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# Eco News Bulletin

NOVEMBER 2009

(An occasional publication of The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee)

## CSI honoured with International Eco- Award



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) has honoured the Church of South India by awarding a Certificate in recognition of its long term commitment to protect the living planet. The award was presented by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, at a public function held at Windsor Castle, England, on 3 November 2009, in the presence of Prince Philip and other distinguished guests. On behalf of the Rt. Rev. Thomas Samuel, Chairman of the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee, the award was received by Dr. Philip John who is now in England on a teaching assignment. He is the son of the Rev. Prof. M. C. John, a former Principal of the CMS College, Kottayam.



## MESSAGES OF APPRECIATION

- Congratulation for the great achievement. The CSI has made it possible as a faith based community's mission agenda of caring the planet.

**R. Christopher Rajkumar**

*Secretary, Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation, NCCI*

- Read about the CSI winning the International Environment Conservation Award. Congratulations.

**Samuel Abraham**

*Asst. Editor, Frontline*

- Congratulations! May God's blessings be with you always.

**Dr. Asok Dyalchand**

*Director, Institute for Health Management, Pachod*

- Congrats ! CSI deserves this. Thanks for sharing this good news.

**Dr Sudip Mitra**

*Asst. Professor, School of Environmental Sciences,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University*

- Congratulations. Keep up the good work. God bless you.

**Rt. Rev. Dr. George Ninan, USA**

- Our most heartfelt congratulations. Sure, this must have given proud moments for you and your team. When recognition comes from reputed organizations like ARC & UNDP, it will have the power to propel anyone involved to achieve greater things.

**Santhosh**

*Centre for Science & Environment, Delhi.*

- Yes, your effort is recognized. If you fall in love with Nature, she will ceratinly reward you and will never desert you! Congratulations!

**Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph**

*Former Director of ECC, Bangalore*

- Congratulations. It is really a great achievement to get such a recognition of initiatives and efforts towards nature conservation.

**Renjan Mathew Varghese**

*State Director, WWF -India.*

- Congratulations! All appreciation for your commendable work and it is a great honour to the Church, under your able leadership.

**Rev. Dr. C. Vasantha Rao**

*Principal, Andhra Christian Theological College*

- Congratulations on receiving the award. It is a great recognition and acknowledgement of what the CSI Ecological Committee is doing. God bless you and continue your good efforts.

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Surya Prakash**

*Bishop of CSI Karimnagar Diocese*

- Hearty congratulations to Principal Mathew Koshy and also to the Church. May the Lord enable you to carry out a greater service in the days ahead.

**Mar Theodosius**

- Thank you for informing me the great news of the UNDP and ACR award to CSI. It is indeed a signal honour and especially for you and the Commission. Please convey my warmest congratulations to all of them, especially to Bishop Thomas Samuel.

**John Sale, UK**

- Hearty congratulations. I deeply appreciate the hard work that you have put in.

**Prof. Mammen Varkey**

*Editor, People's Reporter*

- Congratulations for UNDP Award. It is on the recognition that under your leadership, the world has felt the changes you've brought in, in making this planet a safer place for humanity and for all creatures to live in.

**Mar Atsongchanger**

*Secretary-Communication & Relations, NCCI*

- Congratulations. May God continue to guide you in all your noble efforts.

**Dr. Babu Paul**

*Former Addl. Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala*



# Editorial

This is one of the historic moments of our Church. The UNDP -ARC has honoured the ecological contributions and long term commitment of the CSI in protecting the life on this planet, by giving an Award. We received the Award on 3rd November from Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, in the presence of Prince Philip, at a function organized at Windsor Castle, London. We are thankful to UNDP and ARC for the signal honour bestowed upon us. We consider this as a reward for our team work, and we would like to thank all the CSI Bishops and SECC members for working together as a well-knit team .

The CSI Synod instituted a Committee for ecological concerns, in 1992. Later, the CSI incorporated ecological concerns in its Constitution. The Church of South India recognizes that God's mission has various dimensions. The Constitution of the CSI clearly specifies the mission of the Church- Proclamation of the Gospel, Nurturing the people of God, Service, Establishing justice in society and Stewardship of creation. Perhaps, this is the only Church in India that has specifically mentioned the ecological concerns in the Constitution itself. Also we have a Committee at the synod level for ecological concerns. In the constitution, we read: " The Church seeks to create awareness among all people about environmental and ecological concerns and thereby care for God's creation. It endeavours to encourage people to refrain from excessive exploitation of Nature's resources and to strive to keep the earth a habitable place for the present as well as the future generations."

The CSI SECC has already published four books-Reconciling with Nature, God is Green, Eco- Vision and Mission and A Christian response to ecological crisis. 'Reconciling with Nature' has been translated into Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. We are planning to publish soon another book, 100 eco-bible studies. In order to give wide publicity for eco-theological concerns, we instituted Green Diocese, Green Parish and Green School awards. The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee has joined with ARC-UN seven year plan in addressing the issues related to Environment and Climate Change. It has already presented a paper for discussion at the Diocesan Ecological Committees and we request all the dioceses to take up the seven-year plan seriously.

By joining hands with Christians around the world we can have a greater impact in order to stop the destruction of God's creation and of human livelihoods.

The CSI SECC calls for continued awareness building and theological reflection in our congregations on a new cosmological vision of life and eco-justice through study and action, and through the production and dissemination of relevant theological and biblical study materials.

**Rt. Rev. Thomas Samuel**  
*Chairman*

**Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad**  
*Convener*

## *Officers of the CSI*

**Moderator : Most Rev. Dr. J.W.Gladstone, Dy. Moderator : Rt. Rev. Dr. Christopher Asir,**  
**Gen. Secretary : Rev. Dr. Moses Jayakumar, Treasurer : Mr. T. Devasahayam.**

### *The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee*

**Chairman : Rt. Rev. Thomas Samuel, Convener : Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad.**



### Mission Statement

*The Church of South India Ecological Concerns Committee seeks to create awareness among all people about environmental and ecological concerns and thereby care for God's creation. It endeavours to encourage people to refrain from abuse of Nature's resources and to strive to keep the earth a habitable place for all. We encourage parishes to incorporate ecological concerns in their order of worship and include both advocacy and direct action for social justice and the integrity of creation in missional activities. We encourage the active participation of all people of good will through prayer, partnership, and involvement, which will help humanity to return to an eco-friendly life style.*

## Let the bells ring, the conch shells, drums and gongs sound 350 times for climate justice!

From time immemorial, musical instruments like bells and drums have been used to warn people of imminent danger and also to call people to religious service, marking important moments in worship.

**Sunday, 13 December 2009**, marks the climax of the talks at the UN climate negotiations in Copenhagen, Denmark.

At 3 p.m. – Marking the end of a high profile ecumenical celebration at the Lutheran Cathedral in Copenhagen, the churches in Denmark will ring their bells, and Christians around the world are invited to echo the chimes by sounding their own bells, shells, drums, gongs or horns 350 times.

We envisage a chain of chimes and prayers stretching in a timeline from the Fiji Islands in the South Pacific – where the day first begins and where the effects of climate change are already felt today – to northern Europe and across the globe.

### Why 350 times?

It refers to 350 ppm (parts per million) which is the safe upper limit for CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere, according to leading scientists. In human history until about 200 years ago, our atmosphere contained 275 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub>, but now the concentration stands at 390 ppm. Unless we are able to rapidly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels again, we risk reaching tipping points and irreversible impacts such as the melting of the Greenland ice sheet and major methane releases from increased permafrost melt.

## What is global warming and what's the problem ?

Global warming is happening faster than ever and humans are responsible. It is caused by releasing what are called 'greenhouse gases' into the atmosphere. The most common among them is carbon dioxide. Many of the activities we do every day (like turning the lights on, cooking food, or heating or cooling our homes) rely on energy sources like coal and oil that emit carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases. This is a major problem because global warming destabilizes the delicate balance that makes life on this planet possible. Just a few degrees in temperature can completely change the world as we know it, and threaten the lives of millions of people around the world. But don't give up hope! You can help stop global warming by taking action here at [350.org](http://350.org).

### And what does this number 350 mean?

It is the number that is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide—measured in “parts per million”- in our atmosphere. 350 ppm is the number humanity needs to get back to as soon as possible to avoid runaway climate change.

**If we are already past 350, are we all doomed?**

No. We're like the patient that goes to the doctor and learns he's overweight, or his cholesterol is too high. He doesn't die immediately—but until he changes his lifestyle and gets back down to the safe zone, he's at more risk for heart attack or stroke. The planet is in its danger zone because we've poured too much carbon into the atmosphere, and we're starting to see signs of real trouble: melting ice caps, rapidly spreading drought. We need to scramble back as quickly as we can to safety.

**How do we create the political change to steer towards 350?**

We need an international agreement to reduce carbon emissions fast, and 2009 might be our best shot.

The United Nations is working on a global climate treaty, which is supposed to be completed in December 2009 at a conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. But the current plans for the treaty are too weak to get us back to safety. This treaty needs to put a high enough price on carbon that we stop using so much. It also needs to ensure poor countries a fair chance to develop.

This year, we can create a grassroots movement connected by the web and active all over the world.

If this global movement succeeds, we can get the world on track to get back to 350 and back to climate safety. It won't be easy, that's why we need all the help we can get.

**Will this thing work? Will world leaders listen?**

Only if we are loud enough.

If we can make this number known across the planet, that mere fact will exert some real pressure on negotiators. We need people to understand that 350 marks either success or failure for these climate negotiations. It's not an easy fight—the other side has the power of the fossil fuel industry. But we think the voice of ordinary people will be heard, if it's loud enough. That's all of our job—to make enough noise that we can't be easily ignored.

**Where did this number 350 come from?**

Dr. James Hansen, of NASA, the United States' space agency, has been researching global warming longer than just about anyone else. He was the first to publicly testify before the U.S. Congress, in June 1988, that global warming was real. He and his colleagues have used both real-world observation, computer simulation, and mountains of data about ancient climates to calculate what constitutes dangerous quantities of carbon in the atmosphere. The

Bush Administration had tried to keep Hansen and his team from speaking publicly, but their analysis has been widely praised by other scientists, and by experts like Nobel Prize winner Al Gore.

**Is not America the biggest source of the problem? What about China and India?**

Yes—America has been producing more CO<sub>2</sub> than any other country, and leads the industrialized world in per capita emissions. Even though China now produces as much CO<sub>2</sub> annually, the US still produces many times more carbon per person than China, India, and most other countries. And America has blocked meaningful international action for many years. That's why many of us at 350.org have worked hard to change U.S. policy—we staged more than 2,000 demonstrations in all 50 States in 2007, and helped spur the Congress to pass the first real laws to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. Now we need help from around the world to persuade both the US and the UN to continue the process.

China and India and the rest of the developing world need to be involved. But since *per capita* they use far less energy than the West, and have been doing so for much shorter periods of time, and are using fossil fuels to pull people out of poverty, their involvement needs to be different. The West is going to use some tiny percentage of the wealth it built up filling the atmosphere with carbon to transfer technology, north to south so that these countries can meet their legitimate development needs without burning all their coal.

**Do you measure 350 in CO<sub>2</sub> or CO<sub>2e</sub>?**

First, let us define the term: CO<sub>2e</sub> is a calculation used by climate scientists to account for other greenhouse gases—like methane—that contribute climate change. It converts those gases to “equivalent carbon dioxide,” and is often used by scientists and policy makers to offer a single metric that can be used for all greenhouse gases.

The initial catalyst for the 350 campaign was James Hansen's landmark paper, “Target CO<sub>2</sub>: Where should humanity aim?” In this paper, Dr. Hansen identifies 350 ppm as the upper boundary for CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations — not CO<sub>2e</sub>.

Hansen focussed on CO<sub>2</sub> as the key greenhouse gas because it is the most prevalent in our atmosphere, has the longest life-cycle, meaning we'll be dealing with the consequences of our actions today for over 100 years, and it is most integrated into industrial economies. In other words, cutting CO<sub>2</sub> is the key challenge in combatting global warming, and will be the key feature of any international climate treaty.

Since 350.org. formed a year ago, two things have led 350 supporters to take other greenhouse gases into account and start seeing 350 ppm in terms of CO<sub>2</sub>. First, we've seen the impacts of climate change happening even more quickly than predicted. Just in 2009 there have been increased floods across south-east Asia, a key ice bridge in the arctic melted years ahead of schedule, and places like Australia continue to be ravaged by drought.

Scientists are increasingly focussed on the role of potent, short-term greenhouse gases, such as Methane (which is 25 times as potent as CO<sub>2</sub> — though there's far less of it). As we think about how to combat climate change in the short term, taking these gases into account makes more and more sense.

Second, as the 350 movement has grown more and more of the groups involved, particularly groups in developing countries, do work that focuses on greenhouse gases other than CO<sub>2</sub>. These include large scale meat production or improper waste management, both leading sources of methane, industrial production of CFCs and other dangerous chemical pollutants, and more. Many of these non-carbon pollution sources have profound local impacts on humans and the environment, as well as being contributors to climate change.

These considerations have led 350.org to see the 350 ppm target not only in terms of CO<sub>2</sub>, but CO<sub>2e</sub>. On a technical level, this becomes a more ambitious target, incorporating other greenhouse gases. On a practical level, it signifies the same priorities 350 has embodied all along. Any climate target lower than where we are right now—be it 350 CO<sub>2e</sub>, 350 CO<sub>2</sub>, or anything else—represents a transformative shift in how the world operates. Targets of 350 CO<sub>2</sub> and 350 CO<sub>2e</sub>—both greenhouse gas concentrations significantly lower than current levels—have the same essential policy implications: we will STOP burning coal and other fossil fuel and we will START rolling out clean energy and other sustainable development strategies around the world.

Either way you slice it, in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> or CO<sub>2e</sub>, 350 is the mark of a completely new direction—and the movement that will get us there.

## OUR PROGRAMMES

Green Diocese Awards, Green Parish Awards, Green School Awards, Green Home Awards, Diocesan Ecological Convention, Rain Water Harvesting, Interactive Eco- Bible Study Programme, Environmental Day Celebrations and Rally, Ecological Sunday, Resource Persons' Training Camp, Avoiding Throw away Plastics, Eco training programme during VBS, Organic farming, Planting of Trees, Pilgrimage, Regional Conferences, Parish level Eco Committees, District/Area level work, Eco Clubs in Schools., Eco-literature, Eco-church Architecture, Vegetable Garden, Hand book, Eco-Management in Schools and Churches

## ECO-JUSTICE and ECOLOGICAL DEBT

**The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches adopted a Statement on eco-justice and ecological debt on 2 Sep. 2009. The Statement proposes that Christians have a deep moral obligation to promote ecological justice by addressing our debts to people most affected by ecological destruction and to the earth itself. The statement addresses ecological debt and includes hard economic calculations as well as biblical, spiritual, cultural and social dimensions of indebtedness.**

The Statement identifies the current unprecedented ecological crises as being created by humans, caused especially by the agro-industrial-economic complex and the culture of the North, characterized by the consumerist lifestyle and the view of development as commensurate with exploitation of the earth's so-called "natural resources". Churches are being called upon to oppose with their prophetic voices such labeling of the holy creation as mere "natural resources".

The statement points out that it is a debt owed primarily by industrialized countries in the North to countries of the South on account of historical and current resource-plundering, environment.

In its call for action the statement urges WCC member churches to intervene with their governments to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adopt a fair and binding deal at the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Additionally the statement calls upon the international community to ensure the transfer of financial resources to countries of the south to refrain from oil drilling in fragile environments. Further on, the statement demands the cancellation of the illegitimate financial debts of the southern countries, especially for the poorest nations as part of social and ecological compensation.

In a hearing on "ecological debt" during the WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva, Dr Maria Sumire Conde from the Quechua community of Peru shared some ways that the global South has been victimized by greed and unfair use of its resources. In the case of Peru, Sumire said mining has had particularly devastating

effects, such as relocation, illness, polluted water, and decreasing biodiversity.

The concept of ecological debt has been shaped to measure the real cost that policies of expansion and globalization have had on developing nations, a debt that some say industrialized nations should repay. Dr Joan Martinez Alier, a professor from Spain, said climate change, unequal trade, “bio-piracy”, exports of toxic waste and other factors have added to the imbalance, which he called “a kind of war against people around the world, a kind of aggression.”

Martinez went on saying: “I know these are strong words, but this is true.” He beseeched those present, at the very least not to increase the existing ecological debt any further.

The WCC president from Latin America, Rev. Dr Ofelia Ortega of Cuba, said ecological debt was a spiritual issue, not just a moral one. **The Bible is an ecological treatise from beginning to end**, Ortega said. She described care for creation as an “axis” that runs through the word of God. **The pastoral work in our churches must be radically ecological**, she said.

## Statement on eco-justice and ecological debt

The public issues committee proposes that the Central Committee adopt the following statement on eco-justice and ecological debt:

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12)

- The era of “unlimited consumption” has reached its limits. The era of unlimited profit and compensation for the few must also come to an end. Based on a series of ecumenical consultations and incorporating the perspectives of many churches, this statement proposes the recognition and application of a concept that expresses a deep moral obligation to promote ecological justice by addressing our debts to peoples most affected by ecological destruction and to the earth itself. It begins with expressing gratitude to God, whose providential care is manifested in all God’s creation and the renewal of the earth for all species. Ecological debt includes hard economic calculations as well as incalculable biblical, spiritual, cultural and social dimensions of indebtedness.

- The earth and all of its inhabitants are currently

facing an unprecedented ecological crisis, bringing us to the brink of mass suffering and destruction for many. The crisis is human-induced, caused especially by the agro-industrial-economic complex and culture of the global North, which is characterized by the consumerist lifestyles of the elites of the developed and developing worlds and the view that development is commensurate with exploitation of the earth’s “natural resources”. What is being labeled and co-modified, as “natural resources” is all of creation – a sacred reality that ought not to be co-modified. Yet the Northern agro-industrial-economic complex, especially in the current era of market globalization, has used human labour and resourcefulness, as well as the properties of other life forms, to produce wealth and comfort for a few at the expense of the survival of others and their dignity.

- Churches have been complicit in this history through their own consumption patterns and through perpetuating a theology of human rule over the earth. The Christian perspective that has valued humanity over the rest of creation has served to justify the exploitation of parts of the earth community. Yet, human existence is utterly dependent on a healthy functioning earth system. Humanity cannot manage creation. Humanity can only manage their own behaviour to keep it within the bounds of earth’s sustenance. Both the human population and the human economy cannot grow much more without irreversibly endangering the survival of other life forms. Such a radical view calls for a theology of humility and a commitment on the part of the churches to learn from environmental ethics and faith traditions that have a deeper sense of an inclusive community.

- The Church’s strength lies in its prophetic witness to proclaim God’s love for the whole world and to denounce the philosophy of domination that threatens the manifestation of God’s love. The biblical prophets had long ago deduced the intrinsic connection between ecological crises and socio-economic injustice, railing against the elites of their day for the exploitation of peoples and the destruction of eco-systems (Jeremiah 14: 2-7, Isaiah 23: 1-24 and Revelation 22). Based on Jesus’ commandment of love, as expressed in his life and parables, the World Council of Churches must broaden its understanding of justice and the boundaries of who our neighbours are. For many years, the WCC has called for the cancellation of illegitimate external financial debts claimed from countries of the South based on the biblical notion of jubilee (Leviticus 23). It has taken a step further in addressing the ecological dimension of economic relationships.

- Beginning with the articulation of the ideas of “limits to growth” in a Church and Society consultation held in



Bucharest in 1974 and “sustainable societies” at the 1975 Nairobi assembly, the WCC has been working deeply on ecological justice for over three decades. At the 1998 Harare assembly, the harmful impacts of globalization on people and the environment came to the fore through the Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE) process, leading to the ongoing study process on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. As an offshoot of these important ecumenical reflections and actions, the WCC, in partnership with churches and civil society organizations in Southern Africa, India, Ecuador, Canada and Sweden, initiated work on ecological debt in 2002.

- Ecological debt refers to damage caused over time to ecosystems, places and peoples through production and consumption patterns; and the exploitation of ecosystems at the expense of the equitable rights of other countries, communities or individuals. It is primarily the debt owed by industrialized countries in the North to countries of the South on account of historical and current resource plundering, environmental degradation and the disproportionate appropriation of ecological space to dump greenhouse gases (GHGs) and toxic wastes. It is also the debt owed by economically and politically powerful national elites to marginalized citizens; the debt owed by current generations of humanity to future generations; and, on a more cosmic scale, the debt owed by humankind to other life forms and the planet. It includes social damages such as the disintegration of indigenous and other communities.

- Grounded on an overriding priority for the impoverished and a deep moral responsibility to rectify injustices, ecological debt lenses reveal that it is the global South who is the principal ecological creditor while the global North is the principal ecological debtor. The ecological debt of the global North arises from various causal mechanisms whose impact has been intensified in the current economic crisis.

- Under the current international financial architecture, countries of the South are pressured through conditions for loans as well as multilateral and bilateral trade and investment agreements to pursue export-oriented and resource-intensive growth strategies. Ultimately it fails to account for the costs of erosion of ecosystems and increasing pollution. Many mega-development projects (e.g. dams) in countries of the South are financed through foreign lending by international financial institutions in collaboration with undemocratic and corrupt local leaders and elites, without the informed consent of local inhabitants and with little consideration of the projects’ ecological and social consequences.

Moreover, industrialized Northern countries make disproportionate use of ecological space without adequate compensation, reparation or restitution. Northern countries’ ecological footprint (an approximate measurement of human impacts on the environment) presently averages 6.4 ha/person. This is more than six times heavier than the footprint of Southern countries at an average of 0.8 ha/person.

- Human-induced climate change heightens the relationship of North-South inequity even further. Industrialized countries are mainly responsible for GHG emissions causing climate change (though emerging economies in the South are becoming major contributors to global GHG emissions in absolute terms). Yet, research indicates that the South will bear a bigger burden of the adverse effects of climate change including the displacement of people living in low-lying coastal areas and small island states; the loss of sources of livelihood, food insecurity, reduced access to water and forced migration.

- In the light of Biblical teaching (cf. Matthew 6,12), we pray for repentance and forgiveness, but we also call for the recognition, repayment and restitution of ecological debt in various ways, including non-market ways of compensation and reparation, that go beyond the market’s limited ability to measure and distribute.

- The Central Committee of the WCC recognizes the need for a drastic transformation at all levels in life and society in order to end the ecological indebtedness and restoring right relationships between peoples and between people and the earth. This warrants a re-ordering of economic paradigms from consumerist, exploitive models to models that are respectful of localized economies, indigenous cultures and spiritualities, the earth’s reproductive limits, as well as the right of other life forms to blossom. And this begins with the recognition of ecological debt.

While affirming the role of churches to play a critical role in lifting up alternative practices, as well as building the necessary political will and moral courage to effect urgent transformations, the central committee of the WCC meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 26 August - 2 September 2009:

- Calls upon WCC member churches to urge Northern governments, institutions and corporations to take initiatives to drastically reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within and beyond the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which stipulates the principles of historical responsibility and “common, but differentiated responsibilities” (CDR), according to the fixed timelines

set out by the UNFCCC report of 2007.

- Urges WCC member churches to call their governments to adopt a fair and binding deal, in order to bring the CO<sub>2</sub> levels down to less than 350 parts per million (ppm), at the Conference of Parties (COP 15) of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December 2009, based on climate justice principles, which include effective support to vulnerable communities to adapt to the consequences of climate change through adaptation funds and technology transfer.
- Calls upon the international community to ensure the transfer of financial resources to countries of the South to keep petroleum in the ground in fragile environments and preserve other natural resources as well as to pay for the costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation based on tools such as the Greenhouse Development Rights (GDR) Framework.
- Demands the cancellation of the illegitimate financial debts of Southern countries, most urgently for the poorest nations, as part of social and ecological compensations, not as official development assistance.
- Recommends that WCC member churches learn from the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, women, peasant and forest communities who point to alternative ways of thinking and living within creation, especially as these societies often emphasize the value of relationships, of caring and sharing, as well as practice traditional, ecologically respectful forms of production and consumption.
- Encourages and supports WCC member churches in their advocacy campaigns around ecological debt and climate change, mindful of the unity of God's creation and of the need for collaborative working between Southern and Northern nations. Specifically supports the activities of churches in countries that are suffering from climate change.
- Calls for continued awareness-building and theological reflection among congregations and seminary students on a new cosmological vision of life, eco-justice and ecological debt through study and action, deeper ecumenical and inter-faith formation, and through the production and dissemination of relevant theological and biblical study materials.
- Urges WCC member churches and church institutions to conduct ecological debt audits in partnership with civil society, including self-assessment of their own consumption patterns. Specifically, the WCC should establish a mechanism to provide for recompense of ecological debt incurred by its gatherings, and to collect positive

examples of ecological debt recognition, prevention, mitigation, compensation, reparation and restitution in partnership with civil society groups and movements.

- Calls for deepening dialogue on ecological debt and the building of alliances with ecumenical, religious, economic and political actors and between the churches in Southern and Northern countries.
- Stresses the importance of accompanying ongoing struggles and strategically linking and supporting the efforts of peasant, women's, youth and indigenous peoples' movements through the World Social Forum and other avenues to design alternative compensation proposals, as well as to avoid amassing more ecological debt.
- Calls upon WCC member churches through their advocacy work to encourage their governments to work for the recognition of the claims of ecological debt, including the cancellation of illegitimate financial debts.
- Calls upon WCC member churches to deepen their campaigns on climate change by including climate debt and advocating for its repayment by applying the ecological debt framework.
- Calls upon WCC member churches to advocate for corporate social accountability within international and national legal frameworks and to challenge corporations and international financial institutions to include environmental liabilities in their accounts and to take responsibility for the policies that have caused ecological destruction.
- Calls upon WCC member churches to support community-based sustainable economic initiatives, such as producer cooperatives, community land trusts and bio-regional food distributions.
- Encourages churches all over the world to continue praying for the whole of creation.

### BBC News

(online network: 26 February 1999)

*"Mixing genetic material from species that cannot breed naturally, takes us into areas that should be left to God. We should not be meddling with the building blocks of life in this way."*

*Prince Charles of England*

## Protest against the decision of GEAC on Bt Brinjal

The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee strongly protests against the decision of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), in approving the commercial cultivation of genetically modified Bt brinjal. The CSI SECC has the opinion that the GEAC had “mindlessly” gone ahead and approved Bt brinjal even when informed scientists and citizens of the country raised serious concerns on the nature of the safety studies.

The church cannot be indifferent to issues that vitally affect life on this planet and the integrity of creation. Its response to the recommendation of the GEAC permitting the commercial cultivation of Bt. Brinjal must be consistent with its general position on Genetic Engineering in agriculture. By unnaturally intervening into the order of creation, we are not only playing God, but also destroying the integrity of God’s creation, and meddling with biodiversity and the life-sustaining interdependence among species. *“Mixing genetic material from species that cannot breed naturally, takes us into areas that should be left to God. We should not be meddling with the building blocks of life in this way.”* (Prince Charles, quoted in the BBC News, Online Network: 26 February 1999)

It is obvious that the introduction of Bt Brinjal would contaminate the large number of traditional Brinjal varieties available to us, particularly those with unique medicinal properties. This would also shift the control of seeds from the farmers to profit hungry corporations that have already established virtual monopoly over seeds through the new patent regime. As a nation and communities, what is at stake is not only our food security but also our food sovereignty. The inevitable consequences would be the disempowerment of small and marginal farmers, and their displacement by aggressive models of corporatized agriculture.

This is only the beginning. The flood gates are opening. Bt Brinjal is a test case that must not go unchallenged. Several more food crops are under various stages of field trials. GEAC clearances are in the offing for crops like cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, corn/maize, ground nut, bhindi/okra, potato, rice, tomato, mustard and sorghum.

Insertion of genes into the genome of a particular organism can result in unintended effects. The native genes of the crop could be affected in unpredictable ways. Unknown toxic/allergic components could be generated. The available tests look only for known toxic elements. Scientists of all persuasions warn us that Genetically Modified foods can have unforeseen negative consequences on the health of animals and human beings. Such effects will elude the conventional test regimen. The GEAC clearances are hinged on the scientific evidence provided by seed companies. This mode of determining

the bio-safety of GE crops is unacceptable and unethical, when evidences to the contrary keep coming from the scientific community. The voices of caution may not be the establishment mandate. True science is not based on majority views but on commitment to truth and objectivity. Dissenting voices in the scientific establishment need to be heard while dealing with potentially hazardous technology.

Acknowledging the position of the World Council of Churches and the Courts of many civilized nations, we appeal to the government to apply the precautionary principle in the introduction of GE crops and not to be influenced by corporate entities that strive to establish their monopoly on every aspect of agriculture. It is important to decide whether the introduction of Bt. Brinjal serves the farming community in India or the seed corporations. There must be clarity about how the problem has been framed and who has done it and who the ultimate beneficiaries are. We must also know whether there are better, safer and more viable solutions. The adoption of a new technology calls for a process of deep interrogation, especially when there are apprehensions on potential hazards.

While science and technology have immense potential to further the cause of life, we also recognize that they can also be used to destroy life in the pursuit of profit and power. It is the inalienable obligation of a responsible government to ensure that the people are not subjected, even unwittingly, to “bio error or bio terror”.

Joining the Justice, Peace and Creation Concerns of the World Council of Churches we affirm the following statements from the AGAPE document (3:3):

*“We believe that God’s economy of solidarity and justice for the household of creation includes the promise that the people of the world have the right to produce their own food and control the resources belonging to their livelihoods, including biodiversity. It is therefore the right and responsibility of governments to support the livelihoods of small farmers in the South and in the North. It is their right to refuse the demands of agribusiness that seek to control every aspect of the cycle of life. Such an approach requires respect for indigenous spiritual relationships to land and the bounties of mother Earth.”*

Signed by

- 1) The Rt. Rev. Thomas Samuel,**  
*Chairman, CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee*
- 2) Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad,**  
*Convener, CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee*

## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

### KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

As per the Almanac of the CSI and the request made by the convener of the Synod Ecological Concerns Committee, circulars had been issued to all the Churches / Institutions in the Diocese to celebrate the Environmental Sunday and requested to invite specialists on the subject to speak and bring awareness among all people about environmental and ecological concerns. The main topic will be Problems and challenges faced by the Planet, viz, Global Warming, environment, locally and globally.

The following Churches and Institutions in the Diocese celebrated Environmental Sunday.

**All Saints' Church, Dharwad :** Environmental Sunday was celebrated by inviting a Scientist and 25 Saplings were planted and as a token of the work of Vasantha Vana ( Church Garden ), varieties of flower plants were planted.

**CSI Church, Siraguppa :** Special prayers were offered on the subject. The Church was fully covered with plants to bring awareness among the congregation members. Skit and Drama were conducted for Sunday School children.

**CSI Church, Shiralkoppa :** After the Divine worship the guest speaker spoke about the environment, planting of trees, flower plants were carried out in the Church campus, congregation members decided to celebrate the same in their home garden along with the neighbors

**CSI Church, Kanavalli :** As per the Almanac Sunday worship was conducted, Plantation and other activities were held with the participation of congregation members.

**CSI Hebich Memorial Church, Dharwad :** Environmental Sunday was celebrated. An eminent speaker on the subject was invited and he gave the message. After the Church service, the elders, Women's fellowship members and Sunday School Teachers gathered and Plantation of saplings and cleaning the campus took place.

**Basel Mission Boys' high School, Dharwad:**  
To bring general awareness among the school children

a workshop was conducted by inviting a speaker. Specially the global warming, rise and fall in temperature due to the shortage of rainfall experienced and to avoid this, plantation and protection of trees was emphasized.

**Basel Mission EM High School, Dharwad :** Environmental day was observed with great concern, Teachers of the Civic club actively celebrated the day by having a seminar to bring awareness. Main topic was environmental pollution and how to preserve plants, water and pure air for the future generation. The students performed the skit "Hasiru Mara". The Civic Club members planted trees in the school campus and took oath "each one of them would plant at least two trees every year and save this world from pollution.

**Basel Mission Girls' High School, Dharwad :** Environmental day was celebrated by the teachers and students. Information was given to the students with regard to pollution – Air, water, Soil, Noise-how it is caused and how it is prevented, importance of plants and how they balance the Nature and Vanamahotsava was carried out.

**London Mission Primary School, Bellary:** Environmental day was observed by inviting a senior Professor. Information was given to the students about Nature, its protection and cleanliness. Planting of trees in the school campus was conducted. Painting competition was held by the promotion of adventure sports and nature awareness, distributed pen and pencil to the students.

**CSI Girls' Home, Bellary :** Environmental day was observed and we explained to the hostel children how the Lord created environment love and importance of it. If we neglect conservation, its consequences were brought to the notice of the students and later planted 120 plants in the hostel campus.

**KNH Girls' Hostel, Hubli:** Environmental day was observed. The speaker spoke on the theme 'God needs you to save the planet'. Plantation of tree saplings were conducted. Children enacted skit on pollution, Air pollution, Water Pollution, Land Pollution, Sound Pollution. Plastics should be separately dumped in the garbage. Cleanliness to be maintained in our surroundings. Cutting the trees will affect the rain. Wastage of water and petrol should be avoided. Prayers were offered for the environment, global warming and for the future life of humanity in this planet.

*Rev. Samuel S. Sakkari*

**KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE**

Under the guidance of our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. P. Surya Prakash, we have taken up various Eco – awareness programmes in our Diocese enthusiastically for the past two years .

- 1) We have taken up tree plantation on National Eco-Day, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009, in Karimnagar. The participation of our Bishop was encouraging .
- 2) In association with Lions Club – Parakal , our church congregation took part in eco – awareness rally on National Eco – day, which was followed by tree planting.
- 3) Under the B.D.M Project, we planted mango trees in Aler Church compound.
- 4) Our tri – monthly Diocesan Magazine “ The Thejassu” came out in the month Jan – April 2009, in which our eco – news was published.
- 5) Copies of eco – News bulletin for March 2009, were distributed to all the presbyters in the Diocese and all the institution heads . Inspired by the news, all the parish pastorats and institutions are taking up various plantation programmes in our Diocese .

*Convener*

**EAST KERALA DIOCESE**

We celebrated the Environment Protection week in connection with World Environment Day. Vagamon in Idukki district was selected as the place for special programme in this connection . Vagamon street and its surroundings were cleaned by Green Volunteers. Placards were displayed with slogans of eco – conservation . Sapling of fruit trees were planted . Rt. Rev . Dr. K.G. Daniel inaugurated the awareness seminar on June 14.S eventy five youth from the Diocese participated in the programme. Shri. Babu Sebastian, an environmental activist, was the resource person.

Observed Environment Sunday on June 14 in all Churches in the Diocese. The Lessons and message for worship were on Nature preservation .

**Nature Study Camp in Forest**

The students and teachers of the Industrial Training Centre of the Diocese attended a nature study camp conducted in association with the Forest Department in Idukki district on January 26, 2009. Local people and youth from the Diocese also participated. Topics for study were global warming and forest conservation. Trecking into the interior of the forest was very much interesting and informative .

The committee gratefully acknowledge the support of the Diocesan Bishop, clergymen, local people, youth and Diocesan Social Board in all the activities of eco – concern. Yet we have much to venture as stewards of creation.

*Prof. Anieamma Abraham*

**MADHYA KERALA DIOCESE**

The programmes were arranged with the wholehearted support and involvement of the Bishop, Executive Committee and the Ecological Committee.

April was the month when we launched the ecological programmes in our Diocese for the year 2009- 10

We started with a retreat programme for the pastors and the representatives of each church to make them aware of the programme .

The first meeting was conducted at the Kottayam Retreat Centre . It was a well attended programme where the resource persons explained in detail the changes taking place in the Environment because of human intervention to create a life of luxury. This has affected the climate . They explained how climate changes affect the Flora and Fauna and this in turn causes a chain reaction on human life.

On May 22, an eco-tour was conducted to Vagamon , a hill station on the Western Ghats of Kerala . Under the leadership of the Bishop and other committee members , the tour was organized to focus attention on the need to preserve trees and forest and the scenic beauty of the rolling hills and grassland.

We observed June 7 as Environment Sunday. This was mainly to involve the members of the parish to encourage them to plant trees and save rainwater through rainwater harvest methods . This was made possible through deputation sermons and demonstration after the church service. The speakers were briefed on the subject and sermon notes were distributed before they made the visit to the parish .

To make the programme more effective it was decided by the ecological committee to bring together the representatives of the Diocesan school teachers for a practical awareness programme on ecological preservation. This meeting was held at Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara on 24 July 2009.

We expect that the people will receive our programme in the right sprit, so that we can leave the world as a better place for the future generation

*Rev. Alexander Cherian*

**KANYAKUMARI DIOCESE**

The Ecological Concerns Committee of the CSI Kanyakumari Diocese conducted an "Environmental Awareness Programme on Global Warming" on February 03, 2009 at the CSI Community Hall, Karungal, Kanyakumari District. Already a detailed report of the above programme was published in the eco – News bulletin, March 2009.

Future Plan

- a) Decided to conduct Environmental awareness programme concentrating on "Global climate change and Rain Water Harvest" in selected educational institutions and churches.
- b) Decided to deliver eco – spiritual messages in various churches.
- c) Decided to set apart one Sunday in October as Eco – Sunday in all Churches

**Dr. K Paul Raj**

**THOOTHUKUDI – NAZARETH DIOCESE**

The Church has to take care in safeguarding the Nature created by God. Taking this into consideration our Diocese has made awareness with the following programmes.

*Programme for our Diocesan Institution Students.*

The Global Warming and Climate Change Awareness Programme was conducted at the B.Ed. College, Sawyerpuram on 6 March 2009. 200 students participated and were enriched.

*Programme for the Youth Members*

The Diocesan Socio- Economic Board and Youth Department jointly organized this programme on 17 March 2009 at Tuticorin. The Youth representatives from all our Churches participated and tree planting programme was also convened at Thoothukudi on the same day.

*Programme for our church leaders & Heads of Institutions.*

We organized a Global Warming Awareness Programme for our church leaders and Heads of Institutions. This programme has held at Kovilpatti on 27 March 2009.

*Programme for pastors*

The Joint Seminar Programme for the Pastors of our Diocese and Tirunelveli Diocese was convened in April 2009 in the natural arena of

'COURTALAM'. 118 Pastors participated in the Seminar and it was helpful in providing the Church's involvement in protecting the nature.

**Convener**

**NANDYAL DIOCESE**

Nandyal Diocese is located in the Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh. It is a rural Diocese consisting of 13 deaneries and three High Schools, Seven Elementary Schools, two junior Colleges and a special School for the blind etc., Both the church and all these institutions promote to educate the members and the students regarding the global warming and its ill effects. The following programmes were conducted in this biennium by the Diocesan ecological concerns committee.

*Climate Change Project:*

The Diocese of Nandyal had started various possibilities on the climate change project. Last year we could provide a training programme for the teachers and Church leaders in Nandyal on 1 September 2008 with Mr Adharsh Wansay (Mithra Foundation, Bengaluru) as the resource person.

*Smokeless Chulas ( Stove):*

The Ecological Concerns Committee adopted two villages, namely Yalluru and Madduru for giving training to the people in the villages about smokeless Chulas and they have constructed a model Chula for a puffed rice unit.

*Solar LED Lamp assembling Unit:*

In our Diocesan skill training programme we have started Solar LED Lamp assembling unit and training programme for girls and boys. Now it is just started and will be developed further as a product unit.

*Through B.M.D. Project recycled paper:*

The Project produces recycled paper for teaching students and also for sale in this region. This is an eco – friendly scheme.

*Leaf paper plates and cups:*

Both at Nandyal and Kalasapadu, dry leaf plates are usually very popular. The Projects caters to the demand with new technology by mounting recycled paper producing plates and cups. The usage of these plates would reduce the usage of plastics which is a danger for the ecological imbalances.

*Planting coconut saplings through PROK:*

Nandyal Diocese is engaged in partnership with

Presbyterian Church, Republic of Korea. Every year in the month of June, the youth of Nandyal plant some coconut saplings in the villages of our Diocese. In June this year they planted 250 saplings in Chalimella, 140 saplings in Bhanumukkala and 320 saplings in Kothapalle.

*Sapling plants in the Holy Cross Girls High School, Nandyal:*

6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Standard students were formed as Eco Clubs and the planting of 100 saplings took place in the school premises on 16 November 2008.

*Sapling planted at the Deanery Level Youth Conference at Kalasapadu:*

The Youth treat at Kalasapadu which is pilgrim centre of our diocese where the deanery level Youth met and the diocese ecological committee gave the presentation on ill effects of the Global Warming and they have planted 50 saplings in the compound.

*Regional Ecological Concerns Conference, Nandyal:*

It was indeed a wonderful opportunity for the Diocese of Nandyal to host the first Regional Ecological Concerns conference under the leadership of our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. P. J. Lawrence. Around 35 members attended the conference from all over Andhra Pradesh. The one-day conference was held on 8 November 2008, and the theme was “Live, Let the Future Live”. The programme was inaugurated by Mrs. Shanthi Lawrence. The delegates participated very enthusiastically all through the conference. The resource person, the Rev. Paul Raja Rao, spoke on the crisis of ecology and Rev. Mathews P. Oommen, Presbyter, Madhya Kerala Diocese and Rev. Abraham J. Premchand, Presbyter, Nandyal Diocese gave the theological and biblical exposure on ecology. It was an eye-opener for the participants to learn the ill effects of the present situation concerning ecology. The biblical reflection paved the way for looking at the creation not as objects but as the core of life itself. They affirmed that the life we live must give healthy circumstances to the future generation. We thank Dr. Mathew Koshy for his constant support and encouragement in conducting this regional conference. Our gratitude to all the Bishops in Andhra Pradesh for extending their concrete support by sending delegates to the conference. We share our gratitude to the officers of the diocese and more especially to Mr S.P. Premanandan, the convener of the Conference.

**Rev. Abraham J. Premchand**

## MEDAK DIOCESE

The Diocese consists of five revenue Districts in which we have 1100 congregations. In addition to that the Diocese is the possession of lands in which Teak and Jethropa plantation was undertaken in many acres in Luxettipet and pastorates situated in the Adilabad Revenue District.

An important event of the Environmental Protection Campaign was the conduct of the pastoral session of the Medak District Church Council at Sangareddy on June 25, 2009. Environmental scientists explained in detail the dangers the environment is facing at present and the measures to be taken to protect the environment from pollution. Eighty pastors and office bearers of the Diocesan Council and conveners were enlightened by this awareness programme. Subsequently, they were advised to encourage tree planting programme in the premises of all the Churches, Colleges and Schools.

On July 7, 2009 the tree planting programme was launched by the Most Rev. Dr. J.W. Gladstone, at Medak and Yellareddy with the slogan “Trees are steps to progress” and in about five acres of the mission compound, 5000 saplings were planted. Subsequently at Yellareddy, a pastorate headquarters in Nizambad District, 3000 plants were planted. At Sangareddy, pits were dug for 1000 plants but due to failure of Monsoon, the planting work was held up.

*Future Programmes:*

The Medak Diocese which consists of three District Church Councils is also involved in this campaign. Therefore, we have planned to conduct Awareness Programmes in the town and Godavary District Church Councils to propagate tree planting and environmental protection in September & October respectively.

God willing, with your support and cooperation, we plan to conduct the A.P. regional meeting in November, 2009.

**Convener**

*“We believe that God’s economy of solidarity and justice for the household of creation includes the promise that the people of the world have the right to produce their own food and control the resources belonging to their livelihoods, including biodiversity. It is therefore the right and responsibility of governments to support the livelihoods of small farmers in the South and in the North. It is their right to refuse the demands of agribusiness that seek to control every aspect of the cycle of life. Such an approach requires respect for indigenous spiritual relationships to land and the bounties of mother Earth.”*

**CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee**

**Chairmen and Conveners of  
The Ecological Concerns Committees in the 22 Dioceses of the CSI**

**Coimbatore Diocese**

The Rt. Rev. Dr. M. Dorai  
Dr. Peter G. B. Vedamuthu

**Dornakal Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. B. S. Devamony  
Rev. T. Praveen Abraham

**East Kerala Diocese**

The Rt. Rev. Dr. K. G. Daniel,  
Prof. Aniemma Abraham

**Jaffna Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. Daniel S. Thiagaraj  
Dr. V. R. David

**Kanyakumari Diocese**

The Rt. Rev. G. Devakadaksham  
Dr. K. Paul Raj

**Karimnagar Diocese**

The Rt. Rev. Dr. P. Surya Prakash  
Mr. B. Johnson

**Karnataka Central Diocese**

Rt. Rev. S. Vasanthakumar  
Mr. R. Johnson

**Karnataka Northern Diocese**

Rt. Rev. J. Prabhakara Rao  
Rev. Samuel S. Sakkari

**Karnataka Southern Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Devaraj Bangera  
Rev. Premkumar Soans

**Krishna Godavai Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. G. Dyvasirvadam  
Mr. B. Daniel Rajkumar

**Madhya Kerala Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Thomas Samuel  
Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackad

**Madras Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. Devasahayam  
Dr. A. J. Azariah

**Maurai-Ramnad Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. Christopher Asir,  
Prof. Mrs. Monicka Rathinakumar

**Medak Diocese**

Rt. Rev. T. Kanaka Prasad  
Rev. M. Jayanand

**Nandyal Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. P. J. Lawrence  
Mr. S. Premananthan

**North Kerala Diocese**

The Rt. Rev. Dr. K. P. Kuruvilla  
Rev. Paul Joseph

**Rayalaseema Diocese**

Rt. Rev. K. B. Yesuvara Prasad  
Dr. Helen Davidson

**South Kerala Diocese**

The Most Rev. Dr. J. W. Gladstone  
Rev. S. Ben Roy

**Thoothukudi- Nazareth Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. J.A.D. Jabachandran,  
Rev. D. G. A. Thomas

**TiruchirappallyTanjavoor Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. Paul Vasanthakumar  
Prof. A. Relton

**Tirunelvely Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. S. Jayapaul David  
Dr. A. Selvin Samuel

**Vellore Diocese**

Rt. Rev. Dr. Y. William,  
Mr. Livingston Moses



# Photo Session

## KARNATAKA CENTRAL DIOCESE





**KRISHNA - GODAVARI DIOCESE**



**KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE**



**MEDAK DIOCESE**



**MADHYA KERALA DIOCESE**



*Participants of eco-training for school teachers  
with the resource persons*



*The delegates attending the UNDP-ARC meet held in November at the Windsor Castle, England  
Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh and Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General are also seen*