readiness of Jesus the Son to replicate the giving, the same self-emptying and out-pouring love in his readiness to offer himself on the cross. In this 'giving', self-emptying, Father and the Son are One. The all giving, self-emptying love becomes the norm of Christian discipleship. In imitating self-giving, self-emptying God, the community's spiritual as well as political conscience is enlightened, and is empowered to overcome conflict and walks towards life in all its fullness.

Johannine narrative is a theological treatise on demythologising authority and power. The theological themes and concepts such as

incarnation, solidarity, oneness have a distinct political overtone. Jesus' birth is interpreted as the Word becoming flesh, (1:14) the Word pitching tent among people on the move, who are no people, who have no identity, are migrants, refugees, people in the margins. The Father in the fourth Gospels demythologises patriarchy, He does not centralise power and authority but is the One who gives everything (3:16f), empties oneself and shows everything (5:20ff). In delegating authority, he would invite everyone to experience life (5:21f,27f). Even Johannine Jesus interprets *kenosis* or self-emptying in bending down to wash the feet of the disciples, an act of love and service, extending hospitality, healing, cleansing and enabling them to belong (13:4 -10). In the Fourth Gospel, the cross is the revelation of God's glory and powerlessness is power – 'when Jesus is lifted up, he will draw everyone to himself' (12:32, Cf 3:14). The suffering community gathered together and lifted up in solidarity, reveals the power of liberation and redemption.

The Johannine community's conflict with the context is depicted in the use of binaries: knowledge and ignorance, light and darkness, truth and falsehood, life and death. The protest, subversion and resistance of the community in the process of carving out its own identity, its own space and opportunity for its members is narrated forcefully as the community lays claim to knowledge, light, truth and life. The binaries also depict the Jesus movement's resolve in conscientisation, awareness building, right to knowledge and knowledge transfer, as well as its campaigns on food security for all (6:1ff, 23ff. cf 2:3ff), social inclusion (4:46ff; 5:1ff; 9:1ff), readiness to give space to women (4:7ff; 20:11-18), understanding gender sensitivity and equality (11:20ff, especially, v.27), healing and reconciliation and confronting the death forces in and as the community of eternal life (11:17ff).

Even in the Johannine rendering of the Paraclete we encounter legal overtones. Paraclete is the helper (14:16ff) providing discernment and comprehension to the oppressed, marginalised, and exploited. Paraclete is the Advocate (15:26ff), Jesus' continued presence in his absence, as He will make the world know of guilt, sin, judgement and righteousness (16:8ff). Paraclete makes the community to remember Jesus, reminds them of Jesus' words and deeds and leads them to all truth (16:13ff). In Paraclete, the troubled, persecuted and excluded have the key to the continued revelation. The community, on its own, cannot as it is weak, frail, and a minuscule minority, but the Paraclete is the accompaniment, strength and the power that is provided to the community in their struggle for identity and against death forces.

The fourth Evangelist transposes the episode of Jesus cleansing the temple to the

beginning of Jesus' ministry and interprets the event as reformation, rebuilding and resurrection (2:13ff, cf v19), thereby informing the reader that the Jesus movement was a political movement that had the objective of rebuilding and reforming a new sheep fold, (10:7ff), of resurrecting a new fruit bearing organism, the vine and the branches (15:1ff) in a world of conflict, exclusion and destructions.

The passion narrative of the Gospel has a distinct political fervour, depicting Jesus' resolve to take corruption head on, in the context of a nexus between religion, business and politics. On his arrest Jesus is led to Annas, who was the high priest emeritus by then, and his son in-law was the high priest (18:13ff). However, the retired high priest wielded quite a lot of power as the business and commerce at the temple was under his control. And Annas now takes political revenge in getting Caiaphas rubberstamp his decision (18:24,28). Moreover, the Jesus of the synoptics is very silent before the Roman Governor Pilate, whereas the Johannine Jesus enters into a serious discourse on power, authority, and truth with Pilate (18:38, 19:11ff read 18:29-19:16).

The political responsibility of the community lies not just in confrontation and opposition, but also in experiencing the 'peace' that Jesus promises even amid turmoil, persecution and anguish (14:27). Therefore, the community is encouraged to engage in peace-making and peace-building and to be a channel of peace that it has received from Christ. The risen one blesses the community with *Shalom* and hands over a mission of liberation, forgiveness, and reconciliation (20:21,22). The narratives that follow very intelligently inform us of the restoration of Thomas, (20:24ff), the finding and building up of seven disciples (21: 2ff) and finally the restoration and reconciliation of Peter (21:15ff) in the three-fold "Do you love me more than these?" "Do you truly love me?" "Do you love me?" teach us of the centrality of love, in living out our discipleship as political responsibility.

The ecclesia, as the community of the beloved disciple who is endowed with the gift, the *charisma* of being the interpreter of Jesus event (Cf 1:18; 13:23), having seen and believed (20:8) and recognised the Lord (21:7) is called to be an alternative paradigm for the sake of justice. The challenge for the ecclesia today is to live out its discipleship as political responsibility, instead of being in collusion with the empire of the day. The *ecclesia* should reject all corrupt practices and celebrate the *koinonia* of love, equality and justice without fear and favour, offering the possibility of fullness of life to all.

Rev. Dr D. Rathnakara Sadananda
General Secretary, CSI



Sunil Kathramalla is a member of CSI Wesley Clock Tower Church, Secunderabad (Medak Diocese) currently serves in Los Angeles, California, USA with the Horizons of Hope Disability Ministry Inc., USA. He is the President of MAMATHA Trust NGO, in India. He has done Masters in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology from AYJNIHH, Mumbai, and ACE Award Recipient from American Speech Hearing Association in the USA. He is currently pursuing Doctor of Missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary with emphasis on "Disability Theology and Disability Ministry"

Disability and Church: A Theological Reflection and Biographical Note

How Does the World View People with Disabilities? We live in a world which places incredible emphasis on beauty, magnificence, riches, and influence. People with disabilities are regularly an image of the opposite – they battle with either physical or mental flaw, physical and mental weakness, and mostly live in poverty when it comes to the disabled people living in the third world nations. All the said limitations in life contribute towards disgrace of the disabled person as well as disabled person's family members, resulting in manifestations of seclusion from community interactions, social gatherings, and different forms of isolations. To sum-up, disabled persons, as well as their respective family members, are subjected to discrimination in different forms.

Emotional and Communications point of view, the experiences of a Disabled person is fear of rejection, clumsiness, shame and guilt of unknown. They suffer restlessness on their encounter with the others, who are without the disability, for they struggle to communicate, find acceptance. At one point or other, these disabled persons and their family members end-up silently listening to the so-called advice or counselling. Different emotional and communicative aspects of the disabled persons as well as their family members are not paid attention by the rest. When I said how does the world view people with disability, I mean to say how insensitive is the world that comes to interact with the disabled people and their families.

What is expected of the world by the disabled and their family members? A charity or feel pity? ation from Romans 12:16 ff exhort, "... Do not be glad, but rather connect with individuals in the low

position. Try not to be prideful." Many seem to ignore the disabled persons assuming that any discussion with the disabled demand excessive of them, and shun themselves from interacting with the disabled. In some other incidence, the need to interact with the disabled is shifted to somebody else justifying that they are not trained to communicate with the disabled and let a technically trained person relate with the disabled. In yet another cases, the government is asked to communicate with the disabled as though civil society has no role to take part. In summary "not me" is the face of the civil society that the disabled do not welcome. What they look forward is a strong willingness on the part of civil society that includes religious institutions together with the respective governments.

Biblical Promptings to incline towards Disabled: Churches interaction with the disabled persons as well as with their



challenges and obstacles, God has given me the strength to surmount what others might call impossible. Most people who make plans to enter ministry go through a process of seeking God's will to confirm their direction. In my case, there was no doubt what God wanted me to do by just following the gradual degradation of my mother's health falling into permanent disability. I felt the Lord wanted me to minister to the disabled, which includes so-called healthy people who chose not to understand disability. All such experiences lead me to begin the ministry among the disabled in the name of "Horizons of Hope Disability Ministry," in the USA and one of its branch is in India named as "Mamatha Trust." Its goal is to Embrace, Empower, and Engage the Church to minister the disabled and their respective families.

My purpose of sharing my involvement with the disabled and finally ending up with starting an organization is to express that Church had no room to accommodate the disabled as well as their families within their Pastoral Care and finally a structure needs to be evolved outside of the Church for the very same purpose of caring them. This brief experience of mine is a reminder to engage the local Church to care for the disabled as well as their families within the Churches ministries of Pastoral Care.

Appendix: The empirical findings of smaller studies as well as personal experiences. When 200 parents of adolescents and young adults with autism were asked about their child's attendance at religious services, less than one-third reported their child attended



on a weekly basis; only 11% attended church activities.

80% of marriages end up in divorce when there is a child with a disability in the family. (<http://www.keyministry.org/church4everychild/2016/3/28/special-needs-and-divorce-what-does-the-data-say>)

"As a parent to special need child, isolation is a real-life experience. As things get difficult friends to disappear one by one; it is "too hard to watch sufferings." But, as a disabled child, parent to the disabled child, I know I'm being "politely" avoided and removed from the lives of these so-called friends."

"As a special needs parent, I'm in a unique situation. I know others will not intimately know the details of our child's diagnosis or abilities, and this can lead to feelings of isolation. This is only exaggerated by another people's unwillingness to learn. I need true friends who are willing to stick it out when times are tough."

"Parents of children with special needs sometimes feel isolated from other parents, extended family members, even by the community. Parents of children with special needs tend to be faced with a continuous barrage of challenges from societal isolation, financial strain, difficulty finding resources to outright exhaustion or feelings of confusion or burn out."

A vast majority of the population across the world unintentionally carry an assumption that says, "Disability is a strange piece of life in a generally typical world." It centres individually around the practical parts of disability – the "weakness" or the manners by which a piece of the body doesn't fill in as we anticipate that it will. For a considerable length of time, individuals with disabilities have justifiably belittled being named as "distortions."



**CSI SYNOD WhatsApp Number
+91 9840577404**

Step 1. Add this number to your phone's contact list Step 2. WhatsApp your name (and Diocese) to this number. Step 3. You will start receiving news and information from the Synod in your smart phone!



Ms. Ramya Angelina is an active youth member of the Karnataka Central Diocese of the Church of South India (CSI). She teaches commerce in the college and also an active delegate for Peace campaign, who was trained under CSI-SEVA.

Young and Restless

It was quite an inspiring moment when I was asked to write an article on the young minds of the Christian demography in the present scenario of the tech-savvy world. Just a few seconds after I had agreed upon doing so, crept into me the emotion called anxiety; like the shadow that grows big as you walk past a light post along the street. Because it was at that fraction of a second that I realized how much ground there was to cover, which would encompass such wide range of happenings among the lives of the Christian youth today since I am an amateur (in my own right) to the art of writing.

But this would not and it did not alter the fact that I had agreed to write a piece on the said topic and this is why you are able to screen through the content of this section from off the magazine. Thus starts my first testimony by saying 'This is who we are!' all put together as young Christians. Once we have given our word, it comprises further arguments because from that moment on there's no turning back; only forward and onward with our own conscience governing us of the duties, while reminding us of the consensus has us drilled into the ground until we have completed the task assigned to us. To most, this act would render as negligent and magnify to speak of the oblivious that has gripped the youngsters and some would even be right. However, the critiques have never succeeded in discouraging us from doing what we've set our minds to accomplish. Yes, we are a determined lot who are subsequently misunderstood to be stubborn.

Contrary to popular belief, we have no intentions of posing to be a community of prideful and imperious individuals, who have nothing but their image and appearance to be concerned about. The

verse "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another" from the book of 1 Peter 5: 5 comes to mind while I ponder on to defend our honour, since this is one of those virtues which has been instilled in us (way back when we were children) such propagatory morals through Sunday school. But extensively because, we recognize that had our Lord Jesus not humbled Himself under the righteous hand of God the Father, the word 'salvation' would be undone, to say the least.

As youngsters bottled with untapped energy and a constant rush of adrenaline pumping through our bloodstream (figuratively speaking), we disenthral into the world trying to conquer it all. Forgetting, that the world has been conquered for us by the Son of Man. What then, is expected of us as sojourners? We need only be still and incur forbearance to the likeness of our Lord (I realize that this seems to be an improbable task, but isn't that why we have an ever-present guidance counsellor amidst us called the 'Holy Spirit', who leads us through our journey overcoming every hurdle as insignificant or mighty as they might seem?). Let us remember Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." as we contemplate on every strenuous decision that we have ever had to make which renders to our faithfulness in God and helps us make informed decisions in all realness (with reference to the verse read above).

Change is inevitable, this is especially true when we consider the 21st century and has attributed to the strengths of young Christians in India. From connecting with like-minded people across the globe through the fascinating 'world wide web' to becoming friends of technology, trends and fashion; these traits have peeved the



sentiments of the traditionally inclined elders in our community, who have spent more time reverting to the inscriptions in the Bible than worshipping our Savior Himself. The aspect of the young agreeing to and striking accords to changes such as aiding toward the justice of 'LGBTQ', thriving on exercising the principles of gender equality and promoting the same, disregarding any dividing agent that discriminates among the human populace, taking a stand against gender-based violence and the atrocities against ethnic minorities, caring for and protecting the ecological system that we have terrorized to create luxurious habitats that is built to our convenience, working towards a social movement or for conflict resolutions and for various other such radical factors that affect life as we know it. This has led the elders to believe the Christian youth to be intellectually waived and view this as a pattern formed by the young and naïve (cause only we are foolish enough to fight for a lost cause) to withdraw from our responsibilities. As disheartening as it sounds, it's the reality we live in, and addressing these elements that are of utmost importance would help to mould a better and brighter future for the next generation.

Reflecting upon the verse from Romans 15:7 "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God", might I add if Christ has called all of humanity to be worthy of salvation through His Grace and the

abounding love of God, then as heirs to the Kingdom of God, aren't we liable to gather our brothers and sisters of the world rather than just our nation to usher them to know and learn of our loving Father and to receive our Lord as their only Saviour?

There innumerable occurrences of public disturbances that we have turned away from and have objectified the repercussions; which have played a pivotal role in the existence and institutional coherence of social evils that are dominant in India. Let us scour into discussion the events that unravelled in the life of a PhD student at the University of Hyderabad that, ultimately and inadvertently led to his untimely death. And the distressful part is that most our countrymen are still, to this day not mindful of (Vemula's suicide) the incident that should have led all of us inquire into the ethical credentials of those authorities who have barely moved a muscle to bring the accused of a fair trial at court, if not to be penalized for their biased and unprofessional behaviour towards Rohith. Rohith was a man who spoke his mind and this came to him effortlessly, which could be one of the reasons why he penned down his a book on castes (and their cons) persisting in India called 'Caste is not a Rumour'. Being an energetic social activist in his campus, along with a few of his friends who bore the same interests, he voiced his opinions against the verdict of the death penalty imposed on a

convicted terrorist. This was a bitter pill for the university that stopped paying him the fellowship of Rupees 25000 he was to receive per month; all because he was honest and vocal about his feelings against certain impositions that he considered to be inhumane. This pushed him to an edge from which he would never plough-back and decided to end his life. In the suicide note he had left behind, he describes himself to be empty inside – indicative of his suffocation because of/toward all such politics and slander that manifested, while enunciating the truth.

Could you relate to how the young in our society today want to articulate a revolutionized justice system in our country? Well, we have, which is why youngsters lately have been rallying for a social reform, one that is 'sensitive and rational'. What about sexual assaults and/abuses? Where does this fit into the context of a free India? Rape is considered to be the 4th most common crime associated with the women in India. And yet, the measures we've employed to improve the current status of sexual assaults are minuscule and evidently ineffective. Not a day goes by when, it is uncommon for us to read or hear about such heinous offence; children as young as 3 months old are not spared of this malice (a month ago I read in a news blog that, a dog who had then recently littered was raped by a security guard). The irony is that in a country which is predominantly

“Not for Name or Fame but for the Service to All”: One Day Missionary Workshop in Parkal

“Missionary work is not for name or fame, but for the service to all”, Bishop Reuben Mark, Bishop in Karimnagar Diocese said during the Key-Note Address in One Day Equipping Missionary workshop on 20th September 2018 at C.S.I. Mission Compound, Parkal. Bishop highlighted the work and life of a servant girl as a model missionary who has actively participated in threefold ministry of preaching, teaching and healing.

Based on the story of Naaman’s healing (2 Kings 5: 1-19), Bishop further added that just like the servant girl of Naaman’s house, a missionary should be in service mentality without any reservations. Furthermore, focus must be clear and transparent, and always ready to share the gospel through words and deeds at any circumstances. Personal credibility and integrity should be the medium for a missionary to propagate the gospel to others, Bishop emphasized.

“Starting point of building Christ communities must be through listening and identifying the feeble voices amid the dominant sounds”, said Rev. J. Solomon Paul, Youth Director, C.S.I.

Synod during his session on “Equipping Missionaries Towards Building Christ Communities: Mission from the Margin”. He has mentioned about the prevailing culture of market (profit oriented), culture of muzzle (competition oriented), culture of mask (Hypocrisy) and the culture of monkey’s paw (greedy). In this context, through creative study and analysis of culture, church should act as counter program and church must listen the voices of marginalized, re-affirm the contributions of least and lost, and re-visit and review the Missional methodologies based on the mission from the margin, Rev. Solomon added.

In a session on “Mission in today’s Context”, Rev. Maxcin John, C.S.I. Mission & Evangelism Director, has pointed about the need of inclusivism and tolerance in all missional engagements. He further added that being a missionary is not a vocation, but service to all in Christ’s love. Moreover, a missionary should be conscious about prevailing living scenarios and act as a facilitator for the common well being of the community. Make rapport with people, listen others, be available and

approachable to all without any divisions, and be capable to lead and guide should be the marks of a true Missionary. Indeed, a Missionary should be the living example in faith and action, he emphasized.

One day Missionary workshop was started with a Bible Study led by Rev. John K. Mathew (Katrapally Mission) based on Luke 5: 1-11. God has clear purpose about all lives and our life is the best medium to witness the gospel of Christ, reminded by Rev. John. Rev. Anil Thomas (Mogulapally Mission) has concluded the workshop with a prayer.

Rev. Shalu T. Mathew (Parkal Mission) has organized everything for the workshop in creative as well as commendable way. Sixty Missionaries from Parakal, Mogullapally and Katrapally Mission fields have attended in the workshop. In fact, it was the venue for unlearning and relearning in the context of doing Mission.

Rev. Maxcin John

*Director, Dept of Mission & Evangelism,
CSI Synod*

CSI Life Advertisement Tariff

Back Cover outside - Colour	Rs. 8,500/-
Back Cover inside - Colour	Rs. 7,000/-
Front Cover inside - Colour	Rs. 7,000/-
Black & White	Rs. 5,000/-
Black & White - Half Page	Rs. 3,000/-

CSI Life Subscription Rates

India - 1 Year	Rs. 150/-
India - Life Time	Rs. 3,000/-
U.S.A.	\$. 30.00
U.K.	£. 25.00
Australia	\$. 35.00



“We are also belonging to the ‘Forty-Three Lakhs’ of Missionaries in Church of South India”: Young Voices from Kollam-Kottarakara Diocese

Vembayam: Mission and Evangelism Department, C.S.I. Synod has engaged in the ‘Youth Mission Fest-2018’ organized by Kollam-Kottarakara Diocese from 20th to 22nd September 2018 at Bible Museum, Vembayam.

Mission Fest was inaugurated by the Rt.Rev.Dr.Oommen George (Bishop in Kollam-Kottarakara Diocese) and Er. Cherry George Cheriyan delivered a keynote address. Rev. Dr. Bhanu Samuel (Vice-Chairman, K.K. Diocese), Er. Jose P. Oommen, Br. Asok Alex Philip, Rev. Moses David, Evg. Jose Stephen, Evg. Regimon and Rev. Maxcin John have conducted different Missional Orientation sessions.

Rev. Dn. G. Kunjumon and Rev. Dn. Biji Abraham have shared their life testimonies.

Youth Mission Fest was an avenue for Mission Orientation to the younger generation of the diocese. It was a moulding venue for the future of the church. As Church of South India having forty-three lakhs of members and as each member is considered as missionary in a broader sense, Youth Mission Fest-2018 loudly echoes that “we are also belonging to the ‘Forty-Three Lakhs’ of Missionaries in Church of South India”. More noticeably, it was the occasion for dedication and consecration for missional engagements.

Mission Fest was concluded by Rev. P.O. Ninan, a great Missionary (Madhya Kerala Diocese) who has served as Missionary for eighteen years in Mogullapally, Telengana State. One hundred and seventy delegates have attended in the Mission Fest including Children and Youth. Rev. Paul David and Mr. Nibu Jacob have served as General Conveners for the Fest and Rev. Thomas George, Rev. Mosses David and Mr. Anish also have served as organizers of the Fest.

Rev. Maxcin John

*Director, Dept of Mission & Evangelism,
CSI Synod*

“Enhancing Capacities of Congregation towards Missional Congregation”: A Mission Consultation and Mission Board in Malabar Diocese

Kozhikodu: Department of Mission and Evangelism in Church of South India has engaged in a Mission Consultation along with Diocesan Mission Board on 25th September 2018 at C.S.I. Diocesan Office, Kozhikodu in Malabar Diocese. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Royce Manoj Victor, Bishop in Malabar Diocese has presided the meeting.

The Board has identified the need of the hour as Enhancing Capacities of Congregation towards Missional Congregation. In this concern, board meeting has decided to organize programs in terms of Enhancing Capacities of Congregation towards Missional Congregation. As a beginning, program will be focused on medical

professionals as well as educational professionals to enhance their capacities to participate in missional engagements of the Church.

Rev. Maxcin John

*Director, Dept of Mission & Evangelism,
CSI Synod*



Rethinking Ecclesia - Being and Becoming Christ Communities: Towards a Borderless Church "Health Healing & Harmony Perspective"



Rethinking Ecclesia - Being and Becoming Christ Communities: Towards a Borderless Church "National Ecumenical Perspective"



CSI WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP 70TH YEAR CELEBRATION



Interfaith Eco Consultation at HMI Hyderabad



Consultation on 'Impacts of Climate Change'



Youth Dare to Dream at Parkal Mission

Three Youngsters from CSI Kanyakumari Diocese, Mr. Anish, Mr. Veslin and Mr. Nalla Thambi have begun and their DARE to DREAM assignment from 3rd to 30th of September 2018. They will be placed under the supervision of Rev. Shalu T. Mathew the missionary and pastor in-charge of CSI Parkal Mission in CSI Karimnagar Diocese for a period of 25 days. They will be engaged in teaching at the CSI Parkal Mission School and in the evenings will be engaged in the church activities.

Inspired by the example of Missionary Societies, the Diocese of Travancore and Cochin started organized missionary work in and outside the Diocese. The first

native missionaries 23 were sent out in 1924, and the field was Parkal Taluq, Hyderabad in the Dornakal Diocese (Now C.S.I. Karimnagar Diocese).

Progress was rather slow at first, but after about a decade the work gathered momentum. The backward Mala and Madiga castes first came under the influence of the Gospel, but later higher castes were also attracted. Today there are 10,000 baptized Christians, 116 Christian Villages, 50 worshipping centres, 19 Churches, 28 mission house, 2 orphanages, 2 child care centers, 4 schools, 2 hostels, 3 hospitals, 2 Ashram. Centres, one technical school and one nursery school.

The Synod Youth Department through this initiative DARES the youth of CSI to DREAM a just and inclusive church in nurturing the ethos of radical discipleship and engagement in building Christ communities.

The Synod youth department is grateful to the Bishop in CSI Karimnagar Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Reuben Mark and the people of the Diocese for their hospitality, care and exposure to be given to these youngsters in shaping their spirituality in a more meaningful way.

Rev. Solomon Paul
Director, Dept. of Youth,
CSI Synod

A New set of 2018 EYVP Volunteers from EMS arrive at the Church of South India for Yet Another Exciting Journey of Internship at Projects Managed by CSI

The EYVP volunteers arrived in India on the 3rd of September 2018 at the CSI synod Secretariat. They landed with great excitement looking forward to a memorable experience at the Church of South India for the period of 1 year.

An orientation program was planned to induct the young volunteers to give them a foretaste of what they would encounter during their time in India. The first phase of the orientation was organised in the headquarters of CSI in Chennai, while the second part of orientation was planned in CSI-Board of Child Care, Bangalore.

Topics like Understanding India and its realities, Church of South India and its mission and various ministries of CSI, were dealt in Chennai for the volunteers to understand the Church as a whole which is hosting them. An exposure visit

to the Government Museum, Chennai were the other highlights of their induction in Chennai.

In Bangalore, CSI-BCC organised a systematic orientation on topics like Overview of EMS supported projects, sensitivity towards Social Concerns through exposure visits, children in India with particular reference to Girl Child, Safety and security, child protection and child protection policy were the themes dealt. The orientation came to an end on the 9th September 2018 and the wardens who were in-charge of hosting these volunteers had come to accompany the volunteers to their respective project places.

The Youth Department of the Church of South India, which co-ordinates this program acknowledges and thanks the

EYVP program for sending these volunteers fostering the continuous partnership and committed relationship between CSI and EMS. It also acknowledges with gratitude all the Directors of the Synod and other resource people including the staff of CSI-BCC for organizing this induction program for the volunteers from Germany.

Last but not least, the Youth department of CSI, with assured prayers and accompaniment wishes these volunteers God's blessings, good health and a memorable experience for the next 12 months in India.

Rev. Solomon Paul
Director, Dept. of Youth,
CSI Synod

Rethinking Ecclesia - Being and Becoming Christ Communities: Towards a Borderless Church “Health, Healing & Harmony Perspective”

As CSI's commemoration of Reformation 500, and CSI 70, the Church of South India is organizing seven consultations on Rethinking Ecclesia under the theme "Being and becoming Christ communities – towards a borderless Church". The theme will be discussed from a) Biblical perspective, b) Theological and Ethical perspective, c) Liturgical and Missiological perspective, d) Prophetic diaconal perspective, e) Empowerment and Educational perspective, f) Healing and Reconciliation perspective, g) National Ecumenical perspective and h) Global Ecumenical perspective.

The sixth of these 8 Consultations was held on 30th and 31st of August 2018 at CSI Centre, Chennai and exclusively looked into the theme "Rethinking Ecclesia: Being and Becoming Christ Communities towards a Borderless Church" from Health Healing & Harmony Perspective. This consultation brought together Medical Doctors, Theologians in the field of Religions, Practitioners in the field of pastoral care and counselling and research scholars from CSI for a comprehensive reflection and discussion.

This consultation attempted to reflect on the Health of body (from the perspective of medical science) Healing of the mind (from the perspectives of psychology) and Harmony between communities in society (from the perspective of Inter-religious dialogue and praxis)

Pertinent questions on how does the healing of mind, body and communities enable border crossing? How are the expansion of human knowledge, cross cultural learnings, and strategic alliances in the field of psychology, medical science and Inter-faith dialogue creating new alternative ideas and communities? How does the church, through its 'Health

and Healing for all' policy, realise the construct of borderless communities? How has the church in its mission of healing enterprise already become borderless? Were addressed by eminent scholars from the respective fields.

The Moderator of the Church of South India Most. Rev. Thomas K Oommen, in his inaugural remarks highlighted the role of Christian mission pioneering the ministry of health and healing in India. He said that today unfortunately the Church has lost this vision and urged the church to reclaim the lost space in the field of health healing & harmony. He inaugurated the consultation and thanked the gathering for taking time to contribute to the life and mission of the church through their reflections.

The General Secretary of CSI Rev. Dr. Sadananda in his key note address remarked from the context of heavy floods and damage of lives in Kerala and Karnataka that healing is very essential to restore lives, relationship and communities at large. He urged the gathering to look at healing and harmony as a process and the goal to be achieved.

His talk was an in-depth word study of three words in Greek from the bible; 'Salvation, Therapy and Peace' which gives us various dimensions and perspectives of healing and harmony from the scriptures. He explicated the importance of restoration rebuilding and resolution as an initiative of God through Jesus Christ in and through the Emmanuel experience who created a space for healing between communities and within oneself. He spoke from the John's gospel on how the four healings were borderless and always restored the person back to the community in creating a new space for peace. He spoke about the relationship between the

created order and creator which is interconnected and intrinsic for the value and dignity of life. Finally his address concluded that sickness, injustice and oppression itself are borders and enabling people to be released out of that in terms of creating space and abiding in that creational relationship is border-crossing.

The two days of the consultation witnessed scholarly papers and presentations on main theme. The list of resource persons and the title of their papers are as follows:

- Healing sans Borders: Dr. Sunil Chandy
- Eucharist at the center with undefined borders: theological reflections of a hospital chaplain Harmony between communities in society inter-religious perspective: Dr. Arul Dhas, Rev. Dr. Samuel Pakiam.
- Health and Healing - Our Responsibility, Response & Resilience: Dr. Sujith Chandy
- Politicisation of Religion and its Challenges to Religious Harmony: Rev. Dr. Justin Moses
- Healing of Mind in Today's Context towards a borderless Church" A Historical and Theological Appraisal: Dr. Samuel Jeyakumar
- Towards borderless medical mission: Dr. Sheila Noone
- Towards an Alternative Archetype of Dalits' Psyche: A Therapeutic Ecclesiastical Response from Jungian Analytical Psychology: Rev. Dr. Israel David
- Indian Secularism and Religious Tolerance: Challenges and Possibilities

- in Interfaith Harmony and Crossing borders: Rev. Oliver Densingh
- Rethinking the Healing of Mind in Today's Context towards a borderless Church: Dr. Thayalini Thiagaraja
- Pastoral Counseling Intervention in Healing of Mind: Areas of Concerns and Training: Rev. Giftus Joshua
- Building A Spiritually Mature and An Emotionally Strong Church: Dr. Samson Gandhi
- Health and Healing as a Journey

- Towards Wholeness: Becoming Communities of Mutual Healing, Growth and Harmony: Mr. James Wesley
- Rethinking healing of mind-the role of ecclesia as being and becoming borderless church: pastoral care and counselling perspective: Rev. Sharath Sowseelya
- Church in Mothering Healing Relationships: Insights from Attachment Theories: Mr. Livingstone Arputharaj

- A Psycho-Theological understanding of 'Atonement' and its relevance to the Healing of Mind in today's context towards a Borderless Church: Rev. John Nischal
- Rethinking the mission of building Harmony and Peace in Today's Context towards a borderless Church: Rev. Baila Chennakesavalu

Rev. Solomon Paul
*Director, Dept. of Youth,
 CSI Synod*

Dept. of Pastoral Concerns, CSI Synod **News**

Clergy are Equipped with Managerial Skills for an Effective Pastoral Ministry

IPM, the Institute of Pastoral Management for the second batch in phase-II began on 11th September 2018 at CSI Synod Centre with the inaugural service lead by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Vadapally Prasada Rao, Deputy Moderator, CSI and Rev. K. James Cecil Victor, Director, Pastoral Concerns. In his inaugural address, Bishop Prasada Rao encouraged the participants to be more vigilant in ministry to build accountability and good governance by having an agenda that is beneficial to the community. Rev. Dr. Praveen Prabhu Sudheer, the CSI-EMS Liaison Officer shared his greetings and motivated the clergy to be firm in their convictions and to their calling. Dr. Agna Fernandez, the Associate Professor from Loyola Institute of Business Administration, Chennai lead the session on 'Leading with Agility-Enhancing Performance with People' where she brought out the key factors of administrative skills, performance management and leadership.

Dr. Kandasamy, a renowned Chartered Accountant from Chennai lead sessions on Financial Management, highlighting the process of budgeting, internal

controls, inventory systems and the connection between the vision -mission-goals-objectives and activities. Mr. Glenn Roger Carr who educates people on financial markets gave valuable insights on savings and investments. Minority Rights and Indian Constitution was dealt by Dr. G. Rajasheker, a professor at the Department of Legal Studies, University of Madras. He explicated various articles pertaining to minorities and their institutions as well. Prof. Dr. David Ambrose, the HOD of the Legal Studies, madras University facilitated a session on Dalit Christians and Indian Constitution. He explained the intricacies of SC status to the Indian Christians. Adv. Adilakshmi Logamurthy from madras High Court dealt with Social Beneficiary Laws pertaining to women and children. Rev. Dr. Arul Das from CMC Chaplaincy Department helped with Stress management session where he enabled the participants to identify the causes of stress and coping mechanisms. The last session was on Conflict management and mediation, by Mr. Raja Christopher from Christian Institute of Management. He

presented a biblical and scientific model of dealing with conflict.

The concluding session witnessed very encouraging feedback from the participants. Rev. J. Thilaka Prathaban commented that the IPM had given him wider perspectives in to church management and pastoral leadership. Rev. A. Manoharan said that the IPM has created a sense of confidence to deal with the issues in the pastorate. Many participants have opined that the knowledge in financial management is helping them to set the systems in place and build accountability as per the government rules and regulations. Most Rev. Thomas K Oommen, the Moderator, CSI and Rev. Dr. D.R. Sadananda, the General Secretary, CSI have encouraged the participants with their greetings and prayers. The certificates of completion of the course was conferred to the participants in this closing session.

Rev. K. James Cecil Victor
Director, Pastoral Concerns

Rethinking Ecclesia - Being and Becoming Christ Communities; Towards a Borderless Church: “National Ecumenical Perspective”

As CSI's commemoration of Reformation 500, and CSI 70, the Church of South India is organizing seven consultations on Rethinking Ecclesia under the theme "Being and becoming Christ communities – towards a borderless Church". The theme will be discussed from a) Biblical perspective, b) Theological and Ethical perspective, c) Liturgical and Missiological perspective, d) Prophetic diaconal perspective, e) Empowerment and Educational perspective, f) Healing and Reconciliation perspective, g) National Ecumenical perspective and h) Global Ecumenical perspective.

The seventh of these 8 Consultations was held on 18th & 19th September 2018 at CSI Centre, Chennai and exclusively looked into the theme "Rethinking Ecclesia: Being and Becoming Christ Communities towards a Borderless Church" from National Ecumenical Perspective. This consultation brought together theologians from other Christian denominations and Ecumenical partners of CSI with a listening group for a comprehensive reflection and discussion.

Rev. Dr. Rathnakara Sadananda, in his initial remarks, said we are in between truth and experiment, prescription and description and vision and reality. It is in this context we are called to explore the revealed truth through scripture and tradition in a very responsible way. He remarked that the church or the Ecclesia was always meant to be a movement, on a pilgrim journey but is also caught up with many borders with rules and regulations. His initial remarks highlighted how there were trajectories in both the Old Testament and New Testament resonating the nature of borderlessness at the same

time the faith community being bordered through various aspects. Very remarkably his speech pointed out about how the disciple community who were perplexed in fear and compulsion, on one hand, were also called out to speak another language of love and inclusivity through their lives in John's gospel. His remarks vividly explained how the people of a faith community in the biblical times had to struggle with the two entities of vision and reality. He was urging the participants gathered to find a new creative imagination, to find a new language of equality, justice, dignity and peace doing everything in love as Jesus did by transforming the 'rock of salvation' as the 'cup of salvation' only to be shed and broken for the life of many. In conclusion, he encouraged the participants to express the truth in our experiences, express that which is prescribed through our descriptions and live out our visions in our contextual realities.

10 Scholarly papers were presented by resource persons for meaningful discussions on both these days paving forward a new vision towards a borderless church.

The list of Resource persons who presented their reflections were:

- Mountains shall drip Sweet Wine and they shall drink it." Borderless Church and its vision in the 21st century Indian context:Dr. Jesurathnam
- Rethinking Ecclesia from Prophetic Witness and Critical Leadership:Dr. Mathew Chandran Kunnel
- Rethinking Ecclesia: Being and Becoming Christ Communities –

towards a Borderless Church from the Education and Empowerment Perspective:Dr. M s. Ella SonawaneMaben

- Rethinking Medical Mission in India today:Dr. Suranjen Maben
- Towards a Borderless Church: Role of Theological Education:Dr. Lalrini Diki
- Rethinking Ecclesia: the challenges of being a borderless church in India Today:Dr. Joseph George
- Faith Love and Hope; Paradigms of Borderlessness:Dr David Rajendran
- Ecclesia or Pastorate - A Few Theological Considerations:Dr. Moses Manohar
- Ecclesia 'Christified' – Ecclesia that Breaks Down Walls of Separation:Dr. Sahayadhas
- Reclaiming Ecclesia in the context of Empire: Rev. Dr.Y. T.Vinayaraj

At the end of the consultation, Most. Rev. Thomas K Oommen, in his closing remarks, spoke about the new vision the church needs in the face of atrocities and injustices against the minorities in India. He remarked that the theology that we speak and 'do' should instil hope and courage in people to stand firm to the values of the Gospel in these changing times. He urged the resource persons and the participants to explore new ideas and visions for the faith community for a faithful exercise of our calling.

Rev. Solomon Paul
Director, Dept. of Youth,
CSI Synod

Consultation on 'Impacts of Climate Change': Statement



The Ecological Concerns Department of the Church of South India Synod organised a one- day consultation on the 'Impacts of Climate Change', against the backdrop of the devastating floods took place in Kerala. Eminent persons from various walks of life presented their views in this workshop, which was held at the CSI EDEN Eco-Spirituality Centre, Othara, on 1st September 2018. The team has come up with a statement, which raises pertinent points on climate change and pointing to the immediate measures we have to take in the wake of the floods in Kerala.

The statement is given below:

Preamble: As Vandana Siva observes, "Globalisation is justified for growth. For this, nature's gifts and people's commons are transformed into commodities, be it seed, food and water. Everything is a marketable commodity, everything is for sale." The world today is facing growing and new challenges and risks to human progress and environmental sustainability with direct impacts on development. Disasters, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, degradation of natural resources and climate change pose risks to realized and unrealized development potential; including both chronic (e.g. drought, water shortages) and acute (e.g. extreme weather, wildfire) disasters. Increasing loss

of forests, land degradation and the decline in freshwater quality and quantity undermine the already fragile livelihoods of women and men, especially the poor.

One of the serious problems we are facing today is Climate Change due to Global warming. UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its report assessing the impacts of climate change on human health, settlements and natural resources released on March 31, 2014 made it clear that: "Coming years will see more extreme weather events (floods, cyclones, cloudbursts, unseasonal excessive rains and drought etc) in most parts of the globe. Maldives, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will be among the most affected countries in Asia". We are experiencing the effects of climate change in South India. Chennai Floods in 2015, Okhi in 2017 and the floods in Kerala in 2018 are some of them. The phenomenon of Global Warming and environmental degradation due to emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which results in an alarming increase of temperatures and thus causing inordinate changes in the climatic conditions, affects all creatures.

The changes in the atmospheric conditions include rise and fall in the

temperatures, floods and droughts, cyclones and typhoons, forest fire, the rise of sea levels, monsoonal imbalances, scarcity of water - both for irrigation and domestic use etc. Also, this leads to socio-economic, cultural, political disorders that include displacement, migration, food insecurity, farmer suicides, the extinction of plant and animal species, loss of biodiversity and alienation of the poor and marginalized from their own niche and resources. Further, Climate Change leads to serious and adverse effects on the health of human beings. While there are several new and rare diseases appearing, many of the existing diseases seem to be aggravating. In fact, the victims of the process of Climate Change are invariably the Women, Children, Dalits, Adivasis/Tribals, Farmers, and Fishers whose life and livelihood depend on the bounties of nature.

In Kerala, called as 'God's own Country', where agriculture seems to have become agri-business, madness of building is killing our rivers and river beds, BT Crops seem to be destroying the native biodiversity and killing farmers, trapping them in debt, what one sees is (in)human war against Earth and the One who has created the Earth and all in it. On the one hand, the drastic reduction in rainfall

pushes our state that relies heavily on electricity generated from hydro projects into the worst power crisis of recent times. On the other hand, monsoon in Kerala has become synonymous with flooded schools, lack of potable water, and agricultural collapse. Heavy Monsoon this year has flooded the whole of Kerala. Many have lost houses, property, agriculture and livestock. The death toll has been very high. Landslides have destroyed many houses and shattered many dreams. Most of the low lying areas are still under water. Transportation, electricity, telecommunication are affected. Unabated rains have caused massive damage to the very economy of Kerala.

In such a time, that the goodness of God's creation and His/Her covenant with the creation that "as long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" is threatened, it becomes an imperative that the Church affirms that Climate Justice ministries form an integral part of the mission of the church. It is in response to this call that the CSI Synod Department of Ecological Concerns organizes 'A Consultation on Impacts of Climate Change' at the CSI Eco spirituality Centre, Othara, Kerala, South India on September 01, 2018.

The Consultation emphasizes that there is a conscious correlation between Climate Change and Climate Justice. For the whole creation is groaning with pain. God's covenant was not only with Noah but with all living creatures of the Earth. This needs to be restored, failing which there will always be natural calamities that would be beyond the control of humans and their inability to protect themselves from the catastrophe. Further misuse and/or abuse of God's creation will lead to fatal consequences. As a Church, called to continue the redemptive mission of God, it is necessary to explore the connections between the care of creation and the redemption of all creation. We need to critically evaluate, if through our

predominantly anthropocentric lens, we have shaped a theology that has given space to humanities relentless use of natural resources as disposable and good only for profit regardless of the consequences.

The Church of South India Synod expresses thanks to Dr. T.V.Sajeev (Principal Scientist, KFRI), Dr.K Soman (Centre for Earth Science Studies), Mr. Sreedhar (Director, Thanal), Ms. Sreedevi Pillai (Malayala Manorama TV), Mr. Varghese C Thomas (Malayala Manorama), Most Revd Thomas K. Oommen (Church of South India), Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Timotheos (Marthoma Marthoma Syrian Church), His Grace Joseph Mar Dionosis Metropolitan (Orthodox church), members from various churches and NGO's who have been helpful in organizing and executing this Consultation.

Recommendations: We, the participants of the 'CONSULTATION ON IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE' affirm that

- The Church of South India that considers Ecology as a mission in its Constitution and in its Mission Statement has a commitment to protect God's creation.
- The Church of South India offers absolute cooperation to Government of Kerala in reconstructing Kerala.
- The Church of South India believes that the impact of the flood situation can be reduced to a certain extent if Gadgil report is taken seriously and hence once again strongly recommends that the Gadgil Report be implemented.
- The Government should take strict measures in bringing forth a paradigm shift in development that makes it more eco-centric, explore and adopt eco-friendly and sustainable, climate resistant ways of housing and other constructions.
- We should be sensitive to the woos of

marginalized communities which are the most affected and should be more sensitive to the voices of women, Dalits, Adivasis/ Tribals and other subaltern communities.

- We should take urgent and diligent steps to protect our high ranges, rivers, floodplains and wetlands.
- We should make use of renewable sources of energy, such as solar, wind, water, tides, waves, biomass; and minimize the use of plastics and other polluting agents, and make good use of local organic products of food, medicine etc.
- We should use the unused/vacant church land areas for the environment-friendly projects/programmes, such as tree plantation, herbal gardens, organic farming, food cropping etc.
- We should join hands with other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in promoting programmes on Eco-justice and also to work with other faith communities toward an Inter-religious dialogue and participation on the issue of Climate Change and Climate Justice, so as to engage in advocacy and lobbying with the concerned.
- Drastic measures should be implemented towards energy conservation, water preservation and proper waste disposition, including electronic waste. It is important to reduce, reuse, recycle, and refuse plastic.

Conclusion: We have no other hope but in God. We pray that God would shower His grace and mercy upon the people in Kerala and save our state. At the same time, we need to repent for our ecological sins that have worsened the impact of the rain. It is not just the humans but the birds, animals, trees and the whole of nature is groaning. We all, irrespective of the differences should stand united and engaged in the rescue and rehabilitation process. We are thankful to the Government, Police and

Military and all those who were involved in the rescue operations should be applauded and the Church of South India extends complete support and prayers. All educational institutions, churches and parish halls were availed to be used as 'sanctuaries' for the affected. God is our ultimate shelter, refuge and sanctuary. As a Church, let us all kneel and pray for our people who are affected by the recent flood and let us also pray for the government and non-government

agencies involved in the relief and rehabilitation operations.

The Earth and everything in it belongs to God and the creation lies at the heart of God. Our call is to participate in the mission of God, toward the realization of the promise of the fullness of life offered by Jesus. This also calls us to respond to the misguided notions of growth and development, driven by the structural greed of a microscopic minority, manifested in big development projects,

which results in various ecological crises, particularly Climate Change. In the context, where the life and livelihood of the whole community of creation especially the vulnerable and the subaltern communities, is put to the question, let us commit ourselves to fight against this Climate Injustice, and thus foster the message of life, justice and peace.

Prof. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad
*Hon. Director, Dept. of Ecological Concerns,
CSI Synod*

Dept. of Ecological Concerns, CSI Synod **News**

Interfaith Eco Consultation at HMI Hyderabad

The CSI Synod Department of Ecological Concerns and the Henry Martin Institute, Hyderabad jointly organized a consultation to study the ecological concerns in different religions. One of the serious problems we are facing today is Climate Change due to Global warming. UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its report assessing the impacts of climate change on human health, settlements and natural resources released on March 31, 2014 made it clear that: "Coming years will see more extreme weather events (floods, cyclones, cloud bursts, unseasonal excessive rains and drought etc) in most parts of the globe. Maldives, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will be among the most affected countries in Asia". All religions believe that the Earth and everything in it belongs to God. Our call is to participate in the mission of God, toward the realization of the promise of the fullness of life. Hence the consultation was organized from 27th to 29th August 2018 at HMI to study the eco-concerns of the faith communities.

Rev. Dr. Packiam Samuel, the Director of HMI delivered the keynote address on 27th during the inaugural function.. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad, Hon. director of Ecological concerns of

CSI Synod presided over the function. Eco concerns in different religions were presented by experts. Rev. Dr. John Samuel (Principal Gurukul Theological Seminary, Chennai) presented the eco concerns in Christianity, Prof. CSR Prabhu (Presently Advisor, KL University and also Director, Research KMIT, Hyderabad) in Hinduism, Dr. Raminder Kaur (Medical Doctor, Indian Railways in Sikhism), Mr. Maniklal Kasturchand Jabac (Jain Priest) in Jainism, Mr. Waheed Multani, (Lecturer at HMI) in Islam . The following persons led the panel discussions in the last session. Maulana Abdul Kareem, (Islam) Arabic Lecturer, Pamhor Thumra, (Primal Religion) Jr. Lecturer and Ms. Sribala Mylavarapu (Hinduism), Programme Officer - Academic Extension.

Thirty five participants from different dioceses participated in the consultation. Some of the evaluations of some of the participants are given below. "This is one of the best programmes which I attended. I gained much more knowledge about the eco concerns in other religions" (Rev. Solomon Raj, Dornakal). "I was enlightened when the speakers presented the faith practices in different religions" (Rev, Jiji N Stewart, South Kerala). "Interfaith consultation was really an eye opener for me. Going back with a

new spirit and commitment" (Rev John Samuel Thoothukudy Nazareth) "Gave greater insights to correlate ecological concerns in other religious faiths"(Rev. Devanand Subuddi, Rayalseema) "I have learned many things from other religions. I will respect all religions" (Ms. Nancy Vinoliya, Madras). "Consultation helped me to learn ecological concerns in Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism and Christianity. I shall use the insights I got in my writings. My salute to HMI" (Rev. Sukumar babu, Rayalseema), "First time I am hearing the faith practices in other religions" (Rev. Thomas Prasad Rao, Rayalseema). "I will respect people belonging to different religions. All are Children of almighty God. The dialogue strengthened me to glorify God". (Rev. P Bright Franklin, Trichy Tanjore). The participants expressed the desire to study in depth each of the religions. All the participants and the CSI Synod are grateful to Rev. Dr. Packiam Samuel, Director, HMI and Ms. Sribala, Programme officer for providing a wonderful and unique opportunity to study eco concerns in other religions and for their excellent hospitality.

Prof. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad
*Hon. Director, Dept. of Ecological Concerns,
CSI Synod*

Green School Training Program at Kanyakumari Diocese

The Green School training Program for the teachers of Kanyakumari Diocese was held on 4th September 2018 at Women's Christian College, Nagercoil. Rev. Stanly Jones, administrative secretary presided over the inaugural function. Col. Immanuel

, Treasurer of the diocese, Rev. Vincent Robert, Rev. Wilson and the Principal of WCC addressed the gathering. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad, director of Ecological Concerns explained the significance of GSP and motivated teachers to join the

GSP audit. All the teachers agreed to join the GSP Audit.

Prof. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad
Hon. Director, Dept. of Ecological Concerns,
CSI Synod

Green School Programme, Vellore

The CSI Synod Department of Ecological Concerns organized the training for the teachers on Green School Programme at Vellore Diocese on 12th September 2018 at St. Johns Church Hall, Vellore Fort. The programme began with the meditation of Rev. Jared Arul Jebareuben. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad, Hon. Director of Ecological Concerns and Prof. Dr. Philip Robinson took classes. They explained the significance of GSP and motivated teachers to join the GSP audit. Prof. Dr. Philip Robinson explained the GSP project in Tamil language. Rev. Samraj Kumar, Rev. Christopher David, Rev. Jared Arul Jebareuben, Rev. Ravichandran, Dr. Nirmal Margaret, Rev. Abraham Asaithambi (Chairman, Southern Area), Rev. C. Manimaran (Chairperson, Diocesan Eco Department), Rev. Stanley Christopher, and Rev. Paul Robert Kennedy (Director, Department of Ecological concerns, VDC) rendered active leadership to make the programme a grand success. One hundred teachers participated in the training programme and agreed to join the GSP Audit.

Participants appreciated the training in GSP and they expressed it during the evaluation. Some of their comments are given below: "It was a wonderful programme for me. Children are the nation builders. Through GSP my students who belong to the remote villages will get an awareness to save trees and protect the

land. Surely I will avoid throw away plastic materials. It was the best programme I have ever attended. Praise to God." Mrs. J Mary Vinothini (M. D. Crane Middle School, Tindivanam). "Today's program was very useful. I learned something different about the environment. Hereafter I will change my school and its surroundings into a green land" Ms. J Beulah Matry Shyla (M.D Ele. School, Valayathur). "The two classes held today were very interesting. We learned more about the nature. Hereafter I'll try to make my school as a green school and ask the students to protect the nature" Mr. D Joseph Christopher (M. D. Primary School, Peraperi). "I really enjoyed and learned so many things from this program. Now I'm aware of global warming, natural resources and the necessity to protect the nature. For the next generation we have to safeguard and protect nature. Thanks to CSI Synod for giving us a good awareness about our environment" Ms. P Shanthi (CSI Girls Higher Sec. School, Tirupattur) "I will make the children to do all you have told about and make my school into a green school with the help of students. I will ask my students to avoid taking junk food. With the help of students we will clean our classes, houses and wherever we are going. Ask them to educate people" Ms. S Devasanthini (Honnagar Ashram G.H.S, Sarpenmedu). "Praise the Lord. Today's training was good. Already we have

registered in GSP audit but in today's meeting I have understood what is my role and how I can do it for the students and for tomorrow's generation. Thank you for arranging such a wonderful meeting." Ms. S Mary (CSI Public School, Pulikuttai). "After this training I found that there are so many tasks I've to implement in my school. I have to do something for this nature. I have to change myself first and I want to be a role model for my students. Hereafter I'll never disturb any living things" Mrs. M Aparna Josephene (M D Primary School, Velam). "I have learnt many good things from Director sir's speech. It is very interesting and studied many things about the eco system. Surely I'll share it with my students and family members" Ms. S Hannah Roseline (M D middle School, Melpadi). "This program was wonderful and challenging. We have been encouraged and motivated by the speeches using power point presentations. I will make my school a green school" (Mrs. S Rebecca Shanthi, Walter Scudder Nursery & Primary School, Tindivanam). "The program was very useful for us. We will observe the guidelines and make our students & schools, green" (Ms. V Jayalakshmi, M D School, Kunnathur)

Prof. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad
Hon. Director, Dept. of Ecological Concerns,
CSI Synod

CSI Women's Fellowship Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

The culmination of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Women's Fellowship of the Church of South India (CSI) was held in Bangalore with a two- days meeting of the delegates from all the dioceses of CSI. In the inaugural function, which was held at the Bishop Cotton's Girls School, the vision and mission of Sr. Carol Graham, who was instrumental in the formation of the CSI WF and the abundant blessings the Women's Fellowship has been receiving from the Lord were gratefully remembered.

The Motto of CSI Women's Fellowship, 'Arise and Shine', has been adapted as the theme for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The inaugural celebration, based on this theme, started on 27th September 2018 at 3.30 p.m. with the procession led by Rev. Dn. Chopra Synthia Sobha Rani, General Secretary, CSI W.F marching holding the W.F flag along with Dr. Susan Thomas, the President of the CSI WF., Mrs. Leela Manohari Joseph, the Vice-President, Mrs. Jessie Shiri, the Treasurer, Most Rev. Thomas K. Oommen, Rt. Rev. Vadaplalli Prasada Rao, Rev. Dr. Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda, Adv. Robert Bruce, Bishops, Synod departmental Directors, heads of the institutions, Sisters, national and international guests and the leaders of the Women's Fellowship of the Dioceses.

The inaugural session had its beginning with the lighting the lamp, which depicted the logo of C.S.I.W.F- cross in the centre with the blue background, the 24 rays emerging from the cross represent 24 hours of the day and a chain connecting these rays denote "Continuous, unbroken fellowship with Christ", by the Most Rev. Thomas K. Oommen. The officers of the Synod, the speaker of keynote address, Prof. Berinelle Elizabeth D'Souza, Bishops, former officers of the C.S.I.W.F, national and international, guests from EMS, UK, heads of the institutions, KCD Diocesan

office bearers, Directors and all the Presidents of C.S.I.W.F. and the delegates were welcomed by the General Secretary, C.S.I.W.F and the convener of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Prof. Esther Prasanna Kumar Samuel.

In the inaugural address, the Most Rev Thomas K. Oommen drew the attention of the audience to the fact that the Church of South India is unique because of the union of churches, which paved way for similar church unions across the world. This is the only church in India, may be in the world, which uses the same worship order in ten different languages. He thanked God and paid tribute to all those who toiled to make the CSI WF a reality. He highlighted the unity in diversity of the members of the Women's Fellowship. He reiterated that the CSI WF is a part and parcel of the Church of South India. The CSI WF should continue to intervene in the male-dominated society to change the society more a gender equal society. To ensure the liberation and justice for women, we need to re-read the scriptures and traditions and also rebuild the status of women in our society.

The Presidential address was given by the President, C.S.I.W.F. –Dr. Mrs. Susan Thomas. She expounded the beginning and evolving of the CSI Women's Fellowship into one of the biggest Women's Organisations in India. She told that it is a great commendable factor that soon after the formation of CSI happened, within one year, under the able leadership of many women, the women in the Church were able to form the Women's Fellowship. in India. She remembered the pioneers of the CSI WF with gratitude and respect for having the great vision. She specifically pointed out, with awe and wonder, the great effort of Rev. Eva Mai Grand who chose to lose her identity so that CSI WF could gain an identity. Her selfless efforts brought together the

Women's group of the Mothers' Union of the Anglican Church, Sisterhood of the Methodist Church, Kings Daughters of the Presbyterian Church and Mothers' meetings or Women's meeting of the Congregational Church came together and became the Women's Fellowship of the Church of South India. Dr. Susan Thomas encouraged the audience to be grateful for our rich history and learn lessons and draw strength from the history to move forward with a better pace. She also explained about the 'Divya Bodhini' course, which is initiated as part of the Platinum Jubilee of CSI WF. She explained that the course began in the month of October 2017 and the graduation service was on 27th September 2018. The divyabhodini course was conducted in East Kerala, Malabar, Madhya Kerala, Kollam, Kottarakara, Thuthukudy Nazareth, Madurai, Kanyakumari and Karimnagar diocese. 191 students from all walks of life, young and old, professionals and house wives, graduates and undergraduates completed the course successfully and qualified for the Divyabhodhini certificate. However only 80 students were asked (10 representing each diocese) to come to Bangalore for the graduation ceremony to receive the certificate. "Training for Lay Women Leaders in Family Counseling" a three month course also was conducted in three dioceses of Karnataka diocese and more than 50 people completed the course and awarded certificate to them.

Keynote address was given by Prof. Berinelle Elizabeth D'Souza Professor in Tata Institute of Social Science. She is a powerful social activist who supports and fights for the women rights. She criticised the attitude of Christians to often shy away from prophetically engaged against structural injustices due to political and strategic expediency. We should understand that there is nothing such

thing as called 'non-political'. Hence, we should raise the prophetic voice, especially for women within and outside of the Church.

Felicitations were given by Rev. Dr. Rathnakara Sadananda, Rev. Nirmala Vasanthakumar (former President of C.S.I.W.F), Rev. Dr. Chilukuri Vasantha Rao (Principal, the United Theological College, Bangalore), and Dr. Gabriele Mayer (Coordinator, Women and Gender Desk, International Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) Stuttgart, Germany). Dr. Gabriele expressed the relationship of EMS with CSI Synod and the Women's Fellowship, especially with the women and Gender Desk and appreciated the work of the Women's Fellowship in enriching, enlightening and empowering women. She awarded an appreciation certificate to the General Secretary of C.S.I. Women's Fellowship, Rev. Dr. Synthia Sobha Rani, on behalf of EMS for the 10 years of her ministry among the women.

During the Platinum Jubilee culmination celebration of the CSI Synod and the Platinum Jubilee commemoration of the CSI Women's Fellowship, in order to encourage and empower women from the grassroots level to be deeply rooted in Biblical studies and to develop their life skills, CSI Women's Fellowship introduced one year course on 'Divya Bodhini' theology, counselling and life skills on 27th September 2017 which was inaugurated by the Most Rev. Thomas K. Oommen. The course began in the month of October 2017 and in the graduation service on 27th September 2018, certificates were given for all the Divya Bodhini students for the completion of the course. The vision and guidance of Dr. Susan Thomas, the President of CSI WF, in initiating and organising these courses are highly commendable. More than 80 students have been graduated and received the certificates during the platinum jubilee celebrations. The students and the teachers have given their witness how Divya Bodhini transformed their lives. It was a delightful experience for

the students who have received the certificates. There were old and young professionals, dropouts as students. The CSI Women's Fellowship expressed the gratitude to the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) for the support for the Divya Bodhini course. The Diocesan Women's Fellowship delegates showcased their talents in the cultural night.

On the 28th morning, communion service had taken place in St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore. The Most Rev. Thomas K. Oommen was the celebrant. Rev. Dr. Jessie Anand delivered the word of God. She thanked the CSI WF for giving a blessed opportunity to be the part of the celebration as she hails from Church of South India, Tirunelveli Diocese and former W.F. Secretary of that Diocese. It was a great blessing for the ordained women to be the part of the communion service. Dr. Susan Thomas welcomed and thanked the Moderator, officers of the Synod and also the presbyter-in-charge, Rev. Vincent Vinod Kumar and the pastorate committee members of the St. Mark's Cathedral. Dr. Jyotsna Chatterjee, a well-known icon of women in this era, a great social activist, supporter of women who stand up for women's rights to give dignity in the lives of women, spoke in the meeting. Felicitations were given by Rev. Dr. Mrs. Ramani Dyvasirvadham (former President, CSI WF), Rev. Dr. Bernhard Dinkelekar (former General Secretary, EMS), and Rev. James Cecil (Director of Pastoral Aid Department, CSI Synod). With much enthusiasm, witnesses were shared by the delegates of Divya Bodhini.

It is a great achievement for the C.S.I. Women's Fellowship could publish three books: 'Her Voice' – Issue Based Bible Study, 'Her Vision', and 'Her Life'.

Most Rev. Thomas K. Oommen released the book titled 'Her Life- God's chosen stars from the marginalized'. The book highlights the fact that 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither man nor woman for everyone is equal in the sight of God

and how God has chosen the abandoned, neglected from the margins to be the stars in His kingdom'. CSI WF is thankful to Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK) and especially Dr. Mrs. Ella Sonaware, the Deputy General Secretary of ISPCK, for coming forward to print and publish the book that it would be of good help for the women through Biblical perspectives. The history of the seven decades of CSI WF was presented by the Rev. Dn. Synthia Sobha Rani, which helped everyone to know about the aim, objectives and the activities of the W.F all through these years. CSI WF praises God for enabling the women to be the part of the kingdom of God. The Platinum Jubilee Celebrations made an avenue to remember the lives of the women in the Bible, and women missionaries- national and international- who strived and toiled their life to uplift and empower women to live with a stand and dignity in the family. CSI WF expressed gratitude to the church and society for the support and prayers in the last seven decades. CSI WF places itself in a position, being a ray of hope, to bring women them from the margins to the centre and leading them to the centre of the cross the hope of salvation. The General Secretary, C.S.I.W.F. Rev. Dn. Synthia Sobha Rani, thanked the Moderator, Officers of the Synod President of C.S.I.W.F. officers of C.S.I.W.F Bishops in the 24 Dioceses, Presidents of Diocesan W.F. national and international guests, all the Sisters of Vishranthi Nilayam, Hannah, CSI WF office staff, one and all for making the Platinum Jubilee celebrations a very grand success for the glory of God.

Dr. Mrs. Susan Thomas,
President, CSI Womens Fellowship

Rev. Dn. Synthia Sobha Rani,
General Secretary, CSI Womens Fellowship

“We are also belonging to the ‘Forty-Three Lakhs’ of Missionaries in Church of South India” : Young Voices from KKD



“Not for Name or Fame but for the Service to All” : One Day Missionary Workshop in Parkal



Clergy are Equipped with Managerial Skills for an Effective Pastoral Ministry



A New set of 2018 EYVP Volunteers from EMS

