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1. Our Pilgrimage towards Just and inclusive Communities: 365 days of Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence: Make it Happen Now

14th and 15th March 2016

We the members of the pre-assembly forum for Women and Gender Justice of the NCCI, held on 14th and 15th March 2016 with the theme: “Our Pilgrimage towards Just and inclusive Communities: 365 days of Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence: Make it Happen Now” met at the NCCI headquarters, Nagpur. We discussed the challenges involved in addressing the issues of Violence and the need for Gender Justice in the Church and to usher in a just, inclusive and peaceful society.

In the present national political scenario, characterized by a rise in the communal temperature, there is a tendency for implementing policies and programmes unfavourable to the struggles of vulnerable sections including women, children, Dalits, Adivasis, transgenders and religious minorities. Further, the situation of women and girls in the country has suffered due to gender-insensitive statements by those in positions of authority in political and social institutions. As a result of this and due to the fund allocations and priorities being shifted away from the interests of these sections, several autonomous educational institutions and bodies are in ferment due to a suppression of progressive and liberal voices. There is also a fear that the gains in the legal sphere of the Human rights of women, Children, workers, other vulnerable minorities are being abrogated by moves to change the existing legal protections to child labour, workers, and so on.

In such a context, the forum discussed the situation in the church. In the present changing ecumenical scenario, there are serious concerns in the political, social, and environmental issues and challenges that the ecumenical world needs to address. One of the key issues identified by participants was the unequal distribution of power, responsibility and decision making to women in the church hierarchy, resulting in lack of adequate representation of women in leadership and decision-making at all levels in all constituent bodies of the members of the NCCI. At the same time, there is need for greater awareness among the general church membership on these issues and in the management and distribution of power and resources within the church. [ecumenical and spiritual value-based formation to end gender based violence and ensure a just and peaceful society]

Therefore, we AFFIRM that

- There was general agreement on the need for women and men to continuously engage in dialogue with the power structures in the church, and challenge the hierarchy.
- There needs to be a ‘Discipleship of Equals’, where women are accepted as Bishops, clergy, priests and pastors.
- Women around the world face domestic violence, are survivors of gender based violence, and face inadequate access to the already low allocations for their health and maternal care facilities during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Women and men need to partner together in all issues of justice and rights for the sexual and reproductive health of women. People living with HIV/AIDS and drug abuse and their families, is a neglected area in India and around the world, including the women whose wombs are exploited

to be surrogate mothers, and who need support and services to address their vulnerability to breast cancer.

- That we need to support efforts to raise awareness on the prevention of diabetes and improve access to cheap and affordable treatment.
- We need to work together to end the culture of sexual harassment of women, girls, children and boys in the home, workplace, juvenile homes, orphanages, schools and colleges and elsewhere in society.
- Transgenders who face violence and discrimination need our solidarity and support.
- Our relationship with the Mother earth needs to be healed. Eco refugees, whose lives have been disrupted by forced migration and displacement due to environmental disasters such as earthquake, volcanic eruptions, landslides, tsunamis, cyclones, floods, etc caused by climate change and other 'development' projects.
- We need to work for the restoration of all creation including flora, fauna, insect and other species which are facing extinction due to the destruction of forests, climate change and environmental degradation.
- We need to be specially concerned about the women, girls, children and men who face severe stress, depression and mental health problems due to abuse, violence, and suppression and those who are suicidal and commit suicide due to unbearable stress.
- We commit to building a world free of gender-based violence, and pray for the victims of human trafficking, whether women, children, girls or men; for those who survive rape and violence; for Dalits and other people groups who face racism, discrimination and violence.

WE RECOMMEND THAT

- Churches and related agencies work together on the campaign "365 days to end Gender based violence: Make it happen now" to end the culture of violence against women and children in India.
- The issues and concerns of Dalit and indigenous women, who are doubly disadvantaged, should find priority in the work of the church bodies.
- The allocations of programme budgets should prioritise [gender budgeting] issues of ending gender-based violence
- The rehabilitation and restoration of trafficked women, girls and boys and their families should be a priority for the church.
- There should be a concerted effort to identify issues and map challenges and strategise together to evolve modern paradigms of mission and evangelisation to spread the Good news and end the culture of gender-based violence, promote gender justice and build inclusive just communities.
- The Women's wing - AICCW of NCCI and all the member churches strategise with women's fellowships for resource sharing and the ownership of the programmes and projects.

WE recommend that in the present scenario, AICCW needs to be restructured and brought under the umbrella of NCCI.

WE call upon the churches to pray for the perpetrators of gender-based crimes, for their hearts to be changed and their lives transformed by the Grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

- We call upon the churches to set aside a month every year to celebrate women, while not excluding the existing celebrations of women.
- We call upon the churches to set aside the 2nd Sunday of March as Women's Sunday, as the Women's World Day of Prayer and the 8th of March is International Women's Day.
- WE call upon all member churches of NCCI to commit to the partnership of men and women in the movement to address all forms of gender and social inequality at a national level, so that the values of "A Jesus type of Masculinity" becomes the model for gender relations in the church and family.

2. Towards Just and Inclusive Communities: Dalit & Tribal/ Adivasi Perspectives

29 March-1 April 2016

We, 30 Members, predominantly from the Dalit, Tribal and Adivasi communities, of the Pre- Assembly of the Commissions on Dalits & Tribals / Adivasis of National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), which was held at Bethestha Hall, Church Women Centre, Chennai, in partnership with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (UELCL) from 29 March-1 April 2016 on the theme: ***Towards Just and Inclusive Communities: Dalit & Tribal/ Adivasi Perspectives***, reflected on the problems and concerns of the Dalits, Tribal and Adivasi communities and have come up with the following recommendations and suggestion to the Quadrennial Assembly of NCCI.

We realized and condemn:

- The alarming growth in the atrocities, violence, suppression and discrimination, especially in the field of education, based on caste and religion against the Dalits, Tribals and Adivasis.
- The growing tendency of fundamentalist groups to assault democracy and right to live in the present Indian political scenario and the negligence of the government administration for not implementing the constitutional rights, acts and UN international declarations given to the Tribals and Adivasis.
- The development policies are the vested interest of the dominant and the victims are these vulnerable communities.
- There are not much deliberate attempts to tackle casteism within the Indian churches.
- The Constitution of India (Article 17) states the eradication of untouchability and caste- based discrimination and made them criminal offences, but these crimes are still prevalent.
- The women among these Communities are the most vulnerable and discriminated because of their caste/ race and gender status.
- The complexity on interfacing the methodologies in bringing up the Just and Inclusive Communities.
- The enforcement of law on specific motives against the nature and the nature- loving communities.

We Resolved:

- The church has made some inroads into the tackling of castiesm by adapting the campaign “No one can serve Christ and caste” put forward by NCCI.
- The church should be informed about the socio- political scenario, and should be willing to learn and use constitutional rights for the betterment of the lives of these Communities.
- We resolve to reorient the churches’ prophetic vocation towards just and inclusive communities.

We Affirm:

The uniqueness of the culture, philosophy, ethics and values of the Tribal and Adivasi communities which can contribute to the journey towards just and inclusive communities.

The rights of these Communities on equal opportunities and resources in India.

- The sanctity of the Indian Constitution and the freedom, equality, justice and fraternity it propagates.
- The need of gender equality, especially for these Communities, inside the church as well as in the secular field.
- The Dalit Christian rights should be on the priority on the mission agenda of the Entire Christian community in India and not of Indian Dalit Christians alone.

We Recommend:

- The Church should observe the special Sundays Like Dalit/ Adivasi/ Tribal, and should ask the congregations to share their resources to establish an NCCI corpus fund for the Scholarships of the Dalit and Tribal / Adivasi students.
- The church should more actively advocate with the Right-based approach for justice, equality and peace. The church should work as a redressal mechanism.
- The Laws made for safe guarding these communities should be enforced by Strengthening and widening the “No one can serve Caste and Christ” and confront the discrimination and exclusion in the Christian institutions.
- The church should take up the responsibility to sensitize the communities on the governmental Sub-plan for the economic empowerment.
- The church should have a provision to provide the legal support to the communities which are prone to violence and atrocities.
- The church should empower the communities to be self-sustaining and initiate dialogue between and among the Churches to be Just & Inclusive.
- The church should network, partner and work together with the likeminded organisations and the fellow churches in tackling casteism/racism.
- The member churches of NCCI should demand reservation for Dalits (Christian Dalits and Muslim Dalits too), Adivasis and Tribals in the private sector in India.

3. Inclusive Household of God: An Interfaith Affirmation

4 and 5th April 2016

The NCCI Interfaith Pre-assembly was held from 4 and 5th April 2016, at the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad with 40 clerics, theologians, scholars, practitioners and comrades from Baha'i, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity, Dalits, Tribal, Adivasi, Dravidian, Gandhian, Ambedkarite, Marxist and Rationalist backgrounds and faiths from all over India and deliberated on the theme 'Inclusive Household of God: An Interfaith Affirmation'. This Pre-assembly was jointly organised by Henry Martyn Institute (HMI), Interfaith Coalition for Peace (ICP), India Peace Centre (IPC), Christian Service Agency (CSA) and NCCI-Commission on Unity, Mission and Evangelism.

Affirmations

- The household of God is '*inclusive*' and does not discriminate any one on the basis of 'faiths', 'ideologies', 'backgrounds', 'practices', 'Gender' and other 'prejudices' that negate 'inclusiveness', 'societal peace' and 'harmony'.
- Faith communities are called to 'uphold' the God indented' household that promotes and affirms the life, dignity and respect 'of' all and 'for' all.
- We as faith communities observe that, there is 'Scriptural Commonism' about the understanding of creation and its life in fullness.
- Let us all join God in affirming and recognizing plurality and diversity in society.
- Preempting our religious expressions at the 'common', 'public' and 'secular' spaces for peaceful co-existence.
- Let all our faith expressions become 'human-centric' by becoming and remaining human.
- We affirm that discrimination and prejudice are anti-God and anti-human, so let our lives be free from them.
- We realize that, 'save-god' attitude of adherents and FBOs breeds contempt and enmity.
- Societal issue based inter-faith conversations are to be initiated rather on concepts and theologies.
- Inter-faith is not a concept to discuss but a spirituality to practice, it is not a programme or a project to work but a lifestyle to live and interfaith is not a subject to study but a vision to realise.

Suggestions

- facilitate a national level interfaith platform by net-working with Church based and other interfaith initiatives in India.
- work with the existing interfaith initiatives by the constituent members of NCCI to promote interfaith consciousness among other members in NCCI family. We request those initiatives to enrage in facilitating 'interfaith training programmes for the Church leaders and its members. to develop an inter-faith introductory level publication for the Sunday School and primary level Children in the Church and Church related educational institutions.

to encourage the eligible candidates from marginalized communities to pursue their civil service careers and create a platform for the policy makers.

- to responsibly use the media space by censoring and certifying the existing Christian television programmes that are divisive and misrepresentative of Christianity.
- To initiate and include Interfaith component in their mission agenda
- Inclusive Peoples' Language to be used from pulpit and promoted in other forms of communications
- To celebrate Inter-faith festivals with friends from other faiths at the local congregational levels.
- To initiate exposure events including, rallies, camps, conversations and sports for the Children and Youth
- To facilitate the women to have conversations on role of women in faith and their right to worship and participate in the lives of the faiths.

4. Communication for Life, Enablement and Growth

April 8-10, 2016

NCCI Communication pre-assembly, in collaboration with CSI Synod and BTESSC held from April 8-10, 2016 at CSI Synod, Chennai has developed a strategic plan for next four years. This plan will act as a guideline for its member churches/ bodies to plan their programmes and projects. The major emphasis is given on "COMMUNICATION FOR LIFE, ENABLEMENT AND GROWTH" under NCCI's new quadrennial theme "Towards Just and Inclusive Communities". This planning process helped to examine the new communication and justice challenges that confront us today.

- Electronic and social media have become a powerful democratic tool not only for the upper strata of the society but also to the grassroots mobilisation.
- New forms of communication are giving opportunities and access to all and also creating ethical and moral issues.
- Media literacy is necessary to access the instant informations and global connectivity.
- Communication is a basic human right and it is essential to identity, dignity and community. Communication has to be for life, justice and for sustainable growth.

PLAN OF ACTION

1. Develop communication departments to reflect the mission of the church.

- NCCI communication department's primary mandate is to strengthen the voices of the people in the periphery. Through developing communication departments, the churches /bodies can strengthen the voice of the voiceless and give new life.

2. Advocate communication rights to all for life, enablement and growth.

- Communication rights claims spaces and resources in the public sphere for everyone to be able to engage in transparent democratic debate

3. Network national and international churches, FBO, NGOs, national- international media and Government agencies.

- Through networking the churches/ bodies can influence the decision makers to make policies that can promote life, peace, Justice and sustainable growth.

4. Regular training programmes to increase internal skill and knowledge.

- Through training and practical advocacy initiatives, Church/ bodies leaders and the members can update the changing challenges and issues related with ICT. This will help the churches/ bodies to train the secular society to communicate responsibly.

5. Develop inter and intra-personal relationship

6. Encourage churches/bodies to be actively present in the media world for promoting life and dignity to everyone in the society.

Encourage to produce media savvy programmes to empower youth, women, children, dalits and adivasis and grassroots.

7. Support and promote research in media and communication studies and budget scholarships for desiring candidates

5. Peoples Diakonia for Just and Inclusive Communities

12th -14th April, 2016

We, the fifty concerned citizens who met during the historical occasion of the 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar at Nagpur from 12 to 14th April 2016 as the NCCI Peoples' Forum Pre-assembly to deliberate on the theme '**Peoples Diakonia for Just and Inclusive Communities**' are sending this **MESSAGE** to the 28th Quadrennial Assembly of the NCCI for its appropriate theological, ministerial and societal response.

This Pre-assembly adopted a methodology of 'peoples' conversation' where, the following issues were identified as the **issues** that are yet to be addressed adequately and collectively by the Churches and Church related developmental organisations. *Including Bishops, Presidents, General Secretaries, Clerics, Social Scientists, Academicians, Activists, Church based developmental workers and Ecumenists representing fifteen member churches, three related organisations, autonomous bodies and Five ecumenical development organisations, people's movements and Community based organisations, alternate farming practitioners including thirteen women twelve youth and three persons with disabilities.*

THE ISSUES:

- Human Rights;
- Security and Dignity of women, young girls and girl child;
- Human Trafficking;
- Peace and Human Security;
- Fascism and Religious Fundamentalism;
- Freedom and Democracy;
- Climate Justice, Climate Refugees and Migration;
- The Right to Higher Education for the marginalised section of the society;
- Urbanisation (smart city), and their negative implications;
- Homeless and Housing
- Agriculture - Farmers' suicide, water, land, mining and forest, etc. **We APPEAL**

to the NCCI member Churches and other constituent bodies, in our *Diakonal* and ministerial journey, along with the Charity and developmental approach, to adopt a methodology of 'Doing Gospel' so as to express our liberative solidarity and accompaniment with the communities that are under heavy desperation, repression, oppression and yet struggling for their survival and a better future for all. We gain this inspiration while we read the post-resurrection narrative in Luke 24th Chapter, that Jesus was walking with the fleeing disciples by facilitating them to discuss the issues and problems that they face and to respond

on their own, by making 'their hearts glow' through accompanying them without disclosing his identity, but making them to realise on their own the Jesus' accompaniment. (Luke 24)

DIAKONIA:

The Church as a 'Peoples' Assembly' of God is called 'to' serve 'not' to be served. '*Diakonia*' is the heartbeat of the Church that gives life and strength to the 'called-assembly' to 'go-out' to 'serve' the larger society with love of God as expressed in Christ Jesus. This love filled service (*Diakonia*) affirms dignity and 'justright' of the lives of the socially, religiously and culturally excluded communities of our societies, and to facilitate a journey towards 'just' and 'inclusive communities'.

This '*diakonia*' requires 'service' to others not only as a philanthropic or compassionate act, but also as a preparation of the space 'for' and 'to create' societies of equals with dignity and peace. This is well articulated by Jesus in the Nazareth Manifesto where, *diakonia* is explained as a life principle to usher in God's vision of earth communities living by the values of Love, Justice and Peace by prophetically reforming, healing, restoring and reconciling creation leading to the fullness of all lives on earth, including the human communities.

Therefore, '*diakonia*' is to prepare a 'space to feast' for 'all' to experience and enjoy the '*koinonia*' of the resurrected Christ, transformed societies, where there is no form of any discrimination and stigma, and where everyone's identity, equality, uniqueness, dignity, is respected and mutually edifies all in love.

THE CONTEXT:

We live in a context where '*mantra*' of economic globalizing-financializing development is radiated as the panacea for all ills and evils of the society. This *mantra* has brought about a paradigm shift in political, social and religious arenas and views. Accumulation of wealth through trans-national corporatism and capitalism on the basis of extractive industrialization and stock exchange financial transactions is promoted as the key to development. Such a developmental paradigm is destined to ruin the earth and all that therein. Its ecological exploitation leading to victimization of many earth communities being uprooted from their traditional living and culturally-rooted environments, thus, resulting in large-scale displacement and migration. The principles and policies of such a Development are producing communities that are excluded from the mainstream society; societies that are living by the values of 'consumerism', 'privatization', 'individualism', 'competition' and 'inequality'. On the other hand, the faith communities are fast-driven by the 'prosperity' and 'materialistic' theologies.

Accompanying this phenomenon of development in India is the promotion of the ideology of 'majoritarianism', the rise of 'right-wing fundamentalism', and hate campaigns, which are creating panic and insecurity among the religious 'minority communities', the 'economically poor' and the 'religiously, historically, socially and culturally excluded', such as *Dalits*, *Adivasis*, *Tribals*, Women, Gender Minorities, Persons with Disabilities and Children. Such forces are vitiating the atmosphere by pitting communities to be against one another with hatred and hostility.

In this context of crisis Churches (as committed faith communities) are called to be prophetic and mandated to work 'on' just and inclusive societies 'of' all and 'for' all. The 2016 Peoples' Forum Preassembly calls upon the churches, ecumenical movements, development agencies and organizations of our times to re-visit and re-articulate our Vision, theologies and ministries, impacted as they are by the growing influence of 'prosperity theologies', 'individualistic eschatology', upholding caste and patriarchy, and becoming mammon worshipers.

PEOPLES' DIAKONIA at the Grass-roots:

The Churches, ecumenical movements and the development agencies should realize that the transformation can be actualized only through service (*diakonia*) 'to' the grass-roots and 'with' the grassroots. We need to risk ourselves as 'disciples' of Christ for others with self-less love, sharing and sacrifice.

Peoples' *diakonia* does not purport to be exhaustive, but reflects some of the central elements of the ecumenical debate on development and transformation. Peoples' *diakonia* facilitates the move from the classical mode to the contextual mode where *diakonal* stream flows feely with its own congregations beyond boundaries of churches and merges with the like-minded visionaries who believe in liberation and justice.

Peoples' *diakonia* 'facilitates', 'inspires' and 'accompanies' the local congregations to 'discuss', 'plan' and 'execute' their *diakonal* activities 'by' themselves and 'for' themselves.

Therefore, Let Us...

- Recognize the importance of Peoples' *diakonia* for a common commitment, to bear public witness to the liberative Gospel of Jesus Christ and to work towards common and collective *diakonal* expressions with the entire community being a model.
- Facilitate capacity enhancement activities for the congregations to prepare for and to promote Peoples' *Diakonal* 'skills' towards collective learning and involvement and to relevant and context '*diakonal*' expressions and interventions;
- Consciously nurture and promote 'value based leadership' for future to facilitate the Peoples' *Diakonia*.

We Confess that...

- Most of our *diakonal* interventions tended to interpret '*Diakonia*' as a project, based on partner funding activity;
- Churches are suffering from a 'minority' phobia and have been trying to take asylum under the political provision of minority rights, rather than working towards promoting, defending and affirming the fundamental rights of every individual on the earth;
- Most of our *diakonal* expressions are meant to adequately address the poor, the excluded and discriminated communities of our societies. However, now few institutions of excellence seem to cater to the expectations of the 'elite' segments of the society, who are involved in

commercialization and commodification of knowledge. Therefore, we call the Churches to create more space for the marginalized communities in their institutions as *diakonia* intended for;

- In many cases, Churches and ecumenical movements of today are forced to be 'silent' or made silent, by law enforcements of the State and economic-political majoritarian forces. So, we could not play our prophetic role, and to accompany the victims of injustices.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO...

- Initiate the process of facilitating conversations with the church leaders and ecumenical bodies at the regional level, enhancing the capacities of the laity and clerics to engage in Peoples' *Diakonia* leading towards transformative mission in the socio-economic and political context of India.
- Facilitate the theological and Christian education fraternities and local congregations to move from the 'prosperity theology' to 'economy of life'; and to move from 'charity' to 'solidarity' and to just-peace accompaniment expressions.
- Promote a holistic vision of theologies of lives as a pilgrimage towards 'Just and Inclusive communities'.

***'Another World is Possible'! But 'only' through the Peoples' Diakonia at the local congregational level!
Come, let us join our hands together in realizing the Reign of God on Earth that is 'Just' and 'Inclusive'.***

6. Greater Inclusivity in Churches and In Theological Education

April 19 – 20, 2016

The ESHA PRE-ASSEMBLY focusing on “Greater inclusivity in churches and theological education” brought together 60 delegates from various theological colleges and churches from various parts of India from April 19 – 20, 2016 at the Ecumenical Research Centre in Bengaluru, to engage in two days of exciting deliberations.

Indian society at large looks at the issue of sexuality with suspicion and taboo, often influenced by the predominant notions within their communities and their religions. This has resulted in the marginalization of the communities of persons with diverse sexualities in India. Joining them are other concerned individuals and organisations who are fighting for the repeal of Section 377 of the IPC, while advocating for them a dignified life in society, their constitutional rights and much required space in society.

At the same time, the reality of diverse sexualities are today an acknowledged and open fact of Indian society. With changing societal norms, active and easily accessible social media and open discussions, an increasing number are coming out to share their journeys – their doubts and struggles – and are gradually finding peer, legal and civil society support.

The pre-assembly heard, and was deeply touched, by stories of the struggles of persons having diverse sexualities. Presently, except for a few stray voices, the Church in India is in denial about the magnitude and impact of this issue. It has only a limited idea of the extent to which its members and youth are faced with this within themselves and in their peer circles. And if Christian, their families are not able to find the support they need from the Church or from their personal faith. It is important to acknowledge that the present situation of the Church is our individual and collective failure, and not the fault of those with diverse sexualities. Our understanding of the biblical traditions and their administration in the church has certain limitations in attending to people with different sexualities.

The Pre-Assembly is convinced and recommends that the time has come for the Church to urgently respond and with deliberate purpose to their needs.

CHALLENGES

- There is widespread lack of clarity on the issues regarding persons with diverse sexualities such as
 - definitions, and the implications of the differences within persons with diverse sexualities
 - understanding of their perspectives
 - separation of gender identity and sexual orientation
- The present response of churches and theological colleges:
 - The response ranges between ostracism and a reluctant acceptance

- Most are judgmental; persons with diverse sexualities are stigmatised and discriminated against; Homophobia is common
- Insensitivity to the perspectives of persons with diverse sexualities in their use of language and interpretation of scripture
- Do not know how to respond to genuine struggles of individuals understanding their sexualities
- Difficult to get agreements by the Churches to accept / address different sexualities. This is a sensitive issue that can cause divisions within the church
- Creating awareness in churches
- The task is mammoth - in size as well as to change long-entrenched beliefs and understandings
- Difficulty of practically communicating the message to congregations
- There is varying capacity of the local churches / congregations
- Wide gap between theological education and grassroots realities
- Faculty have differing perspectives on human sexuality
- Few theological colleges provide experiential learning experiences in this area

WAYS FORWARD

- The Church in India needs to accept that an increasing number of persons are expressing their diverse sexualities, and is happening in the Church community as well
- The Church in India should envision its mission as a journey alongside persons with diverse sexualities, offering respect and love, and accepting members who have diverse sexualities as fellow-believers
- Create clarity on the various aspects of diverse sexualities (definitions, perspectives, etc.)
- The NCCI member churches and theological colleges should take a decision to address the issues of human sexuality and homophobia
- End the culture of silence in the Church around issues of human sexuality diverse sexualities
- Actively build awareness and inclusive Christian perspective on human sexuality including diverse sexualities
- Build capacity of the local churches / congregations / theological colleges
- Eliminate the stigma and discrimination and contempt against those with diverse sexualities

- Develop compassionate responses to the struggles of individuals discovering their sexualities. This should be developed as a focused pastoral issue, providing appropriate care and counseling facilities and training
- Help affected persons to integrate with society through initiatives like Self Help groups, employment in Church bodies and agencies, etc.
- Engage in discussions with members of the extended Christian family, and in inter-faith and secular forums.
- Theological colleges should be challenged:
 - to take a proactive stance, assimilate and interpret secular and other perspectives, and serve as thought leaders for their churches and as role-models to their students
 - discussions on human sexuality including diverse sexualities should be beyond the classroom – such as student forums, campus and church Bible studies, clergy and alumni refresher courses, publications in church and Christian magazines
 - to go out and interact with society - interact with grassroots realities of sexuality (in integration with their other grassroots initiatives).

7. Inclusive Theologies of Lives: From Land: Water: Forest: Agriculture Perspectives

24 – 25 April 2016

We the participants as Women and Men farmers, Church Leaders, Theologians, Academicians and Activists met from 24 to 25 April 2016 at Leonard Theological College deliberated deeply on the issues of life and creation related to Land, Water, Forest, Agriculture, Food, Farmers' Suicide, Mining, mega projects issues; ideologically, theologically, socially and ministerially. This was facilitated by the World Council of Churches - Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Integrated Rural Development and Weaker Sections in India, Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society, Christian Farmers Fellowship, Raipur Churches Development and Relief Committee, Christian Service Agency and NCCI Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation.

God's creation is groaning under the pressures of greed, selfishness and endless pursuit of affluence by a miniscule minority of human race based on exploitation of nature and human resources meant to meet the basic needs of all creatures of the world. Commercialization, commodification and privatization of land, water, forest and agriculture are natural corollaries of money-market-profit syndrome under capitalism dictated by the Empire. Such a negation of the basic purpose of God's creation is to be resisted and replaced with systems and structures that guarantee equal share with dignity for all based on the principle: "To each one according to their need; and each are sharing and contributing according to their capacity". Thus, the ultimate reality of harmonious relationship between God-Human-Nature needs to be restored, reaffirmed and reconciled.

Land remains as a core and crucial source of life of farmers. Communities closely connected with land for their livelihood, culture and creativity are being denied their birth right to land in the name of so-called "development" in the garb of eminent domain. A large number of them, especially the Tribals, Adivasis, Dalits and Women have been uprooted and alienated from their land. Today, the biggest battle on this earth is for Land, and whatever therein (water, forest and fauna, mines, minerals and mountains, etc.). On one hand it is the loot and plunder of resources by the Corporate-Capitalist world, with the State playing a supportive role to it. On the other hand, we have poor people, who are resisting this loot and plunder with all their might towards "*JAAN DE DENGE, ZAMEEN NAHIN*"! (We'll lay down our lives, but not the land!)

Water is life - Water is Right. It's the source and resource of life! Water is yet another birth right of every living creature as a gift from God. Yet, the recent upsurge in transforming water into a profit-making commodity to be supplied through the market has resulted in vast majority of human and natural beings denied of this basic need for survival and sustenance. Privatization, commercialization, commodification and increased use of water for industrialization and urbanization has created artificial scarcity, adding to the dangerous dimensions of global warming and climate change.

Forest is an integral part of sustenance and culture of indigenous communities like tribals/adivasis for centuries. Their communal ownership and the right to usage of forests has been traditionally recognized and protected under the law. As a result of prolonged and sustained struggles in India, the Forest Right Act 2005 has come into force, yet very little has been done to restore forests and all that therein to the

adivasis/tribals and forest dwellers. Depletion of forests for fulfilling the vested interests has been going on unabated in spite of the protection of the forest under the Law.

Life-Enhancing Agriculture is being threatened by the Economic Globalization and Market Economy, wherein the agriculture policies are designed to suit the corporate profit centered mechanisms in transforming agrarian economy to corporatized agri-industry. Farmers everywhere are groaning under it. As such agrarian communities have started moving from 'agri-culture to agri-business' by paving ways for Genetically Modified (GM) technologies being applied to the cash crops, terminator seeds, mechanization for ploughing and harvesting, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides aiming at quantity rather than quality.

The States' pro-corporate stance leads to enforcing anti-agriculture and anti-farmer policies having adverse affects on the peasants, resulting mostly from agri-based debts, leading to migration and reducing their status to agri-refugees, as well as a major cause for forcing farmers to commit suicides. India is now opening up to corporate pillaging like never before. Traditional knowledge Systems and indigenous practices are being snuffed out. The poor and the marginalized who are solely dependent on agriculture as a means of livelihood have been forced to abandon their traditional sources and resources for life and livelihood, and migrate to cities. Such onslaught affects mostly the Dalits, Adivasis/Tribals, Women, children and other marginalized and excluded communities, especially the landless agricultural labourers in India.

Large sections of Indian populace is facing critical questions of food sovereignty, food security and food safety since the corporates plunder of land, water and other natural resources continue unabated. Initiatives of low external inputs and sustainable agriculture experiments are mostly limited to the landowning farmers, whereas such initiatives are not supported to Dalits, Tribals/Adivasis who are small and marginal farmers.

In the midst of death and destruction unleashed by the skewed developmental policies and economy of the Empire, we recognize that the ecumenical movement has initiated to reaffirm and strengthen the pilgrimage of justice and peace with the vision of an alternative path of development and theology of life.

The NCCI's 28th Quadrennial Assembly that is scheduled to meet and deliberate on the theme 'Towards Just and Inclusive Communities' is an opportunity for the Churches in India and the ecumenical movement to review and re-examine its present mission paradigm in order to make the Gospel relevant by interpreting it in response to the signs of our times, and to deliberate upon the need, relevance and diaconal engagement of the churches and ecumenical organizations in our contemporary context.

Theologies of lives is a profoundly theological affirmation. It re-imagines *koinonia* as the flourishing of the holistic development of life. Our participation in the blossoming of the life is nothing but the translation of our baptismal vows to denounce the powers and principalities of our times and to affirm the lordship of Jesus, the Christ. Theology of life is based on the alternative moral visions of the communities at the margins, and it requires from us the commitment to renew our baptismal vows through new baptismal experiences of immersion in the struggles of the subaltern communities Adivasis, Tribals, Dalits, differently abled and Transgender depending on Land, Water, Forest and Agriculture.

Theology of life is an interfaith and inter ideological initiative where we recognize that the universal reality of divine is manifested through diverse mediations, and our spiritual journey is a journey of pleasant surprises as we meet the divine in the most unexpected places and times as we engage in the flourishing of the theology of life with people irrespective of creed and color. Ultimately, theology of life is the affirmation of our faith in the promise of God that God will transform the face of the earth. It is our commitment to participate in God's pilgrimage to flourish life through transformative power.

We the participants therefore call upon the Indian Churches and, more so, the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI):

- To bring to the centre the rural Dalit, Tribal and Adivasi Churches which are predominantly agrarian and who constitute about eighty to eighty-five percents of our congregations but have been pushed to the margins for generations;
- To re-read the Bible through the eyes of the marginal farmers and evolve liturgies that reflect agricultural motifs, seasons and festivals.
- We suggest NCCI to facilitate its member Churches to develop policy on land.
- To recommend to Indian Churches to entrust its vast tracts of land in their fold with local congregations to promoting local congregation based Life Enhancing Agriculture.
- To lobby with the Government to implement radical land reforms and sustainable agriculture which is inclusive in nature ensuring entitlement of land to women or in some cases joint ownership in the society-at-large.
- To motivate Churches in India to campaign for Food Sovereignty and negotiate with their respective States to ensure the just and fair public distribution system, and draw up schemes to eradicate hunger, malnutrition, and hunger deaths.
- The Churches should explore the information sharing to empower the congregations and communities on the issues confronted by them and share alternatives that are good practices.
- To organize Indian Churches for alliance building, networking with other faith communities to lobby for just and pro-farmer Land Legislations, and also reject all governmental efforts to support multi-national industries and corporate houses which take away the fundamental rights of farmers.
- To promote solidarity with the Southern countries so that churches and farmers' movements learn from each other through exposures, joint consultations and best practices in Life Enhancing Agriculture.
- To address the issues of migration of younger generation, and explore the possibilities of employment in rural and urban areas.
- To explore collective action between rural and urban churches and between diverse ecclesial and interfaith confessions in promoting Life Enhancing Agriculture.

- To suggest the Indian theological fraternities to develop curriculum integrating Life Enchasing Agriculture.

We call the Indian Church, Ecumenical Movements, Civil Society and Inter-faith Movements for a deeper commitment and concerted efforts from all people in upholding the economy of life through our solidarity.

Let us join hands for a common follow-up action to save land, water, forest and agriculture!

8. Towards Youthopia – a JI-FI Community

24 – 25 April 2016

The Youth Pre-Assembly of NCCI met in Christ Church Boys' Senior Secondary School, Jabalpur, on the 24th and 25th April, 2016; and deliberated on the theme, "TOWARDS YOUTHOPIA – A JI-FI COMMUNITY".

The Pre-Assembly saw adequate representation from various delegates of the member churches of the NCCI. During the course of the two-day deliberations, certain conclusions were arrived at. It was agreed upon that our collective Indian Church and society at large was hindered in building a just and inclusive community due to various problems and issues.

The Youth affirms that God is just and inclusive. The Youth firmly believes that in the household of God, we all are accommodated, and encouraged to live life in all its fullness.

The Youth realizes and identifies itself as the natural peacemakers, but feels that the Youth's participation in the mission of peacemaking is limited by church hierarchy.

The Youth strongly rejects and condemns all the existing discriminatory practices that challenge life and perpetuate injustice.

After much discussion, the Youth now believes that only by attaining the following ideas and implementing the following solutions can we aim to build a just and inclusive community. Therefore, the Youth recommends ideas and solutions as follows:

1. To make compulsory the allocation of funds from the annual budget of the Church and creation of a separate bank account so as to enable the Youth to autonomously carry out its yearly work and activities.
2. To promote involvement of the Youth in Bureaucracy and Politics for Nation Building, through National Leadership Programmes and projects related to train our youth as capable MP's, MLA's and Bureaucrats.
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4. To promote involvement of the Youth in Bureaucracy and Politics for Nation Building, through National Leadership Programmes and projects related to train our youth as capable MP's, MLA's and Bureaucrats.
5. To make conscious efforts in organizing orientations and sensitization workshops to eradicate gender discrimination within the Church.
6. To acknowledge, encourage and respect the crucial role that young women play in building the Church, and to simultaneously ensure that all practices that discriminate against young women

are eradicated, so as to ensure the creation of an atmosphere of equality and inclusiveness in all Churches throughout India.

7. To ensure that the Church is all-encompassing, and includes all genders, that is, male, female and transgender; and enable, encourage and enhance all, especially the differently abled leaders and laity within the church to take up positions of leadership and responsibility. This also includes the establishment of accessible infrastructure in Churches for the differently abled faithful.
8. To focus on strengthening the existing institutions of Sunday School and/or Youth Movement, and to not undermine the important role that these institutions play in the life of a Christian youth, when it comes to social and spiritual support.
9. To promote secular scholarships for capable and meritorious students, apart from the theological aspirants or students.
10. To encourage interfaith and interreligious dialogues and programmes at the Youth level to foster kinship, fraternity and unity among all Indian citizens, as envisaged in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.
11. To guarantee environmental protection and sustainable development as will be mandated by special committees set up for this very purpose, whose job will be to set achievable and realistic goals, and involve the Youth in concrete, hands-on work at the grassroots level, thus also ensuring an increased awareness and sensitivity towards ecological issues.
12. To create a pan-Christian, pan-denominational newsletter that can be accessed by both print and social media. This weekly newsletter will contain studies on each member Church of the NCCI, its history, distinctive doctrines, specific features and characteristics, the social work it undertakes and the projects of its Youth. We believe that this will promote and foster healthy relations and fellowship among all the Youth members of the NCCI churches, by challenging common stereotypes and creating an opportunity to respect the uniqueness of each member church.

9. Inclusive Mission: Disability Perspective

24th -26th April, 2016

We, the 18 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) from different religions and walks of life, 2 PWD Theologians, 8 Church leaders and official delegates to the NCCI Assembly, Parents/Relatives and Accompaniers to PWDs and children attended the Disability Pre-Assembly held at Council of Education and Christian Nurture (CECN), Jabalpur from 24th April to 26th April towards the theme “Inclusive Mission: Disability Perspective”. This Disability Pre-Assembly was jointly organized by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), World Vision India (WVI), Emmanuel Hospital Association, Evangelical Fellowship of India: Commission on Relief (EFICOR), Indian Disability Ecumenical Accompaniment (IDEA), a standing forum of NCCI, accompanied by Commission on Justice Peace and Creation and Engage Disability. This Disability Pre-Assembly was the first of its kind. It was an important space to listen to the stories and perspectives of PWDs and accompaniers on grappling with the issues of disabilities. Also, it is with regret we share the apathy of many member churches in recognizing this crucial issue. Many of the member churches were not represented.

A staggering 21 million and more PWDs living in India are the largest unreached group. They are stigmatized by various prejudices that exist in the society, controlled by the myths about their efficiency, fears and barriers related to disability. In the present scenario, Disability is a part of every community. It knows no nationality caste or creed. In this context, we dealt with and discussed the various challenges, shared our stories and concerns, barriers and issues related to disabilities.

We Affirm that:

- Everyone including persons with disabilities are created by God, and therefore full members of the church and society;
- The persons with disability are also the rightful citizens of the country having rightful access to all facilities like all citizens;
- The Church is the church “of” all and church “for” all. Therefore, the churches need to be aware and concerned about the facts of disability. This is because the Church as a body of Christ will be disabled without the presence and agency of the disabled;
- The mission along with and for people with disability is an important participatory mission to accompany them so as to ensure their full contribution of and to our churches.

We continue to urge that

- The theological fraternities move from notions of the disabled as objects of charity and compassion to the disabled as agents of God’s Image, voice and activity in this world. Therefore disability theology is a Just and Inclusive theology that advances our agency and affirm our personhood;
- The Church’s faith discourse, sermons and studies be focused on God’s love, compassion and goodness especially in the contexts where many ministries over-propagate the theology of miracles and instant healings. We suggest that our theologies highlight the kenotic, vulnerable and disabled God as seen in Jesus;

- The mission of God in contexts as in India is imperatively interfaith and interreligious. Therefore our mission along with the disable should move beyond specific faiths, religions and confessions. **As**

Action Plans, we propose that

- The Church conscientize its members about persons with disabilities as they have been part of our churches and its rightful members. Churches use inclusive language and consciously overcome derogatory language that demean the dignity of the PWDs in liturgies, prayers, sermons
- The congregations are biblically and theologically conscientized to welcome Priests with disability;
- Churches encourage, identify and send for theological/ministerial training People with Disability;
- Churches liaise with Bible Society, Christian literature houses and technological firms to provide access to literature and technological resources that helps the active participation of the disabled in the church;
- The member churches and organisations network with Theological institutions for resources on Theological/Ministerial understanding Disability
- One of the officers in executive committees of the churches and organizations be a person with disability.
- Each member church to have a desk on Disability concerns which is to be headed by a person with disability;
- Seminaries and colleges to offer compulsory courses on disability to be preferably taught by persons with disabilities;
- The Churches provide PWDs-friendly infrastructure in consultation with PWDs-expert engineers. For this, the churches are called to allocate necessary finances to make worship spaces inclusive;
- The Churches take-up periodic Disability-Audit of their building structures and premises to upgrade and update the facilities;
- The Churches to affirm their commitment to advocate the inclusion and participation of PWDs in all church activities and programs as well as their spiritual and structural life of the Church and its community.
- The Church to ensure in their agenda on Mission that the disability issues are treated as a crosscutting concerns in all their programs and use their influences to challenge the government and society at large to provide a space for all ...thus creating A Just and Inclusive society for all.

10. Civil Society Joint Action to Strengthen a Pluralistic Society

25-26 April, 2016

India is a country of people from different religious and traditional backgrounds, living amicably for centuries together. The sub-continent has for hundreds of years provided a unique social and intellectual environment in which many distinct religions have not only co-existed but have also enriched each other. According to the 2011 census, 79.8% of the population in India are Hindus, 14.2% are Muslims, 2.3% are Christians and the remaining 3.7% are Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and from other faiths. Religious diversity and religious tolerance are both established in the country by the law and custom. The preamble to the Constitution of India proclaims India as a "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic". The Indian Constitution guarantees equality of all religions before law and fundamental rights of religious freedom. Unfortunately, this traditionally peace-loving country is sometimes plagued by communal problems. In recent years, there is a rise of groups and individuals who misconstrue or misinterpret the religious teachings for their narrow and short-term gains, and fan communal feelings.

Emerging Concerns:

In recent past we have increasing cases of attacks on persons from Christian community. There are several cases of attacks on churches, believers, and their properties. There are also increasing incidents of murders, rapes, physical assaults and intimidations on pastors, their families and nuns, especially in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. We are witnessing increasing incidents of terrorisation against inter-religious marriages in all states of North India. There are cases where government authorities adopt unconstitutional methods against minority communities. For example, in Ajmer, Rajasthan, the Marriage Registrar insisted on the Hindu woman to bring her parents along for the registration of her marriage with a Christian man. In states like Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the rules related to conversion, and the processes related to baptism have been made complicated. Therefore, several believers suffer from crisis of identity for not being recognised as Christians.

They face intimidation when they attempt to formalise their identity as Christian by official registrations. There are increasing cases of government interference in minority educational institution in most states of North India, especially, in appointment of teachers, principals, in providing grants, etc. There are several incidents of tampering with existing syllabus and introduction of Hindutva beliefs. Minority institutions always face difficulty in getting recognition for their minority status. In recent years, the days of Easter Sunday, Good Friday and Christmas are converted into working days in states like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat ,etc which strongly hurts the religious sentiments of Christians. There is an increasing trend of negative and abusive portrayals of Christians, especially women in TV serials and cinemas as persons with bad characters and loose morals. There are increasing cases of aggressive attempts to Hinduize the Christian Adivasis in the name of traditions and practices, particularly in states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha where Christians are restricted from using certain symbols and terminologies.

Ways Forward:

There is now an urgent need to promote unity among churches and its leadership to address the challenges to communal harmony and secularism in India. There is a need for a forum of churches with probably the NCCI as a convening body, to work for awareness building and proactive action on the constitutional guarantee of 'Freedom of Religion or Belief'. It is felt from the grassroots level that all Christians in general

should have awareness on their constitutional rights. Further, there is a critical need to build awareness among the pastors and mission workers on the constitutional guarantees on Freedom of Religion or Belief. There is a clarion call for pastors, evangelists and preachers to be responsible and sensitive towards the religious sentiments of people from other faiths. The church and Christian community should more vibrantly participate in the processes that help to deepen democracy at grassroots. There is necessity for the Christian community now to move proactively beyond their Mission compounds and to actively engage in the politics of secular India by voicing for the voiceless people. The Church and its leadership also should work for the promotion of secularism and secular values in the society.

There is a need to promote interfaith initiatives between both majority and other minority communities for a sustained social harmony in our country. There is a critical requirement for building national, regional and local level networking involving experts, lawyers, doctors, teachers, youth, women, etc to responsibly share information, knowledge and wisdom for solidarity and peace initiatives. There is need for minority communities to pro-actively join the civil services and be more represented in the decision making institutions of the government. There is also a need to actively involve and participate in the governance of local bodies. Various social media tools should be effectively used to counter false information or propaganda and be used for promotion of social harmony. There is also a need to challenge abusive portrays of Christian women in media. There is a need for the church leadership to take up with the government to revisit and address the challenges faced by the minority communities with regard to conversion and respecting the religious festivals and sentiments of minority communities. It is the sacred duty of every Christian of India to continuously watch and raise our voice against groups and individuals who use violence in the name of religion.

11. Towards an Inclusive Rainbow Church

24-26 April, 2016

We, the twenty participants of the NCCI pre-assembly 'Towards an Inclusive Rainbow Church' held from 24-26 April, 2016 at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, who are engaged in different ministries in the Church and Society as Church leaders, Theological Educators, Ecumenical Partners, Research Scholars and Activists coming from a spectrum of gender and sexuality communities; after several brainstorming discussions and sessions on Biblical, Theological, Ministerial and Ecclesiastical perspectives; resolve to send the following message on an inclusive Rainbow Church on the 28th quadrennial assembly of the NCCI (scheduled to be held from 27-30 April 2016) to adopt, plan and implement appropriate ministerial interventions in their journey towards Just and Inclusive Communities.

First of all, we appreciate and thank the NCCI for its 'rights-affirming' gesture in solidarity with the spectrum of gender and sexuality communities. During our interactive sessions, all members of the preassembly agreed that issues of gender and alternate sexuality are not adequately discussed with church congregations in a formal or informal manner. In such a situation, to be given two days in a formal setting with members of church congregations and members of the spectrum of gender and sexuality communities is a much welcomed step in the right direction. Continuing this, members of the preassembly strongly urge that discussions and debates on issues of gender and sexuality occur within congregations under the initiative and guidance of pastors and church leaders.

We affirm that, the whole human community is created in the image of God and the sacramentality of the body is irrespective of our different gender identities and sexual orientations. Therefore, we condemn systemic and personal attitudes of homophobia, transphobia, stigma and discrimination against the spectrum of gender and sexuality communities. We consider the Delhi High Court verdict to "decriminalize consensual sexual acts of adults in private" as upholding fundamental, constitutional and human rights to privacy, a life of dignity and non-discrimination of all citizens as a positive step towards just and inclusive communities.

We believe that our prejudices towards sexuality and our body denying spirituality stem from our distorted understanding of God's purpose for us. The embodied God who embraced flesh in Jesus Christ is an epitome for us to love our bodies, and thereby, enable us to celebrate our sexuality and life in fullness keeping in mind, the spirit of the word as espoused by Mathew (19:12).

We believe that God invites us to experience sexual fulfillment in our relationships of justice-love with a vow to be vulnerable, compassionate and responsible in it. In this regard, we strongly recommend the member churches to initiate an in-depth theological and ministerial study on human sexuality for better discernment of God's purpose for us. This involves a deeper missional and ministerial engagement with the Bible, and other disciplines such as the social and medical sciences. We encourage that this study will involve the participation and interaction of the lay community within church congregations and those from the spectrum of gender and sexuality communities. In the spirit of true inclusion, we also urge the member churches to be open to the prospect of members of all sections of the spectrum of gender and sexuality communities being included in church bodies/committees that deal with issues of gender and sexuality.

The members of the pre-assembly congratulate the member churches on recognizing the presence and the love of God in extending empathetic initiatives towards the trans communities in India. We hope that such

measures continue. We urge member churches to interact with the trans community leaving aside the perspectives of conversion, denomination and religious identity.

We also urge member churches of NCCI and evangelical missions to take example from Philip and his interactions with the Ethiopian transperson (Acts 8, 26-40); to shift the onus to the church: of welcoming and reaching out to the diverse trans communities.

Keeping in mind the spirit of the word in Luke 4:16-19, the historical position of the church has been that of a sanctuary for the oppressed, vulnerable and the marginalized. This pre-assembly would like to reiterate the importance of this position to all member churches.

We hope and pray that the embodied God will bless our endeavors to grow into the fullness of life and transform our faith communities into rainbow communities of the beloved and equals.

12. Consultation on 'Economy of Life'

26th April 2016

We the 50 participants of the NCCI Pre-assembly Consultation on 'Economy of Life' jointly organized by Economy and Ecological Justice Programme of the World Council of Churches and NCCI - Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation, held on the 26th April 2016 at Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur send the following statement to the 28th Quadrennial Assembly of NCCI scheduled to be held from 27 to 30 April at Jabalpur for its adoption and implementation.

We the participants appreciate the NCCI and in particular the Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation and the World Council of Churches for facilitating the Constituent members to respond contextually to the pro-people global discussions.

We comprehend that, the Economy of Life is an invitation to the Indian Theological fraternity, Churches, and Ecumenical Movements to reflection upon to set their newer, missional and timely interventions and actions".

We affirm, "the Economy of Life embodies God's vision of koinonia, where healthy communities flourish in peace and harmony with one another and with God's creation (Acts 2:42-47). It is a place where all people have a dignified, clean and safe place to live and die among family and friends who love and share life with them; where work has dignity and wages are fair and just; where justice is done, mercy is loved, and all walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8); and where the Earth's beings – microbes, plants, and humpback whales; seas, lakes, rivers and skies; the depths of the Earth and the hidden waters – live in the integrity God has made. .

We are bound in Christ to the whole created reality in whose midst we live and on which we physically depend for our continued existence."

We realize that., God's vision of Economy of life has been distorted by processes of neo-liberal globalization, non eco-friendly development activities, fascist interpretations of socio-cultural and religious expressions of living, nuclear build-ups, wars and terrorist activities.

We have noted that, in the midst of death and destruction unleashed by the economy of the Empire, the ecumenical movement has initiated a new pilgrimage; a pilgrimage of justice and peace with the vision of an alternative economy; the economy of life.

We declare that, "We hear God calling us to live out our faith by working together to create the Economy of Life for the Earth and all her beings, for justice and peace and for koinonia. In deepening our commitment to shape this Economy of Life as an alternative to dominant economic forces and structures, we must recognize each other's struggles and invite each other to concrete action by the responsible communities like Churches and Ecumenical Movements."

Therefore, Economy of life is a bold negation of the ethos and logic of the prevailing neo-liberal economy and its claim that there is no alternative. Economy of life affirms the audacity of hope that it is still possible to radically transform our socio-economic and ecological relations to enrich and strengthen the movement of life. Economy of life is a profoundly theological affirmation. It re-imagines '*koinonia*' as the flourishing of

the economy of life. Our participation in the blossoming of the economy of life is nothing but the translation of our baptismal vows to denounce the powers and principalities of our times and to affirm the lordship of Jesus, the Christ.

We affirm that, the Economy of life is based on the alternative moral visions of the communities at the margins, and it requires from us the commitment to renew our baptismal vows through new baptismal experiences of immersion in the struggles of the subaltern communities. Economy of life is an faith initiative where we recognize that the universal reality of divine is manifested through diverse meditations and our spiritual journey is a journey of pleasant surprises as we meet the divine in the most unexpected places and times as we engage in the flourishing of the economy of life with people of good will irrespective of creed and colour. Ultimately, economy of life is the affirmation of our faith in the promise of God that God will transform the face of the earth. It is our commitment to participate in God's pilgrimage to flourish life through transformative power.

We commit ourselves and solicit support from the NCCI to help us in articulating a Radical Theologies of Lives which offers a new political ontology of the multitude in contrary to the hegemonic ontology of the Empire with a radical vision and action.

We look at the modern economy is propelled by a frenzy of greed and indulges in an orgy of envy and These are no accidental features but they are the very causes of its expansionist success and this is to be challenged ministerially.

Therefore we call the NCCI Member Churches and other constituent members to be like John the Baptist, who prepares the way, by pointing out bad as well as good, for better standards of living for the vast majority of people.

We are challenged to look at the gender issues from economics of bodies of women' that are commercialized by labour, abuse, patriarchy and survival. Therefore we suggest, the Indian Churches should be in solidarity with the women at large and Dalit women in particular in their search for lives.

We call for a *metanoia*, (repentance) a complete turning around from works that bring death and to be transformed into a new life, respecting the humanity of others, re-inventing a new form of transformative and Praxis oriented spirituality which will foster the building of just relationships and the just sharing of resources as 'Economy of Life'.

We affirm... the 'indigenous wisdom on 'Economy of Life' is a counter the western scientific knowledge, that is characterized by justice, equality and respect for one another.

Therefore, we call for critical re- evaluation of our (Churches) ways of life and spirituality, the indigenous people's holistic view of life as a source of inspiration towards building a community where all forms of life could flourish and live together in harmony.

We read that, 'agriculture and economy of life are labour issues. We often discuss the land issue from the land wonders perspective but nor from the landless labourers'. Therefore, we suggest an interactive engagement with theological and missiological interventions on 'Economy of Life' where, theological articulations does not seem to be adequately reflecting upon the process of transformative politics or alternative politics of development to develop a missiological method to go for praxis oriented interventions

of mission with contextual and social analysis since, Indian Church to a greater extent is a church of landless and labouring Dalit and other backward communities.

We demand the Indian theological fraternities to study 'Economy of Life' from less considered communities like landless agricultural labours, workers (labours) in fisher men, small and traditional fishing women.

Considering the context of globalisation and its negative impacts discussions on issues like 'Economy of Life' is inevitable and unavoidable. We hope this statement would facilitate further discussions not only by the theological fraternity but the economics, political science and social science fraternities also to take-up the discussions especially from the grass-roots perspectives.

We hope and pray that the Churches discourse on Economy of Life would enhance the strengths mission that is comprehensive and inclusive.