

# **Tribal and Adivasi Sunday**

**4 August 2024**

**Theme:  
Protecting the Rights of  
Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation  
and Initial Contact**



**National Council of Churches in India  
Commission on Tribal/ Adivasi Concerns  
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## FOREWORD

Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact are a stark reminder of the paradises amidst us all over the world. It is a reminder that life is possible without the influences of the “fruits of development”. Furthermore, it is a reminder that it is not only possible, but is the key to live and sustain.

This year, at the time of the observance of the World Day of Indigenous peoples we are called to remember this gospel and see how the existing and remaining ‘protected’ spaces can be preserved by respecting the rights of peoples who choose voluntary isolation.

It is estimated that there are 200 groups of peoples who belong to this category of peoples around the world. They are present in almost all the continents of the world. Their rights are enshrined, with a view to be protected, in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

There are many challenges that they face due to shrinking spaces of their habitats. Rapid developments for agriculture, mining and tourism on the one hand, and the presence of natural resources on the other, pave way for deforestation even in their protected spaces. Vulnerabilities to diseases due to immunological challenges are also their bane when there is forced contact with the surrounding world.

As we pray together on the same theme of the ‘UN International Day of the Indigenous Peoples’, during the Tribal/ Adivasi Advocacy Sunday, let us educate ourselves about these communities, repent for the occupation of the lands of indigenous communities over many decades and centuries in the name of ‘development’, recognise the difficulties and challenges of those who choose to be in voluntary isolation, and affirm to protect their rights.

May this year’s observance of the Tribal and Adivasi Advocacy Sunday be a blessing to the communities that we lift up - people who have chosen voluntary isolation. May the observance of this Sunday also serve as a warning to our exploitative mindset and lifestyle, and call us, challenge us, and force us to a commitment to change.

**Rev. Asir Ebenezer**  
General Secretary  
National Council of Churches in India

## INTRODUCTION

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was first pronounced by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1994. By resolution 49/214 of 23 December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly decided that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People shall be observed on 9th August every year. By following this UN day, on 17 September 2010, during the Annual General Body Meeting of National Council of Churches in India in Bangalore, for the first-time announced observance of the NCCI-Tribal and Adivasi Sunday. NCCI, therefore, urges and requests constituent members to annually observe every Sunday closest to 9th August as NCCI -Tribal and Adivasi Sunday and the date to be marked in the Church calendar and dairy.

In order to have a better understanding of the life situation of the Tribal and Adivasi communities in India and to have a common form of worship for this special Sunday, NCCI therefore brings out this Liturgy. Nevertheless, NCCI acknowledges that many churches do not follow a liturgical form of worship; still NCCI requests those churches to adopt the Liturgy suitable to their own tradition. At the same time, NCCI is also aware of the absence of Tribal and Adivasi communities in a few churches, yet NCCI requests all those churches to observe this special NCCI Tribal and Adivasi Sunday to show their solidarity to our fellow tribal and adivasi friends who are oppressed and marginalised in various ways. We hope that the observance of this special NCCI Tribal and Adivasi Sunday will be an enriching one in our faith affirmation and for widening the horizon of our ecumenical Journey. Since 2011, Tribal and Adivasi Sunday have been celebrated in many parts of our country in sensitizing the local congregation on Tribal and Adivasi Concerns. We would like to thank for the enormous support we have received from the churches, dioceses, parishes and institutions in celebrating this special Sunday.

The theme for this year's Tribal and Adivasi Sunday is **“Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact”**. We take this opportunity to invite you to celebrate Tribal and Adivasi Sunday on 4th August 2024 in your church/local parish/institution in a creative way. Herewith we are sending you a special order of worship for the day. You may take the freedom to use the entire worship order and translate it in your vernacular language or adapt parts of it.

In Christ,

**Pradip Bansrior**

**Executive Secretary**

Commission on Tribal/ Adivasi Concerns

National Council of Churches in India

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

TRIBAL AND ADIVASI SUNDAY,

4<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2024

Theme:

Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact  
(Suggested Texts: Genesis 1:1-2:3, Isaiah 11:1-9, Revelation 21: 1-7, Luke 13:6-19)

***Leader: Let's Read the Preamble of the Indian Constitution***

**WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:**  
**JUSTICE, social, economic and political;**  
**LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;**  
**EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;**  
**and to promote among them all**  
**FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.**

**Call to Worship**<sup>1</sup>

**L: Who comes to worship our creator?**

**C:** We come from the east to celebrate our God who has created the rising sun and has given us a new day.

**L: Who comes to this place of worship?**

**C:** We come from the north to remember that the One who made us has also shaped the face of icy mountains and snow-swept valleys.

**L: Who enters into this place of sanctuary?**

**C:** We come from the west, singing of our Maker's love and dancing with the red sun at our backs.

**L: Who gathers as the church today?**

**C:** We come from the south, our voices rising from the forest winds as we praise the Giver of all life.

**L: Let us now join together as one body.**

**C:** Worshipping God in spirit and in truth. **Amen.**

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from the Native American Sunday worship order of American Methodist Church.  
[https://www.unyumc.org/images/uploads/Native\\_American\\_Sunday\\_Call\\_to\\_Worship\\_and\\_Benediction.pdf](https://www.unyumc.org/images/uploads/Native_American_Sunday_Call_to_Worship_and_Benediction.pdf)

## Opening Prayer

Akhingting Goa,<sup>2</sup> we come before you in solidarity with the indigenous people around the world; especially, those who are voluntarily isolated. At this time of worship, we beseech your presence to prepare ourselves in looking forward to engage in acknowledging the rights of indigenous people and addressing the pertinent issues faced by them. May the Holy Spirit enkindle us to broaden our understandings and enlighten our learnings to advocate for the needs of Tribal and Adivasi peoples and embrace love and care to share in and out of our community. **Amen.**

## Opening Hymn<sup>3</sup>

All things bright and beautiful  
All creatures great and small  
All things wise and wonderful  
'Twas God that made them all

Each little flower that opens  
Each little bird that sings  
God made their glowing colors  
And made their tiny wings  
(All things bright and beautiful)

The purple headed mountains  
The rivers running by  
The sunset and the morning  
That brightens up the sky  
(All things bright and beautiful)

The cold wind in the winter  
The pleasant summer sun  
The ripe fruits in the garden  
God made them every one  
(All things bright and beautiful)

## Call to Confession

God is near to those who are oppressed and marginalized in the face of the earth, and saves those who seek God's righteousness and God's kin-dom. Let us confess our sins before God, who is able in all circumstances.

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<sup>2</sup> In Khiarniungan, Akhingting means Most High/Almighty and Goa means God which they use as Most High God or Almighty God.

<sup>3</sup>Cecil Francis Alexander. All Things Bright and Beautiful © Universal Music Publishing Group, Warner Chappell Music, Inc.1848, Accessed 14 July, 2024.  
[https://hymnary.org/text/each\\_little\\_flower\\_that\\_opens](https://hymnary.org/text/each_little_flower_that_opens)

### Confession of Sin

**L:** We confess our sins, for we have sinned against you, against our fellow beings and against the nature

**C:** **Atsoujen Goa,<sup>4</sup>forgive us.**

**L:**For we have exhibited our stringent mindset of superiority over the tribal/6divasi communities and domination over the minority

**C:** **Atsoujen Goa, pardon us.**

**L:**For we practiced indifferent behaviours andignorancetowards the voluntary isolated and displaced peoples,

**C:** **Atsoujen Goa, forgive us.**

**L:**For we have been prejudicedtowards oppressed and marginalized group of people,

**C:** **Atsuojen Goa, pardon us.**

### Assurance of Pardon

**May the eternal God in whom there is peace, love and belonging, forgive all our sins. So that, we mayshow compassion and solidarity towards the indigenous communities. May our hearts and minds be opened to embrace and celebrateall the diversities and differences. Amen.**

### Absolution (*Drum beat/ ululation*)

May the spirits of our ancestors cleanse us.

Maymother earth heal the wounds we carry.

May the waters purify our hearts and minds.

May the winds carry away our burdens.

We are forgiven. We are renewed.

Let us walk in balance with all creation. **Amen.**

### Scripture Reading :

Old Testament : Genesis 1:1-2:3

Isaiah 11:1-9

New Testament : Luke 13: 6-19

### Intercessory prayer (*Holding hands and standing in a Circle*)

**L:***O Limha<sup>5</sup>, oyak<sup>6</sup>osiJipo<sup>7</sup>Potsow<sup>8</sup>* (O God of the Earth, the heavens and God of all the tribes), who formed us from the dust of the earth and breathed life into our beings, we come before you as your humble servants, interconnected with the land, the waters, the sky, and all

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<sup>4</sup> In Khamniungan, Atsoujen Goa means loving/Merciful God.

<sup>5</sup> “*O Limha*” translated as “O Earth” in the language of Lotha Naga tribe.

<sup>6</sup> “*Oyak*” translated as the “Sky” in the language of the Lotha Naga tribe.

<sup>7</sup> “*Jipo*” translated as the “tribe” in the language of the Lotha Naga tribe.

<sup>8</sup>*Potsow* is also addressed by the Lotha’s as *Apo* (father). It also mean*Po* (father) *tsow* (Great), the Great father. Thus, the Supreme God of the Lotha’s is *Potsow*

living creatures. We gather to lift up our prayers for our brothers and sisters living in voluntary isolation and initial contact, whose ways of life remind us of our ancestral roots and deep connection to your creation.

**L:** *Hoyiyahe, Hoyiyahe (Congregation: HOYIYAHE)*<sup>9</sup>  
**C:** *Opvüi, ErandanEngayia*<sup>10</sup>

### Prayer for Protection

**L:** Heavenly God, we pray for the protection of Indigenous Peoples who live in voluntary isolation and initial contact. They have chosen a life detached from modern civilization to preserve their unique cultures and languages. Shield them from all forms of harm, especially those that come from the encroachment and exploitation of their natural habitats. May they continue to thrive in peace and harmony with the environment you have so bountifully provided for them. *He....He....*<sup>11</sup>

**C:** *He...He, O MapruSoon Amor Partona.*<sup>12</sup>

### Prayer for Rights and Self-Determination

**L:** Gracious God, we lift up the rights of Indigenous Peoples as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Grant them the strength and courage to exercise their rights to self-determination and autonomy. May they govern themselves and their lands according to their ancient traditions, free from external pressures and forced assimilation.

**C:** *Rira, heirummiguitachatchapilo*<sup>13</sup>

### Prayer for Environmental Stewardship

**L:** *Zayi.....Zayile....*<sup>14</sup>, Creator of Heaven and Earth, we pray for the safeguarding of the natural environment/ habitat that Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation depends on. Their survival is intricately linked to the health of their forests, rivers, and lands. Inspire global leaders and all of us to respect and protect these sacred spaces, recognizing that our own well-being is tied to the preservation of these ecological treasures.

**C:** *Proho! Ithumwuseihāshāmilu*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This is a traditional chant of the Lotha Naga tribe.

<sup>10</sup> “*Opvüi, ErandanEngayia*” translated as “Lord, hear our Prayers” in the language of the Lotha Naga tribe.

<sup>11</sup> This is a traditional Lotha chant that affirm agreement or consent.

<sup>12</sup> *O Mapru Soon Amor Partona* translated as “Lord, hear our prayer” from Adivasi dialect.

<sup>13</sup> *Rira, heirummiguitachatchapilo* translated as “Lord, hear our prayer” from Thangal Naga Tribe from Manipur.

<sup>14</sup> “*Zayi Zayile*” is a Lotha Naga chant or song, could be as “to stand up for” or “to defend.” It conveys the idea of taking a stand or fighting on behalf of someone or something.

<sup>15</sup> The phrase *Proho! Ithumwuseihāshāmilu* translates to “Lord, hear our prayers” in the Tangkhul Naga dialect. It's a heartfelt invocation commonly used in prayers and worship within the Tangkhul Naga community.

### Prayer for Peace and Security

**L:** *NoyingLanlyüPotsow*,<sup>16</sup> we ask for the safety and security of Indigenous communities. Protect them from violence, exploitation, and any threats to their physical integrity. May they live in freedom, peace, and security, as is their right, without fear of displacement or destruction of their way of life. *Ha....hele...*

**C:** *(Ha...hele)* <sup>17</sup>*Gitel, chingnibiakoknachakpabo*<sup>18</sup>

### Prayer for Solidarity and Understanding

**L:** *Khonzan Eli Postow*,<sup>19</sup> teach us to stand in solidarity with Tribal/ Adivasi Peoples. Help us to understand their wisdom and ways of life, which have been passed down through generations. May we learn to honor and respect their choices and support them in preserving their cultural heritage for future generations.

**C:** *Pakai, Katao naongaijan*<sup>20</sup>

### Oath taking

**We pledge to stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities and those who choose voluntary isolation. We will advocate for the protection of their ancestral lands, the profoundness of their cultures and traditions, and the unique biodiversity they preserve. By dismantling prejudice and envisaging understanding, we commit to amplifying their voices and supporting solutions to the challenges they face.**

### Closing hymn<sup>21</sup>

Joyful, joyful, we adore You,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You,  
Op'ning to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the dark of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You,  
Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,  
Stars and angels sing around You,  
Center of unbroken praise;  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,

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<sup>16</sup>*NoyingLanlyüPotsow* translates to “God the Peacemaker” in the Lotha Naga dialect. It reflects the concept of God as the one who brings peace and reconciliation, which is significant in many cultural and religious contexts among the Lotha Naga people.

<sup>17</sup> Lotha Chant or Song.

<sup>18</sup>*Gitel, chingnibiakoknachakpabo* translates to “Lord, hear our prayers in Garo dialect.

<sup>19</sup>*Khonzan Eli Postow* translates to “Merciful God” in Lotha Naga dialect.

<sup>20</sup>*Pakai, Katao naongaijin* translates to “Lord, hear our Prayers” in the Kuki dialect.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Van Dyke. Joyful Joyful we adore thee. *The Poems of Henry Van Dyke*, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911, Accessed 14 July, 2024.

[https://hymnary.org/text/joyful\\_joyful\\_we\\_adore\\_thee](https://hymnary.org/text/joyful_joyful_we_adore_thee)



Chanting bird and flowing fountain  
Praising You eternally!  
Always giving and forgiving,  
Ever blessing, ever blest,  
Well-spring of the joy of living,  
Ocean-depth of happy rest!  
Loving Creator, Christ our Saviour,  
Let Your light upon us shine;  
Teach us how to love each other,  
Lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus,  
Which the morning stars began;  
God's own love is reigning o'er us,  
Joining people hand in hand.  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
Victors in the midst of strife;  
Joyful music leads us sunward  
In the triumph song of life.

### **Closing Prayer**

Eternal Spirit, who binds us all in love and unity, hear our prayers for our Indigenous people. May our hearts be ever open to their needs and our actions guided by justice and compassion. As we celebrate the Tribal and Adivasi Sunday, may we commit ourselves to being co-habitants of your creation and advocates for the rights and dignity of all peoples.

### **Benediction**

May the Creator, who made the heavens and the earth, bless and protect the Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact. May their lands and territories be safeguarded, allowing the forests to thrive and their cultures to flourish. May we honour their role as co-habitants of the nature, recognizing that their survival is intertwined with the health of our environment and the diversity of our global community. In this hyper-connected world, may we learn from their wisdom and resilience, valuing the rich and complex tapestry of humanity that they represent. May peace and justice guide our actions, ensuring that the rights of these communities are respected and upheld. Let us be inspired by their example to live in harmony with nature and with one another. And may the grace and love of our Creator be with us all, now and always.  
**Amen.**



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