

NCCI Monthly E-newsletter | February 2019

NCCI welcomes new Leadership of CASA for the Quadrennium 2019-2022



Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) elected its new leadership on 7th February 2019 at CASA, Delhi. His Grace Yakob Mar Irenaios was elected as Chairperson, Bishop Subodh C Mondal as vice-chairperson and Rev. Dr. S. C. David as treasurer for the Quadrennium 2019-2022.

His Grace Yakob Mar Irenaios is the Metropolitan of The Malankara

Orthodox Syrian Church, Bishop Subodh C. Mondal is Methodist Church in India's Delhi Regional Conference and Rev. Dr. S. C. David is the Moderator of Hindustani Covenant Church.

The National Council of Churches in India wishes His Grace Yakob Mr Irenaios, Bishop Subodh C. Mondal, Rev. Dr. S. C. David and Dr. Sushant Agrawal (Director-CASA) the very best and God's blessings as they guide CASA in the next Quadrennium.

Consultation on Ecumenical Formation and Capacity Building for Young Dalit, Tribal/Adivasi Theologians



**National Council of Churches in India- Dalit and Tribal/ Adivasi
Concerns**

in partnership with

**Henry Martyn Institute, Christian Service Agency and EMW
Germany**

**Consultation on Ecumenical Formation and Capacity Building
for**

Young Dalit, Tribal/Adivasi Theologians

11-13 February 2019, Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad

Brief Report:

The tyrannical social system of caste is creating a major disturbance in the society and community. Human dignity is being trampled ruthlessly every day. The Tribal communities as well who are the heart and soul of our civilizational heritage are being displaced in the guise of development to serve the vested interests of the dominants. In such a time as this the National Council of Churches in India - Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi Concerns reaffirms the divine praxis of liberation of human beings from the clutches of all dehumanizing forces at work so as to achieve authentic humanization ensuring each individual self-respect and dignity in the midst of systemic evils and structures which threaten the very existence of all lives on this planet. The intrinsic value of the entire cosmos needs to be reclaimed. These concerns were the subsistence of the consultation organized by the Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi Concerns of National Council of Churches in India on "Ecumenical Formation and Capacity Building for Young Dalit, Tribal/Adivasi Theologians" from 11-13 February 2019 at the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad. The consultation bore witness to 39 delegates and 17 resource persons. 15 Theological Colleges affiliated to Senate of Serampore delegated their students for the consultation. The consultation brought in a wide spectrum of perspectives from the contributions of church leaders, theologians, social workers, and social activists through their experiences and ideologies under which they were mold to contemplate on the issues faced by the people living in the margins. The sessions included a wide array on the perspectives of Ecumenism, issues related to people living in the margins, and intriguing Bible studies relooking the Biblical texts and narratives through the context of people in the margins. This was yet again a time to reform, revolutionize and challenge certain approaches made to understand the realities of the people living in the margins, and also explicate fresh ideas and awareness about the social atrocities done on the subaltern groups. The consultation came out as a meaningful eye opener for a majority of participants as they pledge to become change makers in the near future who could passionately contribute in bringing a great change in the larger community applying the ideas and information they acquired in this process. The consultation was a great success potentiating all the participants towards a synergic cause.

Pradip Bansrior

Executive Secretary

Dalit and Tribal/ Adivasi Concerns

National Council of Churches in India

Report of Dialogue on Indian Missions



The National Council of Churches in India - Unity and Mission engaged in a mission conversation named 'Dialogue on Indian Missions', reflecting on the documents of two major mission conversations such as Asian Mission Conference of the Christian Conference of Asia and World Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. This conversation was held on February 4th and 5th, 2019 at NCCI Campus, Nagpur. Twenty participants from different mission boards of the NCCI member Churches and organizations, Mission leaders from other mission organizations, representatives from Gender and sexuality minority, People with Disabilities and Children communities have come and had a deeper study, deliberations and conversation on these two documents to suggest a relevant Mission patterns in the Indian churches and mission movements.

This dialogue on Indian Missions is a follow-up to the India Pre assembly of the Asia Mission Conference held at Ranchi, Jharkhand on August 24 - 25, 2017 and also to India pre-conference of the WCC's World Mission Conference at Delhi on January 24 - 26, 2018 and the respective mission conferences held at Yangon, Myanmar and Arusha, Tanzania. The NCCI - Unity and Mission proactively organized and participated in both by offering workshops on the learning of the pre-assemblies and

shared the Indian missional context and concerns. This Dialogue on Indian Missions primarily aimed to discern the learning from both mission conferences and to contextualize the same to benefit the Indian churches and Missions.

The two mission documents have engaged vigorously to review the existing mission models from the geo-political, societal, economic and religious contexts of India today. It suggests the global mission movements to move along with the Great Commission to Great Commitment, Conventional to Covenantal, Mission 'to' the margins to Mission 'FROM', 'WITH' and 'BY' the Margins, Charity to Right Affirming, Preaching to be prophetic. Considering these, the 'Dialogue on Indian Missions' analyzed those two documents to explore relevant missional interventions in the Indian Context and came up with a mission guidelines for the Indian Churches and Mission Movements.

Reported by

Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar

Executive Secretary

Unity and Mission

National Council of Churches in India

Rev. Gnana Robinson Passed Away



The National Council of Churches is deeply saddened by the demise of Rev Dr Gnana Robinson, an eminent ecumenical leader in India. He was a visionary and an able leader who led many Christian institutions including the Untied Theological College, Bangalore and Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai. He was also the founder president of the Peace Trust, Kanyakumari.

His ecumenical contributions are exemplary. Being an Old Testament professor, he proved his scholarly skills and inspired many students who became leaders of the Church now. He was keen on developing a second layer leadership in Indian Church. His passion for the liberation of the common masses in the southern hemisphere of the world had been expressed through his writings.

He left behind his wife Rev Florence Robinson and children Jeevan Robinson and Ratna Robinson. On behalf of the constituent bodies of NCCI, we convey our deep condolences to the bereaved

family and pray that may God grant eternal peace to them.

Fr. Samuel Rayan Passed away of 2 January 2019



It was in January 1989 I, along with other selected ecumenical candidates, met an unassuming man in half-sleeves and a simple dhoti (some called it Lungi) at the venue of Indian School of Ecumenical Theology (ISET), Bangalore. We were the first batch for a crash course and the man was Rev. Fr. Samuel Rayan, our Principal at ISET. The first impression of Fr. Rayan was humble and modest, which never went out of our mind during the course of our study or anytime beyond - however long we spent time with him.

As the entire ecumenical world comprehends, Fr. Samuel Rayan has been one of the prophetic leaders of Indian Liberation Theology, a pioneer who theologized from the perspective of poor, which was distinguished as an Asian or third world perspective. **Most of his life was spent in teaching and during such time his insights have inspired, guided and challenged many.**

Perceptibly Fr. Rayan had two significant objectives in all his activities; i). Investing in the potentials of youth of India and ii). Encouraging his students to be critically conscious to take side of the poor and the marginalized and thereby demonstrating radical humanism. His interest for youth and students was witnessed in different dimension during his association with the All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF).

Though he was radical in his thought and action he never had an aggressive approach to it, rather he wanted radical

humanism be explored in the light of the teachings of gospels, keeping Jesus as his only reference to any context for that matter. 'What would Jesus do if he happens to be here in this context?' - This was probably the question he raised more number of times than anything else during the course of teaching us.

Fr. Rayan always considered Indian reality as a basis for faith interpretation and teaching; which was evident in his own words that theologizing in India means "to bring our Christian faith and Indian reality face to face with each other. ... It makes Christian faith and people's life situations meet, interact and interpret each other (1999).

Fr. Rayan was very passionate in his secular values and in pluralistic co-existence, which is unique to our Indian context. Fr. Rayan said that "God cannot be understood with one religion and God is a phenomenon understood by different religious experience."

Fr. Rayan had passion for theology and teaching, he had wealth of knowledge in the subjects he taught, he had respect for every student, and he believed in the potential of all students, without prejudice. An attitude to be attentive to the needs of students is something very impressive of Fr. Rayan. When Fr. Rayan begins his lecture one may start counting on the doubts and prepare to raise them at the end, but as he ends his lecture probably all the doubts could have been clarified without the need for raising it on the floor. That was the clarity with which Fr. Rayan used to teach theology; nevertheless he was always open to all kinds of questions.

In passing away of Fr. Rayan the world has lost a great theologian, ecumenical world has lost an unparalleled leader, India lost a sincere and committed secular citizen and I lost a simple, nice and friendly teacher.

May God inspire many people to learn from his life and to uphold the values Fr. Rayan believed in.

Simpson Cornelius



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