

## In Search of the Treasure of Life....

The Lenten season is commonly considered as a time of self-denial, a time of sacrifice of one's desires. Rather, it ought to be a season where we re-orient ourselves to make more space for God in our lives. In God's own companionship, during these forty days of Lent, we are invited to begin an exploratory journey in search of the enduring Treasure of life. Matthew says "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field—and to get the treasure, too! Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a pearl merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!" (Matthew 13:44-46). The Lenten season could indeed be a pilgrimage towards finding the hidden treasure and the pearl of great value; the ultimate gift of eternal Life, revealed and experienced in and through the Cross.

It is in this search that we understand the Pauline assertion - "But this precious treasure - this light and power that now shines within us - is held in perishable containers, that is, in our weak bodies. So everyone can see that our glorious power is from God and is not our own. We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed and broken. We are perplexed, but we don't give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. Through suffering, these bodies of ours constantly share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be obvious in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but it has resulted in eternal life for you." (2 Cor. 4:7-12). Lent is an invitation to find, understand, uncover and share the treasure of life that God has indeed placed in us, God's unworthy clay jars.

The search for the Treasure of life should begin with a critical reflection of one's own self and that of our faith community. "Consider now! Call for the wailing women to come; Send for the most wise of them." (Jeremiah 9:17). The wailing women would sing songs that had emotional as well as intellectual appeal. The songs of the wise wailing women would probably initiate a process of critical analysis within the community, they would begin a process of introspection and self-discovery. The wise wailing women would teach the communities to sing the songs of repentance and social and spiritual revolution that would inspire them to overcome the tragedies and shortcomings of the sinful past and to see and recognise the sprouting of the new. During the season of Lent, the faith communities are called to a conscious and wise analysis of, and a spiritual stocktaking of their faith, to embark on a process of emotional and intellectual reflection, whereby the communities would be able to revive, rejuvenate and reorient themselves through the power of God that is working in them to move towards receiving with gratitude, and participating in, the treasure of Life, revealed through the cross.

The search for the Treasure of life teaches us the place and role of an individual within the community. In becoming childlike, the faith communities understand the significance of loving and being loved, of forgetting and forgiving, of sincerity and purity in heart, as well as the virtues of building relationships, exploring and inventing and

being able to emanate joy and transformation in the contexts they live in and witness. In understanding that life blossoms in the company of the other and not in competition with the other, communities learn the importance of growing together and practicing the right relationships within and without. Thus a faith community understands the meaning, significance and richness of living a life of sharing. Jesus has taught us that this vicarious life demands the giving of oneself and the emptying of oneself. It is the beginning of understanding Jesus' challenging invitation to discipleship: "Follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life." The cross of Jesus is the ultimate unraveling of the mystery of voluntary, vicarious suffering through which the faith communities will be resurrected and will share in the risen life of Jesus.

The search for the Treasure of life informs us of the intrinsic relationship of the faith communities with the cosmos. The water, mountains and wilderness play a significant role in the Biblical passages that are read during Lent. Israel's forty years of intercultural eco-pilgrimage through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan, not only informs us to become aware of the intrinsic value of the elements of creation, water, fire, clouds, trees and rocks for the sustenance, protection and the very existence of the community, but also teaches us the importance and significance of bio-diversity for life. It is often speculated that Jesus' use of examples from his eco-context; such as birds of the air, splendour of the lilies, grass of the field were part of his wilderness experience. The World Water Day that falls normally in the season of lent exhorts us to dig old wells leading to a refilling, rejuvenating, reviving, literally and spiritually of the springs in our communities. Unless we re-imagine and re-capture the relational stewardship of creation that has been entrusted to us, our quest for the Treasure of life remains elusive.

Jesus Christ is the Treasure of Life. Our Common Lectionary of the Communion of Churches in India (CCI) calls the communities for a liturgical pilgrimage during the season of Lent with themes such as the Cleansing Christ, the Forgiving Christ, the Accepting Christ, the Liberating Christ, the Restoring Christ, Christ - the King of Peace, Christ - the Life-giving Bread and Christ - the Self-giving Love, so as to enable us to Celebrate Life in Christ on Easter.

May God give the faith communities grace that they may in oneness of mind and spirit invest and channelize all faculty, energy, toil and strength in search of the Treasure of Life, and bestow mercy to experience Life in all its fullness.

Rev. Dr. D. Rathnakara Sadananda  
General Secretary



**Editor's Desk**

# Contents

## Lecture

8



### GOD OF JUSTICE GIVE US YOUR PEACE

The Church institutionally as well as all of us worshipers and believers are called to engage seriously, intelligently, and faithfully with the society and societies that surround us, wherever we find ourselves.



## Bible Study

4

### GOD OF JUSTICE, GIVE US YOUR PEACE

Let us remind ourselves of a triangle, where each of the three edges indicate 'righteousness', 'justice' and 'peace', this makes it clear to us that there is no 'justice' without 'righteousness' and that there is no 'peace' without 'justice'.

## NewScan

- 07 NCCI Centenary Celebrations
- 22 Peter Cater Scripture Examination 2014  
- Department of Pastoral Concerns
- 21 Dedication Ceremony  
- Diocese of Tirunelveli
- 20 Platinum Jubilee CSI Epiphany Cathedral  
- Diocese of Dornakal  
Department of Mission & Evangelism
- 24 Refresher Course for CSI Missionary Pastors
- 23 Karnataka Regional Mission Consultation
- Cov-3 - Madras Diocese
- Cov-4 - Phots - Refresher Course for CSI Missionary Pastors

## Reflection

12

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights" - Gloria Steinem

## Regulars

- 19 | Art & Culture Keyboard Lesson 75
- 18 | Edutainment Puzzles & Quizzicals

## Feature

14

### UNRAVELLING THE MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION

There are only two ways to live our life. 'One is as though nothing is a miracle, the other is, as though, everything is a miracle'...Albert Einstein

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# GOD OF JUSTICE GIVE US YOUR PEACE

Let us remind ourselves of a triangle, where each of the three edges indicate 'righteousness', 'justice' and 'peace', this makes it clear to us that there is no 'justice' without 'righteousness' and that there is no 'peace' without 'justice'.



Rev. Dr. Chilkuri Vasantha Rao, Principal, Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad

**W**hen we seek peace we seek as Jesus sought and when we build peace we build as Jesus built.

The Greek word for peace 'Irene' is the nearest equivalent of the Hebrew 'Shalom' indicating holistic well being. In our vernacular languages we have two words normally such as 'Shanthi' and 'Samadanam' so also in the Syrian language we do have two words one 'Slomo' which is the equivalent of 'Shalom' and the second word 'Shaino' which indicates peace in a state of absence of war.

Let us remind ourselves of a triangle, where each of the three edges indicate 'righteousness', 'justice' and 'peace', this makes it clear to us that there is no 'justice' without 'righteousness' and that there is no 'peace' without 'justice'.

Jesus after his resurrection appeared to his disciples and pronounced peace 'thrice'.

John 20:19- It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Then Jesus came and stood among them and said, "PEACE BE WITH YOU". (Emphasis mine)

John 20:20,21- After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "PEACE BE WITH YOU". (Emphasis mine)

John 20:26- A week later the disciples were together again indoors, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "PEACE BE WITH YOU". (Emphasis mine)

The thrice repeated "peace be with you" is an indication of perfect peace given by Jesus to his disciples, to us and to the whole created order.

Jesus' mission in the world was a mission for peace.

Jesus said in John 14:27- "Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as it be the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid."

Peace that Jesus gives to us is an authentic peace.

Jesus came into the world that was torn apart, segmented, polarized one divided from the other. This is indicated in the prayer of a male Jew:

"God thanks for not making me a gentile,  
Thanks for not making me a slave and  
Thanks for not making me a woman."

This is the indication of the social inequality distorting the imago Dei (image of God) in every person. At a universal level, there was estrangement of fellowship between God and human beings; there was estrangement of fellowship amongst human beings themselves and there was estrangement of fellowship between humanity and the rest of the created order. Our moderator in his presentation said: "Justice means equality to all". But then Jesus entered into a world of inequalities. In such a scenario the mission of Jesus was to reconcile these inequalities and thereby do justice to the underprivileged. God required justice to the poor, widows, orphans, strangers and creation. Jesus pledges justice to the same in his manifesto:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind and set free the oppressed..." (Luke 4:18).

These are the people subjected to injustice and marginalized, these are the ones in distress, these are the ones in debt and these are the ones discontent, peace less as they are they cry for justice. It is only justice that removes their distress, debt and discontentment and permeates peace in their lives.

How did Jesus go about doing this?

We as the Church of South India and especially the delegates of the 34th Synod Session need to take note of Jesus' initiatives for peace. We observe Jesus' ways are dynamic ways of bringing about peace.

Jesus redresses economic injustice:

Economic injustice was perpetuated by the tax collectors of Jesus's time in the Roman Empire. Extraction, extortion and economic exploitation were institutionalized, which drove common people to utter poverty.

Jesus initiates reconciliation as peace process: "Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Listen sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much'". (Luke 19:8-9) Jesus even called the tax collector Matthias. Jesus' ministry was addressing the issue of economic injustice

and liberating the people from all forms of economic exploitation. He transformed the lives of those who were perpetuating economic injustice and thereby created a society, where the poor could live a corruption free society.

Jesus redresses religious injustice: Religious injustice rendered a section of a people ineligible for God's grace. Oppressed as she was by the patriarchal values, bearing the burden of inequality, the woman, who was totally bent for 18 years was sitting in the synagogue at the back side, quite rightly also indicating her oppression justified by the religious authorities. Jesus initiates reconciliation as peace process.

In Luke 13:10-17 we see Jesus calls the bent woman to the fore front in the synagogue, heals her and declares her healed. The religious authorities object, for it was Sabbath. Jesus asserts God's healing grace to her on the Sabbath. Jesus declared that she was also a daughter of Abraham thus raised her religious and social status to be on par with men. Justice is equality to all and equality is peace to all!

Jesus redresses legal injustice: We read in John 4:28-30, Then the woman left her water jar, went back to the town and said to the people there, "Come and see that man who told me everything I have ever done could he be the messiah? So they left the town and went to Jesus.

harmony and gender balance that the CSI is conscious of and stands for in its life and ministry.

Jesus redresses the impingement on child rights

There is a need for growth of children in a non-violent ethos. Mark 10:13-16 reads: Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. When Jesus noticed this, he was angry and said to this disciples, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to these.".... Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them, and blessed them.

Jesus initiates the process to safeguard the rights of the children

There are very few places in the gospel, where we see Jesus being angry at something. This is one place Jesus gets angry, when the disciples stop the mothers that bring their children to Jesus. The disciples were depriving children the right to God's grace by making the children ineligible for having access to Jesus.

Child rights are safeguarded by Jesus. In continuation of Jesus justice tradition to children the CSI is committed to safeguarding child rights. We praise God for the CSI Synod's program of girl child, which has become a great blessing; the 'Wings of Faith' Sunday school curriculum ensures the holistic development of every child. Bringing up children in the scripture knowledge is put to exercise by the Peter Caters examinations. There are

**Jesus' ministry was addressing the issue of economic injustice and liberating the people from all forms of economic exploitation. He transformed the lives of those who were perpetuating economic injustice and thereby created a society, where the poor could live a corruption free society.**

Jesus initiates peace process through legal justice: In the Jewish tradition one man's witness could only be equated with two women's witness. We read, the people of Samaria left the town and went to see Jesus. We observe Jesus by his presence and ministry ushered in a situation where one women's witness was accepted by the society. Jesus was creating a new just society where men and women could enjoy equal status in the eyes of the legal realm.

We praise God that we continue the mission of Jesus Christ in the Church of South India. The Women's Fellowship of the Synod enjoys equality in organizing itself and its ministries. Women's ordination is of much importance sharing ministry equally as men and women in the church of God. It is laudable that the Church of South India insists for 33% representation of women in the decision making pastorate committees. To have had a woman as the general secretary of the Church of South India was commendable in sharing administrative powers equally as men and women. We had one woman clergy elected to the bishopric panel in one diocese and another woman clergy in another diocese was consecrated as bishop. The CSI stands for social justice and legal justice for women. This is the unity and

hundreds of boys and girls hostels for Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi children. There are thousands of educational institutions for teaching children with kingdom values that Jesus Christ has imparted. There are number of New Life Centers for equipping school dropouts, special schools for the differently abled, special institutions that care for the HIV/AIDS affected children.

Church of South India is committed for child rights. I would like all of us to know of an episode from this very diocese and place where we are worshipping. In the Krishna-Godavari diocese not far from here occurred an incident, when the Dalit Christians of the Bandlagudem congregation asked for land distribution from the government the high caste people in the village were retaliating and obstructing the process. In the course of the conflict a girl belonging to the CSI congregation in Bandlagudem, was abducted by a high caste man in the village. This triggered tension between congregation members and the high caste villagers. The church elders of the village informed bishop Dyvasirvadam about the abduction. Bishop Dyvasirvadam gave a call to all the surrounding CSI congregations to assemble in Bandlagudem, he himself went to the village and he staged a protest, gave a press meet and the secular TV channels covered the news. The Chief Minister and the Members of the Legislative Counsel in session took note of the incident and

instructed the District Collector to attend to the unrest immediately. The collector rushed to the scene promised the Bishop that he would ensure that the girl is brought back, and she was brought back from Hyderabad, Bishop Dyvasirvadam had pursued with the collector and saw to it that sixteen hundred acres of land was distributed to the Dalit Christians of the Bandlagudem village. The high caste culprits were booked and today they are cooling their heels in the jail. Such is the commitment of the CSI towards children and especially towards girl child and to the Dalits in general.

Jesus redresses ecological injustice: "All of creation waits with eager longing for the revelation of the children of God, for we know that up to the present time all creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth." (Rom.8:19, 22). In the present times we are able to discern and experience the ecological disasters as never before; air is polluted, water is polluted, forests are felled, land is eroding, ice is melting, oceans are rising, animal life is becoming extinct.

Jesus initiates peace process in doing justice to the creation for its preservation

In my younger days the gospel of Matthew fascinated me since it proved that Jesus our savior was the promised messiah. As a theological student the

of humans with God, the horizontal wood symbolizing the reconciliation of human beings with themselves, and the bottom end of the vertical wood fixed in the earth symbolizes the radical reconciliation with the earth and creation.

By his death on the cross Jesus saved the lives of all animals, which otherwise would have been used for sacrifice. It is in this salvific tone that Jesus gives his great commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures". (Mark 16:15). The Greek word used here is 'KRITES' meaning to all 'creatures' or the entire 'creation'. How many times we quote this verse but never mindful of preaching the good news to the creatures? This is the human mission to the entire creation as Jesus commissioned. It echoes the responsibility of the human begins to protect the birds of the air, fish of the sea and all animals and creeping things upon the earth. (Gen.1:26 & 28). It is the working towards the fulfillment of the vision of God of a peaceful kingdom as it is prophesized: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

The Church of South India is committed in continuing this great commission of Jesus in being the good news to all creatures and all created order. We promote peace to the air, peace to the birds, peace to the waters, peace

**Child rights are safeguarded by Jesus. In continuation of Jesus justice tradition to children the CSI is committed to safeguarding child rights. We praise God for the CSI Synod's program of girl child, which has become a great blessing;**

gospel of Luke appealed to me very much because of its stance for the poor. Getting introduced to the ashram way of life and indigenous theology the gospel of John got added to my interest. It is off late with my passion for ecological justice the gospel of Mark became precious for my study. It is the gospel of Mark that depicts the life of Jesus Christ engaged with initiatives for bring peace to the creation.

The gospel of Mark 1:1 reads: "This is the good news about Jesus Christ the son of God. We need to mark the words 'good news of Jesus Christ'. In the same chapter one and verses twelve and thirteen read: "At once the Spirit led him into the dessert, where he stayed forty days, being tempted by Satan. Wild animals were there too..." Jesus begins his mission of reconciliation at the very beginning of his ministry. He brings good news to the creation. He is led into the dessert by the Spirit; this is the mission of God, since he is led by the Spirit of God. The gospel makes it clear that he was in the dessert where there were wild animals. We remember the estranged fellowship of the creation with God and humanity, here is Jesus Christ the divine son of God and the representative of the humanity reconciling the creation with God and humanity, the stress is laid on the nature of the animals as being wild. The reconciliation of Jesus with the wild animals is indicated in the fact that the wild animals now become harmless and non-violent. The cross is a symbol of reconciling mission of Jesus Christ. The vertical wood symbolizing the reconciliation

to the fish, peace to the land, peace to the trees, peace to the animals. The CSI Synod ecumenical and ecological committee has brought about Bible Studies booklets on ecology and Bible, theological students were brought together to write Bible studies on ecology. We have at least two Sundays when we have themes such as 'Creation' and also 'Environment Sunday' when we equip our congregations with ecological thinking. We have recently celebrated the United Nations international year of forests. The recent Bible Study booklet for farmers was instrumental in bringing back the Biblical values laying stress on the importance of agriculture. Umpteen numbers of our schools, colleges and other institutions along with congregations are involved in several ecological programs for sustaining the created order. We are proud that the Church of South India was given a national award for perpetuating the best ecological programs in bringing about justice to creation and thereby perpetuating peace in creation.

#### Conclusion

We praise God for the initiatives of the CSI through the Synod, respective dioceses and through individual congregations.

Every initiative for peace is an initiative for justice and Every initiative for justice is an initiative for peace, since There is no peace without justice.

May the God of justice empower us in our every initiative and engagement for justice and peace!

# NCCI Centenary Celebrations

## Inaugural Program in Kolkata

By the Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, Convener, Publicity and Promotion, NCCI Centenary celebrations

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) Centenary Inaugural Programme got underway in Kolkata according to the schedule to start the year-long celebrations and observances in various forms and spread across different regions in India.

On February 2, the Centenary Thanksgiving Service was held at 6:00 pm in St. Paul's Cathedral, Kolkata. Dignitaries at the service included, from the NCCI Presidium, Honorable Bishop Dr. Taranath S. Sagar (President of NCCI), Mrs. Pearly Jos (Vice President of NCCI), Mr. Suman Biswas (Vice President of NCCI) and Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad (General Secretary of NCCI). Other Dignitaries present include Bishop Philip Masih (Methodist Church), Bishop Ashoke Biswas (Church of North India), Bishop Brojen Malakar (Church of North India), Lt. Col. Davidson Varghese (Salvation Army), Bishop Nelson Lakra (Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church), Bishop Emmanuel Panchoo (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Madhya Pradesh), Bishop Paul Sarkar (Church of Bangladesh), Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Joseph (General Secretary, NCC Sri Lanka), Dr. K. B. Rokaya (President of Christian Conference of Asia and General Secretary of NCC Nepal), Rev. Dr. Martin Krieg (EMW), Rev. Dr. Henrick Rosen (Sweden), Rev. Dr. Young Ju Kim (South Korea), Mr. Sonam Tezin (NCC Bhutan), Ms. Janejinda Pawadee (CCA), Shri Lalthanhawla (Chief Minister of Mizoram), Shrimati Rii (First lady of Mizoram) and many other heads and leaders of Churches and organizations from across the country and abroad.

Bishop Dr. Taranath Sagar brought a powerful and moving message in which he thanked God for the 100 years journey of NCCI, and recounted the blessing of being able to make great contributions to the nation as Indian Churches, organizations and as a council. He encouraged people to continue the Christian commitment to service and betterment of society, and also raised issues and challenges faced in the society and in the Churches such as caste discrimination and injustice found in various other forms. He urged the people to strive for unity, peace and justice as an expression of fulfilling our mandate as God's chosen people.

On February 3, the worship service was held at Bishop's College at 9:30 am. In keeping with the day's plan for symposium and discussions, the worship was focused on South Asian Ecumenical Solidarity. Ms. Pearly Jos brought the message in which she spoke with the example of different scenarios in the Bible where women were called to take the initiative and act decisively. She challenged the gathering to take serious note of the situation in South Asia and work together towards transformation. In the symposium that followed, the keynote address of Dr. Matthews Chunakara was read out followed by papers presented from Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and India. The discussions all led to the point of needing to

work together for the issues in South Asia. The Cultural Programme was held in the evening at the Calcutta Boys School in which the local host committees and local Church based groups enriched the fellowship with their lively and meaningful performances.

On February 4, the commemoration service was held in YWCA, S. N. Banerjee Road, Kolkata, the place where the National Missionary Council of India was formed. Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan, General Secretary of Council for World Mission (CWM) gave the message on "The power of Integral Mission and Grassroots Ecumenism" in which he spoke about enriching experience of fellowship in community, Encouragement for life with a purpose in community and Energy for mission by the community in solidarity.



The worship service is followed by a commemoration program which is chaired by NCCI Treasurer, Rev. Dr. Augustine Jeyakumar. Shri Lalthanhawla, Chief Minister of Mizoram addressed the gathering and wished the council well to continue the witness and service as an ecumenical body. An NCCI publication, "Prophetic Ecumenism: The journey ahead" was released at this time. Representatives of several countries, NCC's and constituent members of NCCI brought greetings and wishes to the National Council of Churches in India.

As the celebrations begin with the inaugural programs, the atmosphere is marked with a solemn sense of gratitude for God's leading all these one hundred years, the joy of enabling and eager anticipation about the opportunities that lie in the future for advancing the ecumenical vision towards the greater glory of God and in service of Church and nation.

# GOD OF JUSTICE, GIVE US YOUR PEACE

The Church institutionally as well as all of us worshippers and believers are called to engage seriously, intelligently, and faithfully with the society and societies that surround us, wherever we find ourselves.



By the Right Reverend Michael Lewis, Bishop, Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

I am honoured to be invited to attend the 2014 Synod of the Church of South India and to give this Bishop Hollis Memorial Lecture. I thank you all and pray blessings on you, on the Church, and on India.

To students of the history of the Churches, Hollis is a name to conjure with. The Arthur Michael Hollis of these lectures was not just a bishop but the son of a bishop and the uncle of a bishop. (For good measure he was also the son-in-law of a cathedral dean.) It's of course notable and memorable not only that he was the continuing diocesan bishop of Madras before and after the momentous national and ecclesial events of 1947 but also that he became CSI's first Moderator before his Professorship at Bangalore and eventual return to the land of his birth. In India especially the name of Hollis should be a name to conjure with and deeply respect. At the same time I want to record that the episcopal nephew to whom he was uncle, after serving as one of the finest and most inspiring Roman Catholic chaplains the University of Oxford has ever had, became one of the sanest and most open of Roman Catholic diocesan bishops until his recent death.

But, even if in an ecumenical spirit, I don't intend to spend an excessive time talking about bishops; bishops do that very well for themselves anyway. What I do want to talk about in this brief lecture is my conviction that Christians the Church institutionally as well as all of us worshippers and believers are called to engage seriously, intelligently, and faithfully with the society and societies that surround us, wherever we find ourselves. I notice that generally, but especially when away from our native land, most of us find it somehow more satisfying or at least absorbing of our time not to make that effort but instead to turn in on ourselves, apparently content with our ecclesiastical affairs narrowly defined. I believe that, insofar as we ignore the call to notice and engage beyond our associational group and beyond our faith, we miss the workings of the God of justice who hates injustice, all injustice; we miss the blessings of the God of completeness who can mend the broken, all the broken, and whose peace passes all understanding; and we miss, if we're not careful, the God who, by his very Trinitarian nature relational, calls us his creatures into relationship with his divine totality and the totality of creation, all creation. I dare to think that Michael Hollis, both in India and in England, pastorally, academically, and episcopally, might have shared these convictions.

What's my society, now? Where do I find myself? Though I was born in England and was deacon, priest, and bishop there for many years, my Anglican Province now is Jerusalem and the Middle East, stretching in Africa from Algeria east to Egypt and then down through Ethiopia to Somalia, and in Western Asia from an island in the Mediterranean though the Holy Land and the Levant to an

island in the Gulf of Aden, and from the mountains of Kurdistan and the shores of the Caspian to the southernmost parts of the Arabian Peninsula. My own diocese takes in the Sultanate of Oman, the seven United Arab Emirates, the Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and all of the divided island of Cyprus. We have congregations, sometimes closely clustered but more often thinly spread, in all of those places and lands.

There are, even among the countries for which I am responsible, whole nations in turmoil. In considering justice and injustice, peace and war, it is tempting and perhaps natural for Christians to notice the sufferings of fellow Christians first, but recently it has become clear that it is rare for Christians to be the sole group in trouble.

I judge that my society now is the totality of any of the nations that I serve, in their sorrows and in their joys, Christians, Muslims, and others united in the solidarity of their common humanity.

In some places Christians are more or less left alone in the midst of others' pain. In Bahrain, for instance, society's deep divisions remain on public view and they are principally between the Shi'a majority population and the Sunni establishment. The temptation in such a situation is to become, or indeed remain, particularly invisible and to stay literally and metaphorically within the compound of Christianity. But our cathedral parish in Manama and the sister-congregation at Awali have realised that their vocation is to watch and listen and learn, intently, intelligently, and with human empathy, and under the dean they have begun not only to pray for their non-Christian neighbours but to open up places of meeting, dialogue, and understanding. In this way some of our worshippers are coming to know more deeply the dynamics of a surrounding society that it would be easy to say is not their business because not Christian, and also to differentiate thoughtfully rather than be content with using simplistic categories and labels.

Yemeni politics revolve as much as ever around tribe, history both ancient and modern, and regional and provincial allegiance. A long-lasting Zaidi Houthis disruption along the northern border is a major force in destabilising the country. So too are Southern separatist movements and widespread Al Qaeda-branded acts of murderousness. Our church in Aden, like its Roman Catholic neighbour, witnesses by works of bold charity: while the Roman Catholics and their Mother Teresa house specialise in caring for the old and destitute, we at Christ Church are known for our polyclinic for the very poor of the immediate district and for our eye department where consultation and surgery is on offer to all. Furthermore our staff, largely female, have been a more or less deliberate mixture of Muslim, Christian, and Hindu, and the morning tea-break each day is a place where they discuss matters of national and local life in a spirit that doesn't avoid but isn't confined by background and creed. And our little congregation of worshippers, from a mixture of nations but with Ethiopians at present in the majority, really do pray for the peace of the land in which they are variously migrants, travellers, and exiles.

Kuwait's version of parliamentary government and even self-expression has long been fractious, but at least political arguments are aired publicly. Our priest who served there until a couple of years ago was remarkably active in getting out and meeting figures way beyond the normal bounds of Christian fellowship and at several levels in society, and as a result was able to get permission to write and publish a book on Christianity

**In considering justice and injustice, peace and war, it is tempting and perhaps natural for Christians to notice the sufferings of fellow Christians first, but recently it has become clear that it is rare for Christians to be the sole group in trouble.**

in Kuwait. It surprised many Kuwaitis that our faith has been present there so long and in such variety (though in truth the most startling fact, as elsewhere in the Gulf, was the widespread ancient historical presence of churches before the events of the seventh and eighth centuries and the rise of Islam). At the same time some said they felt honoured that a Christian had engaged in this way with the history of their nation. The challenge to our congregations in Kuwait is to share that priest's spirit of bold openness to Kuwaitis and to take multiple daily God-given opportunities to reach out in friendship and humanity.

In Qatar, the assumption had long been that, as in its large fellow Wahhabi-Muslim neighbouring Kingdom, practice of the Christian faith needed to remain covert and unacknowledged. The resultant mindset, at least among Anglicans, was, I am told, the same as in the congregations worshipping in a private way in that large neighbouring nation: never talk of your faith, let alone your places and times of worship, because the society that surrounds you forbids it. The vision, however, of the Emir of Qatar who came to power in 1995, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, and particularly that of his wife Sheikha Mozah, was to make it clear that mainline Churches should be allowed to be known to exist and indeed should be encouraged to build

substantial premises, on the condition of being properly registered entities and responsible residents willing to engage respectfully with Qatari life. It is a fact that, among those mainline denominations, the government is currently looking particularly to the Anglican Church to be an interpreter of the ways of Christianity to Qatar and an interpreter of the ways of Qatar to Christians. This is a sensitive task and a sometimes hard road for clergy and people to travel but I believe it is what we have been led to at this time. It has felt like a challenge, both from Qataris and from God: "you have your buildings, you have your worship, you have your permissions; but are you willing to come out, meet, explain, clear away preconceptions and have preconceptions cleared away? Will you now engage?"

Though I could cite other examples of emerging good practice, not least in the Emirates, one particular example from another country for which I am responsible ought to be mentioned. In Iraq, until the years during which harsh international sanctions were put in place to punish Saddam Hussein, our congregations in Baghdad, Basra, and elsewhere were small chaplaincies of mostly expatriate business people, diplomats, and their families. By all accounts some worshippers, especially those there for the longer term, took a lively interest in the life of the nation, which traditionally had seen itself as a confessional mixture of Muslims both Shi'a and Sunni, Christians of many sorts, Jews (it is, after all, the land of Babylon and Nineveh), and others. Faced with sanctions, however, Saddam, identifying St George Baghdad as a British presence and asset, even though Christians from nations other than the UK had always from time to time been part of the congregation,

peremptorily closed it and allowed it to fall into disrepair. The ill-advised and thoughtlessly planned invasion by the coalition of the United States under George W Bush and Britain under Tony Blair in 2003 seemed to spell a very possible end to St George's existence, as very rapidly Iraq suffered major structural and societal collapse and intercommunal disorder. First, however, and indeed prior to the invasion, an Anglican priest, Canon Andrew White, had brought the work of his specialist foundation for relief and reconciliation to Baghdad and had taken up partial residence at St George's. From there he attempted, as he still does, to get Shi'i and Sunni leaders to talk to one another and work for the common good. Although in retrospect the other historic Churches of Iraq could have been involved sooner in this ministry, not just to demonstrate Christian solidarity but also to gain their wisdom, it signalled to Muslims unaccustomed to Christians' taking a sympathetic interest in their inter-Muslim tribulations that our faith and its practical outworking are essentially not our personal, Christian possession but God's gift to the whole world. At the same time, as well as a food-relief station, a general medical clinic was set up, with pharmacy, laboratory, and in due course dental, ultrasound, and now ophthalmological facilities. All this, open to all comers including Muslims in a situation of high insecurity, takes a risk, as does the recently established and rapidly growing kindergarten and primary school. In parallel to these works of mercy, the worshipping

congregation, almost entirely Iraqi, has grown to several hundreds. In the anomalous situation that prevails in Baghdad, where there is little peace even though no war is officially being waged, my policy has been a classic Anglican one of welcoming to regular church attendance any who name the name of the Most Holy Trinity without seeking to change their denomination. To service these native speakers of Arabic and Syriac I have ordained one Iraqi priest, with the goodwill of the authorities of his existing tradition. This too is a risk, but the principle is the same as in the humanitarian work: not to be content either to mothball St George's until better times, or to restrict attendance to international expatriates, or to exclude Muslims from visiting, but to place it, its compound and buildings as well as its worship, at the service of the wider Iraq, both Christian and non-Christian.

All the instances I have cited could, I expect, be paralleled in other dioceses, other Churches, and other regions. There will be a variety of places where the local church and the wider Church strive to establish and develop works and ministries of charity and mercy that are a genuine witness and offering to the society in

is grave. Such instances, however, are very few. In my own diocese, those who choose to worship in our churches are largely not citizens of their countries of residence. They are, and I am among them, migrant expatriates or expatriate migrants; take your pick of terminology. But I am aware that we are frequently far too timid in living openly and boldly in the land where life has taken us, bewailing our inability to be authentically proclamatory and evangelistic, whereas in fact our best evangelism and our most thought-provoking proclamation will be by the attitudes we have and the offer of practical love we make to those around us, our hosts as well as our fellow guests. If, beyond that, we are ever to have the chance of suggesting a respectful critique of our host societies, it will only ever be possible by virtue of their knowing us as trusted friends already.

Talk of commending ourselves to those around us by our imaginatively effective actions and by our sincerely loving attitudes, and of collaborating with God in the cause of peace with justice for all, and of recognising this way of being Christian as genuine gospel witness, leads me to reflect that when justice and peace are conspicuously lacking in our own internal Church life then a negative witness is offered to those outside us who observe us, and far

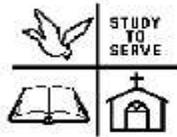
**Talk of commending ourselves to those around us by our imaginatively effective actions and by our sincerely loving attitudes, and of collaborating with God in the cause of peace with justice for all, and of recognising this way of being Christian as genuine gospel witness, leads me to reflect that when justice and peace are conspicuously lacking in our own internal Church life then a negative witness is offered to those outside us who observe us, and far from commending Christ we compromise and betray him.**

which they are set and are not predicated simply on the hope of conversions. Even where such explicit ministries are not yet possible, there are examples of parishes that cultivate an attitude of risk-taking openness and thoughtful engagement with those beyond the Christian enclave, and who realise that both peace and justice are indivisible, to be prayed and worked for and celebrated as much for non-Christians as for Christians; parishes and individuals who commend themselves to those outside the Church for their sheer, simple, and unaffected pleasure in being fellow human beings with them in the same place.

I have concentrated, however, on my own diocese because I often hear it said that such engagement with surrounding society is either easier or better done when worshippers are citizens of and native to the land in which they are living. It is true that those who are guests in a nation should have a due respect for that nation and its people who are their hosts. Yet an attitude of interested engagement and risk-taking offer, such as I have, I hope, described, ought to characterise and commend Christians everywhere, except in the direst situations of persecution and forced subterranean existence. There are a few countries in the world where Christians are compelled to live, as it were, the life of the catacombs, and the situation in each

from commending Christ we compromise and betray him. The expression of different opinions within the Christian body, and the interplay of personalities that struggle to accommodate one another, have been features of the Church's life from the time of the disciples and the apostolic age, and are in themselves natural and neutral phenomenon. But we underestimate the size of the stumbling block that we place in the way of those who observe us, not least those who come with a presumption of interest and respect, when we seem to be hypocrites who are all for peace and justice everywhere but fail in practice to demonstrate and promote them within the Church. It grieves me when, in one or other of my parishes and congregations, or in the wider counsels of our diocese and province, legitimate difference turns, or is turned, into precisely what does not make for divine justice or for the peace that passes human understanding.

The prayer that is the given title of this lecture, therefore, "God of justice, give us your peace", needs to be worn and lived in by Christians as a seamless garment. If it is, then we shall commend Christ and not just ourselves by being known for our true, forbearing love for one another as well as our bold, altruistic, and practical love for all God's creation and most especially the societies within which we find ourselves.



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## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights"- Gloria Steinem, Women's Liberation Movement Activist**

**By the Amritha Bosi Perumalla is a doctoral student at the University of Frankfurt researching the role of the church in the discourse on human rights. She is the daughter of Bishop Surya Prakash.**



**C**elebrated every year on the 8th of March, the International Women's Day (IWD) is a celebration of the economic, political, social and cultural achievements of women worldwide in the past, present and for the future. It was born out of the labor movements in North America and Europe at the turn of the twentieth century by women who were experiencing great inequality and oppression at the work place. Over the years, the International Women's Day has been celebrated all over the world as a day to 'hail past victories over oppression and inequality and to prepare for the challenge of the future in the fight for complete liberation'. The United Nations began celebrating the International Women's Day during the 1975 International Women's Year. In 1977, the United Nations proclaimed this day to be the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. The theme of the United Nations for this year's IWD is "Equality for women is progress for all". Built around this theme, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate their achievements. This year, the IWD drawing on the UN theme is focusing specifically on Inspiring Change.

As we reflect on the theme for this March issue of CSI Life 'Lent: Call to Re-Orient Our Minds', let us re-examine, re-focus and re-orient our position towards

**We all may not be part of Women's Fellowships or have opportunities to propagate women's issues. However, our views towards them are important and need examined. Over the past two decades, women in India have re-oriented their roles to being successful in business, arts and politics.**

women. Inspiring Change is a pertinent focus given the frivolous and shameful social conditions women today face in India. In the recent months, not a day goes by where one does not hear, read or see the atrocities committed against women. That is not to say that women have not made progress in all spheres of life, it is just that being a woman in India today continues to be a struggle and fight against the patriarchal power structures in our society. The efforts of the Church and Christian organizations geared towards women and also the girl child are noteworthy in that they focus on giving those voiceless avenues for growth and development. It is because of the caring nature of the Church towards human rights that the struggle for equality for women has become the struggle for all. However, though the Church's position towards women has become highly inclusive as seen by the appointment of the first CSI woman bishop, one must ask whether the Church has really been an inspiring change, or even an inspiration in bringing about change for women in today's Indian society? Are we as members of the church inspirations for change or are we quiet onlookers and passers-by towards the inequality towards women in our country?

I would like to focus on two aspects in this brief article: firstly, a celebration of women and secondly, a deeper reflection into our attitudes towards women in society.

#### Inspiring Change

Growing up as the daughter of a pastor in the Church of South India, I have seen and experienced the programmes organized over the years by various departments and committees of the church and also several Christian institutions in India. From academic institutions like the United Theological College where I grew up as a child to the mission work in Medak Diocese where my parents hail from, I have had a unique bird's eye perspective of the mission and work of the Church. Through these years, I have seen many individuals and groups be an inspiration to bring about change. Through them many more were inspired and change was almost a chain reaction. Specifically regarding the work done to alleviate the injustices against women, I would like to celebrate the inspiring work of the Women's Fellowship in the Church of South India.

Each of the twenty-two dioceses of the Church of South India has a Women's Fellowship. Based on their annual themes, they spear head projects and programmes for the upliftment and development of not only christian members of the church in a given diocese, but also the poor

regardless of religion, age or gender. For the last seven years, I have had the privilege of witnessing several programmes and projects in the Diocese of Karimnagar. Through seminars and workshops, the women's fellowship is engaged in developing leadership, in bringing awareness of women's issues, educational opportunities provided by the government, health, hygiene and sanitation etc. In the most recent years, there has been more focus on equality, justice and ecological preservation. They are also engaged in prison ministry, giving counseling to the prisoners and providing help to their families. One of the more inspiring works of the Women's Fellowship in Karimnagar is their involvement in social activism. In times where women are being raped, molested and degraded on a daily basis, these women organized rallies in various cities of the Diocese, showing their solidarity with the victims and berating the actions of the perpetrators of this violence and harassment. These women who gained knowledge and skills through various church organized seminars, now regularly meet with the Collector of the District to show their support towards other women. More well-to-do churches have adopted poorer villages as brother and sister church and pass on their expertise and experience to them. On the ecological front, the

Women's Fellowship in the Diocese of Karimnagar organized a Mass Tree Plantation Drive and another No Plastic Rally against the use of plastic and other toxic materials. It is indeed marvelous to see the work of women in just one of the Dioceses of the Church of South India imagine all twenty two of them!

This International Women's Day You may recall and celebrate the work of the Women's Fellowship in your own Diocese and Church. Let us gain inspiration from the tremendous work done for women by the women in our churches!

Re-Orient our Minds A Self Reflection for Inspiring Change

International Women's Day is a celebration of women their lives, their struggles, their achievements. We all may not be part of Women's Fellowships or have opportunities to propagate women's issues. However, our views towards them are important and need examined. Over the past two decades, women in India have re-oriented their roles to being successful in business, arts and politics. These women not only have to assert their strength and credibility in a male-dominated environment, but they also have to continue fulfilling the traditional roles as wives and mothers. Though women now have more chances of being participatory members of India's growing economy, they still have to deal with the conservative and patriarchal mindset that is still very pertinent in both men and women. There is no doubt that change is necessary and several programs are already being implemented by the government of India, NGOs and also the Church. These programs focus on empowering women through education, micro-credits and loans to start businesses. I have mentioned earlier, some of the programmes of the church. As successful as these programs are, we must ask ourselves if it truly changes our attitude towards women. These programmes have brought about a positive change in the lives of many hundreds and thousands of women, however, has it also brought a positive change in the way we see and perceive women in our society? The sad truth is that despite these programmes, women are still seen as second-class, and as dependent on a male counterpart. They are still widely discriminated against, oppressed and disrespected. Why in this century of change and

development, innovation and technology are our mindsets still so traditional and conservative, so oppressive and demeaning?

How do we bring about a positive change a change in our attitude towards women a change in our mindset to see them as equal members in society how can we re-orient our minds? Equality towards women begins in our thoughts, processed through our perception that is sometimes tainted with stereotypes and prejudices and ultimately it is manifested in our actions and stance towards women. In order to change our mindset, we must first understand our perception of women. Take a moment and call to mind a woman in your life, for e.g. a colleague or a friend. How do you perceive them? What expectations do you have of them? What prejudices and stereotypes play into that view consciously or even subconsciously? Where did you pick up those prejudices and how are you enabling them?

Through self-reflection, we gain an insight to the source of our understanding of women. In this process, we become aware of how our thought processes are influenced by the currents of history, politics, markets, traditions, religion and culture. We might realize that even we as educated, Christian members of a modern society still propagate, knowingly or unknowingly, antiquated, unequal and unjust ideas of women. Our gendered opinions need to be deconstructed, re-valued and re-oriented.

Our Focus

With this in mind, the International Women's Day 2014 with the theme Inspiring Change wants us to look at the following areas to bring about change for:

- Greater awareness of women's equality
- Equal recognition of woman in the arts
- Growth of women-owned businesses
- Increased financial independence
- More women in science, engineering and technology
- Fairer recognition of women in sports

During this time of Lent, let us take the time and focus on the women in our lives. Let us find inspiration from their lives and stories, from their struggles and achievements and let us celebrate this International Women's Day with reflecting on ourselves and our expectations of women. Let us joyfully be part of a celebration throughout history and across nations because equality of women is progress for all!



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# UNRAVELLING THE MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION

with Specific reference to Rudolf Bultmann's 'program Of De-mythologisation'

**There are only two ways to live our life. 'One is as though nothing is a miracle, the other is, as though, everything is a miracle'.... *Albert Einstein.***



**Rev. Diamond Michael, Director, Department of Christian Education, Krishna Godavari Diocese.**

**T**he cross takes us to extreme silence, in which we identify ourselves once again. As we are approaching lent season, I thought it would be relevant to ponder on the words like being saved or salvation. It is impossible to understand the meaning and essence of salvation without understanding life itself. We marvel our artistic creations, without little understanding the art of creation. How well do we understand our yesterdays, our to days, and our tomorrows? Is life just an accident? Or an incident in a larger event? How do we unravel the mystery of our life? How do we unravel the mystery around our life? Where is the life we have lost in the living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the life that we have lost in information? Bible says the Knowledge of Truth will set us free from the struggles of life. So, then what is truth? What is the truth of life? Lets discuss in spiritual terms...

The term 'soteriology' comes from the Greek word 'soteria' which means 'salvation', which is increasingly used to refer 'the theories of atonement' or 'the works of Christ. Soteriology embraces two broad areas of theology: the question of how salvation is possible with regard to the history of Jesus Christ and how it is understood. Let's try to understand what on earth this demythologizing denotes...

### RUDOLF BULTMANN - DEMYHOLOGIZING

Rudolf Bultmann was born in 1884 at Wiefelstede, near Oldenburg in Germany. He studied theology at the Universities of Tübingen, Berlin and Marburg. He was a NT scholar, rather a theologian. the 19th century liberalism confidently reconstructed a portrait of the 'Jesus of history', as he really was, who turned out to be a good liberal Protestant. Bultmann's kerygmatic approach to theology can be argued to bring together contemporary New Testament scholarship, systematic theology and philosophical theology i.e., existentialism. Bultmann's skeptical approach to the Gospels made it impossible to reconstruct a historical portrait of Jesus. Knowledge of the historical portrait is unnecessary. Showing interest in the historical Jesus is actually illegitimate. Bultmann takes Paul's statement that 'we no longer know Jesus Christ 'after the flesh' to mean that Paul was no longer interested in the historical Jesus.

How do we bridge the gulf between the 1st century and the 20th century? How can the NT message be applied to our generations? Bultmann attempted to answer these questions in an essay on 'New Testament and Mythology.' He says in that ... " It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves

of modern medical and surgical discoveries and at the same time to believe in the NT world of spirits and miracles." It is impossible today to accept the mythical world-view. The mythical world-view hangs together as a whole. Bultmann's solution is to 'demythologize'. It is the English translation of the German term: "Entmythologisierung" is to 'demythologize' i.e., 'translate the mythological discourse of New Testament absolutely into the discourse of human existence. Mythology is "the use of imagery to express the 'other-worldly' in terms of 'this world' and 'the divine' in terms of 'worldly'. Here, we can refer to Bonhoeffer's term: 'sacred worldliness' which indicates 'the presence of the church(God) in the material world.' 'Myth,' occasionally, denotes the 'objectifying' talk about God. 'Myth' is problematical because he holds that it represents a false stumbling block for modern man. "The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world he lives in. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically or existentially". (NT and Mythology) Bultmann's demythologizing proposals set strong apologetic motives. To demythologize means to translate the mythological language exhaustively into existential (or anthropological) terminology. This is possible, according to Bultmann because of his insistence that in the myths of scripture the narrators intended to portray above all else the ways in which they understood their own existence rather than objective Reality. To demythologize (existentialize) then means, for Bultmann is to interpret them existentially, in the light of the portrayal of human existence which we find in the analysis of the various modes of man's life.

The main problem, inherent in Bultmann's demythologizing proposals, is connected with his insistence that the translation of the mythological into existential discourse must be absolute (or exhaustive). It has been argued that a completely demythologized Christianity would be a contradiction. To translate Christian discourse exhaustively into existential terms would be overlooking the strong ontological constituents. Bultmann comes, perilously, close to transforming Christianity into a philosophical way of life. In his view, there is a dangerous dichotomy between man and nature. A complete demythologization would be to disregard past (historical) element in Christian faith. A completely demythologized Christianity would also be a completely de-historicized one. In this similar manner, Dietrich Bonhoeffer also talks about 'religion less Christianity' which is a radical interpretation of Christian faith into completely in secular terms.

Bultmann's controversial program of "demythologization" proved to be especially significant in relation to the beliefs concerning the end of history. Bultmann regarded that such beliefs are myths. The New Testament relates stories concerning remote and inaccessible times and places (such as 'in the beginning' or 'in heaven'), and involving supernatural agents or events. Bultmann declares that these stories possess an underlying existential meaning, which can be perceived and appropriated by suitable process of interpretation. Bultmann regarded the entire enterprise of historical reconstruction of Jesus as a blind alley. The cross and resurrection are linked in the kerygma as 'the divine act of judgement' and 'the divine act of salvation'. One can not therefore, according to Bultmann, go behind the kerygma, using it as a "source" in order to reconstruct an "historical Jesus" with his "messianic consciousness," his "inner life," or his "heroism", That would merely be "Christ according to the flesh," who no longer exists.

The "Jesus of history" lacks the soteriological significance of the "Christ of faith." The thorny problems of Christology may therefore be left behind in order to develop soteriology, "the knowledge of faith concerning the person of the savior." Christ is not a past phenomenon, but ever present word of God, expressing

similar soteriological structure. John Hick in his book "God has many names" says: ... "The supreme being is referred to as God in a Christian church, as Adonai in a Jewish synagogue, as Allah in a Muslim mosque, As Ekoamkar in a Sikh guru dwara, as Rama or Krishna in a Hindu temple. And yet there is an important sense in which what is being done in several forms of worship is essentially the same.' William Temple the Archbishop of Canterbury defined worship as 'quickening the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God.' And this realization should help us to understand the transformation from self-centeredness to reality-centeredness. Salvation only refers to the status of the individual after death. This is an idea which has to be ceased. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "He has made known to us in His hidden purpose ... namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on Earth, might be brought to a unity in Christ."

There is a famous story of Svetateku in the Changodya Upanishad, where the Guru tells the disciple to take the seed of a tree and to break it to find the hidden essence of the tree. The guru asks him: What

**The "Jesus of history" lacks the soteriological significance of the "Christ of faith." The thorny problems of Christology may therefore be left behind in order to develop soteriology, "the knowledge of faith concerning the person of the savior." Christ is not a past phenomenon, but ever present word of God, expressing not a general truth, but a concrete proclamation addressed to us.**

not a general truth, but a concrete proclamation addressed to us. For Bultmann, the eschatological process became an event in the history of the world. Never forget, dear friends, that Bultmann is a brilliant NT theologian and scholar.

#### Reflections

Mark Heim, in His Book "Salvations" mentions a story of four blind men examining an elephant. One touching the leg, thinks it's a pillar. The other one, felt the trunk as a snake. The other touching the flank thinks that it's a wall. The other dude touching the tusk thinks it's a horn. The point that he makes is that the same reality is understood and perceived in different ways. In a way, he is right to say... "All experience is 'experiencing as'." All the great post-axial religions, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism exhibit (almost) a

do you see? 'Nothing' he replies. Then, the guru says: 'My son, that subtle essence which you do not see, truly from that subtle essence, truly from that subtle this great tree exists.' The Indian mind has never been content to know 'about God' it has always sought 'to know God' and to realize him and to experience has presence not in that imagination but in 'the ground of soul.' I want to conclude in the words of Alka Yagnic Kumar, who portrays the condition of present day religions... "Softly, gently whispers a Voice... Why have I been held a Prisoner. In temples, mosques and churches? Why have I been used as an object. In religious, wars and commerce? Why have I been locked in words. In Geeta, Khoran and Bible? Why are they not of your own making Idols of ME in your mind? Why? Can't you see that you've captured But only bits and pieces of ME?"

## Theme

For the month of April 2014

**Risen Lord and Resurrected Communities**

# SPIRITUAL RE-ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP



**Lent is a time to repent of sins to secure God's forgiveness and to strengthen one's relationship with God and man. The cross signifies God's assurance of new life which Jesus made available through his death on it. The Christian hope promised by the word of God is manifested in the cross. A Christian disciple's life during lent is a pilgrimage to appropriate this hope.**

**By the Rev. Dr. G. Stephen Lionel, CSI Presbyter, Diocese of Tirunelveli.**

The word "Lent" derived from Old English Lencten, German Lenz (spring) denotes forty days fasting before Easter. Forty signifies forty days fast of Jesus, and fast is meant to prepare persons for baptism on Easter night. In Rome in the fifth century, fast was for three weeks and in Eastern Churches Seven. Roman Catholics now keep only Ash Wednesday as a fast day but Lent remains a time of penance. Originally the fast was rigorous. One meal a day was allowed and all flesh and white meats were forbidden. Gradually the fast was relaxed from eighth century. The Book of Common Prayer according to Anglican Liturgy emphasizes penitential practices and private devotion at the discretion of the individual. Eventually, Lent is a time to repent of sins to secure God's forgiveness and to strengthen one's relationship with God and man. The cross signifies God's assurance of new life which Jesus made available through his death on it. The Christian hope promised by the word of God is manifested in the cross. A Christian disciple's life during lent is a pilgrimage to appropriate this hope.

Spiritual life is the life of union with Christ in faith. When a man opens the door of his heart and life to the knocking Christ, Christ comes in to dwell in him in a relationship of love and mutual sharing (Rev 3: 20). When Christ indwells in a human being by the power of the Holy Spirit, the human being becomes a new man, in a new society (2 Cor. 5 : 17, Rom 5 : 15). Spiritual discipline such as prayer, meditation and visualization create a calming effect. These empower a Christian disciple to overcome any kind of crisis or conflict he/she may encounter. Different religions have different standards of spirituality. However, for Christians spirituality is based on the words Jesus "Love your neighbour as yourself". Generally people look for certain outward signs such as praying, attending Church, participating in the Eucharist, and reading the scripture to label a person as a spiritual being. To some, being spiritual is not to have jokes or laughter. Yet, such things alone do not become the measuring rod of spirituality.

True Christian spirituality must reflect Lord Jesus. Church must highlight the moral, ethical and social teaching of Jesus. One's life becomes meaningful by following the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Sermon on the Mount which strengthens one's spirituality to become a Christian disciple. The Sermon on the Mount involves inner attitudes and demands which are more difficult than those found in the Law of Moses. Despite its simplicity, it is difficult for human beings to follow the teachings of Jesus. But Jesus says those who lose their life for his sake will find it. (Mathew 10: 39). It is indeed worth to deny pleasures of world for the sake of our life in

Christ. ". Jesus challenges His followers to count the cost of sacrifice for Christ's sake (Luke 14:27-33, Phil. 2 : 6, 7, John 4 : 32 34, 2 Corinthians. 8 : 9). One cannot serve people until and unless one transforms in the likeness of Jesus for the sake of the Gospel. Brother Stanley, a building Engineer turned Bible Teacher rightly says, "Self denial is not cheap. As Disciples of Christ we called to deny ourselves. Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. Prestige, pleasure and possessions are the three things the followers of Christ must sacrifice to do a service that pleases God and blesses people. Accordingly, our hearts and minds must be re-oriented in tune with realization of God during this Lent.

The Cost of Discipleship for the Reorientation of Individual, Home, Church and World for Lent

The spiritual life is like swimming. If one is not moving forward one is liable to sink. Christian Spirituality is not just an emotional vision or dream but the sustenance of it till the end. Sadhu Sundersingh says that, "One thinks that when one's sin is forgiven one is saved, but one is saved only when one's sinful nature is cured". A progress in spiritual life is, as Paul says, "not that I have already obtained all this or have already been made perfect. But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Phil 3: 12). Similarly in Ephesians 4: 13, Paul compares Christians to growing children. A Christian disciple is to keep on growing in the faith until he reaches his full proper stature, that of Christ.

After the reformatory protest of Martin Luther, the modern evangelical pattern taught the holiness of family life. A regular disciplined family prayer is of great help to an individual's spiritual life. Christ himself rose early in the morning to pray and that is a good example to follow. He also encourages his followers to pray together. Fruitful periods of prayer include time to study the Bible and enable God's guidance. Like Noah's family that obeyed God with unity, it is essential for every family to sacrifice time and energy to prove one's discipleship costly in following Jesus.

Every person who is a disciple of Jesus or a believer is a member of the local faith community, called the Church. The Christian fellowship within the Church especially in the administrative structure and the life of its individual members are effective tools to witness Christ in the world. The central and most typical of Church's life is the coming together of congregation for worship on Sunday the Lord's Day especially for the service of the Lord's Supper. The proclamation of the word of God through preaching prepares the minds and hearts of the hearers to edify their spiritual life along with the fellowship of other believers. Above all, the Holy Spirit is present in all that the Church does when the Disciples of Christ assemble for

worship and sends the worshipping Church out into the world to share the joy of freedom with others.

The biblical doctrine of the Old Testament mainly in the prophetic books and the Nazareth manifesto of Jesus connect Christians' service to the State to proclaim gospel to all. To Paul the Church is the reconciling community (2 Cor. 5: 19) reconciliation between God and man and between man and his fellowmen. The Christian involvement in the world of politics and power can never be comfortable or easy and always involve tension and suffering. At this juncture he must obey the will of God, study scripture by openness of spirit and share the sufferings and aspirations of his fellowmen. One of the leading Indian theologians of our time, Dr. M.M. Thomas, presents his view about the Church's role in the secular world: "India needs most today is not revival ascetic tradition but a new type of sanctity which helps people to live as Christians in the life of the world". Here Christian discipleship counts its cost in building of nation with Christian presence in an effective way.

theologian lists the challenges of the cost of discipleship very sternly: "our own selfish ways, our eagerness to pursue other path other than the path set by Jesus, our own lack of courage to stand up for conviction and our unwillingness to face the consequences of our decision to follow Christ these are some of the reasons for our difficulty. It is important that we become conscious of them and face them up". Nevertheless man's life struggles are not greater than the struggles of Jesus. The temptation he faced at the beginning of his ministry and periodical temptations encountered during his ministry on earth are the clues to that help his disciples overcome troubles. Jesus has set a model for us through his fast and temptation to face circumstances that hinder our service to others particularly to the weaker section of the society. Jesus never likes to use miracles to impress others and to satisfy his needs. However, he did perform miracles which are his ways of responding to specific needs and to build relationships. The conflicts in Jesus' life remain with him till the end even in the garden of Gethsemane where he agonized over his impending ordeal on the cross. But when he submitted himself, he was at

**One cannot serve people until and unless one transforms in the likeness of Jesus for the sake of the Gospel. Brother Stanley, a building Engineer turned Bible Teacher rightly says, "Self denial is not cheap. As Disciples of Christ we called to deny ourselves. Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. Prestige, pleasure and possessions are the three things the followers of Christ must sacrifice to do a service that pleases God and blesses people. Accordingly, our hearts and minds must be re-oriented in tune with realization of God during this Lent.**

The Cost of Discipleship in relation to Message of Repentance and Forgiveness

To re-orient man's spiritual power one must be forgiven from sins. A Christian disciple has to pass through the process of repentance and inherit the forgiveness of sins made available through the death of Christ. Repentance is the most important message to the world today, which supplies means to change one's mind and heart, a radical change in one's own relationship with God and fellow human beings. Many associate repentance with emotion like shedding of tears. But it is possible to become emotional and shed tears, yet never repent. Along with proclamation of repentance, the disciples also cast out demons and cured the sick. By proclaiming the power of Christ effectively, the disciples are empowered to challenge the evils of social systems, structures, institutions, and traditions that keep people in captivity. Apostle Peter's sermon at Pentecost concludes with an appeal to his hearers to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Act 2: 38). And Paul immediately after accepting Christ, was told by Ananias to be baptized and washed away from his sins (Acts 22: 16). Hence, it is still in the practice of the Church to encourage adult baptisms during Lent. Baptism is not for the membership drive, but through the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness from sins with spiritual stamina to prove the cost of discipleship.

Spirituality Re-orientated towards the Cost of Discipleship: A Challenge

Rev. Dr. K.C. Abraham, a leading third world

peace as he confessed "Not my will but Thine". This unswerving trust in God and unflinching commitment to God's mission was the source of his strength.

I quote the German theologian Bonhoeffer's words from his book Cost of Discipleship as a conclusion, "Bewilderment is the true comprehension. Accordingly, at crucial moments of decision making many of us do not dare to take up the task that is most suitable because of the difficulties that are involved in undertaking such tasks. Most of us want to play safe in the shallow waters of our knowledge. Faith is something which is beyond our intellect understanding. And to plunge into the deep waters an individual needs courage. Only in that confusion and bewilderment do we understand that we are frail and we surrender ourselves to the will of God". Our call to discipleship to follow Christ must be a one way faith journey. Like Abram (later Abraham) in his faith journey we should care not for our safety but willing to plunge into deep waters of the incomprehensible. It is not our choice to select from which cup that we should drink. But let Lord's will be done in our lives, Amen.

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# Congratulations

Crossword Puzzles # 144 & 145 - Total Points: 20 & 19

Mrs.Anbu Hepzibah Jesudason  
Mrs.Evangeline Lionel  
Mrs.D.Augustina Vimal  
Mrs. D.Angelina D. Raja  
Dr.B.Evangeline Jones  
Rev.A.Olimpa  
Mrs. R.Jacina Immanuel  
Mrs. Raji Ramachandran  
Mrs. C.K. Selvarani Thangadurai  
Mrs.D.Maragatham

144	145
20	19
20	19
20	-
20	-
20	19
20	19
20	-
20	19
20	19
20	19
19	19

Mr. V.Jeyasekar  
Mrs.Carolina Vedaratnam  
Mrs.Mabiba Sen  
Mr. Nicolas Ratnakar  
Mrs. Christna T.Asangi  
Rev.Kiruba Robinson  
Rev.B.Dayanandam  
Rev.H.C.I. Kirubakar Rao  
Mrs. Vasanthi Jeyasekar  
Mrs.Marcy Victoria Kattakola  
Mr.M.Ratna Prabhu  
Rev.Javvadi Ananda Dayakar Raju  
Mr.G.Paulraj

144	145
20	-
20	-
19	19
20	19
18	19
17	19
17	19
-	19
-	19
-	19
-	18
-	19
-	19

## Crossword Puzzle # 146 15- 19 (GNB)

1	5							7	3
	2								
		4		11					
8	9			6					
			12						
			13						
			10						
		14							
	15								
16									

Clues Across: No 146

- 1 no longer to be \_\_\_\_ (10)
- 2 ... and a \_\_\_\_ (6)
- 4 land of \_\_\_\_ (6)
- 6 was named \_\_\_\_ (4)
- 8 \_\_\_\_ to my house (4)
- 10 able to \_\_\_\_ them (5)
- 12 \_\_\_\_ the stars (5)
- 13 \_\_\_\_ old age (4)
- 14 she named \_\_\_\_ (7)
- 15 ..have \_\_\_\_ him (6)
- 16 forgive my \_\_\_\_ (8)

Clues Down: No 146

- 1 ..to be his \_\_\_\_ (9)
- 3 Eliezar of \_\_\_\_ (8)
- 5 halves \_\_\_\_ each (8)
- 7 I will do \_\_\_\_ (10)
- 9 just once \_\_\_\_ (4)
- 11 countries ? (7)

You can send answers by  
Email <csilife2012@gmail.com>

## Crossword Puzzle # 145 10 - 14 (GNB)

1	2	4				13		15	11
A	S	H	K	E	N	A	Z	A	A
3							7		
S	H	A	V	E	H	R	C	L	M
3			9		12				
G	E	R	A	R	A	I	A	L	R
	6								
O	B	A	B	Y	L	O	N	I	A
M	A	N	R		T	C	A	E	P
	10								
O	E	L	A	M	A	H	A	S	H
			14						
R			H	A	R	A	N		E
8									
R	E	L	A	T	I	V	E	S	L
	16				17				
A	M	A	M	R	E	N	E	M	Y
18									
H	A	Z	A	Z	O	N			

Answers Across : No 145

- 1 Ashkenaz 10: 3
- 3 Gerar 10: 19
- 5 Shaveh 14: 17
- 6 Babylonia 11: 31
- 8 Relatives 12: 1
- 10 Elam 14: 1
- 12 Altar 12: 8
- 14 Haran 12: 4
- 16 Mamre 13: 18
- 17 Enemy 14: 15
- 18 Hazazon 14: 7

Answers Down : No 145

- 2 Sheba 10: 7
- 3 Gomorrah 13: 10
- 4 Haran 11: 27
- 7 Canaan 11: 31
- 9 Abraham 11: 27
- 11 Amraphel 14: 1
- 13 Arioeh 14: 1
- 15 Allies 14: 24

## Crossword Puzzle # 144 Genesis 6 - 9 (GNB)

1	2						4		
A	P	P	E	A	R	E	D	R	
3									16
F	L	O	O	D	G	A	T	E	S
5									
B	E	C	A	U	S	E		P	E
R	A	V	E	N	B			R	V
8		7		15					
E	S	C	A	P	E	P	L	O	E
			10						
A	E	L	R	A	N	G	E	D	N
	11		12	14					
T	D	O	S	H	E	M		U	T
			13						
H	O	S	I	E	A	C	H	C	H
				17					
E	W	E	G	A	T	A	K	E	
				18					
D	N	D	N	T	H	U	M	A	N

Answers Across : No 144

- 1 Appeared 8: 5
- 3 Floodgates 7:11
- 5 Because 9:4
- 6 Raven 8:7
- 8 Escape 7:7
- 10 Range 8:4
- 12 Shem 9:18
- 13 Each 7:2
- 15 People 6:12 Jumbled
- 17 Take 8:17
- 18 Human 9: 5

Answers Down : No 144

- 2 Pleased 6:8
- 4 Reproduce 8:17
- 5 Breathed 7:22
- 7 Closed 8:2
- 9 Beneath 7:11
- 11 Down 8:3
- 12 Sign 9:17
- 14 Heat 8:22
- 16 Seventh 8:14

Rush  
in your  
answers  
before  
15<sup>th</sup>  
Mar'  
2014

Church Music - Keyboard Lesson 75

By Mr. S. John Barathi

If you have ever tried to hit a mango on a tree with a stone; you could have observed that your hand moves backwards behind your shoulder, you might know the reason is to gain momentum or force to hit your target with strength enough to bring it down. The same object happens in Music when some syllables needs to be accented, a weak syllable precedes, here in this song we see that to accent the word "Blessings" "countless" leads,

as this was translated from Thamiz as it has to mean and sound. As this song should have been sung by a singer; unfortunately people who sing along with insensitive musicians overlook this important difference between weak and strong beats play and sing Countless on the first beat instead of having it on the last two quaver beats of a measure, which leads to wrong accents.

Count your Blessings

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is accompanied by chords: A, D, E, E7, and A. The lyrics are as follows:

Refrain: Count your bles-sings and praise the Lord! Count-less bles-ings we have re-ceived For His  
 mer-cy and His Grace, In the name of our lov-ing Lord, For His  
 mer-cy and His Grace, In the name of our lov-ing Lord,  
 1. We need not be scared or threa-tened, In front of who are a-gainst,  
 2. As of the high ris-ing tides, our bur-dens a-gainst us rise,  
 2. rise, As the pu-pil of His eyes, He will  
 Lord of E-li-jah is here still, While we  
 1. take care of you and keep, (2) As the  
 2. En-dure our tri-als. Lord of

Words & Music Anon Translation & Transcription S. John Barathi , Feb 21.2014

Hope you will understand what is explained and hereafter be careful with correct accents in whatever song or piece of music you sing or play. To be clear please know that all music or song does not start on the first beat but what is known as the upbeat or pickup beat.

**Disclaimer**

Any views expressed in the CSI Life belong to their respective authors and are not necessarily those of the CSI Life. The authors will be solely responsible for their views and ideas.

## Platinum Jubilee CSI Epiphany Cathedral - A Report

By **K. J. Shubhakar Ashirvadam, General Convener**

The Mother Diocese DORNAKAL which gave birth to Karimnagar, Krishna-Godavari, Nandyal and Rayalaseema Dioceses celebrated Platinum Jubilee of the Cathedral Church of the Epiphany of our Lord which was built in Indoserenic by the first Indian Protestant Saint Bishop V. S. Dornakal on the 6th, 7th and 8th January 2014.

It has unique architecture with the front portion depicting a choultry with its pillars architecturally designed on Hindu culture almost resembling in its pillars the Madhura Meenakshi Temple. Its minarets resemble the ancient Muslims structure with toll round minarets of very good size. The inner portion except the holy sanctuary also is an architecturally designed with 12 pillars embossed with Datura flower indicating death, and the plantain bud reflecting life indicating, from Death to Life. Only the inner sanctum is in a Christian image of the Holy Altar with a screen and a hanging cross on it. This Cathedral was dedicated on the 6th January 1939. Commemorating 75 years of glory, the Diocese celebrated a thanksgiving Platinum Jubilee Festival on 6th, 7th and 8th January 2014.

The Diocesan Executive Committee thanked the Rt. Revd. Dr. Vadapalli Prasada Rao and Revd. V. Salomi Sunanda Prasada Rao for being the Chief Patrons of the Celebrations. The Core Committee of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations appointed me as General Convener and Mr. K. Martin Luther as Platinum Jubilee Treasurer. The various Projects and Programmes were undertaken by the Core Committee with an estimated budget of Rs. 22 lakhs. The Diocesan Clergy and Evangelists have come forward to meet the expenditure of the Cathedral Paints. The Old students, natives, well-wishers of Dornakal in Hyderabad encouraged by Dr. J. A. Oliver and Mr. G. Samuel and a few others along with other Pastorates in the Diocese have come forward to sponsor various projects proposed. The Heavenly Father granted all the finances to meet the expenditure.

As a mark of celebrations, the Core Committee proposed to propagate Gospel in 75 unreached Villages in each Group Church Council in the Diocese. Thereby the Diocese could cover more than 500 Villages.

During the celebrations, the following programmes were conducted. On Monday the 6th January a thanksgiving Holy Communion Service was conducted and devotees from all corners of the Diocese attended the Service. After the service rich floral tributes were paid to Late Saint Bishop Azariah and his wife Mrs. Anbu Ammal Azariah whose tombs were renovated. The infant and adult baptisms were conducted and nearly 260 members accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. After Baptism Service, 500 believers took confirmation and became full fledged members of the Church.

Dornakal Diocese took a daring decision to construct Bishop Azariah Function Hall and Anbu Dining Hall in the Bishop Azariah Compound where Bishop Azariah first started his ministry at Dornakal. With due respects the bust size Statue of Bishop Azariah was erected and unveiled by our Bishop Rt. Revd. Dr. Vadapalli Prasada Rao on Monday the 6th January 2014. In connection with the Celebrations to Halls were dedicated for the public use and more than 5000 people were served sumptuous lunch.

In the evening a Public Reception was arranged. The dignitaries, IMST Missionaries and Political Leaders attended where the newly constructed Platinum Jubilee Open Air Stage was dedicated which was supported by the Dornakal friends in Hyderabad. All the dignitaries were felicitated, cultural programs were organized. A Drama written by our beloved Bishop Prasada Rao was enacted by the Cathedral Clergy was greatly appreciated by the audience. In 1939 when the Cathedral was dedicated St. Paul's Drama was enacted. In the same way after 75 years the replica of St. Paul's Drama was performed by the Cathedral and Madiripuram Youth which was witnessed with great enthusiasm by a large gathering.

On 7th Holy Communion Service was held and Revd. Daniel Rajamoney National Coordinator IMS has delivered the word of God. Thereafter a public meeting was held various cultural events were presented, VIPs, Pastors who worked as Presbyters in the Cathedral and Clergy of the Diocese were honoured. Platinum Jubilee Games were conducted in 7 Group Church Councils in the month of December and the finals were held at 03:00 p.m. in Dornakal. All the youth from all group church councils participated.



The 8th January 1939 Rev. Stephen Charles Neill was consecrated as Bishop of Tirunelveli in the Epiphany Cathedral, Dornakal. In remembrance of this, the Platinum Jubilee Deacons were ordained in the Epiphany Cathedral on 8th January 2014. The Diocese of Dornakal enjoyed the presence of mighty God in all its programmes and Lord God greatly honoured. And all the congregations of Dornakal Diocese were greatly blessed through these celebrations.

Under the able leadership and guidance of Bishop Vadapalli Prasada Rao the chosen vessel of God and choice of the Church, and Rev. V. Salomi Sunanda Prasada Rao a prayerful lady, I was able to discharge my responsibilities as General Convener with utmost satisfaction. I thank the Diocesan Executive Committee, Core Committee and the local Cathedral Pastorate Chairman Rev. K. N. Bhushanam, Pastorate Committee and the Diocesan Officers for all their prayerful support in carrying on my responsibilities

## Dedication Ceremony

Rev.V.Stephen Muller, Director, Bishop Sargent Anbin Illam, Tirunelveli

The present condition of the society around Tirunelveli is facing the social discrimination of the Mentally ill persons. Either the local people or the north Indians who habituated to drop their social burden in and around the pockets of the Tirunelveli Corporation area and other tourist spots nearby. It encumbered the Christian Society particularly the department of Counselling of Tirunelveli diocese on its pavement. We can see many mentally ill women and men wandering along the road side of the city and that leads to gang rapping and thereby even murdering such women. Many such Mentally ill persons also meet with accidents on the road side while they are wandering around the city and they are bungled to claim for either drinking water or food. as an elucidation to this situation 'The Department of Counselling' has determined to establish "Bishop Sargent Anbinllam" at Palayamkottai. It is disastrous to note the pathetic condition of such vulnerable group especially women. At dawn it has started a new project providing diagnostic and therapeutic facilities to such persons with the mission of all the

activities shall be Non profitable and shall be done on no profit no loss basis.

Anbin Illam Palayamkottai was dedicated and opened for the benefit of Mentally ill persons (Exclusively for women) by the Rt.Rev.Dr.J.J.Christdoss on 27.01.2014 at Campus named after Bishop Sargent opposite to the Cathedral at Murugankurichi, Palayamkottai. This is a sister concern of the Department of Counselling of Tirunelveli Diocese under the leadership of Rev. V.Stephen Muller, Director. TCCD functioning at the Centenary Hall Palayamkottai.

This facility is equipped to accommodate about 40 inmates and it is supported by the resource person and Medical Psychiatrist Dr.Jeeva, MBBS.D.P.M. on voluntary basis. Further the Counsellors, Social Workers, Nurses, Care takes and Helpers are engaged enough to accomplish the task.



## Bethel Bible College

(Affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College [University])

Guntur 522 006

Andhra Pradesh, India, Ph: 0863-2262832

Email: [bbcguntur@yahoo.co.in](mailto:bbcguntur@yahoo.co.in)

Invites applications from committed and qualified men and women of any Christian denomination for the following degree courses in English under the Senate of Serampore College (University) system, commencing from June 2014:

1. Five Year B.D. Degree  
Eligibility: Intermediate/+2passed
2. Four Year B.D. Degree  
Eligibility: Graduates from any recognized university
3. B.Th. Upgrading to B.D.degree  
Eligibility: B.Th degree of the Senate of Serampore College and passed in two English qualifying papers

Candidates willing to apply for any of the above degree course can obtain application and prospectus from the Principal on payment of Rs.100/- (Rupees one hundred only) by M.O. or D.D. (Drawn in favour of "Bethel Bible College").

The duly filled in application form with required supportive documents should reach the Principal's office on or before 15th May 2014.

Advt. /B & W / CSI Life March 2014

## Peter Cater Scripture Examination 2014

By the Rev.T.I.James,Director

The Peter Cater Scripture Examination is a self study program of Christian nurture among the students initiated by an English lay leader Peter Cater, a Barrister at Madras High Court during 1830s. After him the examination was conducted to commemorate the founder. The Last Missionary who was the in charge of the program was Miss. Beth Walpole a missionary from the Uniting Church in Australia, who handed over this program to the Christian Education Department of the CSI when it was formed. Since then the examination is being conducted all over the South India.

The participants of this program are the students of standard IX (lower grade) and standard XI (higher grade) irrespective of Christian Denomination or Religious faith those who are studying in our Sunday School and Institutions. The candidates can write the exams either in English or in any south Indian language.

The Peter Cater Scripture Examination 2014 was held on February 8, 2014 in all the four south Indian regions of the Church of South India. The examination was conducted in English, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada for both higher and lower grades. The following nine Dioceses participated in the examination and a total of 2959 students were registered to participate in the exam. The exam was held in 52 examination centres in the

CSI Dioceses.

Tamil Nadu Region

1.Madras Diocese	2014	Students
2.Thoothukudi Nazareth Diocese	381	Students
3.Kanyakumari Diocese	134	Students
4.Vellore Diocese	131	Students
5.Trichy-Tanjore Diocese	66	Students

Kerala Region

1.North Kerala Diocese	20	Students
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Karnataka Region

1.Karnataka Northern Diocese	53	Students
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Andhra Region

1.Rayalaseema Diocese	108	Students
2.Krishna-Godavari Diocese	52	Students

The Department of Pastoral Concerns of CSI appreciating the efforts of all the Dioceses for inspiring children to participate in the Peter Cater Scripture Examination. We are also thankful to the concerned Directors of the Dioceses, Schools / Institutions / Churches and those who worked for the examination. A special word of thanks to all the students who participated in the exam.



### CSI LIFE MAGAZINE

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## Karnataka Regional Mission Consultation

**By the Rev.S.Christopher Vijayan, Director**

The Church of South India, Department of Mission & Evangelism organized two days Mission consultation at Vishranthi Nilayam, Bangalore on 29th & 30th January 2014, to plan and propose Mission programs in the new Biennium(2014-2016) in Karnataka region and to connect PCK Pastors working in Karnataka State with the CSI Dioceses in Karnataka. The Rt. Rev. Dr. John Sadananda Bishop in Karnataka Southern Diocese inaugurated the consultation with the special address on Engaging in Gods Mission and Rt. Rev. Revikumar Niranjana Bishop in Karnataka Northern Diocese led the Inaugural Worship & Meditation. Rev. S. Christopher Vijayan, Director Mission & Evangelism CSI Synod welcomed the CSI delegates and PCK Pastors. 16 members participated in this consultation from three Dioceses in Karnataka region under the joint presidium of the Bishops Rt. Rev. Dr. John Sadananda and Rt. Rev. Revikumar

Niranjana including Four Pastors from Presbyterian Church in Korea and one Pastor from Mizoram Presbyterian Church. The PCK Pastors brought greetings to the consultation and encouraged the participants to do more activities for the Revival of the Church.

A special partnership meeting was organized by the Director Mission & Evangelism Rev. S. Christopher Vijayan with the CSI Bishops in Karnataka Region and PCK Pastors in Bangalore to explore possibilities for joint mission work. The Bishops welcomed the Mission partners to visit their Dioceses to understand the practical realities and to plan mission work in the interior parts of their diocesan areas. The PCK pastors assured their willingness to partner with the CSI Dioceses in Karnataka state to do Mission work in a greater level.



## Refresher Course for the CSI Missionary Pastors and Mission field In-Charge

*Sponsored by United Society, London*

**By the Rev.S.Christopher Vijayan, Director**

The Department of Mission and Evangelism CSI Synod organized Refresher Course for the CSI Missionary Pastors and Mission field In-Charge working in different parts of India through our CSI Dioceses. This Refresher course was conducted at Bishop Selvamony CSI Retreat Center in Kanyakumari from 4th to 8th February 2014 on the theme 'Mission for life - Marturia 2020'. 95 participants as Mission field In-Charge, Mission Board Directors & Conveners, Missionary Pastors and Mission Coordinators participated in this Refresher Course which was sponsored by United Society London.

Inaugural worship was conducted as a Holy Communion Worship which was led by Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen, Deputy Moderator CSI & Bishop in Madhya Kerala Diocese. Rt. Rev. Dr. G. Devakadasham, Bishop in Kanyakumari Diocese was the preacher for the Holy Communion Worship. After the Holy Communion worship the Refresher Course was inaugurated by the CSI Deputy Moderator Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen with the inaugural address on the theme. Rev. S. Christopher Vijayan, Director Mission and Evangelism CSI Synod welcomed all the leaders and participants of the conference and introduced the program concept. The officers of the DMPB Mission board of Kanyakumari Diocese participated in the inaugural session as Guest of Honors.

Rev. Dr. Israel Selvanayagam, Grukul Theological College; Rev. Viji Varghese Eapen, Missionary Pastor Parkal Mission; Rev. Dr. Alan Palanna, United Theological College; Rev. D.G. A. Thomas, Thoothukudi Nazareth Diocese; Rev. Dr. J. Jaya Chitra, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary; Rev. Daniel Jossiah, Kannamoola Theological Seminary; Rev. Dr. Prinstone Benn, South Kerala Diocese; Rev. S. Christopher Vijayan, CSI Synod and Dr. Paul Raj, Professor in NMCC, Kanyakumari Diocese were the Resource persons for the main sessions of the Refresher Course. Dr. Jean Mathew Abraham, Medical Doctor in Mogulappally Mission, Dr. Samuel Delightson, Medial Doctor in DMPB Yercaudu Hills Mission and Sr. Anu, Missionary Teacher in Parkal Mission participated in the panel discussion on Health Care and Education. Rev. Dr. Vinod Victor, South Kerala Diocese; Rev. Prakash Nayagam, Kanyakumari Diocese and Rev. Dr. J. Jaya Chitra, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary were the Bible study speakers. Special Cultural program including Bhratha Natiyam, Skits and Kaliyal (one of the ancient cultural dances in Kanyakumari District) were performed for the cross cultural learning. Participants were taken to see the Vivekananda Memorial Rock and Thiruvalluvar Statue to understand the teachings of the Swamy Vivekananda and Thiruvalluvar. T G. Rengeela, a transgender from Thoothukudi participated in this conference and shared her life experience and appealed to

the Church to engage meaningfully to support the transgender.

The closing session was led by Dr. Susan Thomas, President Women Fellowship and Bishop Amma in Madhya Kerala Diocese and closing address was delivered by Adv. C. Robert Bruce, the Treasurer CSI Synod. The Principal and Bursar of the CSI institute of Technology Thovalai, Kanyakumari Diocese participated as special Guests in this closing session. The CSI IT Thovalai, Victory Trust and DMPB, Kanyakumari Diocese distributed their valuable compliments to all the participants and Resource persons. Rev. S. Christopher Vijayan extended vote of thanks to the participants and Leaders and acknowledged the contribution of United Society to organize this program in a successful way.

In this Refresher Course Participants were given opportunity to share their mission activities and experiences in a Diocesan and Regional levels. The sharing of the Missionary Pastors and Missionary incharge was the inspiration to one another and mutually edifying in mission work. 10 major issues related to the mission fields and missionaries were taught by the resource persons and reflected by the participants in a practical way. Morning and Evening worships were conducted creatively by the participants in a regional wise. The Directors/ Conveners of the Diocesan Mission Boards were given opportunity to moderate the sessions, respond to the major talks and to lead the group discussions. As part of this Refresher Course participants were taken to see the important tourist places in Kanyakumari District for experience. The Officers of the DMPB, Care taker of Bishop Selvamony Retreat center Rev. J.S. Jai Sing, group of pastors from Kanyakumari Diocese worked hard to make this program grand success and meaningful. The refresher course was useful to all the participants.

The participants affirmed to concentrate more on Gods mission in the next seven years to celebrate 2020 as a year of Spiritual Revival and Social Transformation to accomplish mission in Christ's way. They decided to contribute more to spreading the Gospel and to plant new Churches, where there is no Christian presence or having little Christian presence. The Missionary Pastors and In-Charges assured to do more Diaconal activities to give new life to the people living in margins with more vision and deeper dedication. The evangelical activities should be helped to form alternative communities with the Kingdom values in the conflicted areas. The participants reflected to transform the mission fields as a self supported Churches in another seven years period and to honor the work of the local missionaries in a considerable way.