



Spirit to be a Prophetic Voice and Activist

This year, 2012, marks the 10th anniversary of the SACYN journey. One of the major themes since the beginning is reflected in the label of our third main conference in Pokhara in 2010 - "Cross the Bridge". But this theme is also implicit in the titles of the previous two conferences "Called to Peace" (Colombo 2002) and "Gospel and Globalisation" (Bangalore 2005). It is in our calling as Christian peacemakers that we

are called to take initiatives to cross bridges to reach out to others who are different - including those who we are traditionally separate from and who may even be counted as "enemies". As Martin Mondal recently told me "SACYN has to be understood against the background of enmity and hatred between peoples in the region." The Gospel of Peace is good news, in a world of conflicts, in a world of globalisation, and in a world where the realities of religious and ideological plurality are increasingly proximate to our experience.

At our training programme in Dhaka in June 2012 we looked afresh at globalisation in conjunction with youth culture and Christian mission. The tension between the good and the bad aspects came once more to our attention with varying perspectives expressed which were also related to differing understandings of what actually constitutes the core and nature of globalisation. We recognised the paradox that in a globalising world there are new opportunities

and avenues to cross bridges as messengers of good news and agents of reconciliation as the impact of globalisation itself can remove certain barriers. Yet the paradox is that globalisation can also erect or reinforce barriers, especially between those who socially and economically benefit from globalisation and those who do not and who indeed may be exploited, oppressed or marginalised by the

economic, cultural and technological domination that subtly is at work in and through globalising processes.

The reality is that we live in a complex world and it is sometimes difficult to label any one aspect "good" or "bad" and to get a clear overall perspective. But we

are called to aim for discernment and to seek the truth. It is this activity of discernment which I believe SACYN needs to take up in the future. "Discerning of spirits" is a spiritual gift in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 12.10). While the reference may indeed be to spirits in the unseen spiritual realm, the real underlying meaning of this gift is the ability to discern what is of God and what is not, what is His will and what is not and not just for knowledge but as a basis for making right and wise decisions. We need discernment to know what 'spiritual' experience is authentic and which is not. But we need to discern and recognise not only the good but also sin and evil including the demonic forces and principalities and powers



that are evident in history, in the world today and which destroy life. Discernment is also about recognising where and how is God working in our own lives and in our local situation, but also in the broader regional and global context and to distinguish in this sphere of life his presence and activity from other forces that are work. In this process of discernment we also need to look beyond the boundaries of the church and discern the Spirit who is "The Lord, the Giver of Life" at work in the world and its peoples at large.

Three signs of the Spirit at work according to the late Bishop John V. Taylor (former CMS General Secretary and Bishop of Winchester) are firstly, an awareness and response to a person or persons who are "other" than ourselves; secondly situations of initiative, choice where decisions need to be made that have the potential to hasten the coming kingdom; and thirdly, acts of love and sacrifice that embody the principles of death and resurrection and to point to and reveal Jesus Christ. As we seek to discern the Spirit we surely need to look for these three dimensions - truth and reality in relationships with others, kingdom choices and decisions and practical self-giving love. We need to begin with ourselves - do we see God at work in these three ways in our own lives?

A leading Indian theologian of the 20th century, Stanley Samartha, considered two of the key indications of the Spirit at work are in the emergence of new relationships and the creation of new communities - and these are two of the strongest aspects of SACYN!

Discernment however is not just a technical exercise to apply particular criteria, nor is it primarily an individual practice. It happens in the wider setting of all our relationships including our relationship with God and with one another. The disciples on the road to Emmaus were confused and discouraged by the circumstances around them. All they had understood of what God had been doing seemed to have come crashing down around them with the death of Jesus and the disappearance of his body. But then they went through a process, guided by the unseen hand of God, where they came to recognise or discern the presence of the risen Jesus. It involved the use of their minds with a certain amount of "talking and discussing" (Luke 24.15), but also their emotions and hearts which "burned within them" (Luke 24.32) as Scriptures was opened up and came alive to them. This was all in the context of personal intimacy with Jesus who became known to them in the breaking of the

bread (Luke 24.35). Moreover it happened to them as a shared experience in the company of each other. At first they could not recognise Jesus - but as they journeyed on the road with each other and with him at their side everything changed. They met with Jesus and their minds and hearts were transformed by recognition and discernment of Him. And then they went and told others.

Discernment is also closely linked to the idea of prophecy - another gift of the Spirit - and indeed a vital aspect of the working of the Spirit evident in both the Old and New Testament. Prophecy can be predictive - seeing into the future, but also more frequently is "forth-telling" - speaking what God is saying into and for our present situation. And this too has two dimensions - the inward hearing of what God is saying and then the outward speaking out and acting upon what we hear: in other words "mission". It is easy to assume we see things rightly and know what God is saying - but in reality it is not that easy. We are products of our cultures, backgrounds, education, families, etc. As a result we bring with us a whole bundle of presuppositions, assumptions, perspectives, prejudices, inherited religious tradition and dogma. Any sense of God speaking or God's will could be influenced, shaped and indeed distorted by these factors. What we need is a kind of "double listening". We need to seek to listen to God directly, but also we need to listen to each other - and particularly listen on the other side of the bridge - or on the bridge as a point of meeting, to correct the distortions of our own perspective. God speaks to us through others as much as through our own prayer, reflection on the Bible, times of worship and drawing near to God in the Eucharist. If He is actively at work in the whole world - oikoumene - we too need to listen to voices from across the various "Bridges" of our world to discern what God is saying and doing, to allow the still small voice of the Spirit to bring all these strands together and illuminate our minds and fire our hearts with his living word, a word that is enfleshed in Christ himself.

This all points to the need for a depth of spirituality that is found in a reality of encounter with God and with our neighbour, and as central to this a double attentive listening - to God and to each other interpreted in the broadest sense. This will equip us to

fulfil our SACYN calling to be a discerning and prophetic voice among our fellow younger Christians in south Asia and following on from this by young people of the churches of South Asia to our churches as a whole, to our communities and society every level - even at the regional and national level as God opens doors. But words alone are insufficient. They must be accompanied by and lead to action: as

we practice what we preach mission becomes a reality. Let us fervently pray that God may grant us the gifts needed for SACYN to fulfil its discerning, prophetic and mission potential - through each one of us!

Adrian Watkins

REACH OUT TO THE MISSING ONES!

Mephibosheth, the physically challenged son of Jonathan was the hero of Jacob Isaac and Fr. Vinod Victor's session on 'Practical Models of Engagement.' King David's effort at seeking out and giving respect to Mephibosheth was seen as a Biblical example of reaching out to those who fall outside the social lens of our lives.

In the session that ensued, the groups discussed how each delegate has been at some point alienated from the ministry. The personal experiences and having of problems helped the group share and discuss their concerns, which they discovered was similar to all the South Asian youth. The youth identified with terms like the absent

generation, missing generation, stolen generation, hiding generation, the frustrated generation, the busy generation and the confused generation.

Moving from table to table, the delegates listed out the various ways in which youth groups meet and interact as part of ministry.

The resource persons made the delegates realise that youth ministry would be successful only if the youth leaders reached out to their youth peers in a relevant manner and relevant style.

The biggest takeaway was that the youth leaders when faced with opposition from elders and peers must not give up but try to reach out to the missing ones, in the most relevant manner.

Exposure Visits to Communities



God Knows No Strangers

God knows no strangers,
 He loves us all,
 The poor, the rich,
 The great, the small...
 He is a friend
 Who is always there
 To share our troubles
 And lessen our care.
 No one is a stranger
 In god's sight
 For god is love
 And in his light
 May we, too,
 Try in our small way
 To make new friends
 From day to day...
 So pass no stranger
 With an unseeing eye,
 For god may be sending
 A new friend by.
Sarah Valentine



Exposure visit

The day began with much enthusiasm as a group of 20 participants began their journey to visit three ministry projects. The journey was interesting as the two vans made their way through busy roads in a skilful manner like a knife through butter. The first project run by Bangladesh Youth First Concerns was a de-addiction centre providing care for around 16 youth. The visit revealed that the place is well run and is providing hope to many youth who are living hopeless lives. A quick refreshment later we were on our way to the Centre for the Rehabilitation of Paralytics. The welcome sign on the building, 'ability not disability' was soon made clear as we learnt that the centre catered mainly to those with severe cerebral palsy. While, this condition did severe

damage to the development of the brain, the development of the brain was significant. The school, the vocational centre, the hostel facilities and the treatment wards were all indicative of a vision that had made an impact of thousands of lives over the years. The final project was the St Josephs Vocational Training Institute providing training in the fitter, carpentry, automobile mechanic and electrician skills. The concentration on the faces of these boys on the task ahead of them truly revealed a responsible generation. The day seemed rather short as we took in all the sights and sounds of Bangladesh, the beautiful display of colourful cottons during our shopping and finally cooled ourselves off at the local coffee shop with some yummy pastries and snacks.



Non existent world

Youth is symbol of vigor and life, but visiting a place where youth was redefining its meaning aroused pathos and serious call to reexamine our role. When we are leaving the building as group, I noticed a young man sitting on wheel chair in basket ball court; struggling to move his chair, with neck twisted on one side he can see upside down world in its real position. As gazing his eyes while we were passing, slowly trying to move the tiers with hands which were no different then ours, he was reminding us of our reality. He lost the battle in that basket ball court, posing on us our own helplessness and ineffectiveness in the fallen world. His eyes had only one question "Christ died for me too do you know that?" and my answer was lost in the silence of my heart. We have reversed the standards of Christian service. There world do not exist for us. I found we were no different then that young man on the wheel chair, for we have lost the touch with paralyze world and he has lost touch with mine we both are unable to go out of our own basket ball court. But he had an advantage for he can see world in more truth then us. I came out of the campus but made my home in their world. As Christ showed us with out incarnation it was impossible to bring salvation.

I htsham Ravi

Purpose in life

For everything absolutely everything above and below, visible and invisible, everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. Colossians 1:16 The purpose of our Life is greater than our joy, our happiness or peace of mind. If you think why you are here in this place or world, it is because of God's purpose in your life. If you think life is nothing, no happiness nowhere to go then my friend your wrong. Life will never make sense if we do not begin from God and discover our identity, significance and destiny. The bible says "Gods wisdom.....goes deep into the interior like the oldest what God determined as the way to bring out his best in us.

To discover your purpose in life first we must turn to God's word and not the world's wisdom. You may be in darkness. Therefore tell to yourself everyday

"WIITHOUT GOD MY LIFE IS ZERO"

Shalom Samuel Christdoss



EKLEKTOS

Visuals from Church of Ceylon Youth Movement's – Colombo Diocese National Conference 2012



Reports from Countries

EKLEKTOS Church of Ceylon Youth Movement – Colombo Diocese National Conference 2012

Theme

The year 2011/2012 of the Church of Ceylon Youth Movement committee was based on the Bible Verse 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you' - St. John:- 15:16. Therefore the Greek word 'EKLEKTOS', which means 'Chosen' was selected as the theme for the conference.

Prayer

Since January 2012, every fortnight the committee met to pray for the conference. Prayer cards were sent to all churches/Youth Fellowships in our diocese in order to keep the camp in prayer and they were used at the Sunday services.

It was indeed a testimony that the power of prayer was miraculously felt throughout the conference. Especially since it was the rainy season and continuous showers were predicted in Kandy, no rainy cloud passed through during the time period of the conference.

A total of 310 young Christians participated from all over the country with great enthusiasm.

Speakers, Topics and Sessions

Bible Studies and Sessions were held separately in all 3 languages under a common theme, but the Educational workshop and two more sessions were held in common.

Another significant feature of this conference was that both Bishops of the Church of Ceylon, Rt. Rev. Dhiloraj Canagasabey (Colombo) and Rt. Rev. Shantha Francis (Kurunegala) attended the conference and conducted sessions.

Bible Studies – Called or Chosen?

The conference started off by leading the participants into a question to reflect on their lives and think in which stage he/she is. Brief introduction what is 'called' and what is 'chosen'.

'Many are called but few are chosen'

Specially Chosen

Yes everyone is called, but you are specially chosen for a special task. Different people have different talents, you are special in the talent that you have.

Titus was kept in Crete for a special reason.

All or Nothing

'I surrender all'. Not surrendering half, but giving our whole life.

Are we going to live as we want and face the judgment as a bad person or are we going to listen to GOD and change our lives from now onwards?

Sessions - You are called

All of us are been called to serve the Lord, may be through different people

Speaker reminded us on the promises we took at the Baptism & Confirmation – *'You are called to fight under the banner of Christ'*. We are been called to reach out to others.

Where do I stand?

My current relationship with GOD. How to have a firm relationship with GOD.

Speaker discussed on the current youth challenges (Secular world & Spiritual)

Chosen and Ordained

Call for the mission and we will be called in different ways.

GOD calls you, Church needs you

What is the vision of the Bishop for the Revival of the Diocese?

Revival in our own lives. We should be a living example. Church should grow more spiritually.

Educational Workshop - Love, Marriage, Sex

Girl/Boy relationship, The importance of marriage, The relationship between marriage & sex, The social understanding of Love, The value of

virginity, How to control ourselves, educate ourselves and be safe in Love, Marriage & Sex.

There was time for group discussions, presentations, prayer requests & Testimonies.

There were many Prayer requests from the youth and the organizers are praying for them.

All glory to GOD, 34 participants committed their lives for full time ministry and 24 participants committed for part time ministry. We pray for their future ministries.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony and procession commenced with the presence of Rt. Rev. Shantha Francis, Bishop of Kurunegala and with the participation of Deanery representatives walking under their Deanery flag and the committee members. The key note address was given by the Bishop.

Worship

Morning and evening worship sessions were conducted by different deaneries exhibiting their cultural diversity.

Decorations and Pandol

The entrance to the main hall was decorated with a pandol made up using 400 plastic mega drink bottles. This contained certain features of the conference which added more color.

New Year games and Cricket match

A Sinhala & Tamil New Year festival was organized within the conference this year as the conference dates fell during this time period. Traditional Sri Lankan village structures (made of clay), conference participants dressed in traditional attire and sweet music of the flute added glamour to the festival. Avurudu kavili (New year sweet meats) were also served. All games were conducted within the groups and the price for the most well dressed male and female (Conference Prince and Princess) were also selected.

As per the request of many, a Cricket tournament was also organized during the conference which was played between the conference groups. Each group had members from different regions of the Island speaking different languages and from varied ethnic backgrounds and this was a great opportunity for the Anglican youth to interact and get to know each other.

Clergy vs Laity...who won????

Camp Fire

The usually much awaited Camp fire was also held without a miss this year and was made even more glamorous with the fireworks display. A deanery-wise Talent show was included into this in order to showcase the talents of our youth.

Holy Communion Service and Finale

A beautiful Trilingual fellowship service was held on Sunday 15th April at the Trinity College, Kandy Chapel. This was held with the participation of the CCYM Chaplain, other Priests who attended the conference and Theological College students.

We pray that the time spent at this camp was fruitful and was a time to experience the Holy Spirit and all who participated will be CHOSEN to serve in God's vineyard.

Miranga Peiris

Fest-Zoe Reports from Countries

International Ecumenical Youth Camp - Chennai, South India - 2013 November 11-18

India

The CSI synod Departments of Pastoral Concerns and Ecumenical Relations & Ecological Concerns jointly organized an Ecumenical Youth Leadership Training Camp titled, 'Fest-Zoe' from Nov 12 17, 2012 at the CSI Synod Centre. Fest-Zoe, centred around the theme "Beyond Globalization, Youth culture, Mission and Leadership" and

the motto, "Seeking the Shalom of the City" was attended by delegates from within and outside India. From within India, along with the delegates from the CSI Dioceses, there were participants and facilitators from the Marthoma Church, Syrian Orthodox Church and the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. Foreign delegates included, representatives from the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Church of Scotland, United Church of Christ in Japan, Church of Bangladesh and the Jaffna Diocese of the CSI.

The Camp was inaugurated by the lighting the lamp by delegates from all the nations and churches representing in the Fest-Zoe 2012. The Camp in general had

Interactions, Workshops, Bible Studies, Team Challenges, Devotions, Prayers, Worships, Exposure Programmes, Singing and Games.

Some of the Interactions were :- Globalization & Faith, Youth - Mission & Commission, Globalization & Modern Trends, Gender & Giftedness, Youth Ministry in Diverse, Shrinking Spaces; Yet Claiming Global, Youth Culture, Media & Leadership, Leadership Skills, Synergy & Management, Crypto Generations, Inter-Religious Living Together. The Workshops, called as Thidals, were held simultaneously in four different venues. Thidal is the Tamil Word for a raised platform built around a big shady tree where, the villagers gathered together for formal and informal deliberations.

The 3 day Workshops covered 12 important areas such as:- Youth 4 Mission: Possibilities & Challenges, Culture of Peace, Theatre & Youth, Relationships: Christian Perspectives, Developing Positive Masculinity as one of the Means to curb Gender Based Violence, In God's Image: Perspectives on 'Disability', Impact of Media in Youth

Culture, Hollywood, Bollywood & Kollywood:

Cultural Evolution - Are you the Fittest?, Cyber Ethos, Internet De-addiction, Women in Leadership, Creation Care and New Media for Mission.



The Bible Studies, Worships, Singing Sessions, One to One Prayer and the Personal Devotions helped the Youth Leaders, to strengthen their spiritual bonds with the Creator. In fact, the Worships were lead by the delegates divided into different groups. The delegates were trained through the Team Challenges and Games, on how to foster team spirit, unity, listening and leadership skills. During the Exposure Visits, the delegates were taken to People Living with HIV & AIDS, Slums, Old-Age Homes and 'Rag Pickers'. The delegates reported that what they encountered during their exposure programmes challenged and moved their hearts and minds. The 'Camp Fire' was not only a time for the delegates to exhibit their cultural richness, but also

share their spiritual testimonies. The Camp ended with valedictory address by the Rt. Rev. Dharmaraj Rasalam, Bishop, CSI South Kerala Diocese and the Chair Person for CSI Synod Committee on Youth Concerns. The General Secretary of the CSI, Arch. M. M. Philip and the CMS-Asia Manager, Rev. Kang-SanTan offered their greetings during the valedictory services.

The Facilitators for the Camp were, Rev. Timothy Ravinder, Dr. George Zachariah, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College Students, Rev. Kang San Tan, Rev. Christopher Vijayan, Mr. Stephen Edison, Mr. Bijoy Idicheriah, Mr. Jacob Isaac, Mrs. Loun Ling, Rev. Vinod Victor, Rev. Sunil Raj Philip, Rev. Ukoha N. Ukoha, Mr. John Samadhanam, Mr. Jyothi Kumar, Rev. Jerry Kurien, Mrs. Seema Das, Rev. Anilal M. Jose, Mr. Rohit Benjamin and Mr. John K. John. The Team Challenges, Games and the Rock 'n' Roll (Singing Sessions) were lead by the Jesus Team.

Rev. T.I. James