



CHURCH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

CHAI Newsletter

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An ecumenical
body of church
historians founded
in 1935

INDIA
26 JANUARY
ONE NATION
HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY



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Introductory Words from the President

A news letter for CHAI has been a long felt need which however could not be pursued because of the focus on several other important concerns that were on the table.

Even though we have major publications like 'History of Christianity in India' and the Journal – 'Indian Church History Review' (ICHR), the news letter has a place of its own for an organization like CHAI. It helps to reach out to its membership in relation to keeping them abreast of the happenings, the information about the programmes being undertaken at the branch and the national level, the new historic findings and such other events that take place from time to time.

The ICHR basically deals with scholarly papers for greater interaction and also serves as a means of trial ground for the young writer scholars and researchers while, the history of christianity project is a collated, analyzed, authenticated and consolidated publication of history of christianity in India. Therefore, we welcome this new initiative the CHAI Board had taken up, at its recent meetings in Ranchi and we are grateful to Prof. George Menachery, our former Secretary General of CHAI and a much sought after writer, for taking up this important responsibility.

I am sure that this vehicle of communication keeps us in a steady contact with one another so that we may strengthen our role of inspiring the writer fraternity and deliver what is due unto our membership and the very cause of history of our nation.

I wish the endeavour all success,



Dr. Jetti A. Oliver
President, CHAI



CHAI 16th Triennial RANCHI : The Inaugural Program



George Oommen
General Secretary, CHAI

The 16th Triennial Conference of the Church History Association of India (CHAI) held October 30 to November 1, 2014 at the Social Development Centre (SDC), Dr. Camil Bulcke Path, Ranchi, Jharkhand with the theme “Peoples’ History: Christianity, Culture and Development” was inaugurated on October 30 at 11.00 am in a solemn and colourful session attended by dignitaries and delegates from all over India.

The inaugural session was chaired by Dr. Jetti A. Oliver, President of CHAI, who is also the Chancellor of SHIATS Deemed University, Allahabad. The chief guest of the occasion was His Eminence Telesphore Cardinal P. Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi. The session opened with a hymn led by the German group under the leadership of Dr. Ulrich Schöntube, was followed by scripture reading by Rev. T. S. Cyril Hans. A prayer dance by the St. Anne’s Girls Hostel was followed by the lighting of the lamp. The welcome song was rendered by the children of Ursuline Girls Hostel. Rev. Dr. Manmasih Ekka, Principal, Gossner Theological College, Ranchi and Coordinator of the Sixteenth Triennial Conference welcomed the dignitaries and the participants of the Conference. The Conference Souvenir with the abstracts of papers to be presented at the Conference as well as articles on the History of Christianity in Jharkhand and Eastern India was released by Ms. Vandana Dadel, IAS, Director of Arts and Culture and Secretary for Sports, Government of Jharkhand. She also addressed the gathering as the guest of honour highlighting the local history as well as global history and pointing out the impact of the church on the history of the world. Rev. Dr. Mani Chacko, General Secretary, Bible Society of India gave the keynote address entitled, “Christian Missions, Theological Articulation and Biblical Interpretation: Important Resources in Constructing Peoples’ History,” setting the tone for the Conference. A book titled *Christian Missions in Bihar and Jharkhand: A Study by P. C. Horo* edited by Dr. Jose Kalapura S.J. was released by the Chief Guest His Eminence Telesphore Cardinal P. Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi by presenting the first copy to Mrs. P. C. Horo. Cardinal Toppo in his address appreciated the work of the historians and highlighted the role of the church in the development of the tribal people of the region. The General Secretary of CHAI, Rev. Dr. George Oommen, proposed the vote of thanks. Mr. Cyril Lakra, Secretary, All Churches Committee, Ranchi was the Master of Ceremonies.



Photos of the 16th CHAI Triennial at Ranchi



The 16th Triennial : An Overview

Rev. Dr. D. Arthur Jeyakumar

The Church History Association of India (CHAI) had its Sixteenth Triennial Conference from 30th October to 1st November 2014 at the Social Development Centre, New BarhiToli, Ranchi, Jharkhand under the Theme: “People’s History: Christianity, Culture and Development”. It was held in collaboration with All Churches Committee, Ranchi.

The Inaugural session of the Conference was held under the Chair personship of Dr.Jetti A.Oliver, President, CHAI and Chancellor, SHIATS Deemed University, Allahabad.The Inaugural session opened with a hymn, followed by scripture reading. A prayer song and welcome song were performed by local Sisters. Rev.Dr.Manmasih Ekka, Principal, Gossner Theological College, Ranchi and local Coordinator of the Sixteenth Triennial Conference welcomed the dignitaries and the participants of the Conference. The Souvenir of the Conference which contained the abstract of the papers to be presented at the Conference as well as articles on the History of Christianity in Jharkhand and Eastern India was released by Ms.VandanaDadel, IAS., Director of Arts and Culture and Secretary for Sports, Government of Jharkhand, Ranchi.

Then she as the guest of honour addressed the gathering on the Theme of the Conference. The Rev.Dr.Mani Chacko, General Secretary, Bible Society of India gave the keynote address on, “Christian Missions, Theological Articulation and Biblical Interpretation: Resources for Constructing People’s History” which set the tone for the Conference. A Book titled **Christian Missions in Bihar and Jharkhand: A Study by P.C.Horo** edited by Dr.JoseKalapura S.J. was released by the Chief Guest His Eminence Telespore Cardinal P.Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi.

There were altogether eight Academic Sessions where thirty Papers were presented. The list is as follows:

1. Rev.Dr.D.Arthur Jeyakumar: “Historical Background to Indigenous Christianities.”
2. Dr.Charles Dias: “Christian Contribution to the Development of Modern Education System in India.”
3. Rev.Ajay Chakraborty: “Bengal Pastors’ Role in the National Movement 1885-1947.”
4. Dr.Sam Nesamony: “Re-conceptualising Religious Transformation: Missionaries Education and depressed Classes in South India.”
5. Dr.ChirodipMajunder: “Christianity and Attitudes towards Life and Society: An Indian Perspective.”
6. Rev.Gijjavarapu Moses: “The Growth and Changes in the Life of Baptist Dalit Christians in Warangal District: Post-independence Period.”
7. Prof.Albert M.Chawang: “Christian Mission and Transformation in Nagaland.”
8. Dr.B.L.Nongbri: “Western Health Care and Traditional Worldview: A Study of the Cultural Encounter between the Welsh Presbyterian Medical Mission and the Khasi Traditional Culture.”
9. Rev.Dr.George Plathottam: “Role of Language in Preserving Identity: A Study of the Adivasis of Assam.”
10. Prof.Dennis Lepcha: “Role of Missionaries on the Indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills with special focus on Lepchas: A Historical Perspective.”
11. Dr.Ulrich Schontube: “Social Movement of the Adivasi during the 19th Century in Chotanagpur in the light of the German Sources.”
12. Dr.Jhakmak Ekka: “Two Perspectives on the History of the establishment of the Gossner Church, the first Church in Chotanagpur (Jharkhand): A Historical Investigation.”

13. Bishop A.S.Hamrom: "Missionary Political Attitude and Mission Politics in Jharkhand."
14. Dr.Francis Minj S.J.: "Indigenization of Chritianity in Chotanagpur: A Historical Appraisal."
15. Dr.BalbirKerketta: "The Early History of Missionaries in Education."
16. Dr.M.S.NijharJhariaMinz: "Impact of Missionary Contribution to Education in Chotanagpur / Jharkhand."
17. Dr.Klaus Roeber: "Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908: Observations on the Origin of a Law from Mission History's point of view."
18. Dr.Ms. Jeanette Pinto: "The Sister Karuna Mar and the Tribals of Torpa."
19. Dr.Ms.Joan Dias: "The Chotanagpur Migrant Tribal Development Schemes and Projects in Mumbai."
20. Dr.N.Benjamin: "Famine of 1899-1902 in Bombay Presidency and Missionaries."
21. Fr.Dr.Francis Correa: "Permanent Heralds of Good Tidings in Hindu Temples."
22. Dr.M.Kurian Thamas. "The BraminicSamskaras in the Nazrani Life Cycle."
23. Prof.George Menachery: "Models for Indigenization, Indianisation, Inculturation: Kerala's Oriental - Eastern Churches i.e. The Orthodox, the Jacobite, the Mar Thoma, and the Oriental Catholic."
24. Dr. Varghese Perayil: "The Revolt of 1653 as a Milestone in the History of Syrian Christians of Kerala against the Euro-Centric occupation."
25. Dr.Alex Mathew: "Arch Bishop Mar Ivanios and the Malankara Reunion Movement."
26. Dr.Vedpal Singh Deswal: "Education as Tool of Social Change: An Objective of Christianity."
27. Rev.Fr.Dr.M.ArockiasamyXavier.S.J.: "Christians and Freedom Movement: Role of Christians in Tamil Nadu in Individual Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement."
28. Dr.Santa Prabhuraj: "Catherine Ling: A Link to the Transformation of the Toda Community."
29. Dr.Daniel Solomon: "An Archival Study on Educational Institutions in Madras Presidency during the Company Raj (1818-1835)."
30. Mrs. Premlata K.: "Contribution of Christian Missionaries in the Establishment of the Karunapura Church and Karunapura Residential Area in Mysore."

The academic sessions were moderated by the following persons: Fr.Dr.Leonard Fernando S.J., Dr.Ms.Joan Dias, Dr.O.L.Snaitang, Fr.Dr.Jose Kalapura S.J., Fr.Dr.Emmanuel Barla S.J., Rev.Dr.Manmasih Ekka, Fr.Dr.Francis Thonippara C.M.I., and Rev.Dr.George Oommen. Each Academic Session had a period of questions, clarifications and inputs. Fr.Dr.Jose Kalapura S,J. was the Triennial Conference's Academic Coordinator along with being the editor of the Souvenir.

The Conference participants on 30th October 2014 evening were presented with a Video show on 'the Christian Missions in Jharkhand' by Fr.Dr.Emmanuel Barla S.J which was very informative, followed by a thrilling and lively Programme of songs and dances depicting the local Adivasi Culture. On 31st October 2014 evening the participants were taken to the Cathedral churches of the Church of North India, the Roman Catholic Church and the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The different Branches of CHAI had their Branch meetings after dinner to plan their future activities.

A General-body meeting of the CHAI was held from 2.30pm on November 1st, 2014 when apart from receiving / passing the reports of the General Secretary, the Treasurer, the Branches, the suggestions for the various elected posts made by the nomination committee consisting of Rev. Dr. O. L. Snaitang, Dr. Jeanette Pinto, and Prof. George Menachery (Convener) were unanimously approved. The General Body meeting also decided to launch a News Letter for the Association, with Prof. Menachery as editor.

The following were elected national office bearers :

President: Rev.Dr.Jetti A.Oliver.

Vice-President: Dr.Ms.Joan Dias.

General Secretary: Rev.Dr.George Oommen.

Joint Secretary: Rev.Dr.Manmasih Ekka.

Treasurer: Fr.Dr.Francis Thonippara CMI.

Members: Dr. Varghese Perayil and Rev. Dr. H. Lalrinthanga.

The new office-bearers were installed with a word of dedicatory prayer by the Rev.Dr.D.Arthur Jeyakumar. The Conference came to a close with a Vote of Thanks conveyed by the General Secretary, the Rev. Dr. George Oommen.

CHAI BRANCHES REPORTING: Southern Branch

The XV Triennial conference of CHAI Southern Branch was held at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore from 15.5.2012 to 17.5.2012.

The inaugural address was delivered by Rev.Dr.Thomas.c. Mathew, the honorable vice – Chancellor of the Christ university. Dr.Jetty Oliver, the national president of CHAI gave the keynote address. Rev.Dr.Saju Chackkalakal, president, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram gave the felicitation address. Rev.Fr.Dr.Francis Thonippara, the president of CHAI Southern Branch, paid homage to the departed veterans of CHAI namely Rev.Fr.Dr.Rosario Narchison, a long time editor of ICHR and Dr.K.John ochanthuruth, our dynamic Secretary General who slept in the Lord.

The 15th Triennial Conference of the South Indian Branch of the Church History Association of India CHAI (15 – 17 May 2012) was inaugurated at Bangalore by the Vice-Chancellor of the Christ University Dr. Thomas C. Matthew by lighting a bronze lamp in the DVK Philosophy auditorium in the presence of Dr. Saju Chackalakkal (President



DVK), CHAI Natioal President Dr. Oliver Jetti, Dr. Prameela Devi, Prof. George Menachery, Dr. Pasupulethi Manasseh (CHAI SIB Secretary), and Dr. Francis Thonippara (CHAI SIB President). The valedictory function was

addressed by Dr. Thomas Aykkara, Rector, Dharmaram College. In the Technical Sessions nearly 20 research papers were presented by eminent church historians of Southern Branch.

Prof.George Manachery, convenor of the nomination committee presented the selection of the office - bearers for the next triennium.

The New Office Bearers:

President : Dr.P.Manasseh
Secretary cum Treasurer : Prof.PMaria Lazar
Joint- Secretary : Rev.David Anil Kumar

Nominated Members:

- 1.Dr.B. Narasingaraja Naidu (Karnataka)
- 2.Dr. Charles Dias, M.P. (Kerala)
- 3.Mr.P.C. James (A.P)

The General Body approved the nomination of office bearers presented by the convenor of the of the nomination committee.



Prof. P. Maria Lazar
Secretary Cum Treasurer

The valedictory address was delivered by Rev.Dr.Thomas Aiykera, Rector and the chancellor of Christ University.

The first meeting of the newly elected office bearers was conducted on 17.05.2012 afternoon at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram. It was decided that the XVI Triennial – 2016, would be held in Andhra Pradesh either in Vijayavada or Visag.

It is strongly felt both by the central office bearers and the office bearers of the Southern Branch that Membership Drive should be pursued in Pondicherry and Cuddalore which has a rich, precious, and valiaable

church history. It is a fertile ground for research for church historians.

Soon steps will be taken to enroll new members for the Southern Branch from Pondicherry and Cuddalore. Already links have been established with important persons in Pondicherry and Cuddalore. Hope this effort will strengthen the Southern Branch and infuse new blood in the Organization.

The Tranquebar Fort: Symbol of Collaboration and Co-existence

Tranquebar was a Danish trading settlement from 1620 to 1845. The first Lutheran missionaries Barthalamaeus Zigenbalg and Heinrich plutchau sent by Frederichk IV the king of Denmark landed in Tranquebar in 1706. Bitter enimity prevailed between the Lutheran missionaries and catholic missionaries But the Danish East India officials and the Governors of Tranquebar always had a soft corner for catholics. They permitted catholic churches to be built within and out side

Tranquebar (Sathankudi and Porayar). Not only that the company officials at Tranquebar Paid monthly stipend to catholic priests within the Danish Settlement at Tranquebar. There are reasons for this. The company officials did not like the Lutheran missionaries. Secondly the wives of some company officials and Governors were Catholics. Thirdly a considerable number of soldiers at the service of the company were portiguese catholics.

- Prof. P. Maria Lazar





Prof. Dr. O. L. Snaitang
Former President,
Church History Association of India –
North East India Branch
Kench's Trace, Shillong 793004, Meghalaya.

NORTH EAST INDIA BRANCH:

A BRIEF REPORT

The Church History Association of India- North East India Branch began to get fully organized and entered upon the period of stability only in 2001. Its office bearers then were Dr. O.L. Snaitang as the President, Dr. David R. Syiemlieh the Secretary and Dr. Amena N. Passah the Treasurer.

Some of its major activities included the holding of a seminar on the theme “Mission Records” at YMCA Hall on 2nd October, 2003 on the theme “Mission Records”. There were 40 (forty) participants. Rev. E. H. Kharkongor, hitherto Principal, John Roberts Theological Seminary, Shillong delivered a Keynote Address. Those who read papers were Mr. Austin John, Dr. Amena N. Passah, Dr. B. L. Nongbri, Dr. David R. Syiemlieh and Dr. S. D. Kharmawphlang. It was a successful seminar on a much expected theme.

Another significant seminar was held at John Roberts Theological Seminary, Mawklot, Shillong on 18th June, 2005 on the theme “Colonial Encounter and Christianity in Northeast India”. Prof. Dr. I. M. Simon presented a Keynote Address. There were about 40 (forty) participants, mostly students and teachers from the Seminary. Dr. Amena N. Passah, Fr. George Maliekal, SDB, Dr. David R. Syiemlieh and Dr. O. L. Snaitang read papers on the said comprehensive theme.

Even when the Branch was in a difficult financial position, it however hosted the 14th CHAI Triennial Conference at NEHU Campus on 5th – 7th May, 2009. Its theme was “Christianity and the Marginalized

Communities in India.” There were more than 60 (sixty) participants who have come from different regions of the sub-continent. Participation from North East Indian theological teachers

and scholars was well acknowledged.

In May 7th – 9th 2014, the Branch was able to hold its First Triennial Conference at Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, Mizoram on the theme: “Christianity and Culture in North East India.” The Hon’ble General Secretary, CHAI central body, Dr. George Oommen graced the occasion with his participation and blessing. The newly elected office bearers that the General Body had taken up during the Conference and confirmed included Dr. Vanlalchhuanawma as the President, Dr. Arjun Basumatary the Vice-President, Dr. H. Lalrindika as the Secretary, Mr. Amusstar Shine Marbaniang the Treasurer. Executive Members: Dr. Bembangtemjen, Mr. A. Shangpliang and Mrs. P. C. Laltlani. The proceedings from this Conference were well documented, collected and printed for official records. This is the first major step in the Branch’s journey in the study of Christianity in the region and it will surely bolster its next venture and adventure in the larger interest of ecclesiastical historians, church leaders, scholars, intellectuals and the nation alike.

Reconnecting with the senior CHAI leader Dr.David Syiemleh



Seen in the picture are: Dr.David Syiemleh, Member, Union Public Service Commission, Mrs.Syiemleh, Dr.Mrs.Indira Oliver, Dr.Jetti-President of CHAI, Rev.Suresh Kumar of CNI Sansad Marg Church and occupant of the historic architect Luton's Bunglow and to the left is Rev.Mathias a historian from Zurich.

OBITUARY

C. G. Oommen, 78 father of CHAI secretary general the Rev. Dr. George Oommen died on January 24, 2015 at 1 pm. He was the author of a number of books including "Church and Religion". He is survived by his wife Mrs. V. T. Annamma. CHAI president and other office-bearers conveyed their condolences to the bereaved family members.



Agnes De Sa
Secretary
CHAI Western India Branch

REPORT OF CHAI, WESTERN INDIA, 2011-2014

Soon after the last Triennial at Hyderabad, the Western India branch enthusiastically started organising its programmes. It was decided that Vasai would be the venue for the next seminar.

Under the leadership of Msgr. Francis Correa, it was held in November 2011, and the theme was “Kristapurankar: Fr Thomas Stephens”. We were fortunate to have our newly elected President Dr Oliver Jetti inaugurate the seminar along with Bishop Felix Machado, Bishop of Vasai. The inaugural Address was made by His Lordship, Bishop Felix Machado. Many eminent academicians presented papers both in Marathi and English, on various aspects of the Kristapurana as well as on Fr Thomas Stephens himself. The seminar attracted not only students from the local colleges but many others from all the parishes of Vasai.

This was followed by a sound and Light show on the same theme at the Vasai fort in January 2012. The show was held on two days and received wide coverage in the local newspapers. The spirit and genius of Fr Thomas Stephens moved them all.

In August 2014, the annual seminar was held at Nasik and was hosted by Fr. Aubrey Mascarenhas at the Shrine of Infant Jesus. Eight members presented papers on a variety of topics, ranging from Christian Art and Architecture in Western India, Protestant Christian Missionaries in Gujarat, Response of Missionaries and the Government to Criminal Tribes and Marginalization of Women by the Church. The discussions which followed each paper were very spirited.

On the following day we were fortunate to be able to visit the Salesian Institute, Divyadaan, where Fr Mathew Coutinho spoke to us on, “Building A Gender Just Ethos in the Family”. So we looked to the past and to the future as well.

In November 2014, Dr. Jeanette Pinto was honoured with the Rachana Outstanding Woman of the Year 2014 Award. Dr. Pinto is a pro-life activist and the award was to recognise her work for the Pro-Life cause.

Western India Branch : VASAI



Western India Branch : NASIK





Under the auspices of CHAI, the national president had summoned a meeting at the St. Teresa's College, Kochi in collaboration with Dr. Charles Dias, ex M. P., of the representatives of various Kerala Churches on the eve of Christmas 2014 to discuss the "**Challenges Faced by Indian Christians Today**" which was addressed by a large number of VIPs including Prof. K. V. Thomas, M. P., Hybi Eden, M. L. A., and other M.L.A.s and leaders. Prof. George Menachery was asked to initiate the discussions with a short impromptu talk/paper. He spoke thus:

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From the Editor's Desk

Dear reader,
Here's the first issue of the CHAI Newsletter. Please forward it to all your contacts. Also please send it to all others interested in the history, culture, heritage, and progress of the Church in India. To receive the Newsletter regularly send your e-mail address and the Ids of your acquaintances to chainewsletter@gmail.com and kunjethy@gmail.com with a copy marked to the editor at the Newsletter to the editor through the respective Branch Secretaries or through a national office-bearer. Your valuable suggestions and comments are cordially invited. I thank the CHAI BOT and the General Body for all their concern and consideration past, present, and future. God's peace and Godspeed.

Prof. George Menachery,
Editor.



Challenges Faced by Indian Christians Today



I thank Chancellor Dr. Oliver Jetti, President of the Church History Association of India for convening this conference at Ernakulam under the Auspices of CHAI and some of the representatives of the various Churches. This is a much needed get-together at this moment in Indian History and on the Christmas Eve. I congratulate the organisers on this initiative and I thank CHAI and its president for the continuous interest and abiding anxiety they show for the Church in India Today and for the Churches in India Today. This week Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, the TTP, murdered 132 school children and burnt the school principal in front of her own students. The whole world was shocked. “They’re sychopaths, they’re criminals, they’re sadists,” said the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered two minutes’ silence in every school in India and all political parties in India condemned the perpetrators of this heinous crime. But when Stains and his two young boys were burnt to death in a vehicle many of these gentlemen were mum.

And when hundreds were brutally killed, scores of helpless women and even children were raped, and thousands were forced out of their homes and driven into the forests of Kandhamal in Orissa the same people not only kept silent but even sided with the criminals. This same week when two Christian churches were burnt down in the centre of India’s National Capital Territory the same people refused even to condemn the incidents. This is today’s India for you. For the Christians. For the Minorities. For the Dalits and the Tribals. And this should

open our eyes. Open our eyes wide. And some are trying today to Canonise Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi. And they are leaving alone the Patel Statue for the moment and endeavouring to put up Godse's idols all over the country to deify him and to justify his act. And this same week a law-maker of the Indian Parliament divided the people of our motherland into two categories: the children of Lord Rama on the one hand and all others Bastards on the other hand. And today we read (we just listened to the message read out by Bishop Augen) how a Delhi saffron leader has announced that there will be no more Christians or Muslims in India after December 31 of 2021. And on top of all this was the re-conversion drama. All these happenings in just this one week. Happenings taking place one after the other, in the week preceding Christmas. It is the statement of a purpose. Of firm intentions, and a well-considered agenda. A carefully drafted schedule. And we cannot but take note of this. We cannot afford to overlook all this. True – this country has by and large treated Christians so well for the many services Christians had rendered to their mother land. For the immense nation-building efforts of the Christian community down the millennia and down the centuries. Christians have had advantages which could not be dreamt of perhaps in most countries in Asia – or even in the whole of the Middle East.. But that does not mean we can ignore the signs of the time. But what can we Christians do about it? There are a number of things we can try to do. But I would like to stress just one thing.

Christians in India, though only a small minority of just 2% of the population have great clout. They run almost half the number of educational institutions as the Government itself. They have a decisive say in providing medical care for the whole country, and their presence is crucial in every single part of the country in these two

fields. And their international connections are considerable. But Christians in India do not speak in one voice. Their lack of unity make them an easy target for their critics, detractors, and attackers. We should have a strong, interdenominational, inter-church, united voice. How this could be achieved must be one of our main priorities in our interactions. Concerning the question of settling differences I would like to cite the examples of Akapparambu and Arthattu where there were two differing and opposing communities of Puthenkor and Pazhayakoor whose differences were amicably settled. Inside the Pazhayakoor the differences between warring factions were decided amicably at Ollur, Irinjalakuda, and Aranattukara by intelligent and understanding leadership.

I would like to mention just one more example of dealing with intra church dissensions. There were two opposing factions in the Syro-Malabar Church concerning the all important question of liturgical practices. When scholars and church leaders first began to meet at a series of Seminars at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanaad organised under the auspices of the LRC and its then Executive Director Bosco Puthur and Episcopal leadership and the active Patronage of His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil the Major Archbishop of the Church, during the first Seminars there were hard feelings and hard words between the proponents of the two factions. But as more and more seminars were attended by these leaders and scholars from the two sides passions gradually subsided and a certain amount of understanding and friendship developed. And although the differences continued many solutions and agreements could be arrived at. I propose this method may be followed in all Churches where differences exist. I think I have already exceeded my time-limit and even exceeded my brief. Kindly forgive me. ”



National seminar on
**“Christian contribution
 to Kerala Society-19th and 20th centuries”**

31st August – 1st Sept. 2013,
 Jeevas Kendra, Aluwa, Kerala

Dr. Mathias Mundadan
National Seminar

A National Seminar was conducted in honour of senior CHAI scholar the late Dr. A. Mathias Mundadan at the Jeevass Kendram, (Aug. 31- Sept.1, 2013), Aluwa, Kerala on **“Christian Contribution to Kerala Society – 19th and 20th Centuries”**. The seminar was conducted by the S.H. Province of the CMI under the initiative of Dr. Augustine Thottakkara CMI, the Provincial in collaboration with the available CHAI editorial team in charge of the **HCI Vol. IV, Part 1 “Kerala in the 19th & 20th Centuries”** viz. Dr. Francis Thonippara and Prof. George Menachery. Prof. Menachery was put in charge of the academic aspects of the seminar while Fr. Joshi Chanikuzhi CMI was in charge of the physical arrangements under the leadership of Dr. Thottakkara. The seminar was inaugurated by **Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Gratian Mundadan**. CHAI president Dr. Oliver A. Jetti delivered the keynote address. The following papers were presented:

Paper 1 Dr. Kurias Kumblakuzhy:

മലയാളസാഹിത്യത്തിലെ ക്രൈസ്തവ സംഭാവനകൾ

Paper 2 Dr. Kurian Thomas: **Christian Contribution to the Redefinition of Kerala Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries**

Paper 3 Dr. Charles Dias M.P. : **Anglo-Indian contribution to Kerala society 19th and 20th Centuries.**

Paper 4 Dr. Albert Nambiaparambil CMI: **Dialogue in India w.s.r.t. Kerala in the 19th and 20th Centuries**

Paper 5 Dr. Jose Kuriedath: **The Role of Christians in Education in Kerala in the 19th and 20th Centuries.**

Paper 6 Dr. George Oommen: **The Story of the**

Beginning of Pentecostalism in Kerala.

Paper 7 Dr. Abraham Arackal: **Latin Church and the Latin Catholic Community in Kerala in the 19th & 20th Centuries.**

Paper 8 Dr. Aniyam Kunju: **Christians and the Production of Wealth in Kerala in the 19th and 20th Centuries**

Paper 9 Dr. Francis Thonipara CMI: **Religious Congregations and Societies and the Catholic Revival in Kerala in the 19th and 20th Centuries.**

Paper 10 Fr. Thomas Panthaplackal CMI: **Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) in the service of the Church.**

Paper 11 Prof. George Menachery: **Changes in the Approach of the Kerala Church towards Sacred Art and Architecture in the 19th and 20th Centuries.**

Paper 12 Sebastian Edathilkavil CMI: **Kerala Church and Social Changes in the 19th & 20th Centuries**

Paper 13 Dr. Mar Aprem: **Contribution to the Kerala Society by the Chaldean Syrian community in Trichur in the 19th & 20th Centuries.**

Paper 14 Dr. Suma CMC: **Women Empowerment and the Kerala Church in the 19th and 20th Centuries.**

- **The seminar made suggestions for items to be included in CHAI’s HCI Vol. IV, Part 1 Kerala in the 19th & 20th Centuries.**

- **The seminar shared ideas for implementation in the fields of historical and cultural studies vis-a-vis the Kerala Church**

- **Dr. Augustine Thottakkara gave the valedictory message.**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

* Dr.Jetti A.Oliver

It is in the fitness of things that the Jeevas Kendra is organizing a 2 day national seminar on “Christian contribution to Kerala Society – 19th and 20th centuries” in commemoration of the 1st death anniversary of Prof.Dr.Mathias Mundadan. Late Fr.Mathias is not only a well known figure of the CMI and the catholic church but, a great friend and philosopher of the rest of the traditions of the Indian church. His books - “Arrival of the Portuguese in India and Thomas Christians”, “16th century traditions of St.Thomas Christians”, “History of Christianity in India volume-1” and “History and Beyond” are some of the treasured collections of the secular and the church libraries worldwide. In his death, the Church in general, the CMI and the CHAI in particular have lost a great crusader of research, writing, teaching and inculturation.

Having missed the solemn farewell that was bid to him when his mortal remains were laid to rest on 1st September 2012, I have made it a point to be here at all costs at this commemorative seminar to pray with you and pay him respect on behalf of the CHAI fraternity and bring on to record the debt of gratitude that we owe him for his life, service and witness to the larger society of our country. The CHAI, Fr.Mathias served so faithfully for over 5 decades is a unique instrument that brings together church scholars beyond denominational borders, creating opportunities for us, to search together the unsearchable riches of God’s creation, the earthly journey of His people and His scheme of deliverance to the mankind.

Fr.Mathias was a great thinker, writer and an editor par excellence. He was one of the members of the initial “think tank” that was responsible for the initiation of the study and publication of history of Christianity in India series. As we experience, writers are not good speakers and speakers are not good writers. In the case of Fr.Mathias, he was both a powerful speaker

and a prolific writer. As a teacher, a faith formatter and as an administrator, he continued to be a disciplined writer ever remained faithful to the stewardship of writing and proved to be a world acclaimed church historian. Teaching at a seminary to provincial administration and founding of Jeevas Kendra to befriending scholars of various denominational churches, Fr.Mathias, an admirer of cultural diversity, open to reasoning, quick for assimilation of values emerging from new revelations of the Gospel, ever remained loyal to his faith and his culture. The futility of the deep rooted understanding of shedding culture for faith was powerfully articulated by him even at the displeasure of his superiors and was able to set the trend right for faith to penetrate into every culture. He was a thinker ahead of times contributing to the greater understanding of the Gospel and Culture; History and its Lessons and the Future and its Promise. Therefore, I am glad that Fr.Dr.Augustine Thottakkara, the Director of Jeevas and his team of colleagues, in cooperation with the South Indian Branch of CHAI, have taken up this programme to fittingly commemorate and honour our dear leader and friend Fr.Mathias Mundadan.

The theme of the seminar, “Christian contribution to Kerala Society – 19th and 20th Centuries” is a timely reminder to reflect and recapture the role and response of the churches and Christian organizations in the uplift of the Kerala Society.

It is a well known and a well established fact that Christianity came to Kerala in 52 AD with the arrival of St.Thomas one of the 12 disciples of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When Christianity

began in Kerala, the initial followers were Jews and Brahmins. Pockets of these faithful have grown from strength to strength over the centuries but, true to the nature of the communities under reference, churches remained exclusive clubs of these communities as change of faith did not change the caste system and the

unacceptable practices there of.

With the discovery of the sea route to Kerala by the pioneer Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama in 1498, increased opportunities became possible for the traders from Europe. Following this, steady trade links were established and by 19th and 20th centuries, these links became stronger and the missionary interventions became innovative and problem centric, the Gospel was heard louder and the patronage of the royal rulers of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar became handy and this strengthened the mission establishments of the Portuguese, the German and the British which resulted in the planting of the Latin churches, the Roman Churches, the Anglican churches and so on side by side the already existing churches of St. Thomas Christians.

The interests of trade and commerce were different from the interests of the missionaries. This is evident from the experience of the East India Company and the such other who were always cautious of the possible threats of hampering the commercial interests of the traders through the missionary activity and in several instances, missionaries were discouraged in their service initiatives.

The Christian contribution to Kerala society in the 19th and 20th centuries is so much that a write up of this nature cannot adequately explain. The pioneering missionaries elsewhere, like Fr. Thomas Stevens S.J. of Goa for Konkani, Rev. Dr. William Carrey of Serampore for Bengali, Dr. C.P. Brown of A.P. for

Telugu, Rev. Dr. Ziegenbalg of Tranquebar for Tamil; Rev. Benjamin Baily, a CMS Missionary, revived and rejuvenated Malayalam language and popularized the same in so many ways. He was the first to translate the Holy Bible into Malayalam in 1841 and enabled people access the word of God in their own language. He started the first ever Malayalam printing press in Kottayam and contributed a great deal to Malayalam literature and Malayalam printing and Malayalam teaching. He was responsible for the 1st printed Malayalam to English Dictionary and even gained the title of father of Malayalam printing.

Like any other society, the Malayalee society was also caste ridden. The so called upper caste people in those days had special privileges, clan based power and dominance over others. Even in aristocratic families of Kerala society, education of women was considered

immoral and profane and this prejudice kept women of Kerala society away from learning opportunities. The 19th and 20th centuries experienced a great awakening with the daring acts of service of the missionaries who went about visiting homes, interacting with people, counseling and caring of the pregnant women, gathering children, engaging them in different kinds of educational, economic and social uplift programmes. The missionaries fought against discrimination on the basis of caste, colour and gender that was so inherent in the society.

The first-ever girls school that was started in the year 1819 in Nagercoil by the LMS missionary Johanna Mead, was of monumental service in educating and empowering women in the region. This triggered the slogan “educate a girl child to educate a family”. Inspired by this, in 1904 the Government of Travancore, made primary education compulsory for girls between 5 and 10 years. Several other missionaries like Rev. Tobias Rinzethaube, Rev. Charles Mead, Rev. John Cox, Rev. Samuel

Mateer, Dr. Samarvele Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Rev. Henry Becker, Rev. Joseph Fenn and such other representing the CMS, the LMS, the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, the CMI and so on extended an impact bearing health, education and social uplift services. In some instances, the missionaries did even influence the Governments to make untouchability a criminal offence.

The English medium schools and colleges opened by the missionaries had become so very popular and laid the foundation for a rapid literacy development in Kerala. This also boosted higher and professional education in the region. The situation became handy for the locals to trade with people from overseas and even travelled across the seas which helped a great deal in learning from one another and understanding the values, the culture and the ethos that became more and more acceptable to one another. The literary scholarship of the missionaries was found to be exciting and their socio economic development interventions were appealing. For this, the royal rulers of the region patronized the missionary activities. The 3 pronged programme of education, equity and employment attracted people at all levels and missionary movement became popular with the people of Kerala and therefore they became more and more open and receptive to the ideas of trade, ideas of

entrepreneurship, ideas of equality, ideas of productive engagement, ideas of caring and sharing, ideas of common wellbeing, ideas of good governance and so on resulting in a revisit to the whole dynamics of a purpose filled life to the otherwise uneducated, unemployed, unentreprizing, poverty stricken pockets of the Kerala society.

The hilly terrain became commercially fetching coffee and tea estates, rubber fields and coconut groves. The valleys became water reservoirs, the pisi culture centres. The rest of the land

became, the production farms of spices and condiments and the least of the lands became tapioca and bananas spread-outs. And thus, the farm production was also boosted which enhanced not only the trade relations but, reinforced the economy of the agro-based families.

Kerala became the first State in the country to be totally literate and this distinction is the result of the labour of love and endurance of faith of Christian missionaries and their successors. Education increased the horizon of understanding of the people, resulting in openness for reasoning, skills for management, entrepreneurship for development.

Trade has revolutionized the economy of Kerala. The intermingling of people, travels across the seas and trade partnerships etc. helped in the growth of malayalee diaspora worldwide. The concept of saving and investment arose out of chitties enterprise of Trisoor a byproduct of the ongoing trade and entrepreneurship. The barter system rapidly became the banking system. Increased education and improved economy contributed to social integration of the Kerala society. The teaching of missionaries on values and human dignity fostered abolition of slavery, respect for women, harnessing of human potential for self reliance, prosperity through hard work etc. have impacted the kerala society that they became adventurous, industrious, highly educated, intellectually competitive with abilities to seize the opportunities for sustainable growth and development and skills to live and let live.

The missionary interventions during the 19th and 20th centuries were the strongest ever in shaping much of the Kerala society. Kerala having the greatest honour and distinction of the very disciple of Jesus Christ preaching the Gospel on this

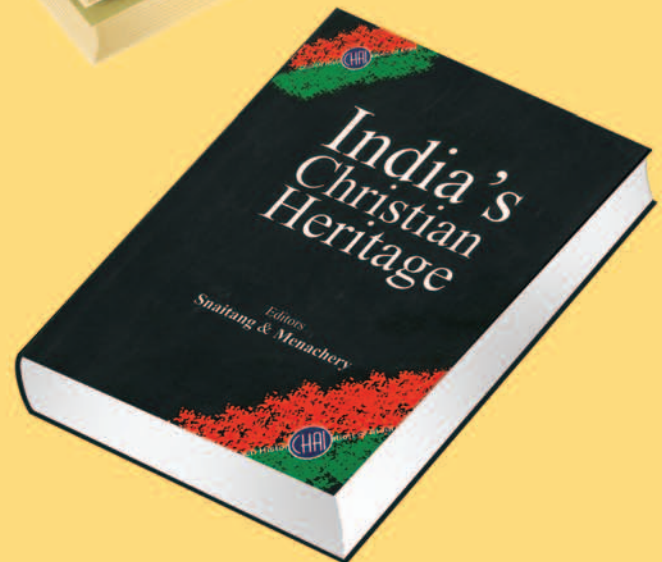
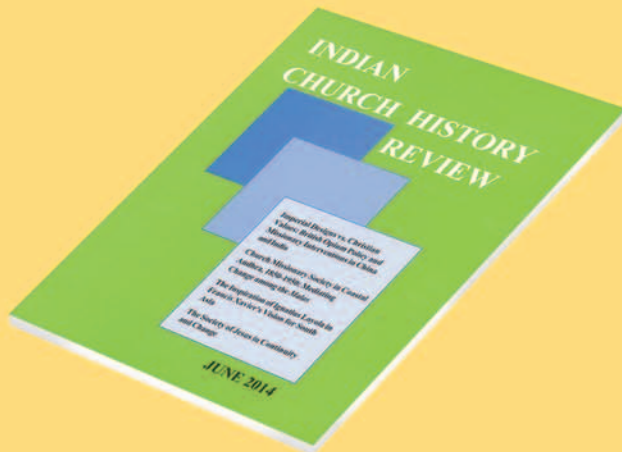
land and laid foundation for “a new heaven and a new earth” to dawn upon. This was reinforced by the work of the missionaries and their successors in subsequent centuries and especially, the contribution made during the 19th and 20th centuries was a turning point to the development of Kerala Society.

The presentations, on subject based Christian contribution to Kerala society are listed in the programme and therefore, I confined myself to the general observations on the theme of the seminar. I am sure, that the 2 day deliberations on this topic would enrich our thought process to understand the missionary zeal and enthusiasm; the self denying and self sacrificing mission adventures made by the missionary leaders, for the cause of all round development of the Kerala society in addition to preparing them with the Gospel for “the world to come”. Fr.Mathias Mundadan who went ahead of us to join the rank and file of these leaders would continue to enthuse us to make a difference in the lives of the least of the brethren of the Kerala society. The church history, which is the history of the faith journey of the people that would continue to inspire the new generation leaders towards that goal.

I thank Fr.Thottakkara, Prof.Manechery and other key functionaries responsible for this programme. May God bless us and grant continued peace to the soul of Fr.Mathias Mundadan.

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and President - CHAI

A note from the National Treasurer Dr. Francis Thonippara CMI



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