



SACYN LEAVES LASTING IMPRESSION on Young People

The South Asia Christian Youth Network Leadership Training concluded in Jaffna Sri Lanka on the 30th August 2013 leaving lasting impressions on all the 45 young people who participated. The concluding service was a wonderful weaving together of South Asian culture and music with songs from all the South Asian countries represented. The participants who shared of their impressions of the training gave moving testimonies of their dedicating their lives to mission and some of them even promising to return to work in contexts like that of Sri Lanka. Certificates for the participants were issued by Olivia Jackson, the closing homily was delivered by Rev. Vinod Victor and the prayer of dedication was led by Adrian Watkins.

Earlier in the closing day Bishop Dulip Chickera led a meaningful Bible Study on the acceptance of the other as the core to Christian discipleship. Adrian drew the threads together and Sam Ponniah led an Open Form on the background of the Sri Lankan crisis and the history of the movement towards indigenisation in the island nation.

The main sessions during the conference included two sessions by Ajit Fernando who looked at the lives of Daniel and Timothy encouraging young people to lead a life of care, concern and integrity. Olivia Jackson looked at the role of art and creativity in

localised and indigenised worship. Adrian critically looked at the impact of Westernisation in the South Asian ecclesial fabric.

The three Bible Studies that stood out included those led by Ajit Fernando, Vinod Victor and Bishop Duleep De Chickera.

Several workshops were in offer for the participants to choose from. Prominent among them included those on Disability led by Bikas Adhikari, Contextual worship by Anilal M Jose, Jesus and Women by Maheshini Perera, Media and Identity by Bijoy Idicheria, Jesus and children by Philip, Youth and the Intellect by Jacob Issac, and Interfaith Involvement by Isttham Ravi among others.

Highlight of the conference were the student presentations. Each participant was asked to choose a topic of their interest and they wrote reflective papers which were then presented in plenaries. The best papers were rewarded with entries into the next conference.

Most participants affirmed that this was one of their best experiences in life. The St. John's College Jaffna offered exemplary hospitality. Bishop Dhilo and Bishop Duleep were present themselves. The local team led by Fr. Jameson Gnanponraj, Sam Ponniah, Miranga Pieris and Laltha did their best to make the stay in Jaffna meaningful.

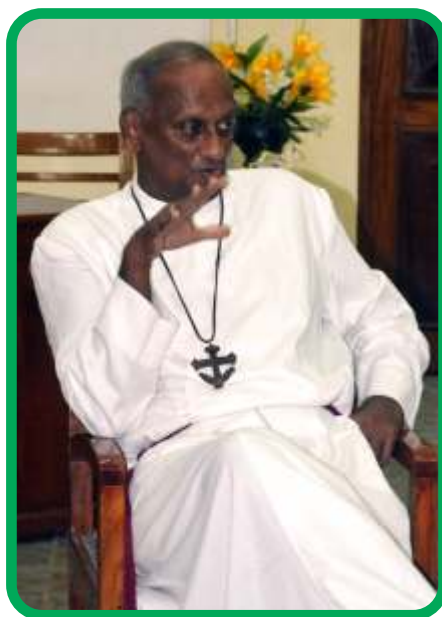
It is a Sin to be Rich in South Asia

Bishop Dulip DeChickera

It is when I can look at wealth and boldly say that I don't want it that I get truly liberated. The Bible is clear in that one cannot serve God and Mammon together. Therefore in the context of poverty in South Asia being and remaining rich is a sin since the rich is accumulating the resources that would have addressed the issue of poverty of the others. The Bishop Dulip D Chickera the Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Colombo said this while addressing the SACYN delegates on the theme Practical Ideas for Nurturing Asian Christian Identities in Jaffna today.

He spoke of Five Asian Realities that reconstruct Asian Christian Identity which include the reality of our neighbour who belongs to a different faith calling us to look for the echoes of the gospel in the cultures around us, the reality of poverty which calls all to live a simple life sharing with the

poor what they have, the reality of the violent oppressive governing systems which calls us to raise a voice on



behalf of the victim and call those in positions of responsibility to accountability., the reality of historical grievance of the people of other faiths

wherein they believe that Christians unfairly benefitted from colonialism, and the reality of the sense of hopelessness.

The Bishop called upon young people to understand the shift from the harvest method of evangelism to the incarnational method of incarnation. Evangelise today in such a way that you can evangelise tomorrow also. When you engage on behalf of the victim you take the risk of the cross and you cannot do so without forfeiting blessings and privileges. He called upon the young people not to be carried away by the hoodwink of development in the North and the East and urged them to see the plight of the people who have endured beyond human endurance.

The Bishop also spoke of three steps in nourishing including formation and vocation, the method of doing theology and the critical approach to gospel and life.

God Cannot Be a Destroying God

Vinod Victor reflects on Noah's Arc

The search of the scriptures would be a meaningless experience unless we are able to connect the text to the context- the Rev. Vinod Victor reminded the young people at SACYN in his Bible Study today. With powerful images that he captured the feel trip he helped the young people revisit the meaningful field exposure they had and relate them to Gen 6 where he reflected with them on Noah's arc as a symbol of the community of God.

Being very critical of the claim that it was God who destroyed the creation Vinod held the destruction of creation was a result of human wickedness and in the present day also we see live images of mass destruction due to the vileness of people. A God understanding that is

life centric is crucial in relating to people in a right way. He asked the young people how their God understanding affect their identity



and self understanding and asked if one could have a spirituality alien to the ones' context? He also asked if we were not connected to the collective sub conscious of the spirituality of

our neighborhood.

Placing the Bible Study Under Five C's Vinod in his usual way engaged the young people in a lot of discussion.

He spoke on Being Connected to God, Committed to God, Called by God, Competent for God, and Covenantal with God and urged the youth of the necessity of Completing well in God.

The Characteristic of the Arc was that it embraced people of all different natures. The lion and the tiger lived in harmony, the bandicoot and the woodpecker behaved, the porcupine and the snail had to be considered and that is the beauty of the church. We have people of every nature- clean and unclean and they have to be in the arc travelling towards the safety of God.

Rooting Deep

Stephen Edison

SACYN 2013 in Jaffna was special, a time of reflecting together with friends from various south Asian countries on aspects of being effective Christians in a multi religious society. Being in Jaffna, understanding the context, meeting with people made clear the reality that Church and Mission does not exist in a vacuum but in the midst of chaos and challenges which is manifested in our region, counties and localities in so many forms. As we head back to our homes and ministries, hopefully we would give some thought to how contextualized are the vessels in which we share the Truth. As sessions during the conference encouraged us to reflect on the possibility that we may be packing a lot of cultural baggage to be presented with the message of salvation which may in fact create more barriers than open doors.

Would like to share one particular reflection which I found encouraging personally:

Bishop Dilho in his opening address shared with us an advice what Bishop Duleep had gave him when he succeeded him as the Bishop of Colombo. The crux of which was to

understand that we are all pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. No matter how complex and hopeless the bigger picture looks like. God has given us our tasks in our own little spheres. We must not be found wanting in being faithful to that calling. When individuals committed to His will strive



faithfully with what is given to us, the bigger picture will start to change. In travels across South Asia, witnessing with growing distress the complexity and depth of situations and problems, found this to be very helpful to avoid the trap of feeling despair and hopelessness.

The Bishops words were supported by powerful examples from the Sri Lanka itself, of small islands of hope and light in a sea of challenges. It was deeply encouraging to witness the ministries of Father Daniel of Killinochi

at the orphanage, Father Jameson of St John's in this trip as well as Father Andrew in the plantation communities in Upcountry, Father Harold among the widows in Trincomale and many others in previous journeys.

As the situation on Sri Lanka was being described by various resource people, many of us found ourselves realising exactly how similar the challenges are in our own countries. South Asia as a whole is witnessing surging economic growth, social change, reforms, increasing political freedoms which coexist with crushing poverty, social and structural injustice and corruption.

We serve not in isolation but right in the midst of a struggle for just and equitable societies and ever increasing conflicts both between nations and within nations. There is increasing violence over issues ethnic, class / caste based and communal. In light of a rapidly increasing population with dreams of material prosperity mirroring the west, struggle over natural resources in the future is inevitable.

I hope that each of us as we return to our churches and homes will reflect and find our little piece in the jigsaw puzzle in our local context, and when we do, we will be faithful to act on it.



Can Peace be established out of violence?

John Vikram

I got shocked when I saw a LOTUS bloomed out of a bullet. But it is true because it is imposed, fabricated, and explodes. In fact LOTUS being a symbol of life needs huge quantity of water to bloom but Bullet signifies violent deaths as it is caused to flow of blood. Lotus stands for celebration where bullet stands for agony. Lotus symbolizes laughter while Bullet symbolizes mourning. Lotus speaks of victory when bullet speaks of vulnerability. Lotus stands for new dreams where bullet stands for shattered dreams. How can we perceive new hopes and peace amidst despair, disaster, destruction, devastation,

dislocation, desolation, demarcation?

It may be possible with Jesus the Victim and sufferer yet Liberator. His Easter experience may help us to look into the victimized sections with hope and new life. Let me join with a broken and burning heart to express my deep solidarity with them in whom Jesus is ever present.

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.

-----Lowry



Contribute

Reports, Articles, Photographs,
and Reflections for SACYN Times
may be sent via email to
anilalmjose@gmail.com

Prayer concerns

Pray for the NCFN YOUTH conference
to be held from 23-26 September 2013. -
1300 Youth representing 75 districts and
all five regions of Nepal are expected to
participate. - at Koinonia Patan Church. -
on the Theme "**Lets Fix it**"