

YOUTH TURN

connect create change

YOUTH CONCERNS—NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

PRIORITIES OF

NCCI—YOUTH CONCERNS

- Encouraging young people to be part of the National Ecumenical Movement.
- Networking with the Local and International Ecumenical partners for sponsorship and partnership.
- Connecting member churches and local youth movements with NCCI Youth Concerns ministry through organizing programmes both at regional and national levels.
- Strengthening direct partnerships with youth fellowships of the member churches and NCCI Youth Concerns ministry and encouraging them to create ecumenical platforms for young people to promote grassroots ecumenism.
- Identifying young people to engage them in a process of articulating their faith and understanding about God.

WHEN CHILDHOOD TURNS A NIGHTMARE

Ever thought of dismissing the speculations and apprehensions of a child as absurd? Then today being the World Day against Child Labour (June 12) could be an occasion to rethink this illusion. We Christians seem to be indolent towards the fact that we continue to follow the God consciousness of a lad. At the age of twelve, Jesus at the temple chose the metaphor of Father to describe God. Do not we foster the same till date?

Children are the most beautiful creation of God and childhood the most envious period. It is so important that even God while incarnating did not choose to take a leap. This is an age when relationships survive without the burden of names, when innocence spills over, when imaginations and actions are not at odds, when emotions are freely expressed without the fear of any sort, when smile and laughter are genuine and much more.

These are the dominant versions of articulating the whims and fancies of childhood. How far are they true? We seem to be so relaxed in this complacency. Take a look at these disturbing facts to shed our oblivion.

1. India is home to the largest under-nourished and hungry population with 195 million people going hungry every day.
2. Close to 165 million children are stunted as a result of under-nutrition and infection, leaving them physically and intellectually weak. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, 24 countries with the highest levels of stunted children are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia alone.
3. Nearly half of all deaths in children under age 5 are attributable to under-nutrition. This translates into an unnecessary loss of about 3 million young lives a year. In India itself, 3,000 children die every day due to malnutrition.
4. In India, the nutrition of children is particularly worse because of the state of their mothers. 36% of Indian women are chronically under-nourished, from their childhood itself.
5. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization it costs just \$0.25 (INR 16) per day to provide a child all the vitamins and nutrients he/she requires to grow healthy.
6. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), climate change and erratic weather patterns will push another 24 million children into hunger in the future.

Today we must not forget that India has one of the largest number of Child Labours in the world. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment there are 1.26 crore working children in the age group of 5-14 as compared to the total child population of 25.2 crore. There are approximately 12 lakhs children working in the hazardous occupations/processes which are covered under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986 i.e. 18 occupations and 65 processes. The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) reports that the number of working children is estimated at 90.75 lakh.

Today it is all about analysing whether justice has been meted out timely and fairly to the children of our world at large and nation in particular. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru whose birth anniversary is commemorated as Children's day once reckoned; "The children of today will make the India of tomorrow. The way we bring them up will determine the future of the country." The future of India does not seem appealing but looks cataclysmic the way the nation treats its children.

Jesus Christ himself is the product of a brutal infant genocide. Jose Saramago in his book "Gospel according to Jesus Christ" portrays a guilty Jesus who holds himself and his father Joseph accountable for that massacre later sanitized by Church Fathers as "Holy Innocence". This may be the reason why Jesus shows profound love towards children. But unfortunately the Church seems to have forgotten that her subsistence is the blood of those infants. Thus the Church choosing to remain silent on the atrocities against children is a Church that digs her own grave.

We live in a time when the consent and interests of children are taken for granted. They are considered to be entertainers to others. Parents are in the illusion that they teach their children. Angela Schwindt remarks, "While we teach our children all about life our children teach us what life is all about." ■

Dn. Basil Paul, Intern, NCCI—Youth Concerns

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<http://basilsecentricities.blogspot.com/2018/06/when-childhood-turns-nightmare.html?m=1>

PROMOTING GOOD CITIZENRY: BUILDING SECULARISM

The National Council of India (NCCI) – Youth Concerns in collaboration with the Church of South India (CSI) organised a two-day programme on the theme “Promoting Good Citizenry: Building Secularism” on 4-5 May 2018 at the CSI Synod Center, Chennai, focusing on the rise of intolerance, promotion of individual responsibility, and building secularism in the country especially among the youth.

Mr. Liju Kuriokose, Youth Vice President, NCCI delivered the welcome address. In his address, he expressed disappointment that the world is getting conservative and exclusive; however youth have the capacity to rise above the situation and to challenge the world to strive for change. Youth need to be prophetic which is beyond foretelling; rather they should be engaged in forth-telling, reforming the situation and being responsible to the future generations to come.

Rev. Dr. D. Rathnakara Sadananda, General Secretary, CSI and the Vice President, NCCI, brought the keynote address on the main theme “Promoting Good Citizenry: Building Secularism”. Questioning the notion of India as a nation where minorities live under the threat of majority and where the country is under a monolithic majority, he asserted that India is a nation of minorities. Whereas people look at secularism as a threat to Christianity in the West, there is a distinctive positive understanding of secularism in India. Referring to the concept of *Sarva Dharma Sambhav* (a Hindu concept which asserts that all Dharmas (truths) are equal to or harmonious with each other.), he observed that Hinduism – basically a caste-based religion, is now being promoted by right wing elements as an all-embracing religion. Therefore Dr. Sadananda asserted that Christians have to be vigilant and should be ready to become a community of hope for all. The theology of prayer is not a prayer to God alone but a prayer with commitment to action. He reaffirmed that the Christian community needs to rethink its being. The Church should never become the majority; it is called to be a minority, to be the salt of the earth. Church should join the choirs of life, a choir that empowers and enriches. He concluded with a challenge to the young people to become the choir that makes a choir of minority.

Rev. Asir Ebenezer, Director, CSI-SEVA, deliberated on the theme “Rise of Intolerance: A Threat to Indian Secularism – Socio-Political Perspectives.” He admitted that a citizen can be of any religion; however the state should be a-religious, being equidistant from all religions and instead focus on all its citizens. Secularism is fundamentally proactive and progressive, encouraging people not only to tolerate one another but also to live in love and friendship. Rev. Ebenezer added that intolerance is non-juxtaposed to secularism, and it distorts the

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values and principles of the constitution. Concurrently, a minority community cannot practice selective secularism and secular sectarianism. Intolerance should be checked when churches are engaged in the proclamation of the gospel. Power to fight for secularism comes from our status as rightful citizens under the constitution, and not as having a minority status. Therefore he urged the young people to fight for secularism from the Indian citizenship platform.

Dr. Christopher S. Baskeran, Associate Director – Church Relations & Interfaith Engagement, World Vision India, reflected on the notion of justice and social transformation under the topic “Justice and Social Transformation – Marginalised Perspectives.” Drawing inspiration from Plato’s *Republic* (c. 380 BCE), he talked about justice as the quality of being fair and reasonable; theory and practice of administering fairness; and justice as being drawn from law. Dr. Baskeran maintained that social transformation implies a fundamental change in society. In conclusion he asserted that the marginalised sections of the society should be acknowledged and should be given transformative justice (which is biblical), a justice of redemption and restoration, what would bear witness to social transformation.



Rev. Solomon Paul, Youth Director, CSI, led a Bible Study from Matthew 25:14-30 (Parable of Talents) highlighting the capitalistic approach, the unequal distribution of wealth, and the exercise of power and authority over the poor.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks and a prayer by Mr. Jianthaolung Gonmei, Executive Secretary, NCCI-Youth Concerns and Fr. John C Matthew respectively. ■

AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEE WOMEN

An awareness session on community health and women’s health was organised and conducted by the CSI Synod Youth Department for the Women of Rohingya refugee camp in Kelambakam, Chennai. Ms. S.W. Naomi Nancy and Ms. Vandana S. Charles, Junior Lecturers, Colleges for Nursing, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore who are also the Youth CSI, volunteered to do handle these sessions as a part of their commitment towards addressing community health concerns.



This interactive sessions enabled the Rohingya refugee women to seek many clarifications on maintaining menstrual hygiene and other children health related queries. ■

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN SCMI

Come... be part of a Historical Ecumenical Organization! A chance to serve in Student Christian Movement of India (Apply before 15th July 2018).

Applications are invited for the following posts:

1. Programme Secretary for Uttar Pradesh
2. Programme Secretary for South Tamil Nadu
3. Programme Secretary for Jharkhand Bihar

General Criteria for the posts:

(i) Candidates must have a deep Christian Commitment, must be below the age of 30 years.

For the post of Programme Secretary should have a minimum qualification of a Degree in any discipline.

(ii) Preference will be given to the candidates with:

- ... SCM background and involvement
- ... Good academic background
- ... Training/Experience in chosen field of activity
- ... Proven ability in writing and verbal communication
- ... Proficiency in Hindi/English
- ... Good Theological perspective
- ... Basic Computer knowledge

(iii) Successful candidate must be prepared to travel widely in India.

(iv) The appointment is initially for one year (probation) with possibility of service for maximum period of six years (3+3).

(v) Candidates must be committed to work among the students, prepared to travel extensively and motivate students to involve themselves in the struggles of the people. Successful candidate must be prepared to be posted in any part of the region/country.

Persons with the above qualifications may request for the application form

from communicationscmi@gmail.com ■

CMAI INTENSIVE PROGRAMME ON PASTORAL CARE FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING

The Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI) is organising a 32nd Annual Course on 'Pastoral Care for the Sick and Suffering' scheduled from 11 to 22 September, 2018 at Development Association of Nagaland Training Center, Mount Carmel Higher Secondary School Campus, 4th Mile, Dimapur, Nagaland.

We will be very happy if you can sponsor few pastors/chaplains/others who are interested in the ministry of healing from your church or hospital who want to equip themselves in this special area of understanding pastoral care towards the sick and suffering. Today, there is a palpable increase in the need of theologically competent care givers who have the ability and commitment to understand the community they serve. We bear in mind that pastoral care is very integral to the ministry of the church as we conduct this annual course to pastors, chaplains and those who believe are called out to be agents of healers.

This is a two weeks intensive programme with theory and practice for pastors/ chaplains in our country to do the healing ministry more efficiently.

For further details please contact: Ms. Imtinenla Aier, Secretary - Chaplain Section, Mobile no: 9953605229

E-mail: imtinenla@cmai.org ■

FINANCIAL PRIZE FOR YOUTH CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Applicants could be individual youth above the age of 15 years and below the age of 30 years; a youth-led entity (defined as any entity, in which at least 50% of current management/leadership is below age of 30); or a youth-focused entity (defined as any entity, in which at least 90% of resources serve youth above 15 and below 30 years of age).

First of its kind, this global award comes as an expression of the firm faith of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, in young people's potential to lead their countries and the world towards a better shared future of peace and prosperity for all people on a healthy and renewable planet, as envisioned by the world's most ambitious plan to transform our world – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The award recognizes young people's endeavour to be effective and productive citizens, contributing to the welfare of their communities and environment, as well as institutions that improve the enabling environment and infrastructure for youth to make an impact, in all United Nations Member States. The award was first launched during the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, in January 2017. The awarding ceremony for that year took place in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in January 2018. As of the 2018 Award Cycle, the King Hamad Award for Youth Empowerment to achieve the SDGs will have two main categories; one for youth action, granting 5 Awards, and a second for youth enablers granting 3 Awards.

It includes five awards, each including a financial prize of USD20,000.

Each of the possible 5 awards will recognize a unique and successful development initiative by youth in one of the 5 key aspects of sustainable development covered in Agenda 2030, namely:

People: Ending poverty and hunger in all forms;

Prosperity: Ensuring prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature;

Planet: Protecting our planet's natural resources and climate for future generations;

Peace: Fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies; and

Partnership: Forging solid partnerships to implement Agenda 2030

In evaluating submissions, jurors will consider the extent to which the development initiative has been informed by, or upholds, where applicable, key principles holistic sustainable development underlying the vision of Agenda 2030, including:

Integrated: Addresses, in an integrated manner, the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental;

No one behind: Leaving no one behind includes being inclusive and focusing on and prioritizing the farthest behind;

Risk-informed: incorporates risk prevention and management, and where applicable, forges links between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding dimensions;

Global outlook: recognizes and addresses interlinkages between local action and global impact; and

Gender Balance: The full extent of development in line with the ambition of Agenda 2030 will not be achieved, if half of society -women and girls- does not get full and equal opportunity to reach their full potential

Deadline 30 October 2018 For more details: <https://www.kinghamadaward.com/award-categories.php> ■

Constituent members of NCCI, especially Member Churches of NCCI, are requested to share recent reports of youth programmes with the NCCI Youth Concerns department for publication in the E- Newsletter.