Horizons of Freedom
Carols with a difference!

If you are interested to write a carol avoiding clichés,
If you are concerned about social issues, which should be reflected in carols,
If you want to search the relevance of Christmas carols in the 21st century milieu,
Your carols will be published by the Communication department of CSI.
And you will be special invitee in the Writers’ Workshop organised by the Synod....
Yes, start writing!
Insensitivity and intolerance are on the rise in India and elsewhere. Different cultures and cultural practices are not being respected. Difference is dealt with violence, rejection and elimination. For some, a different culture represents a threat, as it brings with it the fear of losing the space that was thus far never shared, therefore leading to an identity crisis. In sharing space and opportunity and in appreciating, respecting, learning from, and being sensitive to a different culture, we discover our real identity, understand the context better; we are liberated, we begin to grow, and wake up to a new space or a new horizon beckons.

Jesus' ministry is described in narrative form as a journey between Galilee and Jerusalem. The village-cosmopolitan encounters and exchanges are symbolically narrated. Galilee is seen as a threat to Jerusalem; Jesus also took his disciples to Gentile lands, to Samaritan territories. These journeys are of theological importance; not just to proclaim the universality of salvation, but also to show how a new movement of the marginalized was educated, enriched and equipped to participate in the new humanity it symbolically embodied. Jesus, after feeding the five thousand, begins a cross-cultural walk with a prayer (Mk.6:45), asking God's guidance to see, hear and experience with openness and courage. God's accompaniment is essential in a cross-cultural walk; we cannot by ourselves, but when God is with us, we are able.

In v.47 we read of Jesus walking on the water; the Markan narrative is tuned to eliminate the 'fear' of the devil from the disciples' mind. Jesus had asked them to go to the other side, which was in fact predominantly Gentile. One may well understand the fear in the minds of the disciples of getting polluted by entering into Gentile territory. The fear factor enhances the possibility of a defence mechanism unfolding; it restricts the flowering forth of resources, reduces perspective and shuns openness. Jesus gives them courage and comforts them: "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid."(6:50). Till the disciples were able to overcome the fear of the “other”, they were stranded on their journey, and as Jesus helped them with his accompanying assurance, they reached the other shore.

When Jesus' band lands in Genezareth, people join the peace movement in large numbers. They also had a vision of peace that was coming to them in the form of healing: “When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.” (Mk.6:55f)

But Jerusalem sends emissaries; suggesting that the cross-cultural walk will attract the consequences of 'purity law'; in 7:1-23 the question of purity/impurity is discussed in relation to food. The discourse symbolically narrates racial discrimination and an exclusivist stance. Jesus says: 'that which enters from outside does not defile a person, but what comes from
within defiles a person’. At the core of the argument on purity and impurity, lies the question of an exclusivist attitude - the root cause of discrimination, elimination and violence.

In 7:24 we read of a 'dialogue' as part of the cross-cultural walk, of Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman; an episode that has a prima facie case of verbal violence against Jesus. Surprisingly, the woman shows greater sensitivity - she listens, endures and gives a lesson to the reader on how to overcome fear of the other. She draws Jesus into a dialogue. Jesus too listens and is finally persuaded by the woman's arguments; listening and understanding constitute the opening of an environment that makes communication possible. It also enables an understanding of the other's perspective and the complexities involved. It is a challenge to locate the other in the peace mission. In this cross-cultural learning and listening, we see a networking of information, the implications to oneself and to one's community as it clarifies many a cultural misunderstanding. It enhances analytical competence and extends horizons. Finally, the woman is not understood as a Canaanite waiting under the table that has, but as a faithful belonging to the house of God. The woman becomes a partner and co-traveller in overcoming the fear, rejection and elimination perpetrated by traditional/religious cultural arrogance.

Mk.7:11-13 take this process of listening and learning to another level: the deaf is healed. Ephphatha or 'be opened' is a key word denoting education, opening of new perspectives and new understandings. Those who can hear/understand, those who are 'open' are enabled to overcome barriers, they can visualise, imagine a new creative space of liberation, healing and reconciliation.

The Markan chapter 8 brings the cross-cultural walk to its climax in the feeding of the four thousand: the symbols that were five loaves and two fishes become seven loaves and few fishes, twelve baskets become seven baskets; Jewish symbols transform into Gentile symbols. Election theology makes way for 'creational' theology and universalism. The resources, not only of one particular community are blessed and shared, but of the world need to be identified, collected, respected, managed and shared.

Vs. 22-26 brings the fruits of cross-cultural walk to fruition: a blind man saw in stages (probably all those who undertake Christian ministry also 'see' in stages). First, the sight was partial - 'people look like trees walking', then he looked intently; he 'saw everything clearly'. Christian ministry is a cross-cultural walk with all its fears, with the courage for dialogue, openness to listening and a challenge to a clearer, fuller vision.

V 27-29 is about Peter's confession of Jesus: "You are the Messiah", but his vision as we are told immediately is partial - when Jesus predicted that his suffering, rejection and death is a must (the Greek 'dei' is used), Peter takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him, only to be told: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."(Mk.7:33). It is evident that Peter needed a sight correction.

As we celebrate our Independence Day, as we commit ourselves to be a parable of liberation in a world of suspicion and intolerance, it is important to take cross-cultural learning seriously. In our cross-cultural walk, let us practice faithful and committed discipleship. Let us be enabled to discern the new nuances of liberated space; not by imposing our presence, but through negotiating, sharing boundaries and space, for that is where a new creative space emerges.

Rev. Dr. D. Rathnakara Sadananda
General Secretary, CSI
Christian Mission: A Theological Audit

The present global scenario and the Indian context, in particular, discloses the brutality of communal violence (Israel and Palestine), caste violence (youngsters were beaten and paraded naked due to beef eating), violence on gender minority (killing of the LGBT in Horlando) and so on and so forth. This proves the fact that some kind of 'mission,' either life promoting or life denying, is going on. On the one hand, the dominant of religion, caste, gender, class, and race are engaged in the mission of denying life and promoting triumphalism over and against the weaker section of the socio-politico, economic, and religio-cultural context; and on the other hand, the victims or the vulnerable are involved in a mission of questioning and confronting the acts of the dominant in order to affirm life, filled with justice, peace, and dignity. The mission of the dominant has two important elements as its ingredients in the forms of money and power. They spend their money to earn power and use their power to earn back the money spent and also exploit the vulnerable of the society. Therefore, 'mission' in today's context revolves around money and power. The mission of the dominant is to become powerful, and in the process of becoming powerful, they spend a huge amount of money to justify their brutal acts. However, the mission of the vulnerable is in stark contrast to the mission of the dominant. In the words of Emiie Towns, the mission of the vulnerable is a mission of hope. She elaborates her opinion that "Hope has two daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they don't remain that way."

In a context of the hierarchy, subjugation and suppression, wherein, a larger section of the society is victimised due to their weaker socio-politico, economic, and religio-cultural identity, what should be the role and response of Christian mission? Is the Christian mission encouraging to confront the role of money and power in the process of proclaiming 'God's reign,' or is it contributing to the 'ruin of God' by making a compromise with money and power? Can we witness a Christian mission which is away from money and power?

**Christian Mission and the Paradigm Shifts:** The history of Christian mission has undergone various paradigms shifts from church centeredness to creation centeredness over the past two centuries. In the 19th century, the understanding of Christian mission was exclusion, expansion and domination. It was an aggressive drive of fully 'missioned' lands towards a not yet fully 'missioned' lands. In the words of Heibert, "Mission from the west to the rest". Christianity, being influenced by the western concept of individualism, was claiming certain exclusive views such as 'no salvation outside the church' and 'Christian faith as the only means for human salvation'. By pressing upon the 'exclusive missiological theology', Christianity emphasised on accepting Jesus as personal saviour, and this subtly implied to join church and implant churches. However, the Indian theologians, giving importance to the pluralistic context of India, challenged the exclusive missiological claims of western theology and articulated an inclusive theology in which the faith values of a different religion was equally respected. In the words of Dr. M. M Thomas, "Theology is not just the explication of our faith in Jesus Christ. It involves also putting that faith alongside other faiths,
rationality and human values, allowing the examination of each, including our faith, in the categories of the other. In this process, we risk Christ for Christ's sake".

The Christian mission, predominantly, has been risking Christ for Christ's sake. While the western theology negated the presence of Christ in the poor, blacks and women, the poor, the blacks and the women, suspected the role of Christ as portrayed by the white dominant and critically enumerated the Christ portrayed and proclaimed a Christ who was a source of inspiration and empowerment for them. Similarly, in the Indian context, when the Indian Christian theology, ignored and negated the presence of a large number of Dalit Christians, the Dalit Christians suspected the Christ portrayed and proclaimed the brokenness of the Christ. The Christian mission, i.e. the church and theological education has played a vital role in transforming the socio-politico, economic, and religiocultural context of the margins.

**Christian Mission: Is it Evangelism, Ecumenism, or Emancipation:** The Christian mission is generally viewed from two different lenses i.e. Evangelism and Ecumenism. The different theological schools of thought endorse these two views of Christian mission. Evangelism gives importance to the perspective of 'going' or 'sending.' It encourages the Christians as individuals and communities to either go or 'send' to Christianise the world. It presses upon church expansion and exclusive gospel. It enunciates Christ and Christianity as the helm of all the religions and the only way for salvation and involved in the process of conversion to Christianity. Is Christian mission a call for conversion to Christ or Christianity? This was the criticism raised against Christianity by the leaders of Hindu reform movement. This criticism was seriously considered by the Indian Christian thinkers, and they responded to this criticism by paving the way to ecumenism. Ecumenism commissions people to practice the prayer of Jesus which affirmed the unity of all people, i.e. 'that they all may be one." Initially, ecumenism was Christian centred; however, it gradually gave importance to the inter-religious and intra-religious relationship and widened its horizon to participate in God's mission. Ecumenism as a movement is involved in the process of humanising the society. Salvation a concrete communion of people with God and among themselves, a task embracing the whole world, transforming it and bringing it to its fullness. However, is ecumenism permeating the values that could pave the way for God's reign? Dr. Y. T. Vinayraj accuses ecumenism as another form of empire. In the name of ecumenism, we witness caste, class, regional and language empires being built. Was this or is this the purpose of ecumenism?
The purpose and vision of ecumenism were to forego and dismantle the homogeneous power structures built in the name of the mission. But, the focus has been diluted and has compromised with the power models. It is timely to remind the church, theological institutions and eccumenical bodies, be it evangelism or ecumenism, the DNA of mission is emancipation. Evangelism and Ecumenism should elucidate the Justice and love of Christ, with Christ and in Christ, and get involved in the process of emancipation in order to initiate a transforming world. Following are the mission of emancipation:

1) Emancipation from Guilt: The Christian mission has stressed an individual to regret about his/her birth. The extensive use of verses such as, we are born out of sin, we are sinners, repent and be saved, accept Lord and be saved, need to be born again etc., has damaged the psyche of humankind. In doing so it has suppressed the confidence of every individual till date and has endorsed the dominant ideologies such as caste, colour, class and patriarchy, in which the oppressed groups are pushed into a state of fate and guilt. Christian Mission, in emphasising the Gospel of guilt has taken away the wonderful relationship that God had ordained between Godself and humanity in creating humankind in God's own image. However, thanks to the theological academia which helped the church to focus her mission from the life world of the oppressed. Being influenced and inspired by the mission of Jesus, that emancipated the Canaanite woman, the leper and the blind, who dared to come out of the closes of guilt to acclaim life and dignity, the Christian mission got involved in the struggles of Blacks, Dalits, Women and Gender minority and participated in providing room for the vulnerable to liberate from their guilt. Therefore, the Christian mission should reiterate the Gospel to uproot guilt and root them in the gospel of life in abundance.

2) Emancipation from the Gospel of Exclusion: The Christian mission is known for religious exclusion and social exclusion. In the name of religious exclusion, the people of other faiths are seen as heathens, and in the name of social exclusion (Purity Pollution), particularly in India, the Dalits and the women are considered as polluted. The church, which was called to love the neighbour as self, practised exclusion within and also outside the church. Further, Christian church and Christian mission to a large extent are homophobic. It has excluded the gender minorities from the church and its worship. Can the church be emancipated from her excluded nature? For centuries the Christian mission has led the Christian community to claim themselves as chosen community, called out the community and a set apart the community and has supported the growth of exclusiveness. The Christian Mission has to make a shift from exclusion to life in partnership with compassion. Pope Francis called for a radical repentance for the crime committed against the gender minorities. This embarks a new vision of the church which is on the verge of breaking its exclusive nature. Jesus’ mission asserted justice and love as liberating values of God. The manifestation of God in Jesus is God’s initiation to break the boundaries of exclusion, and get rid of hierarchy in order to live with people. Incarnation is a call to the church to feel as God feels and to act as God acts in a liberative partnership in order to affirm life. Therefore, the mission in today’s context should engage itself to uproot the gospel of exclusion and root the gospel of liberative partnership. In the words of Jon Sobrino, “Personal religious experience is neither private nor exclusive. Rather it is the necessary foundation for our insertion into the Christian and broader human community”.

3) Emancipation from the Gospel of Submission: 'Obedience' and 'submission' are portrayed and preached as two important qualities that a Christian and the Christian community should embrace. The Christian mission propagates Jesus’ cross experience more from the point of view of obedience and submission to God and God’s will. The suffering of Jesus is used to justify the suffering of the oppressed community and invites the oppressed community to persevere suffering from total submission and obedience. This naïve portrayal of Jesus and Jesus’ life, on one hand, encourages the oppressors to continue exploiting the vulnerable, and, on the other hand, it pushes the oppressed to accept their suffering as inevitable and fate. Jesus’ cross is the result of disobedience and subversion. Obedience to God is a call to disobey those structures which cause damage to God’s fabric of life and relationship. Similarly, submission to the will of God/Reign of God is to subvert the empire, the fortress of human will that brings a split between God and Human, human and human, and Human and creations. Predominantly, the Christian
mission focuses more towards the mission of charity towards the poor, orphans, elders, sick and so forth, rather questioning the structures that cause the poor, orphans and etc. To be reminded of Bishop Helder Camara, “When I feed the poor they call me a ‘saint.’ When I ask why the poor are hungry, they called me a communist.” It is time for the Christian mission to ask why the poor are hungry, or in other words, it is time to engage in mission in the field of oppressors than the oppressed. Therefore, the gospel of submission has to invert with the gospel of subversion.

Conclusion: The mission statement 'I will make you fish for men/fishers of men,' is reflected more from the numerical point of view and it is preached to the vulnerable community. However, the prophetic books give a radical perspective of the statement. The prophetic books of Jeremiah 16:16, Ezekiel 29:4 and Amos 4:2 according to Ched Myers, commissions to hook the wicked or fish the wicked. Jesus, the one who is influenced by the prophetic tradition is inviting the common folk to join him in his struggle to hook the existing order of power and overturn it. Further, Jesus commissions his disciple to go among the wolves to challenge the wolves which are on a mission to devour the life of the vulnerable. Therefore, the mission is a call not for aggressive evangelism but evangelism to the aggressor and it is not a call to be out of the world but into an alternative world. The disciples of Jesus were seen as those who turn the world upside down. The mission of the church is to engage in turning the world that mongers for power at the cost of life, and uses power to distort the gospel value of life and exploits the life. The church mission is a call to transform the world by the renewing of our minds from dominating and egoistic imperial mindset, and engage in doing the will of God which is fulfilled in justice and love.

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**Peter Cater Scripture Knowledge Exam-2017**

Children of IX and XI Standards, belonging to CSI Churches or Studying in CSI Institutions (Schools and Boarding Homes) are encouraged to register for Peter Cater Scripture Knowledge Exam to be held in January 2017. The Synod level competition is held based on the Scriptures mentioned below. The Exam can be written in English or in Regional Language.

**IX Standard:**
- Old Testament: Book of Exodus
- Psalms: Ps. 27 (Memorize Complete Chapter)

**XI Standard:**
- Old Testament: Book of II Samuel
- Psalms: Ps. 66 (Memorize Complete Chapter)

**Last Date of Registration:** 30th October 2016
**Registration Fee:** Rs. 25/- per head.

Kindly send the D.D./ Cheque in favour of 'Hon. Treasurer Church of South India, Chennai' to the Director, Department of Pastoral Concerns, CSI Synod, No#5 White's Road, Royapettah, Chennai-14. For further details please contact the Director- 09677018919.
Ms. Vedha Kani, who hails from the Madurai-Ramnadu Diocese of the Church of South India, is currently pursuing her Doctoral Studies at United Theological College in Bangalore.

Concept of Freedom in the New Testament: Beyond Power and Privilege

As we are celebrating our 70th Independence Day of our motherland, it is a privilege and a challenge to ponder on the concept of “freedom” from biblical understanding, especially in the present Indian context of religious fundamentalism, increasing atrocities against women and Dalit, tribal communities, threat of terrorism, economic crisis and so on. Meanwhile, the Scripture continues to engage us with its new ideas and challenges in an attempt to bring the kingdom of God, which promises the freedom for all in all facets of one’s life. However, the community values of Jesus’ preaching on the kingdom of God, through which the proclamation and assurance of liberation of the humanity, particularly to the people in the margins, would be more imperative and meaningful as well as look into in this context of the celebrating the freedom of being a citizen of this idiosyncratic country.

The concept of Freedom in the Old Testament: The concept of freedom is used in the context of slavery (Exodus 21:2, 5, 27; Lev 19:20; Deut 15:12) in general. It is striking that the term “freedom” in the Old Testament is not found in connection with the liberation of Israel from Egypt or the return of Israel from exile. Moreover, though they were freed from the bondage of Egypt or exile, under the monarchy they were not free subjects, but were the king's slaves (1 Sam 8:7-8 and 10-18), as everything belongs to the general context of slavery. However, the question of slavery in Israel has to be understood in the context of Yahweh’s lordship over his people. But still, according to the hints such as Deuteronomy 15:12 and Jeremiah 34:8 which indicate the fact that this slavery system was followed by Israel community as they wanted to adopt the patterns of the surrounding nations of keeping slaves for life (cf. Amos 2:6-16; 8:1). For Israel, thus, though the freedom meant primarily as redemption as being set free by Yahweh particularly from bondage in Egypt, by denouncing the kingship of Yahweh and accepting to be a slave to the king and its consequences (1 Sam 8:6-20), their quest for liberation/freedom had been mounting more day by day with an expectation of “coming Messiah.”

Consequently, in later Judaism and at the time of Jesus, freedom was understood predominantly in an external and political sense. As a result, freedom movements with a religious basis were repeatedly formed with the intention of implementing the promised freedom by force against the pagan...
secular world. The best known of this view was the Maccabees in second century B.C. who tried to bring the religious freedom by political freedom (cf. Acts 5:37; 21:38).

**Understanding of Freedom in New Testament**: Having said the historical, political, and religious background of the Old Testament understanding of freedom, it is clear that the notion of the concept of “freedom” in New Testament would be a response to the historical craving of the people of Israel for the eschatological liberation of the whole creation, and it is fulfilled through the life, teachings and death of Jesus in New Testament. Interestingly, the term which is used to denote freedom in New Testament is never used in the secular sense of political freedom. With that view, one can infer that Israel’s understanding of political freedom had no longer been played in the time of Jesus and New Testament writers. For, Jesus’ holistic view of freedom is not in terms of political what Israel meant, but as bringing salvation to the humanity which will promise liberation in all dimensions of human life. Hence, freedom is understood in New Testament as “the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21); “freedom in Christ, is the one who sets free” (Galatians 2:4; 5:1). Moreover, freedom is “a way of life” in which one lives in accordance with the will of God; and “being independent with regard to the law” (Romans 7:3).

**Freedom is a way of life – reclaiming the original identity**: According to the theology of the New Testament, freedom is a way of life in Christ. The true freedom lies in life with God, living out as it was originally intended by God for humanity in the creation (Rom 6:22; Gal 5:1, 13). And even the realm of the freedom is extended to the supernatural powers and rulers, as the freed one has been conquered by Christ (Rom 8:38; Gal 4:3, 9; 1Cor 15:24). Interestingly the impenetrable horizon becomes transparent in the light of this freedom. So, the idea of freedom goes far beyond the Old Testament as it sees freedom as liberation from the manifold powers which suppress the true humanity and being hindered the reclaiming of the image of God, which is the original identity of the humanity. Some of those powers are, sin (Rom 6:18-22; John 8:31-36); Satan (Matthew 12:22; Lk 13:16; Ephesians 6:12); the law (Romans 7:3-6; Galatians 2:4; 5:1-13); Political power like Roman Empire; and death (Romans 6:20-23; 8:21). Thus freedom in New Testament perspective is the liberation from all these powers.

Particularly, freedom from the law is important in New Testament. For, Law is no longer a way of life, as salvation has brought it to an end in Christ (Romans 10:4). And even more, the aspect of freedom as a liberation from death, as a person is promised and assured of a future through Jesus’ victory over death, is also a reclaim of the image of God which was given in the creation which promises the everlasting life (Genesis 3:3, 4; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26). There is no annihilation of humanity from God as nothing can be in the relationship between God and human (Romans 8:38).

Accordingly, in the New Testament, freedom is salvation, which is not what it means today as religious dogma. In fact, the understanding of salvation is diluted utterly from what Jesus meant it to be, by adding religious colours to it. Salvation is not a concept but an enduring experience which cannot be received by someone through baptism, but only through having faith in Jesus and being faithful to the values of his teaching as a way of life. In this salvation, one will receive the full meaning of freedom with his/her original identity given in the creation. This enduring process of salvation is a journey towards reclaiming the “original identity” i.e. image of God.
Freedom only through marginalised Community: The New Testament history has shown the core of the liberation theology that any freedom or liberation can be brought by the people in the margins and through the act which is mere neglected and being dealt as shameful. For, freedom is the realisation of the cross event (Galatians 3:13). And moreover, God’s work of justice can be realised through the powerless, weak, lowly, broken and marginalised. Empathically, the Nazareth Manifesto shows this fact: “The spirit of God has upon me to proclaim the good news to the poor.” That means when the Gospel is realised among the marginalised in the society then only the liberation of the society would be assured. If any community or nation wants to assure the freedom to be realised, then the people who are at margins or under poverty line should be dealt first. The realisation of freedom of the marginalised community is the freedom of the entire nation. But unfortunately, the economic policies, political strategies and educational ideologies which we have in India are not concerning the people who are really in need, instead through which the poor become poor and rich become rich in more. In contrast to it, Jesus’ way of proclaiming freedom/salvation was focusing the people who are vulnerable and ignored by the social, economic, cultural and religious laws and structures, and who strives with the hope of liberation from all dimensions of oppression.

For, the strategy of freedom realisation can hold two fundamental aspects in it: one is empowering the vulnerable and, at the same time, deconstructing the hierarchical ideologies of social constructions, cultural ethos, and economic disparities. Jesus was very clear in his approach to salvation to be manifested in the society. For instance, Jesus’ approach to the Canaanite woman’s appeal for her daughter’s healing in Matthew 15:21-28 (cf. Mark 7:1-23) clearly explains it.

In this miracle story, the Canaanite woman was crying out as following Jesus in the midst of the crowd and pleading him to heal her daughter from being possessed by a demon. But Jesus seems to be not only ignoring her cry, but he rejects her publicly. The most distressing thing is his reply to her, “It is not right to take the bread of the children and to throw it to the dogs”. Yet finally, in contrast to this, he appreciated her publicly saying “your faith is indeed great”. However, an imperative act of Jesus has to be noticed. The need of the Canaanite woman here is very obvious—her daughter has to be freed from the demon. While she cried over to him, though a gentle, by having faith in him instead of encouraging and helping her, Jesus’ attitude seems to be arrogant. But, this is the way Jesus manifesting the salvation not only to her but to the Jews too. For, as it is said before, are imperative in experiencing freedom; empowering and dismantling, in order to empower her or favouring the healing, he needs to dismantle something, i.e. Jewish racial supremacy which had assured the salvation only for them and through them. Jesus himself was literally dragging her conversation to spell out the religious arrogance of the Jewish racial dominance which had prevented people other than Israel to be the children of God.

So in order to demean the religious and cultural hierarchical ideologies, he spelt out by representing the society which has that ideology (“Children’s bread in not for the dogs”). This religious ideology of privilege was challenged and dismantled by Jesus through the Canaanite woman whose faith has won the religious ideology of hierarchy. As a result, Jesus replaces the religious constructions and beliefs by her “faith” on himself. Jesus’ strategy of ignorance and arrogance attitude, on the one hand, dismantled the oppressive powers and ideologies and on the other hand empowered the woman to reach the “great faith” which envisions the universal mission of Christ and kingdom of God where everyone is experiencing and celebrating the freedom in all manners.

Jesus’ negative attitude is more emphatic and cruel as he appears insensitive and downright rude not only in his refusal to act but also in speaking of Gentiles as “dogs.” But, Jesus’ ruthless attitude towards her is to empower her to challenge the Jewish arrogance of their racial ideology and their understanding of Messiah as “Jewish Messiah,” in which Messianic mission is restricted to Israel. And not only that, she has to enunciate the cry for the kingdom of God which promises liberation for all
which is very much strange to the Jewish understanding of the Kingdom of God. For, the subaltern or oppressed community only can challenge the hierarchical concepts and its manifestations in the society and propose the liberation motifs. In the process of liberation or freedom struggle, empowering the oppressed or marginalised and dismantling the hierarchical powers and ideologies have to go hand in hand.

Canaanites and women. The woman's insistent repeated appeal annoys the disciples (v.23; cf. 9:27) as she shouted by addressing him as “Son of David” which is Jewish Messianic title. While she as a mother needs healing of her daughter desperately, she receives not only the unusual calmness of Jesus but also more of the disciples' irritating statement of “send her away” which was because of her loud persistent cry. In this cultural, and religious problems by doing conversation with her, he told her “Your wish is granted.”

The freedom of a community or a nation is possible only when the hierarchical power structures and ideologies are deconstructed through the community which is in the margins. It is true even in the context of ecclesia which was formed as a movement, a way of life, not

In this process, Jesus is dealing with some important dimensions of dismantling: the first one is the historical-political error in which the Canaanites had driven out by God himself before Israel in their journey towards Canaan. Paradoxically, the area in which now Jesus encountering a gentile woman is Tyre and Sidon (15:21), which had been frequently condemned by the Old Testament prophets as invertebrate enemies of Israel (11:21-22). So now it's a time for Jesus to reclaim the people who are neglected in the past history of redemption. The second one is an aspect of gender and sexuality, as she represents the marginalised societies of context, the woman, girl child, and dog are abandoned members of the society while the Jewish concepts and customs are highlighted. Significantly, what Jesus did through this miracle is very imperative in the journey of freedom of any society: he challenged the Jewish racial favouritism and hierarchical ideologies through which vulnerable are neglected. In doing so, at first, he healed the society who made the community of vulnerable and by healing the oppressors or dismantling the power structures he promised liberation to the vulnerable. Interestingly, in this miracle story, once Jesus finished addressing and challenging the social, political, as a religion by and through Jesus and his life, teachings, death and resurrection. While the Church as an institution cannot promise and make the freedom to be realised among the Christian communities and society as well, Church as a Movement which has equality, justice, righteousness, transparency and liberation as its values, can come forward to help our society to experience the freedom.
“Without the heartbeat of the sacraments at its center, the church will lack confidence about the gospel message and about its own ability to proclaim that message in evangelism, to live it out in its own internal fellowship and to embody it in service to the needy.”

As Geoffrey Wainwright, the renowned liturgical theologian says sacraments are one of the most important elements for the continuing existence of the church. The word Sacrament is derived from the Latin word Sacramentum, which means a pledge taken by the Roman soldiers to be loyal to the country and submitting themselves to obey the military disciplines. The sacramental rites are called as Musterion in the Greek speaking early church. Later earliest Latin theologians like Tertullian used the word Sacramentum to translate Musterion as sacrament. All religions have sacraments as a part in their worship. Each differs according to their cultural context. In Indian cultural context it is a challenge for Christianity to use its Sacraments in line with one of the predominant religions of India, Hinduism. In this context here an attempt is made to compare and contrast the Christian Sacrament “Eucharist” with Hindu “Yajna” and tried to provide a new dimension to Eucharist, Inculturation of Eucharist as a Sacrifice.

Even though Bible does not provide a definition of sacraments, many descriptions are formulated by the biblical scholars and theologians, through which they emphasize two different views of interpretation. First often repeated prominent view of interpretation emphasizes the objective reality of God’s grace in and through the sacraments. Augustine’s definition of sacraments as ‘visible signs of an invisible grace’ substantiates this view. Those who hold this view observes sacraments as divinely appointed rite and when believers properly partake in it they receive grace and salvation. St. Ignatius holding this view interprets Lord’s Supper as the ‘medicine of immortality.’ More specifically, Westminster Shorter Catechism defines it as sacraments are holy ordained institution by Christ, by means of which the believers receive the benefits of the new covenant - the Spirit of God, forgiveness and the promising love of God in Jesus Christ, when they partake in the physical enactments of the Grace. This view makes the sacraments as mere habitation
Eucharistic self engages oneself in "the deeds of the service in solidarity with the needy members of the Christ's body." He says further "the injunction of Christ, 'do this in memory of me', repeated at every celebration of the Eucharist, embraces both the breaking of the bread and the ongoing service of others. Both these Eucharistic actions are performed for the life of the world, for the fuller realization of Christ's presence in all." Besides the performance of Eucharist inculcates the eschatological hope in the receiver, who look for the liberating and reconciling activity of God in which they are now participants and co-workers. Thus Eucharist instills the Christian understanding of sacrifice. Christian sacrifice beings with God the father whose 'self' – offering in the gift of son'. The real Christian sacrifice is not just giving up something to somebody. It requires self giving. Following this the self sacrifice of the Christ in His humanity. Robert J. Daly says if we focus Christ's death as His sacrifice we are more tempted to approach the Christ's sacrifice with non – Christian sacrifices as because the death of Christ has all the common characteristics of sacrifice in other religions. But the ultimate and the central meaning of Christ's sacrifice which differs from other religious sacrifices is Jesus' body, the sacrificial material is given "free, self – giving, self – communicating, en – spirited love of the Son to the Father and also to and for us." Finally the celebration of Eucharist, in which we receive the sacrificial love of the father, son and spirit, initiates the self-offering of the believers. Eucharist is not just a ritual that stops with the celebration in the church. Rather it requires the faithful to be the transformed members into the body of Christ and submitting to the sacrificial love of God. As transformed we can share the self giving love, which is the essence of our own sacrifice.

In the pluralistic context of India, sacrifice is a principal element of almost all major religious practices; especially Hinduism. Sacrament in Hinduism is called as "Samskara." It's a religious obligation of every devotee to perform the sacramental rites in each stages of their life. Sacraments in Hinduism are either in the form of ritualistic ceremonies or ceremonial sacrifices. They are obliged to do it to attain sanctity or to safeguard themselves from the evils or to please God to obtain their desires. Sacrifice in Hinduism traces back its history in the early Vedic era. 'Yajna', is the term used to denote the ritual sacrifice in the Vedic period. The Yajna rituals are centered on the Vedic God Agni. Sacrificial fire is used in the Yajna ritual which personifies God Agni. Later as it is mentioned in the Upanishads, the Hindu tradition brought tremendous changes in the Yajna. It gives more importance in Yajna to the human being, who is regarded as the central figure of it.
According to it Human body and the mind are the main sacrificial materials, in which the mental state attains the Liberation or Moksha being one with the Supreme Being. Therefore Sacrifice is considered as a conscious attitude to submit oneself to the Divine to be sanctified. In the modern day Hinduism sacrifice is purely a ritualistic act performed by the devotees with a plea of desire to be done. However sacrifice in Hinduism is solely self centered either to attain Moksha or to accomplish their desire by pleasing god. 

Sacrifice in Christianity, contrary to this is God-Centered as well as Human-Centered. It does not require a materialistic offering. Christian sacrifice is denying the self, knitted together in God's love and submitting oneself to be broken for the sake of Humanity. The concept of sacrifice in Christianity comes from the ultimate sacrifice of the Trinitarian God. In His self giving 'the gift of Son', and denying the self in human form till cross to redeem the world and to liberate from the bonds. 

This ultimate sacrifice is made known to the faithful and prompted in the Sacrament of Eucharist. Eucharist is an act that proclaims the salvific effect of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and calls the believer to be the partaker of that sacrifice with the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus Eucharist is a sacrificial act in which every believer is called to realize the Supreme Sacrifice and transform. Transformation is a sacrificial process preferring the common goodness of the humanity. Such sacrificial transformation happens in the celebration of Eucharist by sharing in His body and blood. Not in the mere ritualistic act without fail, else in the willing submission.

SYNOD PASTORAL CONCERNS DEPARTMENT

First Annual Clergy Retreat of CSI Malabar Diocese

The First Clergy Retreat of Malabar Diocese was held from July 19-21, 2016 at the CSI Synod Centre, with the support of Pastoral Concerns Department and the Mission and Evangelism Department of CSI Synod. The theme of the retreat was "Equipping Local Congregations as Christ Communities." Rt. Rev. Dr. Royce Manoj Victor, the Bishop in Malabar Diocese gave an introductory remark on the theme. It was an eye opener to understand the different dimensions of equipping local congregations. Rev. Dr. D. R. Sadananda, General Secretary of CSI gave the keynote address highlighting the theological and Biblical understanding of the theme. He challenged the participants to invite people to 'come and see', 'come and remain' and 'come and celebrate'. Synod Directors presented reflections on the theme. Rev. K. James Cecil Victor, Director of Pastoral Concerns spoke on the theme from Pastoral perspective with emphasis on some of the challenges that pastors need to overcome. Rev Christopher Vijayan, the director of Mission and Evangelism spoke from Missiological Perspective, challenging the participants to be mission oriented and establish new congregations. Rev Sunil Raj Philip, the director of Communications & Dait & Adivasi Concerns dealt the theme from Communications Perspective stressing on the contextualization of the sermons and bible studies. Rev Asir Ebenezer, the director of CSI-SEVA spoke from diaconal perspective inspiring the clergy to engage in the social fabric of the communities in order to address the issues faced by people and even empower them to over their struggles.

Bishop moderated the brainstorming sharing session which gave a deeper understanding of pastoral ministry in the context of new Malabar diocese, constitutional provisions and other ministerial matters. All Pastors enjoyed exposure visits to important places in Chennai and talent time as well. The final session was the recap of the highlights of the sessions. Pastors of North Malabar, South Malabar and Wayanad met separately and drafted action plan based on the theme for three levels; Pastorate Level, District Level and Diocesan Level.

The first Clergy Conference came to an end with Holy Communion Service on 21st July. The Malabar Diocese has expressed their thankfulness to the Synod departments of Pastoral Concerns and Mission & Evangelism for facilitating this meaningful program at the Synod Centre.

Rev. K. James Cecil Victor
Director, Pastoral Concerns
Partnership between CSI and Mizoram Presbyterian Church strengthened through the Pastors’ exchange programmes. While 19 CSI Pastors visited AIZAWL last September, 10 Pastors from Mizoram Presbyterian Church visited CSI from 8-16 July, 2016. After an orientation session on the mission and ministries of CSI, the administrative structure and the statistical information, they were sent in groups to Madhya Kerala Diocese, Coimbatore Diocese and Medak Diocese for an intensive exposure to the worship services, institutions and social engagements of the Dioceses. The group that visited Madhya Kerala Diocese attended the worship service at St. Stephen’s Church where they had an opportunity to preach and sing Mizo songs. After which, they have attended the revival meeting in connection with the Bi-centenary celebrations of the arrival of the CMS Missionaries. Following day, they visited Alappuzha and Cochin where they attended the community service, visited Vaskodagama tomb and Jewish synagogue. Their first time boating experience and visit to the CMS College in Kottayam were memorable experiences. Bishop Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen, Deputy Moderator and Chairperson of Department of Pastoral Concerns received the participants and organized the programme through Rev. K. K. Kuruvilla, Rev. Vijji Verghese Eappen and Rev. Joby Joy.

The group that visited Coimbatore Diocese was received by the Bishop Rt. Rev. Timothy Ravinder who organized the exposure visits to the worship services in urban and rural congregations, visit to the Churches and institutions in Coimbatore, Ooty and Kotagiri where a retreat for Junior Pastors was held. The participants were impressed by the congregational participation in the Churches and institutions run by the Churches. The Keti Engineering College was a major attraction to them as they do not have church run higher education colleges. The exposure visits in the Diocese were co-ordinated by Rev. Prince Calvin and Mr. Paul Raj. The group that visited Medak Diocese was accompanied by Rev. K. James Cecil Victor, Director, Pastoral Concerns while Rev. A.C. Solomon, Dr. B. Vimal Sukumar, Rev. T. Bhasker have co-ordinated the programme. The team had a unique experience of worshipping in Medak Cathedral, one of the biggest Cathedrals in South Asia where people from all walks of life attend the worship service. Rev. Y. Robinson arranged a visit to ‘Sandhya Nilayam’- Home for the Aged and Boarding Homes where rural boys and girls are nurtured and cared for. The team visited Andhra Christian Theological College (ACTC) in Hyderabad and Rev. Dr. T. Mathew Emmanuel, the Principal of the college explained the history of the College and the programmes offered by the College. Visit to the Wesley Post Graduation College and CSI Institution of Technology was exciting experiences as Prof. Dr. P. John Jonathan, Director of CSI IT has explained the programmes of the college through a power point presentation. On arrival at the CSI Centre, the teams have shared their experiences with one another. Later, Rev. Paul Pragasham, the Director of Community Service Centre, Madras Diocese has facilitated the reflections on “The Challenges for Pastoral Ministry Today” and “Understanding Mission”. Next day, they had the opportunity to visit the Madras Diocese. Bishop George Stephen and the Directors of each department have explained the ministries of the Dioceses after which Rev. Jacob Selvan, Rev. Paul Dayanandan and Rev. Vijaykumar have led them to St. George’s Cathedral, Bishop New Begin’s College of Education, St. Ebbas Girls’ school and St. Ebbas Higher Secondary School, Deaf and Dumb School and Monahan Hostels. Prof. Cornelius and the heads of these institutions have received the visitors very cordially and explained the ministries rendered through the institutions. They were impressed by the warmth, cultural presentations, especially by the special children at St. Ebbas Hr. Sec. School, the hospitality and the quality education rendered through the institutions.

Synod Directors’ presentations on the Departmental ministries have given them an over view of the Church’s commitment for doing mission contextually and the Bible study on “seeing as healing” by Rev. Dr. Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda, the General Secretary, CSI, has provoked them to "Hope in Action". On the whole, the exchange programme has enabled them to see the “Unity in diversity”, Church’s agenda for social and spiritual empowerment of the people of God and the administrative structure that strengthens each Diocese to engage in the ministry and fulfill the mission of the Church. The visitors considered the programme as ‘valuable’ and suggested that the similar programme could be organized for youth, students and lay leaders to learn from one another. They expressed their sincere thanks to the Officers of the Synod, the Director of Pastoral Concerns for organizing the programme and Mr. John Vincent and Mr. Gnana pragasham for their help and support.

Rev. K. James Cecil Victor
Director,
Pastoral concerns,
CSI Synod.
First Annual Clergy Retreat of CSI Malabar Diocese

Exposure Visit - Cum - Refresher Course for Pastors from Presbyterian Church in Mizoram
CSI - EMS INTER CULTURAL YOUTH EXPOSURE 22-6-2016 TO 27-6-2016

"Come and See" An Inner-Cultural Exposure for the young people of EMS youth network, organised in the spirit of Ecumenical partnership and mutual learning by Evangelical Mission in Solidarity and hosted by the Church of South India.

"Let us all pray - through the eyes of others" Ten confrontation sessions may have recorded my experience of ten days, International Youth Conference in India. The vision from the above FF 17, "Let us all pray -" and the CMS slogan "Through the eyes of others." The group of which I could be a part of, was a group of about five, eight or more people who were not just from the same cultural group. We were involved in a situation where we had the privilege to deal with different cultures and religions and to become aware of the different ways of thinking and acting.

In this context it is important to note that the relationship of these young people to the Church of South India is not just a superficial one. It is a relationship that goes far beyond the formalities of church attendance and participation in church activities. It is a relationship that is rooted in the experiences of these young people and their families. It is a relationship that is characterized by a sense of belonging and a commitment to the mission of the Church of South India. The young people who participated in the conference were from different parts of the world, from different cultures, and from different backgrounds. They came together to share their experiences, to learn from each other, and to grow in their understanding of the world.

In the process we were able to see that the Church of South India is a Church that is not just about Christianity, but about people. It is a Church that is about the relationships that we have with each other, about the way that we live our lives, and about the way that we think about the world.

The Church of South India is a Church that is about the way that we live our lives, and about the way that we think about the world. It is a Church that is about the way that we love each other, and about the way that we care for each other. It is a Church that is about the way that we work together, and about the way that we serve one another. It is a Church that is about the way that we pray, and about the way that we worship. It is a Church that is about the way that we read the Bible, and about the way that we study the scriptures. It is a Church that is about the way that we sing, and about the way that we sing praises to the Lord. It is a Church that is about the way that we share, and about the way that we share our gifts.

The CSI Syden Youth Department which heartily thanks EMS and the EMS Youth Unit Head Ms. Birgit Grothe-Stepsians for all the sincere efforts taken in making the Youth Exposure a memorable one.

[Image with text]

To ensure we having possibilities the opportunity around my eyes, to see and not seeing opportunities. Surching such much from sources and a little more about myself... The process used was being able to experience such a beautiful country with themental tendency, who choose a source for making an influence not very hope the have able to leave a merit of self with you all.

The youth exposure was in eye space for me personally... I trust our question about situation that was having with my family, it made me want to make a difference not only in my life but also in the lives of others as well. If we have a better tomorrow through only, it important me to such much less that I had already. Surching that I have acknowledged all that the best youth whether great or not, great idea go on for ever.
"YOU-LEAD" Youth Leadership Training Seminar

Consultations on CSI Child Protection Policy
GREEN SCHOOL PROGRAMME OF CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

We are really proud to say that Church of South India (CSI) is the only Church in India that has specifically mentioned the ecological concerns in the constitution of the Church and started eco-conservation work in 1992 as part of the faith. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Alliance for Religions and Conservation (ARC) have honoured the ecological contributions and long-term commitment of CSI in protecting life in this planet by giving an award on 3rd December 2009. This event is one of the historic moments of CSI. CSI is the first Church in India that instituted Green Parish and Green School awards. The mission priorities of CSI clearly states that ‘To remain sensitive to all environmental and ecological concerns and ecumenical relations’.

CSI has been promoting Green School programme since 2006. We have been honouring Schools with Green School awards every two years. Every biennium, we publish a set of guidelines and 23 CSI dioceses in India and recommend one school from their Diocese for Green School awards. The experts from CSI synod department of Ecological Concerns will assess the recommendations and select schools for the Green School award.

CSI is promoting the values of sustainability in all our development projects. Living sustainably is about doing more and better with less. It is about knowing that rising rates of natural resource use and the environmental impacts that occur are not a necessary by-product of economic growth. The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend on the responsible management of the planet’s natural resources. The evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the planet can sustainably provide. Many of the Earth’s ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change. Christian ethics also goes a long way in helping Christians to cultivate sustainable lifestyles. We do not have to wait until there is a law to compel us to act responsibly; our ethical values and principles should help us to make right choices. The right place to teach the values of sustainability is school. Hence CSI Synod Department of Ecological Concerns promotes Green School Programme.

During the environmental day in 2016, we entered into a collaboration with Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi (CSE), in Green School Programme. CSI synod Department of Ecological Concerns has decided to utilise the expertise of CSE in making 1000 schools as Green Schools. CSE’s Green Schools Programme (‘GSP’) is a
learning programme for schools that seeks to foster environmental literacy by moving beyond theories and textbooks and concentrates on “doing”. The programme helps schools to audit the use of natural resources, provides them with the methodology to assess themselves as environmental managers and plug the gaps that are identified through the audit. Schools, which submit reports, are then graded and certified, based on their performance. Since students themselves are conducting the audit, it helps them to understand better what is being taught in the classroom, with emphasis on teamwork and collaboration. Examples: Measuring of garbage collected (Maths); Composting Methods (Biology); Narrative report (proficiency in English); Online submission (computer application), Waste Management Campaign (Civics/ Social Studies), etc.

CSI is providing educational services across five states of India, through K-12 school, sensitising students towards the needs of the society to make them responsible citizens. Such educational services are provided through innovative teaching methods while sensitising students towards the needs of the society to make them responsible citizens of society and the nation. By working together with CSE we hope to:

- Rekindle the spirit of environmental conservation among young students of the various CSI Schools, located in five states across India;
- Monitor the consumption of natural resources within the campuses of the various CSI Schools, over a period of five years to help the schools to become resource-efficient.

CSE will prepare and develop content for the Audit manual for online and offline (printed Manual). The manual explains step-by-step, how to audit natural resources like water, air, energy, waste, food, and land, within the premises of a school. It introduces a new methodology for assessing the performance of the school community as a manager of these natural resources. Audit report: GSP will provide advice to the school community to prepare its report, quantifying its own achievements, as well as identifying shortfalls that require awareness and attention. This methodology aims to monitor four crucial aspects of the environmental performance of the school. These are:

- The level of awareness within the school community and the scale of involvement.
- The quality and authenticity of documents and system in place
- The changes in school policies that have been introduced to improve performance
- The changes in education policies that have been triggered by the school constituency to mandate incorporation of environmental concerns in the institution.

CSI will honour Schools from each state every year with Awards to encourage them.

CSI Synod Department of Ecological Concerns seeks the cooperation of Bishops, Managers, Principals and HMs for carrying out the Green School programmes. We will be publishing innovative activities of Schools. In this issue of CSI life, we are publishing the activities of lower primary schools which have got Green School awards. If any schools would like to publish their innovative green school programmes kindly mail to <csi.oikos@gmail.com>.

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

**CMS LP SCHOOL MUHAMMA**

Rev. Joseph Peet, a CMS Missionary in Kerala, started the School in Muhamma, a village of Alappuzha District in the beginning of the last century. Through the years the school has seen many ups and downs but now stands as one of the prestigious institutions in CSI Madhya Kerala diocese.

Currently, there are around 700 children in our school from nursery to 4th standard, mostly hailing from the families of coir workers and fishermen. Our school keeps a good standard in both curricular and extra-curricular fields.

**Representation and achievements:**

- Selected from Cherthala sub-district to participate and present the thesis in the seminar “involvement of School clubs in uplifting Academic excellence”, held at Thriruvananthapuram during the year 2009-10 and 2010-11.
- Awarded ‘Best school’ in Cherthala Sub-district during 2007-08, 2009-10 and 2010-11.
- Best PTA Award for the year 2011 in Cherthala sub-district.
- ‘Best School’ mukavvithavan award for the year 2015-16 in Alappuzha district given by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
- Mrs. Jolly Thomas, the headmistress got the best state school teacher award for the year 2013-14.
- Through the initiative and participation of PTA and Students, Agricultural and medicinal gardens were introduced in the schools, which gave us the Haritha Vidyalaya award from education department, horticultural award from horticorp wing, and green school award from Madhya Kerala diocese.
- Wonderla environment and energy conservation award 2012.
- Our school has two units of Bharath scouts. Mr. Muhammad Rafi, our scoutmaster, got the best sub-district scout master award.
- One of the recognisable achievements of our school is our Band group.
Overall and individual championship in Sports competition.
During the last 10 years, we got a record enrolment. The number of students enrolled during 2015-16 was 725 which was only 299 during the year 2005-06.

Curricular Activities:
Other than classroom teaching the school has taken the initiative in uplifting the academic level in children. Some the programmes the school introduced are:
1. Quality-based English learning programme
2. Language fest
3. Portfolio exhibition
4. Reading corner
5. Simple science experiments
6. Way of knowledge-quiz programme

Extra-Curricular activities:
1. Honesty shop: an initiative taken to build honesty among children. Honesty shop is a venture started with a vision in mind to inculcate honesty and a sense of responsibility in the minds of the children. To improve the math skills of the students was also an agenda behind this project. Stationary items like pen, pencil, eraser, sharpener, scale, sketch pens, books, paper, crayon, chart paper etc. with their price on the paper are put up in the shop. Students can come and pick up according to their needs and deposit the required price in a box. If there is any balance they can take it from the box.
2. Care and share: Programme started to make children contribute to help each other at time of need.
3. Walk with the scholars: Pick up some children with high IQ and give special coaching
4. Leave plastic, save earth
5. My Day (class-based cultural programme): A day set apart for each class to showcase performance of each student in that class
6. Band troop
7. Karate class
8. Keep the school clean programme
9. Butterfly garden:
10. Love feast: A day when teachers, students and parents of class get together in a fellowship lunch
11. Field trip: Visiting various centres in and around the panchayath to invoke community sense within the students.
12. Icon of Month: introducing an eminent personality to all the children.

Ms. Jolly Thomas,
Head Mistress

CMS LP SCHOOL, MUNDAKAYAM
LANTERN OF THE EAST

CMS LP School, Mundakayam was founded in 1849 by an ardent missionary, Rev. Henry Baker (Jr) also known as the “Apostle of the Hill Arrians”. Mundakayam – heron’s pool nestling in the cap of the high ranges is situated in the Kottayam district of Kerala State. It was formerly a hill of the Arrians, a jungle with wild beasts and prone to contagious diseases like cholera and fever. He cleared the jungle and established a School room to be used also as a place of worship. There were no basic facilities or transportation. It was the pioneer institution in the west and is popularly known as the “Lantern of the East”

At present, there are about 600 students enrolled here from nursery to grade IV. The academic sphere along with the curricular activities are made available which help to bring out the innate and inherent talent of every child.

Kasaragod District at the northern tip of Kerala State was exposed to the pesticide, Endosulfan for over 25 years. This led to contamination of soil and water leading to environmental issues. The number of cancer patients is increasing. Children are born with abnormalities. To help the tragic victims, the school decided to conduct a Puppet Show, through eleven districts in Kerala. This programme enabled the school to raise a lump sum amount of Rs. Nine lakhs. The students went to different places to conduct the show. The money raised through this programme
was spent wisely on buying kitchen utensils for 8 Special Bud Schools, established for helping the Endosulfan victims. The School also released 55 books for developing the inmate talents of these tragic victims. A new strategy called “Lantern Awards” was introduced to bring them into the mainstream of the society.

To instil the value of soil conservation among the people, the students of the School conducted a “Street-play” at various places. The show lasting for duration of 20 minutes was written, directed and the visualisation made possible by the school itself. The media and common people helped the school in staging the play at 25 different places.

To inculcate the reading habit among students a “reading room” was created in the more populated areas. Twenty-five reading centres were established in the suburbs of the school with one reading centre for every 50 homes. Here, 50 Children were given 50 books for 50 days to read. After this period, it was transferred to the next centre. These books were circulated among readers in such a manner through these centres. This innovative idea helped a child to read 300 books each year. Adults also become readers as a result of this strategy. Another technique to showcase their literacy skills was that the children were given opportunities to go for creative writing. An Editorial board consisting of 30 students was formed to encourage this habit. Children learned to write stories, poems, notices, report, news etc. In addition to this, “Workshops” were conducted to train teachers and students. Trained students helped the other ones. As a result of this endeavour, 251 students wrote books. All these books were released on a single day. The school has found a place for itself on the world map. The Asian continent for the first time placed the school in the pages of Universal Record Forum.

Special meetings were conducted
- To improve the academic excellence of the students
- Data was collected and recorded to know in detail about each child.
- Traditional methods of medical treatment were practised to improve the child’s health.

- Environmental conservational activities such as Green Campus and various other projects were implemented in the school.

In due recognition of its uniqueness in its kind and the thriving for excellence in every field, the school has bagged 8 awards in the current year. This beacon of light which has completed 167 years proudly provides a right platform for the young minds enrolled here, their number increasing day by day. Sad to say that, the school still lacks certain aspects of its infrastructure due to the shortage of financial support. But whatever be the limitations, this temple of learning, continue its victorious march towards perfection in a faithful way and remains as a role model for many of its kind.

Mr. Rejimon Cheriyan
Headmaster
MISSION FESTIVAL 2016

The Diocese of Vellore is one among the 24 Dioceses of Church of South India. The motto chosen for the diocese was "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" (based on Galatians chapter 6 verse 14). Its emblem includes a banyan tree - the tree under which the Scudder brothers prayed before they decided to begin their Ministry in the Vellore area. The diocese was created by bifurcating the western half of the Diocese of Madras and was officially formed on 26th January 1976. Vellore Diocese is predominantly rural and crosses the state boundaries of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Mission Festival: The Diocese of Vellore has its pride in celebrating the Mission Festival every Year in the month of August, to equip the Churches and the people spiritually and to unite all these people from more than 100 Pastorates of the Diocese in 4 areas of the Diocese. The Bishop, The Officers of the Diocese, The four area Chairmen, The General Convener, The Joint Convener organize the festival. The Churches, Educational Institutions, Organizations, Hospitals and Boards of the Diocese show their support and participate enthusiastically.

Mission Festival 2016: In keen observation of the previous Mission Festivals, various suggestions were given by the Churches, Congregations and representations from institutions and organizations; it was felt a need to empower the areas and to provide opportunities to make all the people of the Area to be involved in the Diocesan activities.

Eastern Area Mission Festival: As per the schedule provided, the Mission Festival of the Eastern Area was celebrated on Saturday the 9th July 2016 at St. Mary's Church, Ranipet. The area Chairman Rev. George Edwin and the officers of the Eastern area arranged the festival by appointing subcommittees to do their work. Our Bishop Rt. Rev. A. Rajavelu graced the occasion with Bishop Amma and gave an inspiring God's message. There were programmes and Competitions all through the day Women's fellowship largely participated. The General Convener Rev. Dr. Isaac Kadirvelu, Joint Convener Rev. Abraham Asaithambi, Rev. A. Leo Samuel and Mr. Sridhar took part in the festival. The women Fellowship of the Eastern Area under the guidelines of Bishop Amma were in-charge for sales. There were traditional food items, eatables, snacks which the people cherished and there were fun and cheer everywhere. The Debate was the high light of the Programme. The winners of the competitions were announced. Thousands of People from all over the Area from Rural to Urban gathered and participated in all the programmes. The festival and the occasion was a blessing.

The people enjoyed the items and supported the sale. Various competitions were held and the winners were awarded prizes.

The Central Area Mission Festival: The Central Area Mission Festival was celebrated on Saturday the 23rd July 2016 in a grand manner at CSI Central Church, Vellore. The area Chairman Rev. Suresh Anandha Kumar and the Officers of the Central area made the arrangements. Churches and the institutions largely participated. Our Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. A. Rajavelu graced the occasion with Bishop Amma. The Officers of the Diocese Rev. Dr. Isaac Kadirvelu, Rev. H. Sharma Nithiyanandham and Rev. D. Barnabas Absalom took part in the celebration. Rev. Dr. S. Sadhu Sathiyaraj, Mr. D. Charles, Mr. Ravi Royal, Pastorate Committee members and leaders were instrumental in conducting the Festival.

The women Fellowship of the Central Area, as usual concentrated on sales under the able leadership of Bishop Amma Mrs. Padmuni Rajavelu, Various competitions were held and the winners were awarded prizes. Rev. Meshach Varman, Rev. Rufus, Mr. Anbu and Rev. V. Nithiyanandham took part and made all the arrangements with area Chairman.

Rev. H. Sharma Nithiyanandham
Hon. Secretary
CSI Diocese of Vellore
Seminar on Ethics in Language

The CMS Press, which works under the auspices of the Madhya Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India has a rich legacy of almost two centuries. This Press was established in 1821 by Rev. Benjamin Bailey, a British missionary, still being published. CSI Madhya Kerala Diocese is celebrating the bicentenary of the advent of CMS missionaries in Kerala, which eventually resulted in the formation of the diocese. In connection with the bicentenary of the Diocese, the CMS Press and the editorial board of 'Njananikshepam' jointly organised a Seminar on “Language and ethics”. Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen, the Deputy Moderator of the Church of South India and the Bishop in the Madhya Kerala Diocese, inaugurated the Seminar. In the inauguration speech, he told that language has a liberating power and that power should be reinvented for the social change. Prof. Dr. Kurias Kumbalakkuzhy, an eminent writer in Malayalam, presented the keynote address. Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, the Director of the Communication Department of the CSI Synod, spoke on the concept of ethics in language; Mr. C. K. Pradeepkumar spoke about ‘the evolving of language that was helpful for the social change’; and Dr. V. V. Mathew described about ‘the role of the missionaries in the social justice and Malayalam language’. Rev. Viju Varkey George, the Managing Editor of the ‘Njananikshepam’ Magazine, Rev. Mathew P. George, the Manager of CMS Press, Rev. Oommen George, DR. Simon John, Dr. Ashok Alex Philip, Mr. Shibu Joy, and Dr. Sally Jacob spoke in the seminar. The papers presented are published as a booklet by the CMS Press for the wider reading.

Rev. Viju Varkey George, Managing Editor, Njananikshepam Magazine.

THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
BANGALORE

CALLS FOR APPLICATIONS FROM QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE FOLLOWING POST:

Lecturer/ Associate Professor/ Professor in Mission and Ecumenics (Missiology)

Qualification: An earned doctorate from a University recognized by the Senate of Serampore College, in the respective field of specialization, preferably with teaching experience and competence in teaching at the post-graduate level.

The appointment will be for a period of three years, the first year being probationary year. The application should include curriculum vitae with a bibliography of published works and, at least, two selected samples of scholarly publications as well as photocopies of the SSLC Certificate/degree certificates.

Applications must reach:
The Principal, The United Theological College
No. 63, Millers Road, Benson Town, Bangalore 560 046,
on or before 30th September 2016
Fax:+91-80-23330015
Annual Retreat for the Wives of Pastors

The annual retreat for the wives of the pastors of the Thoothukudi Nazareth Diocese of the Church of South India was held at the Holiday Home, Kodaikanal, from 24th - 26th June 2016. There was an enthusiastic response from the wives of the pastors and most of them attended in the retreat. There were around 65 delegates participated in this retreat. The theme of the retreat was “Excellent in Guidance” (Isaiah 28: 29). Rev. D. Jesusahayam, Moderator's Commissary to the Diocese and Mrs. Shirly Sagayam inaugurated the retreat with prayer. Keynote address was given by Rev. D. Jesusahayam in which he gave an elaborated description about the theme.

Ms. Sheela Vijayakumar from Coimbatore was the special speaker and she inspired all the participants by her message.

Mrs. Shirly Sahayam led the devotions by urging the participants to pay more attention to God’s word and review their life in light of the mission and ministry of Jesus. Time was given to rededicate themselves for a committed ministry among women in their perspective pastorates. Council-wise cultural programmes were performed by the participants attractively. Singing sessions in the retreat were having refreshing and enriching effects on the delegates. In the closing session, time was given to the participants to express their witness and feedback. Retreat came to an end with the covenant service by Rev. Devaraj Gnanasingh, the Clerical Secretary of the Diocese.

Ms. Anbu Hepzibah Jesudason, Secretary, DWF

Inauguration of CHRISTA YUVA JATHROTHSAVA and Building Capacities of Youth for Civil Services at Madurai-Ramnad Diocese

The CSI Synod Youth Department organized a day’s celebration for youth in CSI Madurai-Ramnad Diocese, during which, CHRISTA YUVA JATHROTHSAVA, the synod youth festival to be held this October 2016 was blessed and posters were released in Madurai-Ramnad diocese by Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. M. Joseph, The Bishop also led the devotion session to the youngsters as a start of the day. Rev. J Solomon Paul, Director of Youth department, CSI Synod, with his active and thought provoking session made the youths to realise the importance of career planning and goal setting in their lives. He emphasised the fact that youths are getting digitally addicted in turn making them very very insensitive to the realities around them. He urged them to critically look at the present mode of so called development and also engage themselves in life-affirming realities.

This celebration was held on 30th of July 2016 at CSI Cathedral, Madurai-Ramnad Diocese, around 1500 young people from the Madurai-Ramnad Diocese of Church of South India participated in this days gathering. A Motivational talk to inspire the young people of the Diocese in preparing a road map towards Public administration and Civil Service exams was conducted. Mr. Madheshwar, from Galaxy IAS institute handled this session for 2 hours. The entire session was an interactive time where many young people raised queries about opportunities available for them towards this venture.

The session began with removing the myths & misconceptions held by the public in general about UPSC and CSE. Various services for which UPSC recruits under CSE were explained and the participants eligibility criteria to apply for UPSC CSE, including the relaxation in age and number of attempts provided to SC, ST, PWD, Ex-Servicemen were presented. Many inspiring videos of success stories, and attitudinal changes were also showcased for discussion during the session to inspire the young minds. Different phases of UPSC-CSE (Prelims, Mains and personal Interview’s) were explained. Few questions which were asked by UPSC in CSE were taken and discussed with the participants, in order to give them better understanding of the kind of questions being framed in the examination. Many participants gave the right answers to the questions displayed, which in turn boosted their confidence and also of the other participants.

The candle light vigil at the end of the day enlightened and committed the students to become better youth standing for the causes of justice and peace. We thank Rev. David Jebaraj, Clergy Secretary and Mr. Joseph Paul Singh, Associate director, Youth Board, Madurai-Ramnad Diocese for all their support and making this occasion gracious and useful to the young minds.

Rev. Solomon Paul J
Director, Synod Youth Department
# CSI Disability Octave

9th October 2016 to 3rd December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>PROGRAMMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 9th – 15th</td>
<td>1st Week</td>
<td>Observance of Disability Sunday &amp; Inauguration of the CSI Disability Octave</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theme: “Disability: Care and Honour”</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16th – 22nd</td>
<td>2nd Week</td>
<td>Bible Study on Gen.1:26, 27; John 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ From Disability perspective – re-reading and re-interpreting Scripture</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>➢ Finding solutions to the problems</td>
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<td>➢ What are the ways that will help in their full participation in church</td>
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<td>and society in enjoying equal opportunities</td>
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<td>October 23rd – 29th</td>
<td>3rd Week</td>
<td>Creative Public Expression including Solidarity walk from P(s)w D homes/</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>centers to the church</td>
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<td>➢ Identifying &amp; locating challenges and needs of P(s)w D and their</td>
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<td></td>
<td>caretakers (individuals/families/institutional centre)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>➢ Exploring ways in meeting their needs</td>
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<td>October 30th</td>
<td>4th Week</td>
<td>Synod level and Local Conclaves</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Nov 3&amp;4: Synod Disability conclave</td>
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<td>November 6th – 12th</td>
<td>5th Week</td>
<td>Day of Prayer</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Assigned theme specially for P(s)w D, their significant others and care</td>
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<td>providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 13th – 19th</td>
<td>6th Week</td>
<td>Competitions on Singing, Painting, dancing…..</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20th – 26th</td>
<td>7th Week</td>
<td>Meeting in local churches</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Accept the P(s)w D as they are</td>
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<td>➢ Engage in discussion relating to addressing accessibility - physical,</td>
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<td>ICT, attitudinal</td>
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<td>➢ Creating an accommodative space in the churches</td>
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<td>➢ Becoming an accompanying “I am there with you * I will be with you”</td>
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<td>“church”</td>
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<td>November 27th –</td>
<td>8th Week</td>
<td>Observance of International Day of the People with Disability</td>
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<td>December 3rd 2016</td>
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<td>(Dec. 3, 2015)</td>
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<td>➢ Grand finale on at the diocesan level spearheaded by diocesan</td>
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<td>institutions serving P(s)wD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Presentation of disability aids to the P(s)w D</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(Resources to be mobilized from local philanthropic organisations)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Swearing “Full Participation and Equality” Oaths or Affirmations</td>
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Disability Sees Light in Pastors’ Training

“Though I see only Darkness yet I can see, live and do ministry just as you do” says Rani a person with visual impairment. The minds of 38 Pastors drawn from 20 Dioceses absorbed the essence of Rani’s story in the training workshop on Disability. They came with predominant idea that sin is a cause of disability, which was addressed in the workshop on Disability, jointly organized by CSI SEVA, CSI Pastoral concerns and World Vision India, which was coordinated by DISHA (Disability Intervention for Solidarity and Holistic Accompaniment), from 26th to 29th July 2016 in CSI Centre, Chennai. The workshop was inaugurated by the CSI Deputy Moderator Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen. Mr. Cherian Thomas, National Director, World Vision India and Rev. Dr. D. R. Sadananda, General Secretary, CSI graced the workshop and rendered Biblical exposition on Disability. It was marked by planting of saplings of medicinal values.

During the 4 days the issue of disability was addressed from Social, Legal, Biblical, Theological and Ecclesial points of view. The Simulation Exercise of disabling the delegates truly propelled them into the vulnerable world of Persons with Disability (PwD).

The delegates were introduced to the issue of disability, its prevalence, its causes, types the models and the barriers involved in the discourse and the lives of persons with disability. Disability occurs in a human being, before Birth, during Birth and after Birth. It can be expressed either physically or mentally or in learning abilities. The Pastors were informed about the usage of right terminologies of disability and were encouraged to address the PwD in an unstigmatised and dignified language. A person with disability encounters barriers from the attitudes of the world around, the environment around them, the institutions they live in and information, and communication and technical spheres. The trainees were also informed about the variety of myths surrounding the issue of disability and the ways and means to break them. As far as disability and the Laws are concerned, the National and local Governments provide friendly legal avenues and entitlements. The participants were challenged to read the Biblical Scripture and interpret them from a disability-friendly perspective. Moreover, they were encouraged to follow inclusive liturgies and liturgical practices. The traditional theologies were challenged by Indian Christian disability theology which identifies the disabled God in Jesus Christ on the cross in relation to the one’s disability and the context they are living in. The delegates being engaged in Pastoral ministry were encouraged to accept the PwD in and around the Church as they are, to modify and construct accessible attitudes, structures and spaces in order to facilitate the Church community accompany them so that they live, witness and minister in an inclusive, just and a disability friendly accompanying Church.

The workshop changed their ideas, misconceptions and perspectives motivating them to see, discuss and act from a disability friendly perspective in order to engage with the lives of PwD in the Church and the community around them, to inspire the Church and empower the PwD by way of providing equal opportunities and fuller participation in the life, witness and ministry of the Body of Christ.

Many of the representatives of their respective dioceses have planned and committed themselves to do more inclusive ministry in their Diocese and local Churches, by way of conducting regional, diocesan, local conclave, and observance of Disability Sunday and Octave.

John Samadhanam,
Coordinator,
DISHA.

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.
A seminar on Youth Leadership and planning meeting of the Synod Youth Festival “CHRISTA YUVA JATHROTHSAVA” (A Christian Youth Pilgrimage and festival) was held at Holiday Home resort, Kodaikanal on 18th and 19th July 2016. The Church of South India Synod Youth Dept with the gracious support and hospitality of Madurai-Ramnad Diocese hosted this gathering for 75 participants represented by 22 dioceses of the Church of South India.

This 2 days seminar started with the inauguration by the Chairperson of the Youth Dept Bishop, Timothy Ravinder, who in his inaugural address challenged the youngsters to become servant leaders like Jesus. He spoke about the rise of Youth Leadership in churches, Christian communities as an urgent need for the Church to be represented in the national mainstream towards nation building. He encouraged the participants to look at leadership as a calling from God to which everyone has to be accountable and faithful. After the inauguration Rev. David Jebaraj, The Clergy Secretary and Junior Church Ministries Director of Madurai-Ramnad Diocese shared the greetings on behalf of Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. M. Joseph.

Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, Director of communications, Adivasi and Dalit concerns, CSI Synod, handled a Bible study on the theme “Leadership in the word-Leadership in the world”. He highlighted various instances from the life and ministry of Jesus and explained how Jesus as a Leader made difference in the life of the common people. Rev. Sunil Raj Philip shared numerous experiences from his pastoral ministry and the life of others reflecting the principles of the true leaders inclined to the word of God but not confirmed by the world.

The afternoon session was led by Rev. Paul Prakasam, Director of Community service center, Diocese of Madras, spoke on the theme “Spirituality and Integrity in Youth Leadership”. Rev. Paul highlighted the fact that being spiritual is being courageous, and being spiritual is losing one's own identity for the sake of social justice. He took the example of The Pharaoh's Daughter who saved the baby Moses from the river, making a decision to go against her father in raising up Moses to be a true leader. He challenged the youngsters to be true in whatever they do and to prioritize others first and to put themselves first in times of danger.

In the evening Rev. Augusty Gnana Gandhi, Youth Director, Trichy-Tanjore Diocese, led a session on understanding youth, their context and challenges. Later in the evening the youth directors along with chairperson of the department met together for the planning of Synod Youth Festival. The youth director of Synod Youth dept Rev. Solomon Paul J shared the vision and the objectives of the synod youth festival and also briefed about the proceedings thus far about the same. Many concerns and ideas were expressed on how to make the synod youth festival a more meaningful one and various committees were thought about to divide responsibilities and execute them as per the decisions taken. All the youth directors and the incharge from all the dioceses felt the need of such a youth festival at the synod level for a wider and stronger network in CSI and also firmly believed that this synod youth festival can strengthen their ministry among the youth at their local churches and dioceses.

A short talent night was observed at the end of the day and the next day morning a bible study was led by Rev. Joby Joy, Youth gen sec of Madhya Kerala Diocese. He highlighted the character of Nehemiah who was a leader who saw the unseen, heard the unheard, and spoke the unspoken in building the community of Jerusalem. After the bible study all the 22 dioceses presented a report of their youth ministries in their own respective areas which enabled them to learn from each other, to exchange ideas to be inspired and to be challenged. Rev. Solomon Paul concluded this session with the activities of the synod Youth Dept and again invited the support and co-operation of all the participants to Synod Youth Festival. The DVD's of the Short Film Festival on the Youth against Addiction and Abuse (YaAA) campaign was handed over to each diocese to bring awareness and further the objectives of the campaign through the use of these short films. The seminar came to a close with prayer and benediction by Rt. Rev. Timothy Ravinder, who also thanked the team of Madurai-Ramnad diocese for their hospitality and all the support rendered.

Rev. J. Solomon Paul
Director,
Synod Youth Department.
PAPER PRESENTATION AT SACYN BY MISS. NANCY NAOMI (CSI DELEGATE) WHICH WON THE FIRST PLACE

Three important attributes / qualities of a people-helper

“Let each one of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” Philippians 2:4. We live in a world that is full of needs. People in need cry for help. John Donne rightly said that no man is an island. You need other's help one day or the other. And the needs of people are not just physical, but also psychological, spiritual, emotional, financial and so on. There are people ready to receive the help one gives, but there is a big dearth of compassionate people-helpers. Our Lord Jesus Christ came as a people-helper to save us from our bondages. We, as children of this Living God, are called to emulate Him.

To be a people-helper one does not require big qualifications or specific skills. But all that one needs to have is the heart, the willingness to serve people. One can choose to be a helper by just being relevant in his/her context and do what he/she can do that will make a difference. William James said “Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does”.

The three essential attributes/ qualities of a people-helper are:

1. Being patient: Being a people-helper is not an easy job. When one tries to cater to the needs of others, many a times it will be tiring and hurtful. Being a nurse I have always felt that. Your intention would definitely be to help those in need, but most of the times they would respond in such a way that might be hurtful. Yet, a people-helper needs to be patient to handle all the hurts.

2. Being prayerful: We are mere human beings. We live in a complex world with intricate problems/ life issues. To be a good people-helper and address the problems of the suffering in a holistic manner, one needs wisdom, strength and guidance from above. So, to be competent and productive, we need to be prayerful in all our deliberations and seek His strength to lead us.

3. Being people-centric: People-helpers need to be sensitive even to the minutest cries of an individual. To be more productive, one has to be available and accessible to people at all the time.

To really reach out, one has to understand (i.e. being empathetic and caring at all times) the real situation or the plight of the suffering (putting yourself into their shoes). And it is vital that a people-helper develops a trusting relationship, a friendly relationship through which one can identify and deal with issues in a meaningful manner.

Conclusion: I John 3:17 says “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”. God delights in those who respond and obey His call. Our world is full of needs, and people need our help and love. Let us be the ‘people-helpers’ who will be sensitive to the needs of people around us and make this world a better place to someone through our words and deeds, ultimately bringing glory to His name!!

S. W. Naomi Nancy, M. Sc Nursing
Diocese of Vellore,
Church of South India
News Scan

Inter Diocesan Project Staff Workshop
CSI Retreat Centre, Shoranur, Diocese of Cochin

The Dalit Women Empowerment Project sponsored by EMS is simultaneously implemented in Adimali and Kathipara areas of CSI Diocese of Cochin and Kottarakara area of CSI Kollam Kottarakara Diocese. During the visit of Mr. K. Prem Madhuker, Coordinator, CSI SEVA to the project areas in June and July 2016, it was felt that the Project Staff needed additional training to implement the proposed activities in a systematic manner so that many Dalit and Adivasi women would be empowered through our interventions. It was suggested to have a combine training programme for staff of both the projects at a convenience place. The two days training cum workshop was organised at CSI Retreat Centre, Shoranur on the 29th and 30th July. Two staff from Kollam Kottarakara and two staff from Cochin Diocese have participated. The Workshop was facilitated by Mr. Chacko Abraham, Project Coordinator, CSI Cochin Diocese and Mr. Santosh, Principal, ITC Muttom, East Kerala Diocese. Mrs. Sakhi Mary Fenn, President, Women Fellowship, Cochin Diocese took a session on women empowerment. Rev. P.G. Thomson and Rev. K.M. Hezekiel led motivational bible studies on the two days.

It was an excellent learning process for the participants and the facilitators. The participants were able to understand the activites of different projects and the methodology in implementing the activities in their respective project areas. They shared the success stories in different Projects. A case study has been employed to analyze and understand conflict and negative situation in the given context and to redesign the programme with available and options. The participants were also given orientation to design to simple Project implantation process and strategy. The different avenues of the Community Development were discussed with special emphasis on empowerment of marginalized women.

Chacko Abraham
Kunnathuparamban
Diocesan Project Coordinator,
CSI Diocese of Cochin.
YOUTH DEPARTMENT

Come and See- Through the eyes of another.

CSI-EMS Youth Intercultural Exposure, Phase II- from Bangalore to Hyderabad

The team of 22 vibrant, life-filled youngsters who experienced their first taste of Indian hospitality and the mission and ministry of the Church of South India at the Synod Secretariat in Chennai set off to Bangalore on a train for their exciting second phase of their inter-cultural exposure. Something unexpected did happen, when one of the participants from Indonesia got into a wrong train, but thanks to the CSI Youth network and its committed team of youngsters who put him back in our train half-way-through.

The days in Bangalore were very welcoming with the pleasant weather, and on the day one itself gave these team of youngsters an opportunity to visit the Board of Child Care to understand its mission among the children and also visit a theatre to watch a Bollywood movie. Day two in Bangalore started off with meeting the Bishop Rt. Rev. Prasanna Kumar Samuel of Kollam Diocese, who primarily shared his experience of being a servant leader and the ministry of CSI in the Diocese. The day got much better with the visits to Arpana, a school for the specially abled and Makkala Ashraya Kendra, a rehabilitation home for the Children in crisis, and the Cathedral High school. Mixed with emotions of joy and tears the youngsters were able to witness the beauty of life and God's grace through these ministries. The evening fellowship with the youngsters of St. Andrew's Church and the local dioceses enriched our experience of being young and active for God's work through our talents and positive commitment. On the day the team left to Hyderabad in a train again, they had the opportunity to visit the United Theological College and Gurudvar, a place of worship for the Sikh Community.

The night travel in a train to Hyderabad was one such memorable experience for everyone and for many it was their first time too. At Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad, the next three days were to be spent, where the group had the opportunity to learn about the importance of inter-faith relationship and reconciliation. Sessions on understanding Islam were planned and provoked learning and quest for knowledge among the youngsters to know more about their own spiritual quest in relation to the people of other faith.

A Muslim community invited us to an iftar celebration as it was the holy month of Ramadan, this meal was a sign of fellowship and definitely strengthened the ties between the Muslim and the Christian communities. The final evening was a time of retrospection where the entire team was so enriched about the last 10 days of learning together, staying together and experiencing India through the eyes of another. Surely the memories will not fade away as it will continue to linger on the minds and hearts of these youngsters moving beyond barriers of race, nationality, denomination, language and culture to say and affirm, “Yes, a world of love and justice is possible”.

All this wouldn't have been possible if not for EMS (Evangelical Missions in Solidarity) and its Youth Network in planning and organizing and the Synod office bearers of the Church of South India for their hosing and execution of this program. This exposure for the young people of EMS and CSI is surely a sign of the positive mutual partnership and the fellowship shared between across boundaries. The CSI Youth Department with gratitude thank EMS Youth Network Unit head, Mr. Birgit Grobe-Slopianka, and everyone responsible in EMS for their meticulous planning and organizing in making this event happen. With arms of hospitality wide open CSI wishes the very best for those youngsters who journeyed along with us on this memorable exposure.

Rev. Solomon Paul j
Director, Youth Department
CSI Synod

BEHIND THE COVER

Freedom makes human being, and any creature, to express himself/herself/itself. Jesus says that 'the truth shall set you free'. The fullness of the humanity and the fullness of creation are seen only the needed freedom is enjoyed by everybody. Freedom from the bondage of sinfull structures in the society and freedom from tyranny are core values to be discussed in the present day India from a theological perspective. In the cover design, the artist presents himself as an optimist, who hopes that the bondage will have an end, even though the clutches of heinous social systems such as casteism, communalism, widening gap between the poor and the rich and fascism are becoming uglier. The horizons of freedom are wider than anybody can expect as birds fly high and far. Mr. Yesudasen, the artist, is a member of the Madhya Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India. He has his Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the Ravi Varma Lalitha Kala Academy in Mavelikkara, Kerala. He had recently attended the Art Camp in Taiwan, which was organised by the Council for World Mission (CWM).
CSI DISABILITY OCTAVE
9th October 2016 TO 3rd December 2016

Theme: “Disability: Care and Honour”
Bible study, creative public expression, synod level and local conclaves, day of prayer, competitions on singing, painting & dancing, meeting in local churches, and observance of international day of the people with disability....

For more details see page 28

PASTORS
Unleash your Talents! for a Multilingual Audio CD

Theme: “Pilgrim Journey Towards Forgiveness and Reconciliation”

Last date for submission of songs: 31st August, 2016
For more details, please contact:
Rev. James Cecil Victor
Director, Department of Pastoral Concerns,
Church of South India Synod
Cell: +91 9477181818
Email: csiympad@gmail.com