“We can’t Breathe!”
Towards Implementation of Action Plans for the Vulnerable....

Child Protection Policy @ Karnataka Central Diocese & Vellore Diocese
Dear brothers and sisters,

As children of God living through this pandemic, even though we are naturally anxious and unsure, we know that God is with us. We trust that His Spirit is active. We affirm that our Lord Jesus Christ is our Hope. He is our Salvation. He is our Guide. It is only through the eyes of this “great hope” that we can look at ourselves and our world and not despair. He is our inspiration in this life.

**COVID 19 Second-wave and our responsibilities**

As the country is struggling to combat the second wave of coronavirus pandemic, medical experts are spreading awareness about Covid-19 and vaccines against the viral disease. Covid has challenged health care systems and the economy. The second wave has now set-in with all its fury, we need to be very careful. India’s deadly Covid-19 second wave has devastated various cities and its now firmly gripped many smaller cities, towns and villages where the devastation is largely under-reported.

The coronavirus disease (Covid-19) has taken more than two lakh lives in India but the massive hike in the rate of infections in the last two months led the nation to gasp for breath as hospitals are overwhelmed with cases. Hospitals across India are experiencing oxygen shortages. The country now has the greatest demand for oxygen. Patients are waiting in streets, autorikshaws, cars, ambulances outside the hospitals to be admitted and to avail treatments. Sports halls, stadiums and institutions have also been converted into make-shift treatment centres to ease the pressure on hospitals. Hospitals and crematoriums have run out of space.

As India’s healthcare system continues to reel under a raging second wave of Covid-19 infections, we are called upon to open our institutions and hospitals to support the government’s initiatives to curb the spread to the virus.

A genuine concern for the vulnerable was obvious and beautiful. Revealing our sacrificial love, we all willingly came to a consensus about protecting the vulnerable. The Covid-19 crisis now offers us a unique opportunity to rebuild our society by fostering these values. Care for the vulnerable has shaped every area of life and I encourage this development. The tragedy created by the pandemic has awakened us to the value of all human life. We take this rare opportunity to commit ourselves to protect and support all our people. This crisis has made us know the dignity of every human lives and rediscover
that, our society can be rebuilt. Like the Good Samaritan, we can create a better society by recognising even the most vulnerable as our neighbour. Hence, I urge you to go the extra mile and spend quality time with the infected and affected by using the communication technologies so as their minds and souls may be soothed and alleviated.

**COVID 19 vaccination and our responsibility**

Amid surge in Covid-19 cases in the country, India has crossed the mark of 100 days of vaccination. At this critical time, I prayerfully write to you on a matter of grave importance. We ask all of you to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible. Many lives hang in the balance, the vaccine will only be effective if a majority of people receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Therefore, I feel it as my duty and responsibility to speak publicly, and strongly encourage everyone to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available and offered.

Our Lord tells us very plainly that the greatest commandment is to love God, and love our neighbour as ourselves. COVID-19 has imposed death and destruction throughout the world, but God has not abandoned us. In so many ways, God has brought us closer together, and the expressions of love, neighbourliness, and faith have been extraordinary. We are called to perform our moral obligation by participating in God’s healing love, which includes getting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. The only exception to getting the COVID-19 vaccine should be for health reasons. Though, it is, indeed, a personal choice to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we must always remember that this personal choice can have a great impact on others’ lives.

At this juncture, I call-upon all the Churches and Dioceses to support our Mission Hospitals so that the vaccine is made available and administered to the poor and needy in our area.

Let us collaborate to respond effectively to the virus and work together for a better future as we rebuild after the pandemic. Let us not be afraid. The Lord is with us and can calm every storm and bring light to the darkness.

With prayers,

*C. Fernandas Rathina Raja*  
*General Secretary, CSI*
What St Luke talks about God to the Protesting Sikh Farmers

“…The BJP onslaught is also very different and even more damaging to whatever remains of democracy in India” – these were the words of Gyan Prakash, a professor of history at Princeton University. In line with him, many critics call the reaction of the Central Government, “an undeclared emergency.” Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, comments that “The news coming out of India about farmers protest is concerning and we are all worried about family and friends… Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protests.” What are these celebrities talking about?

Post-pandemic India is witnessing people of all faiths going forward and exemplifying their solidarity in their protest. For months, farmers in India, especially Sikh farmers, have raised their voice against the Indian agriculture acts of 2020, often referred to as the Farm Bills instituted in September 2020. The local agitation started in the region of Punjab has taken a new shape as a protest in November 2020 by blocking all the roads to New Delhi. Though these protests are primarily leaderless, millions of farmers are united in their struggle for their livelihood, human rights, and dignity. Support for the farmers’ protest has been gaining day by day around the world. However, it is highly heartbreaking that the Indian Church acts as if it has nothing to do with this farmers’ protest. There is no significant response or action that the Indian Church has initiated, and Indian theologians are keeping their mouth shut. The raised questions are: why do the Indian farmers protest against the Farm Bills? What does biblical theology convey to this farmers protest? What can we learn from the protesting farmers?

Farm Bills and Lucan Theology

The common consensus is that the world presupposed in Luke-Acts was an advanced agrarian society, and agriculture was the primary base of its economy. As per census 2011, nearly 10% of the Indian population counted farming as their primary occupation, and 46% of the workforce is working full-time in farmlands. Furthermore, agriculture and allied sectors like forestry, logging and fishing accounted for 23% of GDP and employed 59% of its total workforce in 2016. Hence, it is appropriate to assimilate Lucan theology to the context of present India to achieve the purpose of using Luke-Acts for the issue of Farm Bills and livelihood threat.

i. Act on Agri Market vs Liberation for a Dignified Livelihood

The first ordinance in the Farm Bills, Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, claims that generalisation will reduce competition. It proposes expanding the trade area’s scope to any place of production, collection, aggregation and encourages electronic trading. Here we can observe a sharp shift in the economic system. This ordinance promotes Globalization and the so-called market economy, which instigates making money with money. The absence of Minimum Support Price (MSP) in this ordinance foreshadows the possibility of the farmers selling their produce even below the MSP. A majority of the farmer population (more than 55% of the population) already suffers from economic disparity. Such a transition to a monetary economy was likely to bring conflicts and disproportion within society and reinforced the distinction between urban and rural, rich and destitute.

The value system presented in Luke-Acts contrasted with an elite-centred market economy was one that allowed for generalised reciprocity. Concerning

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reciprocal relations, it is appropriate to recall Lk 6:36-38, which illustrates God’s compassionate identity in Jesus' encouragement of generosity: “Be merciful ... Give ... Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.” The Lucan schematic location of God’s providence towards the Zarephath widow (Lk 4:25-26 / 1 Kings 17:14-16) in the context of Jesus’ proclamation of good news to the πτωχοί, exemplifies God’s abundant mercies towards the lowly which is concerned with the provision for extended family or clan and the notion that all could share in the fruits of the land.

ii. Act on Contract Farming vs Sustenance and Security for All

The Farmer (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 is the second act that proposes a legal framework for farmers to do contract farming and market their produces. Contract farming appears to be remunerative to the agricultural sector. However, farmers in contract farming arrangements will be the weaker players in terms of their ability to negotiate and be in danger of losing their land to the sponsor due to crop failure. Already India is witnessing that over a third of the rural Dalit population (29.97% about 53.7 million) are landless labourers, and 67.27% of the rural Dalit households (overall 51% of rural population) rely on casual manual labour (including farm-work and scavenging) for their livelihood. Furthermore, debt bondage in India is most prevalent in agricultural areas, and farmers often pay more than 100% of the loan as interest. The implementation of contract farming to the agricultural sector may lead the small farmers to lease their little land to wealthy corporations, which will end up losing their land to MNCs.

This expectation echoes the socio-economic condition of the peasants of Mediterranean antiquity. In the Roman Empire, collecting tribute from the provinces by levying direct and indirect taxes was the custom. Oakman observes that sometimes more than 50% of the total crop was extracted as tax. Furthermore, natural phenomena like droughts and inconsistent rainfall forced peasants to make loans for seed in order to exist. The small Roman elite and its provincial allies controlled the primary resource of land and its production; many lost their land and were forced into debt and slavery (Lk7:41-42; 12:58-59). In this context, the Lucan Jesus pronounces the Jubilee Year, which was God-given equaliser which is forgiveness of debt and redistribution of land; every fifty years, all slaves were set free, all rental leases expired, all debts were forgiven and property returned to its original owner (cf. Lev 25; Isa 61:1,2). Lucan Jesus’s declaration reminds God’s property ownership over land and his most precious gift to humanity. Jesus’ pronouncement addresses the landlessness which existed in modern societies.

iii. Act Relating to Commodities vs A Borderless Inclusive Community

Third Act, The Essential Commodities Act, 2020, frees items such as foodgrains, pulses, edible oils and onion for trade except in “extraordinary situations” such as
war. This act appears as helping both farmers and consumers by bringing in price stability; however, the arrangements concerning farm infrastructure like cold storages may disturb the food supply chain, and MNCs will dictate terms to farmers which may lead to lower prices. The unstable foodgrain procurement and distribution may result in hunger and food insecurity. A food-insecure person, according to Merriam-Webster, is someone who is “unable to consistently access or afford adequate food.” The Sikh farmers’ “langar” meal, however, challenges food insecurity. Though they away from their homes, the Sikh men and women make chapatis and sweets on the streets to feed protesting farmers for free. The Persian root word means “almshouse”, and it reminds Lucan inclusive community meals. The early Christ-followers carried out the Lucan Jesus’ liberative and reformative mission in Jerusalem, and the Lucan meals provide a solid foundation in the early Christ movement for an inclusive community towards a reformative service. The communal sharing in the early stages of the Christ-movement illustrates the socio-economic inclusivism between the same ethnic group, which built a community of economic equals (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35). The extended inclusive feature in Peter’s shared tables (Acts 10, 11) furthers the fellowship by breaching ethnic boundaries that form a vital bridge in the symbolic universe.

It is appropriate to conclude this article with bishop Lesslie Newbigin’s words: the ministry would become “irrelevant” when it looks after a “selfish and introverted congregation” with little concern for their neighbour. As discussed, continuing Indian farmers’ protest sending dangerous signals to society.

To the protesting farmers who are the victims of complex and deteriorating Farm Bills, the Church ought to bring good news to the suffering farmers in liberating the oppressed, marginalised, and the socially/politically ignored to ensure their necessities of life. Lucan Jesus fundamentally reworks social order, values, and socio-economic and personal relations. His proclamation and boundary-breaking activities brought the marginalised population to the centre. In the context of structural exploitation, the called-out community have to act as a mouthpiece of God in its voice against structural exploitation. It is the need of the hour for the Church in India to realise the plight of Indian farmers and think theologically to act in solidarity with the protesting farmers.
The year 2020 and these first few months of 2021 have been full of unknowns, new fears, disruptions, and deaths all over the world. India is now in the midst of a devastating death toll and panic. Some of us wonder how God can allow such a painful COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic that is killing millions across the globe. Others assert that God does indeed send calamities to punish or to test people. In India, COVID-19 is the first experience of the serious consequence of a pandemic in our lives. This viral disease seems to dwarf SARS, H1N1, and HIV.

When large scale epidemics occurred in the past, there were Christians of extraordinary courage and compassion who responded by helping others. The story of one outstanding woman, Dr. Mary Rajanayagam, reveals steadfast faith in the face of a killer disease. Mary was an early graduate of the Madras Medical College in 1894, sponsored by the American Arcot Mission. While she was working in Madanapalle the bubonic plague hit the area in 1903. Mary had a presentiment that in serving the plague-stricken people her own life was in danger. But she knew she must stay and serve. Sadly, she too became infected and succumbed to the plague in March 1904. She was so loved by everyone that people of all religions and backgrounds joined her burial procession for a mile, braving the highly contagious disease.

Mary’s choices lead us to some all-important questions: What do we believe about God and suffering? Did God send this pandemic as punishment, as well as other disasters, such as the tsunami of 2004? What alternative explanations can we look to? How is this pandemic changing our beloved church as an organization? How do we respond?

Did God send the Tsunami?
The damming declaration that God sent the tsunami was very confusing for Christians who believe in a loving God. How can an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent God make people suffer? We tend to ask this question when we suffer from serious illness, impending death, disaster, and

Did the tsunami kill sinners?
The day after Christmas in 2004 a devastating tsunami killed nearly a quarter million people and left tens of thousands suffering. Originating off the coast of Indonesia, it was the deadliest tsunami in recorded history. The response of many fundamental believers around the world was to declare that it was sent by God as punishment and a warning against their evil deeds. The devastation and deaths were seen as God’s curse and his vengeful act against human rebellion. Others believed that the tsunami was sent for a greater good of bringing people closer to God, while some saw a clear sign of the last days of the world.

Did God send the Pandemic?
The Christian Response to Disasters

Mrs. Anne is a librarian, archivist, reading specialist and educator. She has helped establish archives and inclusive schools, and mentors college women in leadership skills. She promotes early literacy and innovative learning methods.

Mr. P. Dayanandan is a botanist who taught at the Madras Christian College and has carried out extensive research in several fields with funding from Fulbright, NASA and Indian Government. He has guided ten Ph.D. scholars. His other research interests include environment, evolution, history of human migration, science & religion, Pallava art history and Tamil literature. Together Anne and Daya write and document the history of local Christian congregations and the contributions of Christians.
misfortune. Theologians refer to this problem as theodicy. After the 2004 tsunami many young Christians struggled to understand this issue of theodicy - could God have permitted a tsunami that killed 230,000 people? Student Christian Movement of India (SCMI) organized a public program on 4 February 2005: “Students for Science and Spirituality”. We suggested that the question should be rephrased to: ‘Did the Son of God send the Tsunami?’

Did the Son of God send the tsunami?
The answer lies in the following set of questions: Would one who promised to offer life abundant cause death? How can one who ignored the stirring of the pool and healed the man by the poolside send a sea storm? Can he, who calmed the sea and walked on placid waters, rejoice in sending killer waves? How can one who healed and gave sight to people send disease and afflictions? Would he who multiplied the fish, bread and wine cause famine and thirst? Is it conceivable that he who made the nets burst with fish would stop people from fishing? Would he who chose fishermen to be fishers of men, kill them by waves? Can Eternal Light bring darkness to the lives of the coastal people? Would he who loved the children and hugged them make orphans out of them? How can he impose burden after calling the heavy-laden to come to him for rest? Did he not want people to go free and not get caught in bondage? Can a shepherd who showed the way be a source of confusion? Did the Son of God who said that he came to save, not to judge and who was a loving friend of the sinners and adulterers, send the tsunami to punish any people? Could he who came to give love and hope bring suffering and hopelessness? Could the Son of God bring hell after bringing the Kingdom of God on Earth?

No, God did not send the tsunami. God did not send the COVID-19 either.

A restless Earth- We suggest that when this pandemic is over and congregations rejoice in worshipping and meeting friends again, church groups could make an excursion to nearby areas where fossils are found. Young scientists in your group will explain that some fossils and the land where they are found have a history stretching back 200,000,000 years! India was once part of a large supercontinent, called Gondwana, in the southern hemisphere. About 180 million years ago the Gondwana split and the plates carrying separate landmasses moved in different directions to where they are, recognizable as the southern continents. All these plates are still moving. Collision of plates can cause earthquakes and sometimes volcanic eruptions. Subduction of one plate over the other displaces enormous quantities of water. The 2004 tsunami occurred due to the movement of the Indian Plate and its subduction under the Burma Microplate. We can say that the tsunami had its origin at least 180 million years ago! Naturally, tsunamis will occur again.

An Earth full of more viruses than stars in the Universe
More than 200 viruses cause various diseases in humans, some in epidemic and pandemic proportions. Scientists estimate that there may be more viruses on Planet Earth than stars in the universe! A fraction of these, living in animals, mostly mammals and birds, may cause diseases in the future including pandemics. Tsunamis, as well as viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens are part of nature and biodiversity of a living Earth.

The Cross does cause suffering
There is only one kind of suffering that
should be associated with religion. We will face hardships when standing up for justice, to help liberate the oppressed from every form of tyranny. The powerful exploiters, racists, and casteists will hurt people who dare to stand with the enslaved. One does not have to be a Christian to experience this pain. Thousands of non-Christians in India suffer for demanding justice, equality, and fairness. Christians associate this agony with the cross. “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). In Gethsemane Jesus himself feared the excruciating pain he would be going through on the cross. He sweated and wished that the cup of suffering would be taken away from him. This supreme suffering was a deliberate choice he had to make for justice and liberation of people. One of Bishop Masilamani Azariah’s favourite verses of meditation was on this kind of suffering; real suffering, but made lighter because Jesus was sharing the yoke. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:25-30).

**Pandemic and the essence of a church**

The corona virus pandemic is a wake-up call to learn what a church is all about. Churches have been shut as if the holy places and our prayers have no power to stop the ultramicroscopic virus from entering. People cannot meet fellow Christians and sing together heartily in their familiar places of worship. Have we become lesser Christians because for months together we did not participate in the Lord’s Supper in a church? Friends are eager to share youtube sites of any number of admonitions by televangelists. What will it take to reimage the traditional church we know with a hierarchy of elders, evangelists, deacons, committees, pastors, and bishops? Many have even wondered what really is the relevance of such a church. Churches must justify their existence as large bodies, restate what they have accomplished and what they plan to accomplish. As family members conduct worship at home do we understand anew ‘the priesthood of all believers’? Do we see a deeper meaning in “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20). Is this the time that Jesus was telling the Samaritan woman: “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.”? (John 4:21). As we join together in worship online or in-person, how does it change our connectedness to God, to our church buildings, and to each other?

Some are content to be free from the organization of large churches with imposing altars and pulpits that are often reserved exclusively for the ritually privileged. Could this be a reason for the proliferation of numerous small ‘house’ churches? Ritual hierarchy and artificial sanctity devised to hold on to power, to administer communion, or baptize a child can be antithetical to the loving good news of Jesus. The lockdown measures to prevent the spread of infection have hopefully helped to open our minds and hearts to the essence of belief. Jesus “emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:7). Jesus can be invited and seen anywhere, under a tree or in a courtyard. It is reassuring to learn about the early Christians: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:46).

**Sacred and secular:**

As members of a simple hut or an impressive towering building for a church, how do we respond to the pandemic? Can our churches become a place for refugees? Will we readily accommodate homeless migrants to sleep on the floor or the well-polished benches? Will we, in the name of The Great Healer, offer the churches to be converted into hospitals? What of burying the dead due to COVID infection? Are we comfortable in giving a dignified burial or do we suffer from fears and prejudice of the unknown, even denying burial in a piece of land that we ourselves do not own?

In Chennai, the Royapuram CSI Ulaga Meetpar Alayam once functioned as a hospital to accommodate cholera patients! The church was built by the American missionaries Rev. Dr. John Scudder and Rev. Dr. Miron Winslow and was dedicated in June 1843. It is remarkable that the original building has remained intact for the past 178 years. John Scudder and his sons moved west and established the American Arcot Mission. The church was purchased by Dr. David Horn Paterson who was sent to Madras by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary...
Society. The old drawing shows the church and the dispensary that Paterson used for treating patients. When there was a cholera outbreak in 1868 more space was desperately needed. Dr. Paterson converted the church building into a hospital, as a very practical response. In these days of corona viral pandemic it will be a sobering experience to visit the Royapuram church and contemplate its past. While there, you might also see the small burial ground and the burial markers of 9 people connected with the American Mission. Infants to adults were laid to rest here. Dr. John Scudder and Mrs. Harriet Scudder were buried here but were later exhumed and reburied at the Ranipet Scudder Memorial Hospital.

**Courage born of Love**

So, ‘Did God send the Pandemic?’ We needed to address this question because unfortunately, many people are preoccupied with such ‘end-time’ issues rather than live in the present and address the everyday challenges of poverty, illness, inequality, and injustice. The COVID pandemic is a time for us to remember how Christian love motivated people to act during famine and outbreaks of smallpox, plague, cholera, and other life-threatening events. Christian compassion has been available to all people at all times, especially in times of suffering and need.

Countless numbers of missionaries and fellow Indian Christian leaders—people who shaped our churches—were not focused on theological discussions of God punishing people. As a body their concern was healing the sick, caring for the abandoned, and consoling the bereaved like a mother caring for her children. 123 years ago missionary doctors took the plague vaccine first, in full public view, to encourage their congregation and the general public to get vaccinated. This is our legacy.

Today, like Dr Mary Rajanaayagam, many healthcare workers are in the frontline, serving the afflicted even in the face of death. Some of us may not be as courageous. But Jesus, whose compassion for suffering was boundless, invites us all to follow his footsteps and rediscover new ways to serve and ease the pain during the current pandemic.

(Excerpted from an article that can be requested from: p.dayanandan@gmail.com)

**References:**


Department of Mission and Evangelism CSI Synod along with Trichy-Tanjore Diocese has participated in a special missional evening gathering on 04th March 2021 at St. Luke’s Chapel, Bishop Heber College in Trichy. Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Chandrasekaran, Bishop in Trichy-Tanjore Diocese and the Chairman for the Mission and Evangelism CSI Synod has presided over the meeting. Rev. Maxcin John, Synod Mission Director has led a missional talk in which he pointed out that youngsters are the backbone of the Nation. Moreover, they have to be-SMART (Sustainable Mission Accompaniment towards Radical Transformation) by becoming salt and light to the world as Jesus Christ told. Education must help us to be a better human being, he added.

Mrs. Roselind Chandrasekaran, Bishop Amma, Rev. R. Stanly Mathiselvan, Lay Secretary, Rev. V. Rajamansingh, College Chaplain, Rev. Dr. C. Arul Singh, Mission Director, Rev. Dr. Ruby Priskilla, Heber College, have attended in the meeting. Prof. Dr. Vinod, College in-charge for faith matters and it’s activities along with other staffs have arranged the meeting. Around two hundred college students have attended in the meeting. It was the platform for rejuvenation, fellowship, and mutual empowerment. 

Rev. Maxcin John, Director, Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod.

“Be-SMART” A Mission Call from Madurai-Ramnad

Department of Mission and Evangelism CSI Synod along with Home Missionary Society of Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese has organized a one-day Missional conference on 06th March 2021 at OCPM School, Madurai. Rt. Rev. Dr. M. Joseph, Bishop in Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese has inaugurated the conference. “Live as a Christian is great challenge”, Bishop stated in his inaugural speech. He further added that selfless love must be the driven force in our day to day missional engagements. Any missional engagements through love and humanity will be everlasting and deep-rooted, Bishop added.

Adv. C. Fernandas Rathina Raja, General Secretary, Church of South India CSI Synod has delivered the keynote address based on “Relevance of Be-SMART in the present context: Practical Implications and Suggestion”. He has highlighted the importance of CSI Mission Statement in the day to day missional engagements. It is our bounden duty to declare our solidarity through the constant accompaniment towards the broken communities like Adivasi-Dalit, LGBTQ, and other less-privileged and underprivileged communities. It is the need of the hour to make timely awareness program towards the sustainable transformation of the broken communities. Missionaries must not be mere spectators, rather, they must be active participants in the every aspect of the human life, he added.

Mrs. P. Leela Manohari Joseph, the President, Women’s Fellowship in Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese has led a session based on “Woman Empowerment in the Mission Fields in the light of Be-SMART”. She has highlighted the role of the women characters in the Bible and stressed a need of empowering women missionaries to serve for the women empowerment, especially in the most vulnerable areas. Love must be the driving spirit in all missional engagements which should be for everybody’s well-being, she added.

Rev. A. David Jabaraj, Clergy Secretary in Madurai-Ramnad Diocese has led a session based on “True Spiritual Nourishment of the People in the Mission Fields in the light of Be-SMART”. He stated that live out the gospel is the only way to nourish people spiritually. Integrity and credibility of our life is most important. Witnessing through our words as well as deeds will be the right medium for the spiritual nourishment. All our engagements must be filled with love for all, he added.

Rev. Dr. A. Yakkobu, Deputy Chairman conveyed a greetings to the conference. Mr. J. P. Edwin Chelliah, Registrar, Mrs. Mary, OCPM School Principal, Rev. Caleb Vinolin, Junior Church, Rev. Sathish, Department of Eco-Concern, and Rev. Peter, Department of Christian Education has attended the conference. Department of Home Missionary Society of the Diocese Director Rev. Pon Prabhakar has organized the conference along with missionaries. Rev. Maxcin John has explained the concept of “Be-SMART” as Be-Sustainable Mission Accompaniment towards Radical Transformation”. A seventy five participants including delegates from HMS, Divyabodhiny School, and Junior Church have attended in the conference. OCPM School presented a welcome dance. The Conference was a venue for refreshing and rejuvenating experience in doing mission.

Rev. Maxcin John, Director, Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod.
Church Serves as a Medium to Witness ‘The With-Ness of God’ With the Suffering Community: Covid Relief Food Kit Distribution in Madurai-Ramnad Diocese

The Church of South India Synod has distributed Covid relief food kits to the Missionaries (HMS), Junior Church workers, Bible Women and the participants in the Divyabodhiny School of CSI Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese on 06th March 2021 at OCPM School, Madurai.

Adv. C. Fernandas Rathina Raja, General Secretary CSI Synod along with Rt. Rev. Dr. M. Joseph, Bishop in Madurai-Ramnad Diocese has led the distribution ceremony. Mrs. Leela Manohari Joseph (Diocesan Women’s Fellowship President), Rev. Dr. A. Yakkobu (Diocesan Deputy Chairman), Rev. A. David Jabaraj (Clergy Secretary), Mr. J. P. Edwin Chelliah (Registrar), Rev. Pon Prabhakar (HMS Director), Rev. Vinolin Caleb (Director, Junior Church), Rev. Sathish (Director for Eco-Concerns), Rev. Peter (Director for Christian Education Department) and Rev. Maxcin John, Synod Mission and Evangelism Department have participated in the distribution. A seventy-five beneficiaries were there to collect the food kits. It was a source of encouragements, relief and a token of accomplishment of Church with people during the crisis like pandemic.

The Relief food Kit distribution was the experience to highlight that the Church as a medium to witness “the with-ness of God” with people, especially with the suffering community.

Rev. Maxcin John,
Director, Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod.

Nagarcoil Mission Consultation Urges to uphold the Same Mind of Jesus Christ in doing Mission

Department of Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod along with Diocesan Missionary Prayer Band (DMPB), Home Missionary Society (HMS) and ZENANA Mission of Kanyakumari Diocese has organized a mission consultation at the Chapel, Kanyakumari Diocesan Compound in Nagarcoil on 10th March 2021. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Anantha Raj Rayappan Chelliah, Bishop in Kanyakumari Diocese has presided over the meeting. Bishop urges the participants to uphold the same mind of Jesus Christ in doing mission.

DMPB General Secretary Rev. David Robby Jacob, HMS Treasurer Dr. S. Sam Manohar Das and HMS Superintending Minister Rev. W. Stanley Jones, and Diocesan Women’s Fellowship Secretary Rev. Mrs. Charlet S. Rajan, Zenana Mission have presented reports of respective mission movements. Moreover, there was a decision to jointly participate in the upcoming Rev. Ringel Taube Memorial Day celebration in muttom on 25th April 2021.

The Mission consultation was the common platform to learn and listen together in doing mission. Furthermore, it was the venue to cherish and nourish more fellowship, cooperation and mutuality in missional engagements in the days to come. A fifteen delegates from DMPB, HMS, and ZENANA were attended in the special mission consultation. The meeting was hosted by the DMPB.

Rev. Maxcin John,
Director, Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod.

Vellore Diocese Witnessing as Welcome Center towards Transformational Discipleship of Jesus Christ

Vellore Diocese in the Church of South India under the leadership of Rt. Rev. H. Sharma Nithiyanandham wholeheartedly welcomed and received 116 people who are willfully and voluntarily dedicated to be the part of Christ’s Discipleship and received baptism.

The Diocese organized the holy ceremony on 21st March 2021 in Punepalli village, Madhavaram pastorate Northern area, Diocese of Vellore. Rt. Rev. H. Sharma Nithiyanandham, Bishop in Vellore Diocese has led the ceremony along with Revd Arun Kumar, Area Chairman Revd Samuel Babu and Area Secretary Rev Dolvin.

Hopefully, they will serve as channels of good news of Jesus Christ towards peace, justice and reconciliation.

Rev. Maxcin John,
Director, Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod.
Mission Legacies Left by Periannan and Chinnaannan Still Inspiring: The Centenary Celebration of C. K. Ashram, Tirupattur

The Department of Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod has represented the CSI Synod in the Centenary Celebration of Christukula Ashram-Tirupattur (1921-2021) on 07th March 2021 at C.K Ashram Compound, National Missionary Society of India (NMSI), Tirupattur.

Rt. Rev. Dr. J. George Stephen- President, NMSI & Chairman, Christukula Ashram has presided over the meeting. Rt. Rev. Dr. G. Devakadasham, Former Moderator CSI and Former Bishop in Kanyakumari Diocese was the chief guest. Rt. Rev. H. Sharma Nithiyanandham, Vice-President (H.Q), NMSI & Vice Chairman, Christhukula Ashram has led the function. Rt. Rev. V. Samuel Kennedy, Bishop in Arcot Lutheran Church, Rt. Rev. Dr. A. Rajavelu, Former Bishop in Vellore Diocese, Rev. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary, NCCI, and Rev. Joshua Peter, United Evangelical Lutheran Church have conveyed their greetings. The Celebration was organized by Rev. S. Christopher Vijayan, General Secretary, NMSI has organized the centenary celebration.

The Christu Kula Ashram is distinguished as the first Indian Christian Ashram which is founded in 1921 by two dedicated great medical missionaries Dr. Savarirayan Jesusdason (well-known as Periannan) and Dr. Ernest Forrester Paton (well-known as Chinnaannan). Furthermore, CK Ashram is remarkably featured by its unique way of life-simplicity, equality, and spirituality. This center is still serving as the venue for the mission of education to the most marginalized in the community as well as a center of mission for the health care towards the most vulnerable in the society. Recently, NMSI Executive Committee and CK Asram Governing Council have decided to start a cancer care center in the CK Ashram. Thus, CK Ashram still moving ahead by taking inspiration from mission legacies left by Periannan and Chinnannan for the community development and transformation.

Rev. Maxcin John,
Director, Mission and Evangelism,
CSI Synod.

CSI-EMS Liaison Office Work with the Partner Theological Institutions: TTS Madurai & ACTC Hyderabad

A partnership meeting with Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, was organized in consultation with the Principal Rev. Dr. Mrs. Margaret Kalaiselvi. The meeting was held on 2nd February 2021 at TTS Campus. There were good interactions with the TTS teaching staff as well as with the students on partnership in theological education and EMS partnership with the TTS educational programs. Students had shared their experiences of living with the Urban poor and doing theology. Listening to the student experiences is a good learning on emerging challenges in theological education at the given time under Pandemic and poverty. Discussions with the principal and faculty members was on importance of partnership in theological education in the context of pandemic. The principal had thanked the EMS for its constant partnership support, which enabled the institute to continue some of its ministerial projects even under difficult times.

A meeting with the Andhra Christian Theological College (ACTC), Hyderabad, Principal and Teaching Staff was organized on 16th February at ACTC Campus. A PowerPoint presentation on EMS Theological Guidelines, EMS fellowship and EMS Partnership through project support was presented and it was well received. The discussions helped to understand significance of partnership in theological education. The principal thanked the EMS for its commitment towards theological partnership with the ACTC.

Rev. Dr. Perumalla Praveen Prabhu Sudheer,
Liaison Officer, CSI-EMS
Bicentenary of the CSI Diocesan Press - Kanyakumari
Karnataka Regional Youth Conference

Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth - Dornakal
“Be-Smart” @ Various Dioceses

“Be-Smart” Covid-19 Relief, Madurai-Ramnad Diocese
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Regional Institute of Pastoral Management (Karnataka Region)

The Department of Pastoral Concerns of CSI has organized a three-day Regional Institute of Pastoral Management (Karnataka Region) for the presbyters of Karnataka Northern Diocese, Karnataka Central Diocese and Karnataka Southern Diocese at RLTC in Dharwad from March 16 to 18, 2021. Rt. Rev. Ravikumar James Niranjan, Bishop in Karnataka Northern Diocese (KND) has inaugurated the Institute. Inaugurating the Regional IPM by lighting the lamp, the Bishop said God has called us to be His community and our root of mission should be the Christ. His followers should be different from others and they should be an example, he added.

KND Secretary Mr Vijaykumar V. Dandin called upon the presbyters to make use of the various programmes offered by the CSI Synod for the betterment of their pastoral life. KND Treasurer Mr Sadguna Paul, Associate Treasurer Rev Samuel Calvin and KND Associate Secretary Rev D S Honnaykar were present on the occasion.

On Day-1, Mr Jacob Swamynathan, founder director of The Skill Factory, spread light on human resource management. He engaged the delegates during the session through various activities. He taught the delegates that conflict resolution is a most important aspect in the life of clergies.

Advocate Mrs Esther Rani spoke on the issues pertaining to the legal aspects. She quoted various Acts and Sections from the constitution of India to enlighten us on dowry prohibition, protection of women and child rights. Dr Abdul Rasheed, Deputy Commissioner, Minority Welfare Department, Government of Karnataka, has explained to the clergy community about various facilities available in Karnataka for the upliftment of minorities. And in the evening, Rev Dr Vincent Vinodkumar moderated a group discussion on Covid-19 and its nuances in the pastoral ministry.

The second day of the IPM began with a devotion based on Philippi 2:1-11 led by Rev Dr Vincent Vinodkumar. He contextualised the text in such a way that the presbyters got boost to continue their ministry without any fear. He pondered upon the “Kenosis and the ethic of the Church during Covid-19 Pandemic.” Even during his paper presentation, he created awareness on fighting Covid 19 pandemic. He deliberated upon the subject of Covid-19 and pastoral ministry from the perspective of communication.

On the occasion, a team of doctors headed by Dr Ajay Raju, Medical Superintendent of Basel Mission CSI Hospital, had come down to Dharwad to conduct health check-up camp for the delegates. Except a couple of cases, most of the pastors are diagnosed fit. In the afternoon, Mr T P Udupa, Chartered Accountant, elaborately discussed about accounting pattern in churches, handling of FCRA as well as GST. Most clergies got their doubts cleared on various issues of accounting.

On the third day, the Deputy Moderator of CSI and the Chairman of the Department of Pastoral Concerns, Rt Rev Dr Reuben Mark delivered the God’s message based on the text John 19:23-30. The extempore sermon caught the attention of all participants.

Later, IPM Consultant and TTS Vice-Principal Rev Dr Alfred Stephen spoke about the importance of IPM and the relevance of a contextual pastoral ministry, especially in the context of COVID-19. He encouraged presbyters to formulate a contextual ministry that can address the issues of the people, who are struggling from different kinds of problems in the present context.

Finally, at the concluding session of the Regional IPM, Rt Rev Ravikumar James Niranjan delivered the presidential address, Rt Rev Dr Reuben Mark gave a parting shot to the delegates who successfully finished the course.

Around 50 clergies representing all the three dioceses took part in the Regional IPM. They actively took part in all the activities of the course. They all enjoyed the fun and frolic during the learning. Rev. Sunilkumar (KND) served as coordinator and recording secretary of the Institute and Rev. Moses (KND) extended sincere support for the physical arrangements for the Institute. Moreover, the respected Bishop, Diocesan Secretary and all office bearers of the Karnataka Northern Diocese extended their maximum help and support for the smooth functioning of the Regional IPM.

Rev. Dr. Prinstone Ben,
Director, Department of Pastoral Concerns, CSI Synod.

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Chairperson of CSI Synod Youth Department inaugurated the conference and motivated the youngsters with his astonishing articulation. Bishop spoke the aspects related to Truth and Justice highlighting Truth as ‘God’s Attribute’ and Justice as ‘God’s Character.’ Bishop elucidated Biblical Truth and Justice by taking prominent verses from the Bible such as Deuteronomy 32:4, St. John 17:17, Micah 6:8, St. Luke 4:18,19. Knowing the truth, accepting the truth and responding to the truth without delay were his major concerns. He coined a very powerful statement, “no to Sin of Silence: be spec-actors not spectators.”

Four Sessions on Youth for Truth and Justice were productive. The summary of these four sessions is as follows:

**Rev. Maxin John**, Director, Department of Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod.

**Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar**, Director, Department of Youth, CSI Synod.

**Rev. Dr. Prinstone Ben**, Director, Department of Pastoral Concerns, CSI Synod.

Dr. I John Marlin Inba Kumar, Educationalist spoke on, ‘Youth for Truth and Justice in the Context of Socio-Political and Religious lenses. Fellowship and collaborative learning space between various ministerial and missional aspects of different dioceses gave an exposure to understand diverse perspectives.

The Rt. Rev. Henry Sharma Nithyinanandham, Bishop in CSI Diocese of Vellore & Chairperson of the CSI Synod Youth Department inaugurated the conference and motivated the youngsters with his astonishing articulation. Bishop spoke the aspects related to Truth and Justice highlighting Truth as ‘God’s Attribute’ and Justice as ‘God’s Character.’ Bishop elucidated Biblical Truth and Justice by taking prominent verses from the Bible such as Deuteronomy 32:4, St. John 17:17, Micah 6:8, St. Luke 4:18,19. Knowing the truth, accepting the truth and responding to the truth without delay were his major concerns. He coined a very powerful statement, “no to Sin of Silence: be spec-actors not spectators.”

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Religious situation of present Indian Nationalism.” He touched important areas related to the New Amendments of Agricultural Laws, the chasm between the poor farmers and corporate companies, new educational policy, biased nature of the media in projecting the protestors as anti-national and so on. This educated young people to become more conscious towards the issues related to the present Indian Nationalism and the ways to deal with the prejudiced Government policies. Rev. J. Rajan, Presbyter of CSI Madurai-Ramnad Diocese & Hon. Associate Director of the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns equipped the Youth to practice ‘Truth and Justice in Multi-Religious Inhabitation and Eco-Sensitivity.’ His presentation enlightened the young minds related to the professing, proclaiming and practicing Christian values in Multi-Religious areas. He also focused on the ‘Go Green,’ aspects which educated the Young people to learn and practice the aspects of caring the creation.

Rev. J. Jacquln Jothi, Presbyter of CSI Madras Diocese explained ‘the role of youth in achieving Gender Equality through Truth and Justice.’ Her presentation raised a significant question, ‘Is God Female or Male?’ The difference between the understanding of Sex and Gender was explained by taking few examples which emphasizes on, sex is a natural composition/biological creation of male/female/others but the Gender is created by humans. She proposed re-reading the Bible without Gender inequality and in Christ we are all one: proposal for Inclusivity. Her presentation was much focused on the issue of teaching Gender basics from the childhood. Dr. Bennet Benjamin, Director of the CRESSE took a session on, ‘Youth Adopting Truth and Justice as a Lens for Peace Building.’ His presentation helped young people to understand the dynamics of Peace. He stated that, the Holy Bible is the book of Peace and through reading and practicing the Bible one can achieve inner and outer peace. Absence of voice is not peace but the struggle for the change in unjust pattern and structure creates peace. ‘Educate, Organize and Participate’ is his slogan for Youngsters in peacebuilding.

Group Discussions and presentations focusing on the main theme, “Youth for Truth and Justice,” helped young people to learn the importance of team work, mutual sharing and learning. Inter-diocesan and intra-diocesan activities and presentations by the youth was a great learning experience to evaluate and resolve the problems related to the Young people in Church and Society. Group Discussions and Presentations were focused on eight sub-themes, such as, Gender Equality, Present Indian Nationalism, Multi-Religious Inhabitation, Eco-Sensitivity, Psychological Struggles in Career Building, Leadership Struggles of the Youth in Church and Society, Youth against addiction and abuse, peace building allotted to the Eight CSI Dioceses in Tamilnadu. There was a Sharing and Feedback session where youth shared their views about the conference and further activities of the department. Apart from the content-oriented sessions, youth actively participated in various activities. Cultural Evening gave space for the young people to exhibit their talents and it’s a great time of fun, fellowship and entertainment. Exposure visit to ‘Christukula Ashram,’ which is a Christian Ashram built in the year 1933 with an Indigenous style of construction near Tirupattur helped youngsters to understand the purpose and praxis of proclamation of Gospel in Multi-Religious context.

Almost 60 Young People and Youth Directors from all over Eight CSI Dioceses of the Tamilnadu region such as Vellore, Kanyakumari, Madras, Madurai-Ramnad, Coimbatore, Thoothukudi-Nazareth, Tirunelveli, Trichy-Tanjore were present at the conference. The Rt. Rev. Henry Sharma Nithiyananandham, Bishop in CSI Diocese of Vellore & Chairperson of the CSI Synod Youth Department, Rev. A. Noel Christopher-Director, Rev. P. Samraj Kumar-Chairperson and Mr. J. Joshua Stalin-Treasurer and all the Board Members of the Board for Youth work-CSI Diocese of Vellore were instrumental in making the conference successful.

Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar, Director, Department of Youth, CSI Synod.

Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth at CSI Kanyakumari Diocese

The CSI Synod Youth Department organized a 3-day Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth in the CSI Kanyakumari Diocese from 04th to 06th March 2021 at CSI Retreat Centre, Muttom.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Anantha Raj Rayappan Chelliah, Bishop in the CSI Kanyakumari Diocese inaugurated the Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth on 04th March, 2021 and motivated the youngsters by explaining how the management skills are very important for the Youth who migrate to the urban sectors for education and career opportunities. Prof. Dr. Felicia Chelliah, Bishopamma and Mr. N. P. Thankaraj, Diocesan Treasurer greeted the gathering. Rev. R. Duds Gnana Roby, Diocesan Youth Director; Rev. Jerome; Rev. Zenith; Rev. Reghu Lal and other presbyters were present at the Inaugural. 30 Young people from various pastorates of the CSI Kanyakumari Diocese got benefited through this training.
The project aims at a skill enhancement training, enabling the rural youth to build their self-esteem and develop their personality with life skills such as team work, goal setting, SWOT analysis, time management, communication skills, career mapping and leadership skill training. These courses are offered in management colleges for an expensive fee but CSI Synod Youth Department envisioned to bring the Church youth from rural areas who cannot afford to attend this training outside in management colleges. This in turn is hoped to make them competent and confident to face the different challenges the job market offers.

The sequence of activities envisaged under this training is to mobilize youth into viable groups, improve their skills, arrange for support services, provides awareness and education on the key focus areas. Besides, there is an increasing emphasis on making the young women and men self-reliant and self-employed, so that they can establish income generating units for their livelihood. Appropriate soft skills play an important role in a successful career. Keeping this in mind the training was facilitated by the experts from the Skill Factory, Bangalore. Mr. Jacob Swaminathan from Skill Factory, Bangalore touched on important areas like team work, goal setting, self-confidence, public speaking skills, etiquette, time management and career mapping, SWOT analysis, communication skills and leadership skills.

CSI Synod Youth Department extend our gratitude to the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Anantha Raj Rayappan Chelliah, Officers and Youth Director of the CSI Kanyakumari Diocese, Rev. R. Duds Gnana Roby for their meticulous planning and implementation of the workshop.

Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar
Director, Department of Youth,
CSI Synod.

Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth at CSI Dornakal Diocese

The CSI Synod Youth Department organized a 3-day Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth in the CSI Dornakal Diocese from 08th to 10th March 2021 at CSI Epiphany Cathedral Compound, Dornakal.

Mr. K.J. Shubhakar Ashirvadam, Treasurer, CSI Dornakal Diocese; Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar, CSI Synod Youth Director and Rev T. Praveen Kumar, Diocesan Youth Director inaugurated the Skill Enhancement Training for Rural Youth on 08th March, 2021. 30 Young people from various pastorates of the CSI Dornakal Diocese got benefited through this training.

The project aims at a skill enhancement training, enabling the rural youth to build their self-esteem and develop their personality with life skills such as team work, goal setting, SWOT analysis, time management, communication skills, career mapping and leadership skill training. These courses are offered in management colleges for an expensive fee but CSI Synod Youth Department envisioned to bring the Church youth from rural areas who cannot afford to attend this training outside in management colleges. This in turn is hoped to make them competent and confident to face the different challenges the job market offers.

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CSI Synod Youth Department extend our gratitude to the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. K. Reuben Mark, Deputy Moderator CSI & Moderator’s Commissary, CSI Dornakal Diocese; Officers and Youth Director of the CSI Dornakal Diocese, Rev T. Praveen Kumar for their meticulous planning and implementation of the workshop.

Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar
Director, Department of Youth,
CSI Synod.
“Church Enlightened, Informed and Responsible Citizenship” held at Bishop Azariah School Compound, Vijayawada

Capacity Building Programme on “Church Enlightened, Informed and Responsible Citizenship” held at All Saints Church, Bishop Azariah School Compound, Vijayawada on 15th and 16th March 2021. This is a Joint Project of the CSI Department of Pastoral Concerns, Mission and Evangelism and Youth. This programme was inaugurated on 15th March 2021 by the Rt. Rev. Dr. T. George Cornelious, Bishop in CSI Krishna-Godavari Diocese. Bishop highlighted the need for the enlightenment and how we need to be aware of our rights in the Indian society by taking Biblical passage from Ephesians 1:17-19. Rev. T. Joshua Kumari, Bishopamma & President Women’s Fellowship, KGD Spoke on Gender Equality and explained the ways in which women can stand for their rights. Rev. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of NCCI greeted the gathering and explained the need for knowing Human rights and constitutional privileges.


Second Day of the programme was started with a Holy Communion Service led by the Rt. Rev. Dr. T. George Cornelious, Bishop in CSI Krishna-Godavari Diocese and Rev. Dr. B. Anand Rao, Presbyter In-Charge of the All Saints Church, Vijayawada. Departmental Sessions succeeded the Devotion with different sub-themes. Department of Mission and Evangelism steered a session on, ‘Wholistic Mission: Implications and Praxis,’ this session was taken by Rev. Bandi Jeeva Manohar, Bishop’s Chaplain & Presbyter In-Charge, CSI KGD. Speaker explained the need for the Wholistic Mission in present day context by taking biblical and social issues. Department of Pastoral Concerns organized a session on, ‘Pastoral Ministry in Multi-Faith Context,’ this session was very well drafted and articulated by Rev. K. John Vikram, Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Auxiliary, Bible Society of India. Speaker spoke on the need for renewed and committed Pastoral Ministry in multi-religious society by taking Biblical, theological narratives and many practical examples. Department of Youth conducted a session on, ‘Equipping the Youth to Inherit the Christian Social Responsibility,’ this session was taken by Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar, Director, Dept. of Youth, CSI Synod. Speaker emphasized on the committed Social responsibility of the young people focusing on the service, accountability, transparency, care for the creation and so on. Rev. Prabhakar Rao, Vijayawada Church Council Chairman, Registrar CSI KGD; Rev. Edwin Sudhakar and other presbyters attended the programme. Rev. N. Vincent Raj Kumar, Youth Director, Krishna Godavari Diocese was instrumental in organizing the Choir and moderating sessions. Rev. Karunanidhi, Presbyter In-Charge, CSI KGD was helpful in organizing sessions.

There was an intense Question and Answers round for more than an hour. There was a sharing session where participants from all segments shared their feedback and suggestions Cultural Evening which took place on 15th March 2021 gave space to the participants to present cultural programmes based on the proposed theme. A Total number of 72 participants, consists of 24 Pastors, 24 Missionaries and 24 Youth from CSI Krishna-Godavari, Rayalaseema and Nandyal dioceses attended the programme. Rev. T. Dinesh Cornelious, Ms. T. Mounika Cornelious, Mr. John Daniel, Mr. GS. Sudhakar, Mr. Solomon took care of all the arrangements.

Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar, Director, Department of Youth, CSI Synod.
Rev. Maxcin John, Director, Department of Mission & Evangelism, CSI Synod.
Rev. Dr. Prinstone Ben, Director, Department of Pastoral Concerns, CSI Synod.
Karnataka Regional Youth Conference held at the CSI Board of Child Care Centre, Bengaluru

Karnataka Regional Youth Conference initiated at the CSI Board of Child Care Centre, Bengaluru on 19th and 20th March 2021 with the theme, “Youth for Truth and Justice.”

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Prasana Kumar Samuel, Bishop in CSI Karnataka Central Diocese inaugurated the conference on 19th March 2021 and delivered the sermon based on the assigned theme. Bishop brought out thought-provoking sermon focusing on the practical aspects of truth and justice. Bishop made an appeal to the young people to negate the popular notion, “youth for pleasure, middle-age for business and old-age for religion,” by practicing the truth and justice and leave addiction and pleasures of this world. The distinction between natural and supernatural world was explained by taking practical examples. He explained that young years are the energetic years, years of sensitivity, teachable years and years of danger too. Truth is perspective in nature and truth is a person not personal experience and that person is Jesus Christ who is the embodiment of Truth. Bishop also highlighted the theme by using biblical texts such as St. John 18:37, 8:32, 17:17 and so on.

Mr. Arthur Sadhanandham, Member of the EC & CSITA Management Committee greeted the gathering and presented the secular views of the theme. He spoke on learning and teaching aspects and addressed that youth have creative energy and this creative energy need to be used for the edification of the society and Church at large. Enthusiasm and exuberance will not last long but creating a just-self will take young people to great heights. Mercy, truth, righteousness and peace were Mr. Arthur’s main concerns.

Rev. Moses Francis Huggi, Youth Director from CSI Karnataka Northern Diocese; Rev. D. Mary Shalini, Youth Director form CSI Karnataka Central Diocese, Rev. Adrian Deepak, Youth Director from CSI Karnataka Southern Diocese, Rev. Gabriel, Christian Education Director from CSI Karnataka Southern Diocese and other young people led praise & worship and prayers in the inaugural. Rev. Mary Shalini took session on, ‘the role of youth in achieving gender equality through truth and justice,’ she has brought out many contemporary issues related to the gender inequality happening in the Church, society and especially with in families. Rev. Moses Francis Huggi engaged the youth to participate in creative activities. Dr. Jason Alexander, programme executive from CSI SEVA helped youth to understand ‘Disability in Churches.’

Rev. Dr. Dexter S Maben, Assistant Secretary of the CSI Karnataka Central Diocese led a session on, ‘Equipping the Youth to practice truth and justice in Multi-Religious Inhabitance.’ Dr. Dexter spoke on the relationship goals and career management. He also focused on the young people clinging on to the faith by taking Daniel chapter 1. His main focus was to fight united to solve the problems by coming out of the shell. He explained that the Bible need to be re-read by using the other-faith as lens.

Second day was started with a Holy Communion Service. Rev. Adrian Deepak, Youth Director from CSI Karnataka Southern Diocese led the order of worship. Rev. Moses Francis Huggi, Youth Director from CSI Karnataka Northern Diocese preached sermon on ‘Truth and Justice,’ by taking Biblical passage from St. John 18:37. He preached that the young people are challenged by various temptations and these temptations should not direct them to the erroneous ways and by adopting Truth and Justice as their lifestyle they can tune their life in accordance with the scripture. Rev. Gabriel, Christian Education Director from CSI Karnataka Southern Diocese was the Celebrant.

Rev. Adrian Deepak took session on, ‘Youth Adopting Truth and Justice as a Lens for Peace Building.’ He exposed various issues connected to the Peace Building. He explained that, Young people face many conflicts in their day-to-day life from the society, church, family, peer groups, work places and so on and they need to adopt peace building mechanisms to overcome those conflicts. Peace need to start from with-in us and need to spread to the people and creation around us, was his major concern. Speaker also engaged youth in activities related to the Peace building and this gave space for the youth to understand the concept in a more meaningful and practical way.

Mr. Jacob Swaminathan, trainer from Sill Factory, Bangalore motivated the young people in terms of understanding the true meaning and purpose of life. He also engaged youth in activities which can build their self-confidence, determination and positive attitude. There was a group discussion focusing on gender equality, multi-religious context and peace building. This served as an aptitude test and in-a-way, it helped to assess the young people’s learning and involvement in all the sessions of the conference. Participants also shared their views regarding the conference and gave suggestions related to the future programmes of the department.

Cultural Evening which was started after dinner on 19th March 2021 gave space for the participants to present the cultural events based on the theme and this also generated fellowship, fun and entertainment. 45 participants comprising of 15 participants from CSI Karnataka Central Diocese, 15 from CSI Karnataka Southern Diocese and 15 from CSI Karnataka Northern Diocese attended the conference.

Rev. Ch. John Nischal Kumar
Director, Department of Youth,
CSI Synod.
Towards Implementation of Action Plans for the Vulnerable

A two day workshop on Vulnerability Mapping was held at the CSI Synod Centre, on the 12th and 13th of January 2021, as a follow-up of the one done earlier. This was attended by the Directors of various Departments namely, Socio-Economic, Youth, Sunday School, Christian Education, Dalit and Adivasi and School Education from Madras, Kanyakumari and Vellore dioceses.

Rev. Easter Rajan introduced the topic, Child Labour, for the day. Devotion was led by Rev. M. Benjamin Inbaraj, Director, CSI – SEVA, who explained the Church’s role in today’s scenario and the responsibility she holds for the future of our children. Prayer was offered by Rev. Jacob Peter. A short Video on Child Labour was screened.

Mr. Andrew Sesuraj, Professor in Loyola College, spoke about Child Labour and Street Children, through a Powerpoint Presentation. He put forth ways in which one could identify child labour in their respective dioceses. One could start small groups in their areas which will identify the vulnerable places, identify families in which there are disabled children and to tap local community resources. He also stressed the need for deinstitutionalization.

Rev. Samson, was the Moderator for the talk on Caste which was delivered by Rev. John Jayakaran. He spoke about the origin of Caste and its implications in the life of common man. He suggested documentaries for the participants, with regard to Caste. Participants were then grouped for a discussion on Caste, Class and Hierarchy.

Since Day 2 was the day before Pongal – The Harvest Festival, the Presbyters of Madras diocese organized a Folk song service. After the worship, Ms. Aruna Stephen, Programme Executive, Focus 9/99, conducted a quick Recap of the previous day’s proceedings.

Then, Mr. Solomon Raja, Senior Programme Executive, introduced the Resource Person, Ms. Glory Hubert, Child Protection Officer. Based on her experience, she gave information on how a child can be rescued from dangerous situations and the steps that should be followed while doing so. She also explained in detail about the legislations and the schemes of the Tamilnadu Government.

The final session was dealt by both Rev. John Jayakaran and Ms. Glory Hubert. They suggested that Sunday school teachers need to keep pace with the present generation. They should have full information, in the area of their work, to bring an impact in the lives of these little ones, who are the leaders of tomorrow. Participants then presented their group work, after which the workshop came to an end.

**Ms. Aruna Stephen,**
Programme Executive,
CSI - SEVA

Towards developing a safe society for the vulnerable

The Child Protection Policy was disseminated to the Heads of Institutions Lay Preachers at the Ashram Chapel of Vellore diocese. Team SEVA was honoured to have the presence of Vellore Bishop, Rt. Rev. Sharma Nithiyanandham, throughout the dissemination. Rev. Sampath Sadhanandham led the devotion.

Then, Mr. Solomon Raja, Senior Programme Executive, CSI-SEVA, spoke on how the Campaign, Focus 9/99, started and how it has evolved into a learning process. The Campaign which created an awareness about Child Protection to many, has brought about many changes in the lives of the vulnerable.


Post Lunch, TEAM SEVA organized a Balloon Game which clearly indicated the concept of child abuse. Then, Mr. Solomon Raja gave a lecture on Disability and went on to explain as to how a Church can contribute to their welfare, by having the More Able Church Guidelines.

The workshop came to an end with a participant’s prayer and Benediction by the Bishop.

**Ms. Aruna Stephen,**
Programme Executive,
Focus 9/99.
CSI -SEVA was privileged to have the Bishop of Karnataka Central Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Samuel, for the Child Protection Policy Dissemination workshop. It was held on the 19th of January 2021, at the CSI – Board of Child Care Campus and was attended by the Officers of the diocese, Clergies, and Heads of Institutions.

Dr. Jason Alexander enlightened the audience about More Able Church Guidelines, followed by Mr. George Wesley who spoke about Women DARE. Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) an initiative for Peace was explained by Mr. Praveen Daniel.

Mr. Solomon Raja, Senior Programme Executive, informed the participants about the Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Programme.

The participants from Karnataka Central Diocese (KCD), were of the opinion that the issue of Gender Equity in Bangalore city is different and needs a separate handling with the understanding of Metro Culture. They narrated how KCD is far ahead in Disability Inclusion and Accessibility.

The workshop came to an end with Closing Prayer and Benediction offered by the Bishop of Karnataka Central Diocese.

Kerala Government should withdraw EWS ‘Savarna’ Reservation and take Steps to give Reservation to Dalit Christians: Church of South India.

Dalit Christians, Dalits, Adivasis, and other backward communities were cheated by the new reservation policy on the basis of economic disparity, which is unconstitutional and against the marginalised communities in India. This 10% reservation for the Economically weaker sessions (EWS) is made exclusive for the ‘Savarnas’ by the ruling LDF Government in Kerala, which was supported by the Opposition Parties! The Savarnas are getting 10% reservation when the poor and oppressed Dalit Christians receive only 1% along with many other caste groups! A shift of focus from the caste based reservation to the economically weaker sections of the upper caste groups is the first step towards the age of ‘Manu Dharma’.

By implementing this new reservation policy with a deliberate cunning way, the so-called poor among the upper caste eat up the reservation seats of the Dalits and backward castes. This happens because the authorities take the 10% of the total opportunities instead of the 10% of the open (unreserved) opportunities/seats. hence the scenario is that almost all the political parties work against the oppressed communities by the Indian caste-system.

The Dalit and Adivasi Concerns Department of the Church of South India Synod organised a two-day convention at the Kerala United theological Seminary in Kannammoola, Trivandrum, and raised voice against this unconstitutional move by the state govt., which was surprisingly quick to implement a policy put forward by BJP, the ruling party in the centre. The Department came up with the following statement.

1. Kerala Government should withdraw the unconstitutional ‘Savarna’ reservation.
2. Various parties in Kerala, who collude in cheating the oppressed communities by supporting the EWS Savarna reservation should revert their stand.
3. The political parties should openly take a political stand to include the Dalit Christians in the Scheduled Caste list.
4. The state government should conduct a survey on the socio-political backwardness of the Dalit Christians.
5. There should be due share kept aside for Dalit Christians in the state budget.

6. There should be exclusive funds for Backward Christian Development corporation from the government.

7. There should be exclusive projects designed for Dalit Christians.

8. Govt should make a census/collect data on the population of Dalit Christians in Kerala.

9. The Churches in Kerala should critically self-examine whether the reservation system for the Dalit Christians within the church is effectively implemented.

10. The churches in Kerala who haven’t yet made a reservation policy within the church for the Dalit Christians should implement it without any further delay.

11. The landless Dalit Christians should be provided cultivable land.

YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/FX3IhnjHLIU

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip  
Director, Dalit and Adivasi Concerns  
Department, CSI Synod.

“Caste can be Caged: From Callow to Courageous Dalits and Adivasis” Kerala Regional Leadership Training for Dalit and Adivasi Youngsters: II\textsuperscript{nd}Phase

A leadership training camp for the youngsters from the Dalit and Adivasi communities of the Church of South India (CSI) in the Kerala Region was organised by the Dalit & Adivasi Concerns Department of the CSI at the Human Resource Development Centre (HRDT) in Melukavumattom under the East Kerala Diocese from 26\textsuperscript{th} to 22\textsuperscript{nd} of March 2021.

Rt. Rev. V. S. Francis, the Chairperson of the Dalit & Adivasi Concerns Department of the CSI and the Bishop in East Kerala, inaugurated the Camp. He pointed out the fact that the minority dominant communities in India who formulate only 20% of the population rule the 80% of the others using casteist hierarchy as a tool.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, the Director of the Dalit & Adivasi Concerns Department, welcomed the gathering and gave orientation to the camp. He drew the attention of the delegates to the current political scenario where the majority of the political parties join hands in supporting unconstitutional ‘Savarna Reservation’ and act against the caste-based reservation and thus negate the fact that casteism is the root cause of all Indian social evils. Rev. P. C. Mathewkutty; the Treasurer of the East Kerala Diocese, Rev. Biju Joseph; the Clergy Secretary, and Rev. Bijoy gave felicitation speeches. Rev. Lijo Abraham; the General Secretary of the CSI East Kerala Diocesan Youth Movement offered the opening prayer.

The second day of the Training Camp began with an outing to ‘Illikkal Kallu’, a hill station near Melukavumattom. The delegates of the camp took part in the Sunday Worship Service on the top of the Illikkal Kallu hill. Rev. Sunil Raj Philip led the worship service and gave a brief sermon.

Back in HRDT Centre, the delegates engaged in a day-long training session. Mr John Joseph, a Professional Trainer of Personality Development and Leadership led the interactive sessions in which the delegates took part with much enthusiasm. He dealt with topics such as Adaptability, Change Management, Confidence Boosters, Assertiveness, Decision Making Skills, Body Language, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Grooming, Leadership Skills, and Conflict Management.

The participants of the camp showcased their talents in the campfire organised at the courtyard of the HRDT centre in the second night. Songs, dances and skits made the night unforgettable for the delegates.

The final day commenced with a bible study by Rev. Sabin Jo Benson. He presented a novel perspective on the first miracle by Jesus in the wedding in Cana.

Dr Anju Sosan George and Prof. Betty Elsa Jacob, Professors of English at CMS College, Kottayam, led sessions on “Teamwork and Facing Interviews”. This was done with mock interviews, interactive sessions and lectures.

Rev. George E. Mathew, a young pastor from the Kollam Kottarakkara Diocese of CSI, led the final session of the camp on “Christian Dalit and Adivasi Youngsters: Challenges Ahead”.

In the plenary session, the young Dalit and Adivasi leaders of the Kerala Dioceses of CSI reiterated that they will carry the experiences they earned from the camp to the Diocesan and local
levels and urge the diocesan leadership to do similar programmes in the dioceses so that many other youngsters also will be benefitted.

Concept Note of the Training Camp
Combating casteism needs the awakening of the victims and efforts of them to strengthen their abilities to stand up against casteism. A diocesan and synod level capacity building/leadership training programme/Summer camp for the young Dalits was already organised with the help of CWM. This programme is designed as the second phase of the project because continuity is the major need in this kind of training programme.

This programme will focus on making the Dalit/Adivasi youngsters realise that, even though the casteist ideology/hierarchy is deep-rooted and powerful in its all negative manifestations, the onus is partially on them to fight against the casteism, mainly by equipping themselves to thrive, rather than succumbing to the casteist power structure.

Aims and Objectives
• Empowering the young Dalit and Adivasi youngsters to face caste-based discriminations.
• Deliberating the challenges posed by the new affirmative action policies in India, which is against the true spirit of creating equality in the caste-ridden society.
• Equipping them to search and earn jobs, even in the corporate sections.
• Personality development.
• Encouraging them to intervene in society as positive catalysts.

Methodology
• Dalit and Adivasi Youngsters will be given leadership training at the regional levels.
• Career guidance, especially encouragement to venture into the civil service exams will be part of training.
• The need for education will be given thrust in the training.
• The delegates will be given encouragement to strengthen their reading habit. The possibilities of using various online books sites will be shared with them.
• Personality development trainers, theologians, successful Dalits and Adivasis in various fields including civil service will be invited as resource persons.
• The training will be predominantly in the vernacular languages.
• As a second phase, the Leadership Training Camp will be conducted at the synod level.
• The areas of concerns raised by the delegates at the regional level will be dealt with seriously at the synod level.
• Study materials will be produced for the further process of the leadership training.
• Evaluation of both the phases of the leadership training for the Dalit and Adivasi youngsters will be done and further steps will be decided.

Target groups
Dalit and Adivasi youngsters from all the four dioceses of the Church of South India.

Half of them or more than half will be young women

A good percentage of them will be from very remote villages in South India.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip
Director, Department of Dalit & Adivasi Concerns, CSI Synod
A leadership training camp for the youngsters from the Dalit and Adivasi communities of the Church of South India (CSI) was organised by the Dalit & Adivasi Concerns Department of the CSI at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary (TTS) in Madurai from 17th to 19th of March 2021. The Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese of the CSI was the host and the programme was supported by the Council for World Mission (CWM), Singapore.

Rev. Christopher Dharmaraj, the Director of the Christian Education Department of the CSI Synod, welcomed the gathering and gave an orientation to the camp. Rt. Rt. Dr M. Joseph, the Bishop in the Diocese of Madurai Ramnadu and the host of the programme, inaugurated the training camp. Adv. Fernandas Rathinaraja, the General Secretary of the CSI Synod, gave the Presidential Address. Mrs Margaret Kalaiselvi, the Principal of TTS, Rev. Rajan, Hon. Associate Director of the Ecological Concerns Department of the Synod, and the Officers of the Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese gave felicitation speeches.

Mr Jacob Swaminathan, a professional trainer and the founder of ‘the Skill Factory’ in Bangalore, led the training sessions on Adaptability, Change Management, Confident Boosters, Assertiveness, Decision Making Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Self-grooming, and Leadership Skills for the three days of the camp.

The second day of the Leadership Training Camp started off with the bible study led by Rev. John Dhayanandham, Professor, TTS Madurai. The Morning Worship and he Bible Study on the third day were led by Rev. Augusty Gnana Gandhi from the Trichy-Tanjore Diocese of the CSI.

Concept Note of the Workshop
Combating casteism needs the awakening of the victims and efforts of them to strengthen their abilities to stand up against casteism. A diocesan and synod level capacity building/leadership training programme/Summer camp for the young Dalits was already organised with the help of CWM. This programme is designed as the second phase of the project because continuity is the major need in this kind of training programme.

This programme will focus on making the Dalit/Adivasi youngsters realise that, even though the casteist ideology/hierarchy is deep-rooted and powerful in its all negative manifestations, the onus is partially on them to fight against the casteism, mainly by equipping themselves to thrive, rather than succumbing to the casteist power structure.

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• Career guidance, especially encouragement to venture into the civil service exams will be part of training.
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• The delegates will be given encouragement to strengthen their reading habit. The possibilities of using various online books sites will be shared with them.
• Personality development trainers, theologians, successful Dalits and Adivasis in various fields including civil service will be invited as resource persons.
• The training will be predominantly in the vernacular languages.
• As a second phase, the Leadership Training Camp will be conducted at the synod level.
• The areas of concerns raised by the delegates at the regional level will be dealt with seriously at the synod level.
• Study materials will be produced for the further process of the leadership training.
• Evaluation of both the phases of the leadership training for the Dalit and Adivasi youngsters will be done and further steps will be decided.

Target groups
Dalit and Adivasi youngsters from all the four dioceses of the Church of South India.

Half of them or more than half will be young women

A good percentage of them will be from very remote villages in South India.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip
Director, Department of Dalit & Adivasi Concerns, CSI Synod
All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No, anything beyond this comes from the evil one’ (Matthew 5:37). The Communication Department of the Church of South India (CSI) Synod organized Report and Feature workshop for the Tamil Region at Bishop Selvamony Retreat Centre in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, from 25.02.2021 to 27.02.2021 by partnering with the Department of Communications of the Kanyakumari Diocese and EMS, Germany. The workshop was inaugurated by Rt. Rev. S.E.C. Devasahayam, the Chairperson of the Synod Communication Department. He appreciated the initiative taken by the Department of Communication Synod and the Kanyakumari Diocese to organize such a wonderful workshop promoting the growth in human development. The Bishop emphasised that a ‘Church without communication ceases to be a Church in its nature’. The Scriptures becomes an able communicative tool of the Gospel which has been handed down to us from ages past (Matthew 5: 10) affirms the power of written words and also calls us to affirm this power in our lives. He pointed out that it is our inherent duty to exhibit the church’s responsibility through our words and deeds. He reminded the delegates that “Pen is mightier than the sword, which can shake the history of humanity. We don’t just need preachers, but also writers to shake and transform this world through writing”. He encouraged the Christian Writers to follow certain approaches such as “Powerful Resistance, Bringing Alternatives, Envisioning Transformation, Envisioning Liberation and Enriching Life. Let our writing be Resourceful, Resistant, Reliable and Reforming in nature”. The sessions on the first day began with regional Tamil songs. Rev. Wilson invocated God’s presence with a prayer. Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, the Director of the Synod Communication Department, gave an introduction regarding the training camp and welcomed the gathering. The inauguration took place by lighting the earthen lamps placed in front of the flowers and plants indicating life and light.

Mr Andrew Christopher moderated the first session by welcoming the Keynote speaker Rev. Dr Alfred Stephen, Professor, Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary. He spoke on Christian Journalism and explained 5 important key points for Christian journalism. Firstly, he insisted that the Role of a Christian journalist, is to make things simple, and that would be the uniqueness of a good Christian journalist. Secondly, there are two different types of writing regarding Christian journalism which is “Reporting Type” and “Narrative Type”. Thirdly, the base content for a Christian journalist is to write a report based on the Gospel giving importance to the Gospel in the Bible. He says that the Challenges of a Christian journalist is to face the consequences while reporting for the Gospel in an unbiased manner with ‘no compromise’. He concluded by saying that a journalist should be a ‘Prophet’ in a world of chaos and says that a Christian journalist is one who should give the solution to the investigation made and also be the instrument of justice.

The second session was led by Dr M. Jezer Jebanesan, Former Principal, Scott Christian College. Mr Suhash moderated the session. The topic for this session was “The importance of having command on language and vocabulary”. He assigned an exercise to the delegates asking them to imagine and write, “What Jesus would have written on the ground!” (John 8: 6). Delegates from various dioceses responded actively with different opinions and perspectives. He then raised a question, “Do Christian articles have readability?” and also asked the delegates to follow the formula ‘AIDAS’ (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action, and Satisfaction) as it would be very useful for report writing. He also said that an article should have suspense and a sense of humour to be published in well-reputed magazines.

Mr N. Swamynathan, Reporter, The Hindu, who led the third session was introduced by Mr Bhakta Singh. Mr Swamynathan spoke on the topic “Report writing: Gathering Info/ Inverted pyramid”. He said that ‘Authentic News’ can be found within a lane, a street or a local area and not from any outside source. He called upon the delegates to represent the conscious voice of the people and to write what we think is essential for the community with a sense of justice. He insisted that one should not to use unnecessary words to describe news content. He also said that the resources that the journalist has will serve as a strategic move in the reporting field.

The final session for the day was rendered by Dr J. R. V. Edward, Principal, Scott Christian College. The session was moderated by Rev. Jeyathilaka Prathaban. Dr Edward spoke on the topic “Media Ethics”. He says that one can understand ethics in media by following its “5 Principles” such as ‘Truth & Accuracy’, ‘Independence’, ‘Fairness and Impartiality’, ‘Humanism and Accountability/ Responsibility’. The concluding remarks of the day were delivered by Rev. Sunil Raj Philip. He also gave an assignment on report writing on the day’s event and concluded with a prayer.

The second day of the workshop began with welcoming God’s presence and guidance. The first session was chaired by an eminent speaker Dr Jemamalai Vinanchiarach (Former Principal Adviser to the Director-General, UNIDO, Vienna, Austria). He spoke on the social conviction of a reporter, and
how it implies to church magazine. He encouraged the gospel magazines to concentrate more on social issues and to serve as a representative for the voice to the voiceless.

Mr Davidson Sargunam (Journalist), spoke as the second panellist in the session. He said that a good reporter must have a good character. He put forth the practical applicability of a journalist irrespective of situational competence.

The next session was led by Mr Esaikiappan, Tamil Desk Chief The Hindu in Tirunelveli. He spoke on the styles of writing the introduction (intro) for news and added that a good journalist should be honest. He enriched the delegates on the vitality of the inverted pyramid style, which is a basic feature of any news story. He also threw light on the essential mobile and computer Apps to be used for preparing and editing the news. He also gave insights on the shortcuts of photography and the creative use of catchy titles.

Dr D. Henry Raja (Associate Professor of Physics, Scott Christian College) talked about how reporting and writing for Church magazine differ from secular media. He pointed out that the editor of a Christian magazine is not so free to edit some content because of religious restrictions. It is the reporter’s job to emphasize the reality that the Christian magazine and focus on promoting peace rather than instigating a problem. The second-day session closed with the evaluation of the reports written on the first day.

The first session on the final day was chaired by Ms Jessie Paul. Dr Shemin Balachandran Nair (Filmmaker/ Cinematographer and Academician) spoke on the topic ‘Writing News for Visual Media’. He explained the functions of visual media and gave an insight as to how media can be used in the secular and religious counterparts of society. He suggested that if a person wants to write an article in any kind of media ‘one must first unlearn to learn something new’. He reiterated that ‘writing is a struggle against silence and one must follow non-verbal communication because it is the sacred mantra, to begin with. He then guided that one must generate an idea first to write something new followed by a synopsis, treatment, plot and the structure of a story. He then concludes by saying that ‘Time and Space’ is very essential for visual media.

The second session was moderated by Rev. Beaula Poongudi. Dr Paul T. Benziker, Department of Visual Communication, Scott Christian College, took a class on the topic “Photojournalism”. He explained that photojournalism is a form of journalism as it employs images in order to tell a news story. He clarified that it is essential to practice taking photos to become a good photojournalist because these pictures help communicate with one another. He said that technical skills are very important to a photojournalist as they will help one to be creative with a little persistence. He then concluded by saying that ‘A strong picture doesn’t read captions to create an impact’ as it always appears in newspapers, magazines and the internet.

The third session was moderated by Rev. Bobby Alfred. Dr L. Judith Sophia, Assistant Professor of English, Scott Christian College spoke on the topic “Feature Writing”. She says that feature writing is a kind of news story and she explained the characteristics of a feature writer. She stated that a feature writer must create an instinct to write well by being a good reader. She explained that one must never write a news article with partiality. When a person writes an article, it must have brevity, coherence and perseverance. She concluded by saying that one must follow a four-step plan to write a feature article that is to ‘Capture the Idea’, ‘Develop the Idea’, ‘Tailor the Idea’ and to ‘Test the Idea’.

The final day of the workshop concluded with a plenary and valedictory session. Gifts were distributed by the Communication Department of the Kanyakumari Diocese as well as the CSI Synod to all the delegates.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip
Director, Department Communications, CSI Synod

Celebrating 200 years of the Printing Ministry: Public lecture on the Bicentenary of the CSI Diocesan press (LMS Press), Nagercoil.

In a public meeting organised by the Communication Department of the Kanyakumari Diocesan Printing Press partnering with the Diocesan Communication Department and the Department of Communications of the Church of South India (CSI) Synod, Dr James R. Daniel, former Principal of the Scott Christian College in Nagercoil, presented a vivid narration of history on the contributions of the LMS Missionaries pioneering the printing ministry in South India.

The spark behind the LMS press in Nagercoil was ignited by the father of the South Travancore mission Rev. Charles Mead. In 1820, Rev. Mead visited Tanjore and obtained the necessary equipment for the press and assembled it in his own house at Nagercoil, this was the first printing press introduced into Travancore, the papers for the press were sent from England. One of the prestigious moments was that the first order of service was published in the LMS press for the first church inaugural ceremony held in Chennai.

The Printing ministry of the CSI Diocesan press (LMS Press), Nagercoil has been of service to
The community for the past 200 years and to commemorate its Bicentennial year, a programme was held at Bishop Selvamony’s Retreat Centre Kanyakumari. Rev. Gildon Dhayanandan, Director, Department of Communication, Kanyakumari Diocese. The Welcome address was delivered by Rev. Vibin John (Superintendent, Diocesan Presses). The Inaugural address was delivered by Rt. Rev. Dr A. R. Chelliah, Bishop, Kanyakumari Diocese. He highlights the ethnicity of LMS press and said how Rev. Charles Mead took steps to establish the press.

The Arch Bishop of Canterbury Most Rev. Justin Welby sent his greetings for the bicentenary year celebrations and it was rendered by Mr. Suhash, PhD Research Scholar, Scott Christian College, Nagercoil. "For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. (I Corinthians 3: 9)" was the most important message from the letter.

The Commemoration lecture was delivered by Dr. James R. Daniel (Former Principal, SCC). He gave a delightful speech on the history of missionaries of South Travancore. He asserted that everyone should always remember the contribution of missionaries. The printing press was installed in Nagercoil in 1820 and in 1821 the first book ever printed in South Travancore was ‘Aatmabodhagam’. Mrs Gouri Parvathi Bayi, a descendant of the royal family in Thiruvananthapuram, brought the reminiscences of how the LMS missionaries and the Royal family were connected and supported each other. Felicitation speeches were rendered by Dr D. Thambi Vijayakumar (Vice President of Kanyakumari Diocese) and Mr N. P. Thangaraj (Treasurer of Kanyakumari Diocese) gave credits and acknowledgement to the organizers for organizing such a great event. Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, the Director of the Communication Department of the CSI Synod, spoke about ‘Aksharam’ (letters/alphabets), which literally means that cannot be destroyed and explained how the efforts of the Protestant missionaries to give access to ‘Aksharam’ (education and printing ministry) to even the marginalised communities changed the social matrix of India in a positive way. He gave concluding remarks about the programme stating ‘Where do we have to go from this bicentenary year’. The vote of thanks was delivered by Rev. J. Vincent Robert. The Master of the Ceremony was Rev. Gildon Dhayananth, the Director of the Communication Department of the Kanyakumari Diocese of the CSI. The programme concluded with a prayer and benediction by Rt Rev. Dr A. R. Chelliah.

CSI Synod Communications Reporting Team.

Bicentenary Celebration of Kollam (Quilon) Mission Gets Underway

The Bicentenary Celebrations of Kollam (Quilon) LMS mission got underway at Kollam with a grand function organised by the Kollam- Kottarakkara Diocese of the Church of South India on the 28th February 2021. On Sunday evening, the inaugural function of the celebrations was declared open by the former UN Ambassador and the famous writer Mr Shashi Tharoor MP. Rt. Rev. Dr Oommen George, the Bishop in Kollam- Kottarakkara Diocese, presided over the meeting.

In his speech, Mr. Tharoor reminded of the pioneer social reformation works of the Christian missionaries. At the end of the 19th century, many reforms groups started functioning across Kerala. These organisations got moral support from the progressive thinkers among the missionaries. Mr Tharoor narrated the historical facts about the LMS missionaries. The Kollam (Quilon) was started in 1821, even though Rev. William Tobias Ringeltaube tried to start it even before that in vain. Rev. Johns Smith was the first missionary of the Kollam Mission. Afterwards, Rev. J. C. Thomson, Rev. Joshwa Nolds and Rev. Edmonds came to Kollam and spread the mission work further. They started many schools and churches under the Kollam mission. Thus they developed a civilized culture here. 2021 is the bicentenary year, and as part of the celebration, the Diocesan Bishop has announced around Rs. 100 crore development projects. The presence of Mr N. K. Premachandran MP, Most. Rev. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan, Most. Rev. Dr Paul Antony Mullassery, and Mr M Noushad MLA added meaning to the function. Mrs Aliyamma Oommen (President, Diocesan ), Mr Nibu Varkey Jacob (Member CSI TA), Mr Varkey Jacob (Lay secretary ), and Rev. David Habel (Vicar, Cathedral church ) also spoke in the meeting. Mr Justin Raj (Registrar) gave the vote of thanks.
“Harmoni-them” Kerala Regional Choir Festival

Kerala Regional Choir Festival, titled “Harmoni-them”, jointly organised by the Kerala Region Choir Committee and the Communication Department of the Church of South India (CSI) Synod, was held at the CSI Holy Trinity Cathedral, Madhya Kerala Diocese, in Kottayam on the 20th March 2021. The Festival got a colourful beginning with the flag hoisting by Rt. Rev. Baker Ninan Fenn, the Bishop in the Cochin Diocese of the CSI. The choirs attended entered the Cathedral as a procession singing “Sthuthippin, Sthuthippin”.

In his inaugural speech, Rt. Rev. Dr Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian; the Bishop in Madhya Kerala, pointed out that the title of the choir festival reminds us of the fact that our songs should be the songs of uniting love, care and fellowship. Bishop was honoured by the gathering for his consecration as the Bishop of the Diocese only a couple of months back.

Rt. Rev. Dr Oommen George, the Bishop in Kollam- Kottarakkara Diocese of the CSI encourage the audience and the choirs to sing without ceasing for the glory of God.

Rev. Samuel Oommen, the leader of the organising team of the Choir Fest, welcomed the gathering and expressed his gratitude to all those who joined him to make this programme a success.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, the Director of the Communication Department of the CSI Synod, informed the gathering that the department has already initiated a process to make a similar kind of Choir Festival in all the other three regions- Tamil, Telugu and Kannada.

Choirs from the Dioceses performed a song each after the bible reading.

The South Kerala Diocese of the CSI will be the host for the next Choir Festival.

The Dioceses of the Church of South India have a great tradition of Church music for which they predominantly grateful to the missionaries of Basel mission, London Mission Society and Church Mission Society. Because of their contribution in translating European Hymns the choristers in these dioceses were introduced to western music as early as two centuries back. On the other side, these dioceses drew from the rich heritage of Indian classical as well as folk traditions to create indigenous Christian music. The systematic approach to church music such as regular choir practice, singing in parts etc. varies from congregations to congregation. A common festival of Choirs will encourage the congregations to learn from each other and search for better practices in Christian music. Above all, a harmony among them (‘harmoni- them’ which sounds similar to harmonium, an Indian musical instrument) will be formed in the regional levels.

Aims and Objectives

- Bringing together Choirs of the four regions in South India.
- Encouraging the choristers to think out of the box and make the church music more relevant.
- Give training for the choristers.

Methodology

- Select Choirs from various dioceses of the specific language regions (4 regions- Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Tamil) will be brought together in a commonplace and help them to perform with the sophisticated sound system.
- A seminar, which deals with the possibilities of reviving the rich heritage of songs as well as exploring the possibilities of creating new songs that are socially relevant, will be organised along with the Choir Festival.
- Various choirs from the regions will form the second phase of the Regional Choir festivals, in which the choirs will be singing predominantly new songs with the current themes.
- The papers presented in the seminar held in the last year will be printed and distributed to the choristers and the public.

Target groups

Choristers of the churches in the dioceses.

Aspirants to join the choir- young voices.

Common worshippers will be encouraged to be actively involved in the church music rather than making it a cliché.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip
Director,
CSI Synod Communications
COVID Relief: Dry Ration Kit Distributed by the CSI Diocese of Madurai-Ramnad.

The Church of South India Synod has distributed COVID Relief Dry Ration Kits through the Department of Social and Dalit Concerns of the Diocese to the nurses and conservancy workers in CSI Christian Mission Hospital and CSI Dental College of Science and Research, of CSI Diocese of Madurai-Ramnad. The distribution was held on the 09th March 2021 at the CSI Christian Mission Hospital Chapel.

Adv. C. Fernandas Rathina Raja; the General Secretary of the CSI Synod along with Rt. Rev. Dr. M. Joseph, Bishop in the Diocese led the distribution. Mrs. Leela Manohari Joseph (Diocesan Women’s Fellowship President), Mr. John Mahendran (Treasurer), Mr. J. P. Edwin Chelliah (Registrar), Rev. Rajan (Hon. Associate Director of Ecology Concern, CSI Synod), Rev. Jayasingh, Mrs. Udhayam Kumar (Treasurer, Christian Mission Hospital) Conducted the meeting.

Dr. A. Charles (Medical Superintendent of Christian Mission Hospital), Dr. Thanveer (Principal of CSI Dental College of Science and Research), Mrs. Christina Anb Selvi (Nursing Superintendent) have participated in the distribution which was guided by the Director Rev. Daniel Ravi and organised by the Project Co-Ordinator Mr. Sam J. Nallu Prasad and Mr. Augustine Ponraj; Department of Social & Dalit Concern.


Vengampalli Olivamalai CSI Church of Vellore Diocese was Dedicated by the Moderator in the Presence of the Diocesan Bishop

Vengampalli Olivamalai Church in the Nagamangalam Pastorate of the Vellore Diocese of the Church of South India (CSI) was dedicated by Most Rev. A. Dharmaraj Rasalam; the Moderator of the CSI in the presence of Rt. Rev. Sharma Nithyanandam, the Bishop in Vellore. Adv. Fernandas Rathinaraja, the General Secretary of the CSI and Mrs Shirley Rasalam also attended the dedication service, which was held on 13th March 2021.

Rev. M. Isaac Fernandes; the Presbyter-in-charge, and Mr B. Thomas; the Catechist of the church led the arrangements for the dedication service.

~CSI Synod Communications

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum is the new General Secretary of CWM

Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum has been appointed as the new General Secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM). Most Rev. Dharmaraj Rasalam; the Moderator of the Church of South India (CSI), Rt. Rev. Dr. Reuben Mark; the Deputy Moderator, Adv. Fernandas Rathina Raja; the General Secretary and Prof. Dr. Vimal Sukumar; the Treasurer congratulated Rev. Jooseop for his appointment as the General Secretary of the most prominent mission organisations in the world, CWM.

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Mr. Antony Sagayadoss, Gardener, Church of South India Synod, passes away.

Mr. Antony Sagayadoss, Gardener, Church of South India Synod was called to eternal glory at 10:30 pm in Chennai on 24th March 2021 due to throat cancer. His demise was at the age of 57. He served at the Synod Secretariat as the Gardner for over 6 years.

The Moderator, the Deputy Moderator, the General Secretary, the Treasurer and Staff of Church of South India Synod express our deep condolences to the bereaved family.

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