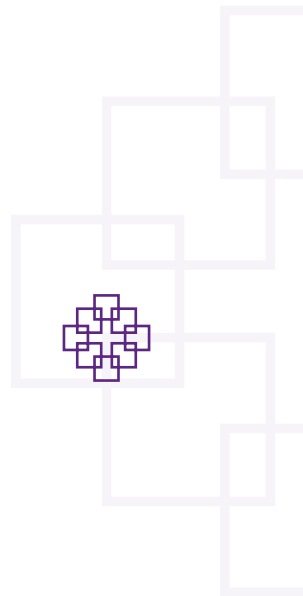


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# **Giving Account of Our Hope Zeugnis geben von der Hoffnung in uns**



**Christian Witness Today:  
International Seminar,  
Dalhousie/India, 27th till 29th May 2013**

**Christliches Zeugnis heute:  
Delegierte aus allen asiatischen  
Partnerkirchen der EKHN in Dalhousie**



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# Inhalt

<b>Report – Reisebericht</b>	<b>7</b>
Reverend Dr. Johny Thonipara	
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Bibelarbeit - Bible study</b>	<b>31</b>
Church President Dr. Volker Jung	
<b>Key note Lecture</b>	<b>51</b>
Reverend Dr. M. Mani Chacko	
<b>Indonesian Perspective, GKPS</b>	<b>71</b>
Reverend John Christian Saragih	
<b>Indonesian Perspective, GMIM</b>	<b>77</b>
Iwan Frederik	
<b>Henry Martyn Institute</b>	<b>81</b>
Reverend Dr. Varghese Manimala	
<b>Mission: a german perspective</b>	<b>87</b>
Reverend Detlev Knoche	
<b>Krishna-Godavari Diocese, CSI</b>	<b>103</b>
G. Samuel Sudir	
<b>East Kerala Diocese, CSI</b>	<b>111</b>
Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. K. G. Daniel	
<b>Diocese of Amritsar</b>	<b>115</b>
Bishop Rt. Rev. Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy	
<b>Stimulus Post, EKHN</b>	<b>121</b>
Reverend Dr. Johny Thonipara	
<b>Final Statement</b>	<b>125</b>



# Report – Reisebericht



**Pfarrer Dr. Johny Thonipara, Beauftragter für Entwicklung und Partnerschaft Asien am Zentrum Ökumene der EKHN**

**Rev. Dr. Johny Thonipara, Secretary for Development and Partnership in the Ecumenical Center of EKHN, Germany**



## **Delegation:**

**Kirchenpräsident Dr. Volker Jung**

**OKRin Christine Noschka**

**Dr. Susan Durst**

**OKR Detlev Knoche**

**Dr. Johny Thonipara**

## **Herzlicher Empfang in Srinagar**

Nach einem angenehmen Flug landeten wir in Delhi am Dienstag, den 21. Mai, um 0.30 Uhr. Nach einer Wartezeit von über 4 Stunden flogen wir um 5.35 Uhr weiter nach Srinagar in Kaschmir. Gegen 7 Uhr landeten wir in Srinagar, wo wir herzlich von Bischof Samantaroy und Vertretern der Diözese empfangen wurden. Familie Kaul bereitete ein leckeres Frühstück für uns vor.

## **Allgemeine Situation in Indien**

Zunächst ein paar Anmerkungen zu der allgemeinen Situation in Indien: Im ersten Augenblick nimmt man wahr, dass die Euphorie der vergangenen Jahre über den wirtschaftlichen Erfolg vorbei ist. Das Wirtschaftswachstum hat mit vier bis fünf Prozent den niedrigsten Stand seit zehn Jahren erreicht. Es wird immer noch und überall viel gebaut. Trotzdem nimmt man eine gewisse Stagnation wahr. Die versprochenen Reformen kommen nicht voran. Die wirtschaftliche Liberalisierung hat nicht allen Menschen geholfen. Die Schere zwischen Arm und Reich hat sich vergrößert. Die aufstrebende Mittelschicht ist nicht so groß wie man vermutet hatte. Das Land und seine Menschen kommen mit den rasanten Entwicklungen nicht zurecht. Sie merken, dass das Land Regeln braucht. Und nun wird viel reguliert.

Die Berichte über Gewalt gegen Frauen und Kindern und Vergewalti-

## A warm welcome at Srinagar

After a pleasant flight, we landed at Delhi on Tuesday 21 May at 0:30 a.m. We had to wait for more than 4 hours to get our connecting flight at 5:35 a.m. towards Srinagar in Kashmir. We landed there around 7 o'clock and were warmly welcomed by Bishop Samantaroy and some representatives of the Diocese. The Kaul family had prepared a tasty breakfast for us.

## The general situation in India

First I would like to present some remarks on the general situation in India: at a first glance already you become aware of the fact that the enthusiasm of the past years regarding economic success is gone. Economic growth has, with four to five percent, reached the lowest level since ten years. There is still much construction everywhere but, nonetheless, one has a certain feeling of stagnation. The promised reforms are not coming. The economic liberalization was not of benefit for all people. The gap between poor and rich has widened. The up-coming middle classes are smaller than one had assumed. The country and its people are not coping up with the rapid developments. They realize that the country is in need of rules. And now there is much regulation.

The reports on violence against women and children, and raping, are all-pervasive in newspapers, discussions and talk shows. After the

gungen sind allgegenwärtig in Zeitungen, Diskussionen und Talkshows. Nach der brutalen Vergewaltigung einer Studentin hat die Regierung innerhalb weniger Wochen ein neues Gesetz verabschiedet, das Frauen mehr Schutz und mehr Rechte verleiht. Aber das Thema ist nicht so virulent vertreten wie ich gewünscht hätte. Die Thematisierung der Gewalt gegen Frauen hat dem Ansehen des Landes sehr geschadet.

Ökologisches Bewusstsein ist im Kommen. Es gibt Gruppen und NGOs, die sich dafür stark machen. Vor allem junge Menschen machen sich Gedanken über Ökologie.

Auf politischer Ebene ist die regierende Kongresspartei in keiner komfortablen Situation. Viele Skandale erschüttern die sie. Gerade während unseres Besuches gab es eine Diskussion über Unregelmäßigkeiten beim Kauf von Hubschraubern aus Italien. Der Kronprinz Rahul Gandhi ist niemand, der die Massen bewegen kann. Die regionalen und kleinen Parteien werden die allgemeinen Wahlen in 2014 prägen. Dies bedeutet, dass die zukünftige Zentralregierung den unterschiedlichen Interessengruppen viele Zugeständnisse machen muss.

Trotz bilateraler Gespräche sind die Beziehungen zwischen Pakistan und Indien angespannt. Entspannt dagegen ist die Beziehung Indiens zum Nachbarland Bangladesh.

## **Gespräche und Begegnungen in Srinagar**

Nach einer Erholungspause bei Familie Kaul trafen wir uns zum Mittagessen. Die Gesprächsthemen waren: die politische Lage in Kaschmir, Stellung der Frau, Gewalt gegen Frauen, Homosexualität usw.

Die politische Lage in Kaschmir ist ein wenig entspannt. Einige islamische Parteien hatten am Tag unserer Anreise zu einem Streik aufgerufen. Die Geschäfte waren geschlossen. Ansonsten hatte man den Eindruck, das Leben läuft normal weiter. Die Kaschmiris haben sich mit der Situation arrangiert. Nüchtern betrachten einige, dass

brutal rape of a student, the government has quickly passed a new law giving more protection and more rights to women, within a few weeks only. But the subject is not so well represented as I would have desired. Making violence against women a subject of discussion has much impaired the country's image and respect. – Ecological awareness is growing. There are groups and NGOs standing up for that. Especially younger people are worried about ecology.

On the political level the Congress Party in power is in no comfortable situation. A variety of scandals have shaken the Congress Party. Even during our visit there was a discussion about irregularities in a purchase of helicopters from Italy. The crown prince Rahul Gandhi is not capable of moving the masses. In 2014 the regional and small parties will mark the general elections, and that means that the future central government will have to make many concessions to the various interest groups. Despite bilateral talks, the relations between Pakistan and India are under tension. On the other hand, the relationship of India with its neighbour Bangladesh is eased of tension.

## Talks and meetings in Srinagar

After a break for recovery at the home of family Kaul we came together for lunch. The subject of the conversation was: the political situation in Kashmir, the status of women, violence against women, homosexuality, etc.

The political state of affairs in Kashmir has a bit eased of tension. Some Islamic parties had called a strike on the day of our arrival, the shops were closed. But for the rest we had the impression that life is normal. The Kashmiri have come to an arrangement with the circumstances. Some have rationally realized that violence will not advance

Gewalt sie nicht weiterbringt. Die Menschenrechtsverletzungen der letzten Jahre haben viel Vertrauen eingebüßt. Kein Wunder, dass viele Kaschmiris sich nicht als Staatsangehörige Indiens fühlen. In jedem Fall muss Indien einiges tun, um das Vertrauen der Kaschmiris zurückzugewinnen und eine friedliche Lösung der Konflikte zu erreichen.

Fast 80% der Kashmiris sind Sunniten, der Rest sind Shiiten, Hindus, Buddhisten, Christen u. a. Trotz der sunnitischen Mehrheit gibt es kaum Konflikte zwischen Sunniten und Shiiten. In den letzten Jahren mussten viele Hindus wegen Drohungen und Gewalt Kaschmir verlassen. Nach den Bekehrungsvorwürfen der vergangenen Jahre sind die Beziehungen zwischen Christen und Muslime angespannt. Einige Muslime sehen in der schulischen Arbeit der Christen einen Versuch, die Muslime zu missionieren. Vor zwei Jahren wurde Rev. Chander Mani Khanna wegen angeblicher Zwangsbekehrungen in Srinagar verhaftet. Pfarrer Khanna darf immer noch nicht nach Kaschmir einreisen. Es kommen immer wieder evangelikale Missionare nach Kaschmir mit der Absicht zu missionieren. Für Muslime sind alle Christen gleich, egal welcher Prägung. Deshalb gibt es auch ein Misstrauen gegenüber den traditionellen Kirchen.

Die Lage der Frauen ist nicht so schlimm wie in anderen Teilen Indiens. Es gibt Scheidungen nach islamischem Recht, die öfter zum Zerschlagen der Familien führen. Nach Einschätzung von Joyce Kaul, der Direktorin der Kaschmir Valley School, sind Vergewaltigungen weniger häufig als in anderen Teilen Indiens. Es gibt aber auch eine hohe Dunkelziffer von Gewalt gegenüber Frauen.

Nach dem Mittagessen haben wir in einem Hotel eingekcheckt und anschließend Zeit genommen, ein wenig die schöne Landschaft rund um Srinagar kennenzulernen. Dazu gehörte auch der Besuch des Mughal Gardens und eine Fahrt auf Shikaras, gondelartigen Booten aus Holz. Zum Abendessen wurden wir ins Wangnoo Heritage House Boat eingeladen, am Nigeen Lake, Srinagar, welches von einem ehemaligen Schüler der Tyndale – Biscoe & Mallinson Schule geführt wird. Ein wichtiges Thema des Gesprächs war die Bildungsarbeit der

their case. The violation of human rights during the past years has destroyed much confidence and trust. No wonder that many Kashmiri do not see themselves as citizens of India. In any case will India have to do something in order to gain back the Kashmiri's trust and to reach a peaceful solution of the conflicts.

Nearly 80% of Kashmiri are Sunnites, the rest are Shiites, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and others. In spite of the Sunnite majority there are hardly any conflicts among Sunnites and Shiites. Many Hindus were forced to leave Kashmir in the last years due to threats and violence. After the accusations of conversion attempts during the past years, the relations between Christians and Muslims are under tension. Some Muslims see the Christian school work as an attempt to do mission among Muslims. Two years ago, Rev. Chander Mani Khanna was arrested at Srinagar on account of alleged forced conversions. Still pastor Khanna is not allowed to enter Kashmir. Regularly Evangelical missionaries come to Kashmir with the intention of proselytizing. For Muslims all Christians are the same, no matter of what kind. That is why there is also a distrust of the traditional churches.

The condition of women is not as bad here as it is in other parts of India. There are divorces according to Islamic law that often lead to a break-down of the families. Ms Joyce Kaul, director of the Kashmir Valley School, says that rapes were less frequent here than in other parts of India. But there is also a high number of unreported cases of violence against women.

After lunch we checked in at a hotel and then took time to see a bit the beautiful landscape around Srinagar. This included the visit of the Mughal Gardens and a trip in Shikaras, wooden boats similar to a gondola. For dinner we were invited to the Wangnoo Heritage House Boat, on Nigeen Lake, Srinagar, which is managed by a former student of Tyndale – Biscoe & Mallinson School. An important topic of the conversation was the educational work of the Diocese in Kashmir. The schools of the Diocese are very popular and it's not easy to get an admission. There was the question of how the schools are helping

Diözese in Kaschmir. Die Schulen der Diözese sind sehr beliebt. Eine Zulassung zu bekommen ist nicht leicht. Die Frage kam auf, wie die Schulen den ärmeren Kindern helfen. Manche bedürftige Kinder erhalten bis zu 75 % Gebührennachlass, so die Antwort. Die christlichen Schulträger versuchen den Kindern eine gute Schulbildung anzubieten, dazu gehören auch Exkursionen, Schülerlager und Extracurricularaktivitäten.

## **Besuch der Schulen in Tangmarg und Srinagar**

Am Mittwoch besuchten wir die Schule in Tangmarg, die 2010 von muslimischen Extremisten niedergebrannt wurde. Wir waren sehr beeindruckt von der Arbeit der Schule. Die meisten der fast 500 SchülerInnen sind Muslime, die diese Schule gerne besuchen und beim Neuaufbau der Schule helfen würden. In Gesprächen mit den SchülerInnen und Lehrkräften haben wir den Eindruck bekommen, dass sie den festen Willen haben, die Schule wieder aufzubauen. In einem Gespräch mit den Schuldirektoren und Verantwortlichen der Diözese ging es auch um die Zukunft der Schulen. Die Schulen haben eine lange Geschichte, die bis in das Jahr 1876 zurückgeht. Die Schulen, mittlerweile vier, haben hervorragende Leistungen für die Gesellschaft in Kaschmir erbracht. Die Arbeit unter den Muslimen ist eine große Herausforderung. Die Verantwortlichen in der Diözese und Mitarbeitende in den Schulen wollen die Arbeit ausbauen, obwohl die Lage nicht so günstig ist. Unsere Partner merken, dass einerseits ihre Arbeit hoch geschätzt wird, aber auf der andere Seite erhalten sie kaum Unterstützung. Die wenigen Christen im Kaschmir Tal müssen die ganze Last der Arbeit tragen. So stellen manche die Relevanz der Arbeit in Frage. Die negativen Erfahrungen entmutigen die Verantwortlichen aber nicht. Im Gegenteil, sie wollen die niedergebrannte Schule wieder aufbauen und planen, die Arbeit in den Schulen auszubauen. Sie sehen in der Bildungsarbeit einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Frieden und zur Weiterentwicklung einer offenen und toleranten Gesellschaft.

poorer children. The answer was that some needy children receive up to 75% reduction of tuition fees. The Christian school bodies try to offer a good education for the children, including excursions, students' camps and activities outside the curriculum.

## Visiting the schools at Tangmarg and Srinagar

On Wednesday we visited the school at Tangmarg, that had been burnt down by Muslim extremists in 2010. We were much impressed by the work done in the school. Most of the nearly 500 pupils are Muslims who like to go to that school and would be ready to help at the reconstruction of it. In talks with pupils and teachers we got the impression that they have the strong will to reconstruct their school. In a talk with the school principals and persons responsible in the Diocese we also discussed about the future of the schools. The schools have a long history dating back to the year 1876. The schools, meanwhile four of them, have rendered extraordinary service for the society in Kashmir. The work among the Muslims is a great challenge. Responsible bodies in the Diocese and collaborators in the schools want to extend the work although the circumstances are not very beneficial. Our partners are aware that, on the one hand, their work is held in high esteem, but on the other hand they hardly receive any support for their work. The few Christians in the valley of Kashmir must carry the whole workload alone. So, some people question the relevance of that work. But the negative experiences do not discourage the persons in charge. To the contrary, they want to reconstruct the burnt-down school and are planning to further develop the work in the schools. They see in the educational work an important contribution to peace, and to the further development of an open and tolerant society. On Thursday 23 May the delegation was welcomed by the school community of the Tyndale – Biscoe & Mallinson Schools at Sheikh



Am Donnerstag, den 23. Mai wurde die Delegation von der Schulgemeinschaft der Tyndale – Biscoe & Mallinson Schulen in Sheikh Bagh begrüßt. Hier hatten wir Gelegenheit, mit den SchülerInnen und Lehrkräften zu sprechen. Anschließend besuchten wir die Kaschmir Valley Schule in der Nähe des Flughafens. In allen seinen Ansprachen würdigte der Kirchenpräsident die kompetente und erfolgreiche Arbeit und betonte die Rolle der Bildungsarbeit in den Schulen für die Entwicklung und für den Aufbau der Gesellschaft.

## **Begegnungen in Jammu und in Amritsar**

Am 23. Mai flogen wir gegen Mittag weiter nach Jammu, wo die Leiterin der St. Thomas Schule, Frau Esther Williams, mit ihrem Mann Johnny Williams uns erwartete. Nach dem Mittagessen fuhren wir mit zwei Autos weiter nach Amritsar, wo wir gegen 22 Uhr ankamen. Wir wurden herzlich von einem Team der Diözese begrüßt. In Amritsar erlebten wir ca. 47 Celsius Außentemperatur.

Am Freitag früh um 6 Uhr besuchten wir den Golden Temple, eine besondere religiöse Erfahrung für alle TeilnehmerInnen. Nach der Andacht im Bischofsbüro hatten die TeilnehmerInnen Gelegenheit, die Arbeit der Diözese kennenzulernen. An der Andacht nahmen alle Mitarbeitende teil, einschließlich Hindus und Sikhs. Es ist eine Besonderheit der Diözese, dass hier Sikhs, Hindus und Muslime als Mitarbeitende eingestellt sind. Ein besonderer Schwerpunkt der Arbeit der Diözese ist die Bildungsarbeit. Die Diözese unterhält in Regionen gute Schulen. Obwohl die Mehrheit der Schülerinnen und Schüler nichtchristlich sind, sieht die Diözese die Bildungsarbeit als einen wichtigen Beitrag für die Gesellschaft. Eintreten für Menschenrechte und für die Rechte der Dalits und der Frauen sind wichtige Schwerpunkte der Arbeit. Die Diözese hat ein tatkräftiges Team. Eine neue Generation von Führungskräften prägt langsam das Geschehen. Am Spätnachmittag besuchten wir das Dorf Dogar, ca. 33 km nordwestlich von Amritsar. Die Mehrheit der Einwohner sind Dalits ohne Landbesitz. 178 der 194 Familien sind Arbeiter der Grundbesitzer,

Bagh. Here, we had the opportunity to talk with pupils and teachers. After that we visited the Kashmir Valley School near the airport. Our Church President underlined in all his addresses the competent and successful work, and stressed the role of the educational work in those schools for the development and the building-up of the society.

## Encounters in Jammu and in Amritsar

By midday on 23 May we took a flight towards Jammu where the principal of St. Thomas School, Ms Esther Williams expected us together with her husband Johnny Williams. After lunch we drove with two cars onward to Amritsar where we arrived by 10.00 p.m. We were cordially received by a team of the Diocese. In Amritsar we had about 47 degrees Celsius outside.

On Friday morning at 6 o'clock we visited the Golden Temple, what was a special religious experience for all participants. After the prayer in the bishop's office, the participants had the chance to get to know the work of the Diocese. All employees including Hindus and Sikhs took part in the prayer. It is a particularity of the diocese that Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims are employed here as collaborators. A special emphasis of the diocesan work is education. The Diocese maintains good schools in many regions. Although the majority of the pupils are no Christians, the Diocese sees its educational work as an important contribution to the society. Standing up for human rights and for the rights of Dalits and women, these are important issues in the work of the Diocese which disposes of an energetic team. A new generation of leaders is gradually marking the activities there.

Later in the afternoon we visited the village of Dogar, about 33 km north-west of Amritsar. The majority of the inhabitants are landless Dalits. 178 of the 194 families are workers for the land owners who exploit the labourers. Many inhabitants are analphabets. Nearly 95%

welche die Arbeiter ausbeuten. Viele Einwohner sind Analphabeten. Fast 95 % der Kinder leiden an Anämie und 40% leiden an Unterernährung. Die Diözese hat es sich zur Aufgabe gemacht, sich in diesem Dorf im Bereich Bildung und Gesundheit zu engagieren. Konkret hat sie Schritte unternommen, um die Gesundheit der Kinder zu verbessern. Es werden vor allem die vorhandenen staatlichen Hilfen zugänglich gemacht.

Am Samstag Vormittag besuchten wir das Gesundheitsprojekt von Frau Dr. Alma Ram in dem Dorf Munda Pind. Frau Dr. Alma Ram leitet die Organisation „Jagriti Bhalai Kendra“, die es sich zum Ziel gesetzt hat, eine gesunde Gesellschaft aufzubauen und Multiplikatoren für diese Aufgabe zu gewinnen. Sie und ihr Team gehen in die Dörfer und machen Feldstudien. Danach wird geschaut, wo „Jagriti Bhalai Kendra“ intervenieren und helfen kann. Sie führen dann Gespräche mit den Verantwortlichen in den Dörfern, um effektive Maßnahmen zu ergreifen. Falls die Verantwortlichen einverstanden sind, werden zwei Personen ausgewählt, die eine Schulung für ihre Aufgaben erhalten. In ihren Studien hat die „Jagriti Bhalai Kendra“ herausgefunden, dass die Geburtsrate bei weiblichen Babys überdurchschnittlich niedrig ist, dass Mädchen kaum in der Ausbildung vorkommen, dass Mädchen im Alter von 14 oder 15 Jahren verheiratet werden, dass Drogen - und Alkoholmissbrauch weit verbreitet sind, dass Hepatitis B, C, und HIV in jedem Dorf anzutreffen ist, dass viele Menschen wegen mangelnder Fürsorge und aufgrund von Ignoranz sterben. Es wurden in den Dörfern Gruppen gebildet, um diese Problem zu überwinden. Ein großes Problem in den Dörfern ist HIV/AIDS, was sich stetig weiter ausbreitet. Lastwagenfahrer und ihre Familien sind stark betroffen. Die HIV/AIDS-Patienten (über 66 Patienten, darunter 5 Kinder) werden oft von ihren Mitbürgern und Familien gemieden. Eine Selbsthilfegruppe wurde gegründet, um sich gegenseitig Hilfe zu leisten. Ferner ist in der Region die Tuberkulose ein großes Problem. „Jagriti Bhalai Kendra“ arbeitet mit lokalen Helferinnen und Helfern, die die Menschen beraten. Es wurde eine Hotline für Hilfe eingerichtet. In allen Bereichen stellt Frau Dr. Alma Ram große Fortschritte fest.

of the children suffer from anaemia and 40% are malnourished. The Diocese has chosen the task to get involved in this village for education and health. They undertook concrete steps to improve the children's health. Above all, the given government subsidies are being made available.

On Saturday morning we visited the health project of Ms Dr. Alma Ram in the village of Munda Pind. Ms Dr. Alma Ram leads the organization "Jagrithi Bhalai Kendra" that aims to build up a healthy society and gain multipliers for that task. She and her team go to the villages to do field studies. Then they check where "Jagrithi Bhalai Kendra" could intervene and help. They talk to the responsible persons in the villages in order to take effective action. If the responsible persons agree, two persons are chosen who receive a training for their tasks. In its studies "Jagrithi Bhalai Kendra" has found out that the birth rate of female babies is above-average low, that girls are hardly present in education, that girls are being married at the age of 14 or 15, that drug abuse and alcohol are widely spread, that hepatitis B, C and HIV are to be found in every village, that many people die because of a lack of care and due to ignorance. Groups were formed in the villages to overcome these problems.

A great problem in the villages is HIV/AIDS that constantly spreads out. Truck drivers and their families are strongly affected. The HIV/AIDS-patients (over 66 patients, including 5 children) are often shunned by their fellow citizens and families. A self-help group was founded to mutually assist each other. And even tuberculosis is a great problem in the region. "Jagrithi Bhalai Kendra" works together with local helpers who counsel the people. A help-hotline was installed. Ms Dr. Alma Ram sees great progress in all fields.

A very special experience was a trip to the Indian-Pakistani border at Wagha where strange rites are being exercised on both sides to demonstrate strength and patriotism. At every visit there I must think of the German-French relationship that, in my view, could be a model for the relationship between India and Pakistan.

Ein besonderes Erlebnis war eine Fahrt an die Indisch-Pakistanische Grenze in Wagha, wo eigenartige Riten auf beiden Seiten durchgeführt werden, um Stärke und Patriotismus zur Schau zu stellen. Bei jedem Besuch hier denke ich an die Deutsch-Französische Beziehung, die m. E. ein Vorbild für die Beziehung zwischen Indien und Pakistan sein kann.

### **„Zeugnis geben von der Hoffnung in uns – Christliches Zeugnis heute“: internationales Seminar mit Delegierten aus allen asiatischen Partnerkirchen der EKHN in Dalhousie**

Die meisten Teilnehmer des Seminars reisten bereits am Samstag, den 25. Mai an. Bischof Samantaroy begrüßte die Teilnehmer herzlich während des Abendessens, zu dem die Leitung der Alexandera Schule eingeladen hatte. Es folgte eine kurze Vorstellungsrunde. Die Teilnahme an den Gottesdiensten am Sonntag gab den Gästen Einblicke in die Gemeinden rund um Amritsar. Kirchenpräsident Dr. Jung predigte in der Christuskirche in Amritsar.

Am 27. Mai früh morgens fuhren wir mit Autos nach Dalhousie, im Bundesstaat Himachal Pradesh. Das Seminar mit Delegierten aus allen asiatischen Partnerkirchen der EKHN in Dalhousie war m. E. gut gelungen. Die großartige Unterstützung des Bischofs und seines Team hat erheblich dazu beigetragen. Die Bibelarbeit des Kirchenpräsidenten und das Impulsreferat von Dr. Mani Chacko waren hervorragend und boten Stoff und Anregungen für Diskussionen und Austausch. Mission wird als gemeinsame Aufgabe angesehen. Wir haben auch festgestellt, dass wir als Partner vor gemeinsamen Herausforderungen stehen und dass wir einander bereichern können. In vielen Beiträgen gab es eine enge Verknüpfung zwischen Mission und Diakonie. Verkündigung, Pflege des Gemeindelebens und diakonisches Engagement gehören zusammen. Das Seminar verdeutlichte

## **“Bearing witness to the hope in us – Christian witness today”: an international seminar with delegates from all Asian partner churches of EKHN at Dalhousie**

Most of the participants at the seminar arrived already on Saturday 25 May. Bishop Samantaroy welcomed the participants cordially during the dinner to which the direction of the Alexander School had invited. A short presentation round followed. The participation in the Sunday services offered the guests insights into the congregations around Amritsar. Church President Dr. Jung held the sermon in the Christ Church cathedral at Amritsar.

On 27 May early in the morning, we drove with cars to Dalhousie in the federal state of Himachal Pradesh. The seminar with delegates from all Asian partner churches of EKHN at Dalhousie was a good success, as I see it. The excellent support by the Bishop and his team contributed essentially to that. The Church President's bible study and the opening lecture by Dr. Mani Chacko were outstanding and offered stuff and impulses for discussion and an exchange of ideas. Mission is considered a joint task. We also learned that we as partners are faced by challenges common to all of us, and that we can enrich one another. Various contributions stressed a close interlinking between mission and diaconia. Preaching, attending the congregational life, and diaconal commitment belong together. The seminar clarified the different understandings and ideas on the subject of mission and

die unterschiedlichen Verständnisse und Auffassungen zum Thema Mission und interreligiösen Beziehungen. Sprachliche Probleme erschwerten manchmal die Verständigung. Die Diözese Amritsar unter der Leitung von Bischof Samantaroy hat die Organisation des Seminars und des Rahmenprogramms hervorragend unterstützt. Nach dem Seminar fahren wir am Donnerstag, den 30. Mai, mit Autos nach Amritsar und dann mit dem Flieger nach Neu-Delhi, wo wir in CNI-Bhawan übernachteten. Sehr früh morgens besichtigten wir Neu-Delhi mit seinen Sehenswürdigkeiten.

## Treffen mit dem Generalsekretär der CNI

Nach dem Frühstück trafen wir mit dem Generalsekretär der Church of North India (CNI) Alwan Masih zusammen zu einem Gespräch, das sehr informativ war. Die CNI, deren Gebiet geografisch sehr weit ist und außer 4 südlichen Bundesstaaten das gesamte Gebiet abdeckt, ist an Mitgliedern eine kleine Kirche. Christen sind eine Minderheit in der indischen Gesellschaft. CNI - Mitglieder sind konfrontiert mit zahlreichen Diskriminierungen. Das kirchliche Leben wird sehr intensiv gepflegt. Es werden Tage des Fastens und Betens durchgeführt. Die CNI sieht es als eine wichtige Aufgabe an, ihre eigenen Mitglieder zu unterstützen. Um deren Berufschancen im höheren staatlichen Dienst zu stärken, werden besondere Coachings für KandidatInnen angeboten. Mehrfach wurde betont, dass unsere Partner in Indien einer Minderheit angehören und überwiegend aus den Reihen der Dalits kommen. Als Generalsekretär musste Herr Masih manche unbeliebte Sparmaßnahme durchführen, um einigermaßen über die Runden zu kommen. Die CNI hat zahlreiche Liegenschaften, leider gibt es auch reichlich gerichtliche Auseinandersetzungen um diese Liegenschaften, was viel Zeit und Geld kostet. Die CNI ist sehr stolz auf ihre Erfolge im Bildungsbereich und setzt sich für die Bildung benachteiligter Kinder ein.

Die EKHN hat keine direkte Partnerschaft mit der CNI, sondern nur mit der Diözese Amritsar. Es besteht der Wunsch auf Seiten der CNI,

inter-religious relations. However, language problems sometimes hampered our understanding. The Diocese of Amritsar under the direction of Bishop Samantaroy has excellently promoted the organization of the seminar and the supporting program.

After the seminar we drove, on Thursday 30 May, with cars to Amritsar, and from there with the airplane to New Delhi, where we stayed overnight at the CNI-Bhawan. Very early in the morning we visited New Delhi with its places of interest.

## Meeting the General Secretary of CNI

After breakfast we met the General Secretary of the Church of North India (CNI), Mr Alwan Masih, for a conversation that was very informative. The CNI, covering a geographically very large territory except the 4 southern federal states, is a very small church regarding its membership. Christians are a minority in the Indian society. Members of CNI are confronted by numerous discriminations. The church life is very intensive, there are days of fasting and prayer. The CNI sees it an important task to strengthen its own members. In order to enhance career chances of CNI-members in the upper civil service, special coaching for candidates is offered. It was repeatedly underlined that our partners in India are a minority in their country and that they primarily come from the group of Dalits. As the General Secretary, Mr. Masih had had to carry out some unpopular austerity measures, just for to somehow make ends meet. The CNI has large real estate, but unfortunately there are numerous litigations in court for this property, what affords much time and money. The CNI is very proud of its success in the field of education and works for the education of disadvantaged children.

The EKHN has no direct partnership with the CNI, only with the Diocese of Amritsar. There is the wish on the side of the CNI to have more relationships to the churches in Germany.

After the conversation at CNI we had enough time for a shopping tour



mehr Beziehungen zu den Kirchen in Deutschland zu pflegen. Nach dem Gespräch in der CNI hatten wir genügend Zeit für eine Shoppingtour und für einen Besuch der Altstadt von Delhi. Nach dem Abendessen in der Altstadt fuhren wir zum Flughafen. Die Ankunft in Frankfurt war um 7.30 Uhr am 1. Juni.

## Abschließende Bemerkungen

- Für die Delegation der Kirchenleitung der EKHN war der Besuch eine Gelegenheit, die Partner vor Ort sowie die Partnerschaftsarbeit in der Praxis kennenzulernen.
- Der Besuch des Kirchenpräsidenten und seines Teams wurde in der Diözese Amritsar positiv aufgenommen. Der Besuch im Kaschmir Tal war wirklich ein Zeichen der Solidarität. Für mich war diese Reise insbesondere unter dem Aspekt der Solidarität sehr bedeutsam. Unsere Partner in Asien brauchen vor allem unsere moralische Unterstützung und unsere Gebete. Fast alle unsere Partner leben als Minderheiten in den jeweiligen Ländern und müssen mit Nachteilen und Diskriminierungen leben.
- Das Seminar bot die erstmalige Gelegenheit für unsere Partner in einem asiatischen Land zusammenzukommen. Früher trafen sich die Partner meistens in Deutschland, obwohl sie sogar manchmal aus dem gleichen Land anreisten. Es wäre wichtig, diese Art des Austausches fortzusetzen. Es gibt genügend Themen, die besprochen werden könnten. Eine Fortsetzung des Themas „Mission“ wäre auch sinnvoll, da es hier verschiedene Ansätze gibt. Aber auch Themen wie interreligiöser Dialog, Ökologie, Frieden etc sind wichtig für den gemeinsamen Austausch. Das Thema „Mission“ könnte auch ein gemeinsames Thema für die PROK und für die indischen Kirchen sein, da die PROK zunehmend in Indien missionarisch aktiv ist.
- Das Seminar hat auch die unterschiedlichen theologischen Prägungen und Denkweisen unserer Partner gezeigt. Die theologischen Positionen sind sehr unterschiedlich. Dies kann

and a visit of the Old Town of Delhi. After the dinner in the Old Town, was the departure to the airport. Arrival at Frankfurt 7:30 a.m. on 1st of June

## Concluding remarks

- For the delegation of the EKHN Church Government the visit was an occasion to get to know the local partners and to see the partnership work in practice.
- The visit of the Church President with his team was very welcome in the Diocese of Amritsar. The visit in the Kashmir Valley was really a sign of solidarity. For me, this journey was particularly important under the aspect of solidarity. Our partners in Asia need, above all, our moral backing and our prayers. Nearly all of our partners are living as minorities in the respective countries and must live with shortcomings and discrimination.
- The seminar offered for the first time a chance for our partners in Asia to come together in an Asian country. In the past, the partners mostly met in Germany, although they sometimes came from the same country. It would be important to continue this kind of exchange. There are enough topics that could be discussed. A continuation of the topic of “mission” would also be reasonable since there are various approaches to that subject. But also subjects like inter-religious dialogue, ecology, peace, etc. are important topics for the common exchange. The subject of “mission” could be a common topic as well for PROK (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea) and the Indian churches, since PROK is increasingly active with missionaries in India.
- The seminar has also shown the different theological characters and ways of thinking among our partners. The theological positions are very variant. This can be an enrichment and enable mutual ecumenical learning.

eine Bereicherung sein und gegenseitiges ökumenisches Lernen ermöglichen.

- Der Besuch hat bestätigt, dass die Entwicklungsprojekte, die die EKHN unterstützt, Erfolge zeigen, insbesondere im Bereich Menschenrechtsfragen und Unterstützung der Dalits und Frauen. Hilfe für Bildungsarbeit ist eine Hilfe für die Zukunft. Nach meiner Einschätzung sind die Projekte in Amritsar unterstützungswürdig. Allerdings braucht die Projektarbeit im Rahmen der Partnerschaftsarbeit Qualifizierung und kompetente Begleitung. Dies sehe ich als eine wichtige Aufgabe für mich als Beauftragter für Entwicklung und Partnerschaft an.
- Wie weit wir als EKHN den Wiederaufbau der Schule in Tangmarg/Kaschmir unterstützen können, muss noch diskutiert werden. Dabei sollten wir auch eine Kooperation mit den Muslimen im Bereich der EKHN suchen.
- Insgesamt bestehen lebendige partnerschaftliche Beziehungen zwischen unseren Partnern. Die ehrenamtlichen und hauptamtlichen Verantwortlichen auf beiden Seiten geben sich sehr viel Mühe, die Partnerschaft lebendig zu halten. Die Betonung der Projektarbeit könnte mit thematischer und inhaltlicher Arbeit ergänzt werden. Gleichzeitig beobachtet man einen Rückgang in der Akzeptanz der ökumenischen Partnerschaften. Ich persönlich sehe es als eine wichtige Aufgabe an, die Relevanz der Partnerschaften für unsere Kirche heraus zu stellen und die Freude an der Partnerschaftsarbeit zu vermitteln. Ich bin überzeugt, dass ein Blick nach Außen uns bereichern und anregen kann. Darüber hinaus muss man auch fragen, welche Rolle diese Partnerschaften in unserem gesamtkirchlichen Leben spielen. Nehmen wir die Impulse aus den Erfahrungen in den Partnerschaften auch in den kirchenpolitischen Entscheidungsprozessen auf?

- The visit has confirmed the fact that the development projects supported by EKHN do show success, especially in the field of human rights issues and the assistance for Dalits and women. Aid for educational work is a help for the future. The way I see it, the projects at Amritsar are worth the assistance. However, the project work within the scope of church partnerships requires qualification and a competent accompaniment. I see this as an important task for myself as the Secretary for development and partnership in our church.
- It still has to be discussed how far we as EKHN can assist the reconstruction of the school at Tangmarg/Kashmir. For this we should also aim for a cooperation with the Muslims living in the area of EKHN.
- In total there are lively partnership relations between our partners. The honorary and salaried persons responsible on both sides take great trouble to maintain the partnership alive. The focus of project work could be complemented by work with regards to issues and content. At the same time one can observe a reduction in the acceptance of the ecumenical partnerships here. I personally see it as an important task to stress the relevance of the partnerships for our church, and to convey the joy in the partnership work. I am convinced that a look to the outside can enrich and stimulate us. Besides that, we have also to ask which role these partnerships are playing in the life of our church. Are we really integrating the impulses from the experience in partnerships into our decision-making processes regarding church policy?

# Agenda

## A Seminar with Church President Dr. Volker Jung of the EKHN and the Asian Partners of the EKHN

### “Giving account of our Hope: Christian Witness Today”

25th May – 30th May 2013

25.5.13 evening Arrival in Amritsar  
Welcome

26.5.13 Services in the local Congregations  
Preaching in the local congregations  
(1 Kings 8, 22-29, Romans 8, 1-11, John 14, 8-17)  
*Preachers: Bishop Dr. Daniel, Dr. Jung,  
Rev. Knoche, Fr. Manimala, Rev. Saragih,  
Rev. Thonipara*  
evening Get together  
We introduce each other/Introduction  
Night Prayer, *Krishna Godavari*

27.5.13 06.00 Departure from Amritsar  
11.00 Arrival in Dalhousie  
15.00 Bible study (1. Peter 3, 8-17), *Church President*  
16.30 Key note Lecture, *Rev. Dr. Mani Chacko, Delhi*  
Discussions

- Get together  
Night Prayer, *East Kerala*
- 28.5.13 08:00 Morning Prayer  
09.30 Giving Account of our Hope:  
Christian Witness Today (Korean perspective)  
10.30 Giving Account of our Hope: Christian Witness  
Today (Indonesian perspective - GKPS and GMIM)  
11:45 Giving Account of our Hope: Christian Witness  
Today (Henry Martyn Institue, India, GKPS)  
15.00 Giving Account of our Hope: Christian Witness  
Today (German perspective)  
16.30 Experiences in Mission (plenary session)  
evening Get together  
Night Prayer, *PROK*
- 29.5.13 08:00 Morning Prayer, *GMIM*  
09.30 Giving Account of our Hope: Christian Witness  
Today (Indian perspective: Krishna – Godavari and  
East Kerala)  
11.00 Short Presentation of Mission Projects, *All*  
15.00 Partners in Mission – our common witness”  
plenary discussion with a common statement, *All*  
17.30 Worship with the Lord’s Supper, EKHN/Amritsa,  
Sermon Bishop Samantharoy  
evening Get together
- 30.5.13 6.00 Departure from Dalhousie for Amritsar by car/bus  
15.55 Flight Delhi at 15.55



# Bibelarbeit zu 1. Petrus 3,8-17

## Bible Study about 1 Peter 3:8-17



„Giving account of our Hope“.

**Das ist das biblische Motto für unsere Konsultation – That is the biblical theme of our consultation.**

**Dr. Volker Jung, Kirchenpräsident der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau (EKHN)**

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Volker Jung, Church President of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany**



Wir sind geprägt von unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen, politischen, kulturellen und religiösen Situationen. Gemeinsam wollen wir darüber nachdenken, was es in unseren unterschiedlichen Situationen heute bedeutet, von unserer Hoffnung Zeugnis zu geben. Wir beginnen, indem wir uns in aller Unterschiedlichkeit auf unsere gemeinsame Grundlage besinnen: auf Worte der Bibel. Lasst uns also gemeinsam auf Worte der Bibel hören und über sie nachdenken und reden. Ich bin sicher, dass wir im Laufe dieser Tage immer wieder auf diese Worte zurückkommen. Ich lese einen Abschnitt aus dem 1. Petrus-Brief, Kapitel 3, die Verse 8 bis 17. Aus diesem Abschnitt stammt unser Motto.

Endlich aber seid allesamt gleichgesinnt, mitleidig, brüderlich, barmherzig, demütig. Vergeltet nicht Böses mit Bösem oder Scheltwort mit Scheltwort, sondern segnet vielmehr, weil ihr dazu berufen seid, dass ihr den Segen ererbt. Denn »wer das Leben lieben und gute Tage sehen will, der hüte seine Zunge, dass sie nichts Böses rede, und seine Lippen, dass sie nicht betrügen. Er wende sich ab vom Bösen und tue Gutes; er suche Frieden und jage ihm nach. Denn die Augen des Herrn sehen auf die Gerechten, und seine Ohren hören auf ihr Gebet; das Angesicht des Herrn aber steht wider die, die Böses tun« (Psalm 34, 13-17). Und wer ist es, der euch schaden könnte, wenn ihr dem Guten nacheifert? Und wenn ihr auch leidet um der Gerechtigkeit willen, so seid ihr doch selig. Fürchtet euch nicht vor ihrem Drohen und erschreckt nicht; heiligt aber den Herrn Christus in euren Herzen. Seid allezeit bereit zur Verantwortung vor jedermann, der von euch Rechenschaft fordert über die Hoffnung, die in euch ist, und das mit Sanftmut und Gottesfurcht, und habt ein gutes Gewissen, damit die, die euch verleumden, zuschanden werden, wenn sie euren guten Wandel in Christus schmähen. Denn es ist besser, wenn es Gottes Wille ist, dass ihr um guter Taten willen leidet als um böser Taten willen.

Unser Motto ist die zentrale Aussage dieses Abschnitts. Hier wird gesagt, was zu tun ist. Es wird ermahnt, jederzeit bereit zu sein, die

We come from different social, political, cultural and religious backgrounds. Despite these differences, we want to contemplate together, what it means today to bear witness to our hopes. We will commence by recalling, what we have in common, namely, the Word of God. So let us hear together the Gospel and think and talk about it. I'm sure that we will come across these words again and again in the next couple of days. I read you now a passage from the first Epistle of Peter, chapter 3, verses 8 to 17. Our motto is taken from this passage.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (Psalms 34: 13-17). And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

The central message of this passage constitutes our motto. It says what has to be done. We are admonished to be always prepared and to give testimonials of the hope that is within us. The other statements are to be understood as directives or guidelines, as to how this can be accomplished. First I will talk about the concept of „Hope“, to which we have to bear witness.

Hoffnung zu bezeugen, die in euch ist. Die anderen Aussagen lassen sich so verstehen, dass mit ihnen gesagt wird, wie dies geschehen kann bzw. als Erklärungen oder Erläuterungen dazu. Ich bleibe zunächst bei der Hoffnung, also bei dem, was zu bezeugen ist.

## Die Hoffnung

Am Anfang des Petrus-Briefes heißt es: „Gelobt sei Gott, der Vater unseres Herrn Jesus Christus, der uns nach seiner großen Barmherzigkeit wiedergeboren hat zu einer lebendigen Hoffnung durch die Auferstehung Jesu Christi von den Toten, zu einem unvergänglichen und unbefleckten und unverwelklichen Erbe, das aufbewahrt wird im Himmel für euch, die ihr aus Gottes Macht durch den Glauben bewahrt werdet zur Seligkeit, die bereit ist, dass sie offenbar werde zu der letzten Zeit.“ (1 Petr 1,3)

Die große Hoffnung ist die Hoffnung auf das Leben, das stärker ist als der Tod. Es ist eine Hoffnung für dieses Leben. Und es ist eine Hoffnung, die über den Tod hinausreicht. Es ist die Hoffnung auf ewiges Leben. Bereits jetzt, mitten in der Welt des Todes, sind wir wiedergeboren. Das heißt: Wir sind befreit von der Macht des Todes. Alles, was jetzt und hier den Tod bringt, Krankheit, Unfall, Gewalt, soll keine letzte Macht über unser Leben haben. Es ist deshalb eine lebendige Hoffnung. Es ist eine Hoffnung, die bereits jetzt und hier Kraft zum Leben schenkt. Es ist eine Hoffnung, die lebendig macht. Diese Hoffnung ist eingebettet in eine Hoffnung, die über dieses Leben hinausblickt. Sie vertraut auf Gottes Gerechtigkeit und seine Liebe am Ende unserer Zeit und aller Zeit. Warum können wir dies hoffen? Weil Jesus Christus von den Toten auferstanden ist. Die Hoffnung ist keine allgemeine Weisheit und Wahrheit über dieses Leben. Sie ist uns geschenkt mit und in einer Person – in Jesus Christus. Das Zeugnis von der Hoffnung, die in uns ist, ist deshalb immer Zeugnis von Jesus Christus.

## Hope

At the outset of the Epistle of Peter we read: „Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time“ (1 Peter 1:3-5).

The biggest hope is the hope for life, which is stronger than death. It is a hope for this life. Moreover, it is a hope, extending beyond death. It is the hope for eternal life. We are already reborn in the middle of this world, which is destined to come to an end. In other words, we have been delivered from the power of death. Everything that can bring us death in our earthly life, sickness, accidents, violence, for example, shall not have the final power over our lives. Hence, it is a living hope. It is a hope that gives us strength to live in the here and now. It is a hope that makes us alive. This hope is embedded in a hope that looks beyond the grave. It has faith in the justice of God and in His love at the end of our time and at the end of all times. Why can we nurture such hope? Because Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. This hope is not just a widely recognized understanding or an accepted truth in life on earth. We were endowed with it, when Jesus Christ was given to us. For this reason our testimonial of hope always bears witness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Die Fremdlinge

Wem sind nun diese Worte zuerst gesagt bzw. geschrieben worden? Unser Brief beginnt mit den Worten: „Petrus, ein Apostel Jesu Christi, an die auserwählten Fremdlinge, die verstreut wohnen in Pontus, Galatien, Kappadozien, der Provinz Asien und Bithynien.“ (1. Petr 1,1) Die Fremdlinge sind Christen in heidnischem Gebiet. Das genannte Gebiet sind Provinzen des römischen Reiches in der heutigen Türkei. Die Christen leben dort als Minderheit.

Die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft sagt: Der Brief wurde nicht von Petrus persönlich geschrieben. Es ist ein Schreiben, mit dem die Autorität des Petrus in dieser Region gestärkt werden soll. Es wurde vermutlich gegen Ende des 1. Jahrhunderts geschrieben. Das war eine Zeit, in der die Christen in dieser Gegend nicht direkt verfolgt wurden. Aber sie wurden sehr kritisch gesehen. Sie waren auch immer wieder Anfeindungen und Angriffen ausgesetzt. Man warf ihnen Gotteslästerung, Aberglauben und Menschenhass vor. Gotteslästerung, weil sie die griechischen und römischen Götter nicht akzeptierten; Aberglaube, weil sie miteinander Abendmahl feierten; Menschenhass, weil sie an manchen öffentlichen Feiern nicht teilnahmen. Auch wenn es in dieser Zeit in dieser Gegend keine Verfolgungen gab, war die Situation immer wieder sehr bedrohlich. Der Brief ermutigt jedenfalls, in der Bedrohung nicht zu verzweifeln, sondern auszuhalten. So heißt es an einer Stelle: „Ihr Lieben, lasst euch durch die Hitze nicht befremden, die euch widerfährt zu eurer Versuchung, als widerführe euch etwas Seltsames.“ (1. Petr 4,12)

Der 1. Petrusbrief sagt also: Auch wenn ihr bedrängt und bedroht werdet, hört nicht auf, die lebendige Hoffnung zu bezeugen, die in euch ist!

Bevor ich mich dem zuwende, wie dies geschehen soll, möchte ich noch auf zwei Gedanken hinweisen, mit denen die Gemeinde ermutigt wird.

Der erste Gedanke: Immer wieder wird der Gemeinde gesagt; dass Gott auf ihrer Seite ist. Das wird mit ganz starken Worten gesagt. Ihr seid auserwählt. Ihr seid Priester. Ihr seid Könige. Wörtlich heißt es:

## Strangers

To whom were these words addressed in the beginning or for whom were they written down initially?

Our letter starts with the words: „Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.“ (1 Peter 1:1)

The strangers are Christians, scattered in heathen territories. The named regions were provinces of the Roman Empire, situated in the geographical area of modern Turkey. Christians lived there as a minority.

Many New Testament scholars tell us: This letter was not written by the apostle Peter personally. It is a letter, which was written to bolster the authority of Peter in those regions. It probably dates back to the end of the first century A.D. In those regions Christians were not persecuted directly at that time, but they were viewed with a very critical eye. Again and again they had to contend with hostility and aggression. They were accused of blasphemy and considered to be superstitious and misanthropic. The charge of blasphemy stuck to them, because they refused to worship the Greek or Roman gods. The Lord's Supper, which they celebrated, was seen as a superstition. Since they did not participate in public celebrations, they were seen as misanthropists. And even though there were no persecutions in those regions during that time, they were threatened repeatedly. Thus, the letter encourages them not to despair in an unfriendly environment, but to persevere instead. Hence, one passage tells them: „Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.“ (1 Peter 4:12)

In other words, the first letter of Peter states: if you are hard-pressed or even if you are threatened, you should not stop to bear witness to the living hope within you!

Before elaborating on how this is to be done, I'd like to point out two thoughts, with which the congregation is comforted.

The first thought: the congregation is assured again and again that God is on its side. This is underscored with very powerful words. You

„Ihr aber seid das auserwählte Geschlecht, die königliche Priesterschaft, das heilige Volk des Eigentums ...“ (1. Petr 2,9). Es sind Worte, die in einer Situation der Bedrohung, das Selbstbewusstsein stärken. Selbstbewusstsein nicht im Sinn des Bewusstseins der eigenen Stärke und Kraft, sondern im Sinne des Vertrauens auf die Stärke und die Kraft Gottes.

Der zweite Gedanke ist eine Antwort auf eine Frage. Die Frage lautet: Aber wenn Gott uns erwählt hat, warum müssen wir dann leiden? Die Antwort: Weil ihr mit Christus verbunden seid. Das Leiden wird dabei geradezu zum Beweis dafür, mit Christus verbunden zu sein. Mit ihm im Leiden verbunden zu sein, bedeutet dann natürlich auch mit ihm in seiner Herrlichkeit verbunden zu sein.

Der 1. Petrusbrief hat in all dem einen besonderen Blick auf die Christen in dieser Welt. Sie leben mitten in dieser Welt, aber sie haben auch eine besondere Stellung in dieser Welt. Genau betrachtet sind sie „Fremdlinge“. Sie sind „Fremdlinge“ nicht nur in einer heidnischen Umwelt. Sie sind auch „Fremdlinge“ in einem geistlichen Sinn. Sie sind in dieser Welt nicht nur geboren zu einem Leben, das mit dem Tod endet. Sie sind in dieser Welt jetzt schon wiedergeboren zu einem neuen, zu einem ewigen Leben. Sie leiden in dieser Welt, aber in ihrem Leiden sind sie mit dem verbunden, der alles Leiden überwunden hat. Sie sind Menschen in allen Abhängigkeiten – als Bürger im römischen Reich, manche gar als Sklaven und sie sind zugleich Könige und Priester. Das alles macht sie zu „Fremdlingen“ in dieser Welt. Und in dieser Welt sollen sie ihre Hoffnung bezeugen. Und sie sollen dies in dieser Welt tun, mitten in dieser Welt. Das heißt: Den Christen wird nicht empfohlen sich zurückzuziehen. Kein Rückzug in eine fromme Innerlichkeit. Kein Rückzug in eine Sonderwelt, wo sie nur unter sich bleiben.

have been chosen. You are priests. You are kings. Verbatim: „But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ...“ (1 Peter 2:9). These are words that give self-confidence in a hostile world. Self-confidence doesn't mean at all exaggerated self-esteem, quite the contrary, it means to have faith in the mighty powerful God.

The second thought answers a question, the question being: but if God has chosen us, why do we have to suffer? The answer is: Because you are united with Christ. Seen this way, suffering becomes virtually the proof that the believer is truly united with Him. To share Christ's suffering means, of course, being also united with Him in His glory.

In all of this the first letter of Peter looks at Christians in this world in a particular way. They live in the middle of this world, but they also have a unique position in it. To be precise, they are „strangers“. They are not just „strangers“ in a heathen environment; moreover, they are „strangers“ in a spiritual sense. They are not only born here and now into a life that ends with death. Already in this world they are reborn into a new and eternal life. They suffer in this world, but their pain and anguish unites them with the one who has triumphed over all sufferings. As human beings Christians are subjected to many constraints – as subjects of the Roman Empire, some even as slaves – but at the same time they are kings and priests. All of this makes them „strangers“ in this world. And in this world they are supposed to bear testimony to their hope. They must do it in this world, right in the middle of this world. Christians are not advised to withdraw into themselves. No pious introspection. No retreat into a separate sphere, where they only congregate with each other.



## Die Hoffnung bezeugen

Also: Wie soll die lebendige Hoffnung bezeugt werden? Die Antwort: Sie soll so bezeugt werden, dass die Welt irritiert ist. Damit wird allen anderen zugleich vor Augen geführt, wovon sie selbst einmal Rechenschaft geben müssen. Im 4. Kapitel heißt es im 4. und 5. Vers: „Das befremdet sie, dass ihr euch nicht mehr mit ihnen stürzt in dasselbe wüste, unordentliche Treiben und sie lästern; aber sie werden Rechenschaft geben müssen dem, der bereit ist, zu richten die Lebenden und die Toten.“

Ich habe diese Grundgedanken des 1. Petrusbriefes zusammengetragen, damit wir nun deutlicher sehen, welche Empfehlungen den Christen damals am Ende des 1. Jahrhunderts gegeben wurden. Noch einmal: Der Grundgedanke war: Lebt so, dass ihr die Welt um euch herum irritiert! Sie sollen verunsichert werden, damit sie euch fragen, warum ihr so lebt. Oder anders: Damit sie euch nach der Hoffnung fragen, die in euch lebendig ist.

## Was verunsichert die Menschen?

Da ist sicher ganz weit oben die Erfahrung, wenn Menschen Böses nicht mit Bösem vergelten. Wenn sie nicht Scheltwort mit Scheltwort beantworten, sondern wenn sie diejenigen, die ihnen Böses tun, segnen.

Die Welt hat ein anderes Gesetz. Wir kennen alle dieses Gesetz gut. Gewalt wird mit Gewalt beantwortet, Leiden mit Leiden zufügen, Tod mit Töten. Die lebendige Hoffnung, so ist der Gedanke des 1. Petrusbriefes, wird anders bezeugt. Auf das Böse wird nicht mit Bösem reagiert. Wer das Leben liebt und Tage sehen will, der sollte in der Lage sein, seine Zunge zu hüten und nicht Böses zu reden. Wer das Leben liebt und Tage sehen will, muss nicht lügen und betrügen. Diejenigen, in denen die Hoffnung lebendig ist, haben eine Lebensrichtung: sie suchen den Frieden.

Der 1. Petrusbrief hat auch eine Antwort darauf, was dies für das Verhältnis zum Staat bedeutet. Christen sind loyal zum Staat, weil der

## Bearing witness to everlasting hope

Now then, how does one bear testimony to the living hope? To be exact, testimony should be given in such a way that it stirs up the world. This brings home to all others that eventually they will be held accountable for what they have done or have neglected to do. Chapter 4, verses 4 and 5 say: „Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.“ I have compiled these fundamental thoughts of the first Epistle of Peter, so that we can clearly see the advice that was given to Christians at the end of the first century A.D. Once more, the basic idea was: live in such a way that you stir up the world around you! People must be made to wonder, why you are living in this particular way. Saying it differently, other human beings should feel the compulsion to ask you about the hope that lives within you.

## What makes people wonder?

First and foremost it has to do with the experiences they gather, when they observe that evil is not returned with evil, or abusive words with abusive words, but rather with blessings.

The world has other laws. We all know these laws quite well. Violence is repaid with violence, suffering with suffering, killing with killing.

According to the first letter of Peter, bearing witness to life eternal is accomplished in a radically different way. Evil is not retributed with evil.

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile”. For Christians there is no need to tell lies or betray. Those, in whom hope is alive, know only one way of life, the way of peace.

The first Epistle of Peter also tells us what this means in relation to the powers that be. Christians are loyal citizens of the state, because the state is charged with a moral duty: it must punish the wicked and reward the virtuous. (cf. 1 Peter 2:13-14) Incidentally, this loyalty is

Staat eine bestimmte Aufgabe hat: Der Staat hat die Bösen zu strafen und die Guten zu fördern. (s. 1. Petr 2,13-14). Diese Loyalität ist übrigens auch eine Irritation. Den Christen wurde ja nachgesagt, sie seien gottlos. Damit war der Vorwurf verbunden, sie würden die gottgleiche Autorität des Staates nicht akzeptieren. Das tun sie ja in der Tat nicht. Trotzdem sind sie loyal. Es ist übrigens sehr interessant, dass hier der Staat nicht – wie im Römerbrief - als gottgegeben verstanden wird, sondern als „menschliche Ordnung“. Anders als im Römerbrief wird hier auch nicht gesagt, dass man dem Staat nicht widerstehen dürfe.

Irritieren sollen die Christen offenbar auch durch die Art, wie Frauen und Männer zusammenleben. Wie es damals üblich war, hieß es, dass die Frauen sich den Männern unterordnen sollen. Die Männer sollen ihrerseits dem schwächeren Geschlecht die Ehre geben und vernünftig mit ihm zusammenleben. Öfters war es wohl so, dass die Frau Christin war und der Mann nicht. Die Art, wie man miteinander lebt, soll dabei auch den jeweils anderen vom Glauben überzeugen. Auch die Sklaven werden aufgefordert, durch ihre Art wie sie mit ihren Herren umgehen, ihren Glauben zu bezeugen.

Ja und schließlich wird natürlich die Hoffnung auch dadurch bezeugt, wie man in der christlichen Gemeinde miteinander lebt. Hier ist nun sicher bemerkenswert, dass – anders als in der heidnischen Umwelt – Menschen mit ganz unterschiedlichen sozialen Stellungen zusammenkommen. Die sollen nun so zusammenleben, dass sie „allesamt gleichgesinnt, mitleidig, barmherzig, demütig“ sind. Ganz auf dieser Linie wird denen, die ein besonderes Amt in der Gemeinde haben, dass sie nicht als „Herren über die Gemeinde“ herrschen sollen, sondern als „Vorbilder der Herde“ der Gemeinde dienen sollen (s. 1. Petr 5,2). Ganz klar gilt: Demut statt Herrschsucht.

Im 1. Petrusbrief werden die Christen aufgefordert, in einer feindlichen Umwelt ihre Hoffnung zu bezeugen. Ihnen wird gesagt, dass Anfeindungen und Angriffe zu ihrem und damit auch das Leiden in Verbindung zu dem stehen, an den sie glauben. Dabei wird unterstellt, dass sie durch das Zeugnis ihres Glaubens andere zum Glauben bewegen

also a source of irritation, because Christians were said to be godless people. Along with this accusation went the charge that they refused to recognize the divine nature of the state. That is indeed the case. Nonetheless, they are loyal citizens. By the way, it is quite interesting that in contrast to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Peter does not see the state as a divine institution, but only as an expression of „human order“. And in contrast to Paul, Peter doesn't say that it is forbidden to resist the state.

Christians are also expected to irritate by the way, in which they live together as men and women. At the time when the Epistle of Peter was written, that meant that women should be subordinate to men. Men, on the other hand, were counted on to respect the weaker sex and they were urged to live together with women in a sensible way. Frequently the married woman was Christian, while the husband was not. Hence, the way one lived together, was also intended to convince the partner of the validity of one's faith. Slaves were likewise reminded to bear witness to their faith by the way they obeyed their masters. And finally, a testimonial of hope is also the way in which the members of the Christian congregation live together. In this context it is surely remarkable that here – in contrast to the heathen world – people of very different social standing have contact with each other. They are expected to be all of one mind, to be courteous, to have compassion with one another, to love each other as brothers and sisters, and to be humble. Along these lines, those in high office are forbidden to rule as „lords over God's heritage“, much rather they must be mindful to be „examples to the flock“ (cf. 1 Peter 5:2-3) No doubt about it: humbleness, instead of imperiousness.

In the first Epistle of Peter Christians are summoned to give testimony of their hope in a hostile world. They are told that hostility towards them and attacks on them are part of their suffering, which in turn is part of the suffering of Christ, in whom they believe. At the same time it is assumed that they are able to make others believe by testifying their faith. Not theory, but living faith bears witness to eternal hope. The heathen environment is stirred up by the life of Christians. Many

können. Der Glaube wird dabei nicht als Theorie bezeugt, sondern durch das Leben. Durch das Leben der Christen wird die heidnische Umwelt verunsichert. Manche werden ins Nachdenken kommen und nachfragen und dadurch zum Glauben finden. Andere nicht. Die werden sich am Ende schämen müssen wegen all dem, was sie anderen und insbesondere den Christen angetan haben.

## Schlussgedanken

Historisch betrachtet ist der 1. Petrusbrief ein sehr bemerkenswertes Dokument aus der Geschichte der jungen Christenheit. Er gibt Einblick in eine ganz bestimmte Gemeindesituation. Er gibt Einblick in eine Situation, in der die Gemeinde bedroht war und viele Christen leiden mussten. Der Brief zeigt eindrucksvoll, wie diese Situation des Leidens auch theologisch bewältigt wurde. Es wurde bewältigt, indem das Leiden als Beziehung zum Leiden Christi verstanden wurde. In dieser Sichtweise liegt bis heute die Kraft, Menschen im Leiden und in Anfechtungen zu stärken.

Der 1. Petrusbrief ist darüber hinaus auch ein eindrucksvolles Zeugnis für das Verständnis von Mission. Die „Strategie“ des Briefes zielt nicht darauf, Menschen durch zu belehren oder durch Theoriedebatten zu überzeugen. Sie zielt darauf Menschen dadurch zu irritieren, dass die lebendige Hoffnung gelebt wird. Diese lebendige Hoffnung entfaltet ihre Stärke darin, dass sie soziale Unterschiede überwindet und den Frieden sucht. Das heißt: Sie geht von der prinzipiellen Gleichwertigkeit aller Menschen aus und davon, dass Gott Heil für alle Menschen will. Es gibt Kirchenhistoriker, die sagen, dass das Christentum die Antike überlebt hat, weil es eine überzeugende ethische Orientierung geliefert hat, die insbesondere in der Unterstützung der Armen, Kranken und Schwachen sehr praktisch wurde.

people will start to ponder and to pose questions. Some will become true believers, others won't. These people will be put to shame for what they have done to other people, above all to Christians.

Concluding thoughts

Looking at it historically, the first Epistle of Peter is a unique document of the infancy of Christianity. It provides insights into the particular situation of the Christian congregation, a situation in which the congregation was threatened and many Christians had to suffer

## Final Thoughts

The letter shows formidably, how the faithful came to terms with this experience of suffering in theological categories. They coped with it by understanding own misfortunes as part of the suffering of Jesus Christ. It is this perspective, which generates even today the power that gives strength to people in adversity and temptation.

Moreover, the first Epistle of Peter is also a striking testimonial of a sense of mission. It is not the „strategy“ of the letter to convince people by instructing them or involving them in high-brow theoretical debates. It much rather aims to rouse people by actively demonstrating to them living hope. This living hope unfolds its strength by surmounting social differences and by seeking peace. In other words, its premise is that in principle all human beings are of equal value and that God has in mind the salvation of all people. Some church historians say that the Christian religion outlived antiquity and didn't perish, because it offered an authentic ethical orientation that was put in practice by helping the poor, caring for the sick and empowering the weak.

How can this missionary „strategy“ be further described?

The New Testament mentions various kinds of missionary activity.

Wolfgang Reinbold, a Professor of New Testament Studies, discerns four of them:

Wie lässt sich diese „Missionsstrategie“ einordnen?

Es gibt im Neuen Testament verschiedene Formen der Mission.

Wolfgang Reinbold, ein Professor für Neues Testament, unterscheidet vier Formen:

- Die Haustürmission. Das ist die Form, zu der Jesus seine Jünger beauftragt, als er ihnen sagt, dass sie in die Häuser hineingehen sollen. Das ist die Form wie sie heute noch von Zeugen Jehovas und den Mormonen praktiziert wird. Die hat, wenn überhaupt, in der Frühphase des Christentums eine Rolle gespielt.
- Die Mission durch eine Rede vor großem Publikum. Hier stehen uns vor allem die großen Reden vor Augen, von denen in der Apostelgeschichte die Rede ist. Historiker zweifeln, ob es diese Reden in der Antike – auch mit diesen Zahlen – wirklich in dieser Form gegeben hat. In der Moderne kennen wir solche Formen der Mission. Ich nenne nur den Namen Billy Graham.
- Mission nach dem Modell des Paulus. Paulus zieht mit seinen Mitarbeitern von Ort zu Ort und gründet Gemeinden. Er nutzt dabei Anknüpfungspunkte, die sich ihm bieten: in der Synagoge, bei Bekannten, bei der Arbeit, im Gefängnis. Der Erfolg ist sehr unterschiedlich.
- Das vierte Modell ist nach Wolfgang Reinbold das wichtigste gewesen. Es ist das Modell der Verbreitung des christlichen Glaubens durch Menschen in ihrem sozialen Umfeld. Zu diesem Modell rechnet er auch das, was im 1. Petrusbrief beschrieben wird. Menschen beeindruckt andere durch ihre Lebensweise. Und sie sind dann bereit, auch über ihren Glauben zu reden. Wolfgang Reinbold nennt diese Form der Kommunikation „Mikrokommunikation“. Das bedeutet: Der Glaube muss kommuniziert werden von Mensch zu Mensch, und zwar in unserem jeweiligen persönlichen Umfeld – in unserer Familie, in unserer

- Door-to-door missionary work. Jesus commissioned his disciples to pursue this type of evangelization, when he told them to go into the houses. Today Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons pursue this door-to-door missionary activity. However, this kind of missionary work only played an important role in the early phases of Christianity, if at all.
- Missionizing by preaching to large audiences. Here we think above all about the biblical sermons in the Acts of the Apostles. Historians are skeptical, whether these homilies were actually held in antiquity in this form, and whether the audiences were really as big as mentioned. However, this type of sermon is also known to us in modern times. Just think of the American evangelist Billy Graham.
- Missionizing in the fashion of the Apostle Paul. Paul went with his followers from one place to another and founded new congregations, using the points of contact, which he found: in the synagogue, among acquaintances, at work, and in prison. The degree of success varied considerably.
- The fourth type of missionary work was the most important, according to Wolfgang Reinbold. Meant is the spread of the Christian religion by people in their social environment. According to Reinbold, the model of missionizing that is described in the first Epistle of Peter belongs to this category, namely: impressing other people with one's own way of life. If they take note of it, they are also ready to talk about their faith. Wolfgang Reinbold calls this kind of communication „micro-communication“. Faith must be communicated in the respective intimate surroundings and from person to person: in the family, in our neighbourhood, at our place of work. The chosen passage from the first Epistle of Peter gives a valuable clue on how this can be accomplished, namely with „meekness and fear of God“ (1 Peter 3:16). Nikolaus Graf



Nachbarschaft, an der Arbeit. Unsere Stelle im 1. Petrusbrief gibt ja auch einen wunderbaren Hinweis, wie das geschehen kann, nämlich „mit Sanftmut und Gottesfurcht“ (1 Petr 3,16). Vermutlich hat Nikolaus Graf Zinzendorf ähnlich gedacht. Der hat einmal gesagt: „Rede nicht von Gott, wenn du nicht gefragt wirst. Aber lebe so, dass du nach Gott gefragt wirst.“

Ich finde, dass dies wichtige Hinweise sind. Aber ist damit auch alles gesagt? Wie kann vom Glauben geredet werden, so dass sich nicht nur einzelne, sondern auch eine Gesellschaft damit auseinandersetzt? Was ist heute nötig, wenn es darum geht, nicht Böses mit Bösem zu vergelten, sondern den Frieden zu suchen – in unseren Ländern, in denen wir leben, und in dieser Welt?

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder, ich freue mich sehr darüber, dass wir in diesen Tagen darüber miteinander reden wollen. Schenke uns Gott dazu seinen Geist, damit die Hoffnung in uns lebendig ist und wir gestärkt werden zu Zeugnis und Dienst in dieser Welt.

Zinzendorf probably was thinking along these lines When he once he said: „Don't talk about God, if you are not asked to do so. But live in such a way that you will be asked about God.“

I feel that these are important points, but do they cover our theme thoroughly? How is it possible to talk about matters of faith, so that the message not only reaches individuals, but also society at large? What has to be said and what is to be done today, when we are called not to repay evil with evil, but to seek peace – in the countries, in which we live, and in the entire world?

Dear brothers and sisters, I'm very happy that we will further discuss these matters with each other in the next few days. May God bless us with his spirit, so that the living hope within us is strengthened, enabling us to bear witness and to serve in this world.



# Key note Lecture



**It is indeed a privilege for me to be invited to deliver the key note address on the theme “Giving Account of Our Hope: Christian Witness Today” at this seminar on Mission organised by the Asia Partnership of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany and the Indian Mission Partners.**

**Rev. Dr. M. Mani Chacko Ph.D.,  
General Secretary of the Bible Society of India**

I too would like to join in welcoming you all in particular the President Dr.Volker Jung of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau to India and I do hope your stay and interaction with each other would enable you to revisit your own perceptions of Mission and see how best we can be witnesses to the Gospel in today's context. I am grateful to my friend Bishop P K Samantaroy, the Deputy Moderator of the Church of North India and Bishop of the Diocese of Amritsar of the CNI and also to Dr.JohnyThonipara, Secretary for Development and Partnership, Asia of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau for the invitation extended to me.

## The Theme

The theme for the seminar is taken from I Peter 3: 15b: "Always be prepared to make defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you". This biblical text will be adequately understood only when we read the text as a part of 1 Peter 3: 8-17. Here the writer of the epistle talks about the marks of Christian life and witness such as Unity, Sympathy, Brotherly Love, Compassion, Humility and Forgiveness. The writer then prepares the readers by pointing out that in a hostile world it was inevitable that the Christian would be called to defend the faith he/she held and the hope by which he/she lived and suggests certain things to be kept in mind when we defend our faith. First of all, the Christian defence should be reasonable; we must know what we believe; we must have thought our faith through; we must be able to state it intelligently and intelligibly. Secondly, the defence must be given with gentleness; the Christian faith must be presented with love and not with an attitude of arrogance. Thirdly, the defence must be done with reverence; we must respect other faiths and faith communities and see whether they have anything to offer to aid common issues and problems which are faced by humankind. Fourthly, the writer talks about the work of Christ and admonishes the suffering community that if a Christian is compelled to suffer unjustly for his/her faith, he/ she is only walking the way Christ has already

walked. The writer lays down clearly that the work of Christ is unique and vicarious and brings about a new relationship between God and the human.

The text chosen for our reflection compels us to explore ways in which we can make our Christian Witness meaningful and relevant to our times. The text challenges us to practice Unity, Sympathy, Love, Compassion, Humility and Forgiveness in our work and witness. The text also inspires us to revisit the liberative work of Christ and see how this salvific activity of Christ has adequate impact on life today. In other words, the text and the theme chosen for our consideration give us an opportunity to look at the concept of Witness or Mission deeply in the context of the multiple issues that we confront today.

## **Context of Christian Witness Today**

God's mission and the resulting mission of the church take place in ever-changing contexts. In exploring these contexts, the church will see how issues of context affect its life and witness.

### **a. Globalization**

In general, Globalization had a considerable impact on all aspects of societal life: economy, politics, culture, communication and the individual's sense of value and morality. On the one hand, Globalization has brought a number of benefits on different aspects of life. On the other hand, with its promotion of individualism at the expense of the community, globalization has widened the gap between people, nations, the wealthy and the impoverished.

### **b. Technology**

Along with Globalization has come an increased use of technology and greater access to information. Information technology has both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, people can communicate with each other more freely and immediately, and the ability to store, retrieve, process, and disseminating information has

increased. On the negative side, 'virtual contact' may become more important than personal contact. Moreover Information technology runs the risk of increasing the gap between those who have access to this technology and those who do not.

### **c. Health**

Advances in scientific knowledge and technology have led to considerable progress in combating various diseases and other threats to health. Nevertheless the world continues to struggle with health issues. One major health hazard is the spread of HIV/AIDS epidemic. It has reached pandemic proportions in many countries and in India.

### **d. Violence**

God's mission has always taken place in the midst of a violent world. Violence is a potent tool used by those with power or seeking power to control, suppress, or enforce change for their own benefit. It takes place in different forms:

- **War and Conflict**  
War and Conflict occur between or within nations, as power struggles emerge to maintain or increase control over limited resources and achieve uncontrollable superiority. Today's technological advances make this form of violence even more lethal, physically and psychologically. War brings untold suffering, disease, and poverty to the most vulnerable, the elderly, women and children and to succeeding generations. It devastates the infrastructure and the environment.
- **Structural and systemic violence**  
Violence occurs when social structures are founded on and maintained by privileged groups for their own profit. Patriarchal structures do not recognize the rights and equality of women. Those with the lowest standing in the society are often unjustly treated and excluded. Social or political structures such as

dictatorship, oligarchy, and patriarchy have always resulted in systemic violence.

- Violence against women, children and the weak  
Violence is also the cause of terrible suffering in the home often directed against women, children, the elderly and the physically challenged.
  
- (iv) Violence in religion and in the church  
Religious fanaticism is a sad fact of human history. This breeds violence within and between religions. In one sense, this is violence in its worst form because it justifies itself in the name of religion and in the name of God. Abuse of power and disputes over property by church authorities have often been the cause of church conflicts. Women have been subtly excluded from the leadership of the church, and their voices and those of the youth have been silenced or ignored.

#### **e. Upsurge in Spirituality**

In different parts of the world, in spite or because of violence and calamity, there is a surge in spirituality; people are seeking new forms of spirituality to satisfy their own longing to belong. Churches have experienced extensive loss of membership due to a general lack of interest in church life and mission. Some have left institutional religions and have embraced spiritism, or in extreme cases, embraced secularization.

#### **f. Religious Pluralism**

The church exists along with other faith traditions is a reality today. In this context, how to live as a Christian in accordance to the Gospel values is a continuous challenge. Different theories have been proposed- Inclusivism, that God in Christ is a God of all peoples; Exclusivism, the notion that God in Christ is the real God and only those who confess allegiance to the God of Christianity will be



saved; Pluralism, the ideology that Christian faith is one among the many other faiths and therefore one cannot be regarded as the only Unique faith over against the other; all are equal paths to salvation; Advaitic Perspective, the theory that one should hold on to his / her own faith tradition but at the same time one should realise the value of other faiths and respect them. It has also been proposed that there is always a sense of 'mystery' when we talk about God and hence we are not in a position to fully comprehend the ways and workings of God. Hence we should approach faith traditions with great respect and reverence.

The above portrayal of a few of the contextual issues shows clearly that context and mission are intrinsically related and this awareness is very much needed to engage in authentic Christian Witness.

## Traditional Understanding of Mission

Traditionally, the word 'Mission' is used for sending persons to faraway lands to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The main goal was numerical church growth. Dr.Gnana Robinson lists ten characteristics of this traditional understanding of Mission; (Gnana Robinson, "A Voice in the Wilderness" pp.100-101).

- A sender-receiver relationship,
- The 'sender' possesses the full truth and has the inescapable Commission from God to bring this truth to the 'receiver' somehow or the other,
- The 'receiver' is the heathen, who still walks in darkness and has no knowledge of the truth. His religion is the way of darkness. If he does not receive the truth in the art and the way the 'sender' possesses it, he will die in sin and lose eternal life. Hence, the urgency of mission,
- The revelation in Christ is final and once for all. This means that outside the institutional church there is no revelation of God. There is no revelation in other religions,
- This world suffers under the powers of the devil. Men and women

should therefore flee away from this world if they have to inherit eternal life,

- Because this world is under the rule of the devil, we cannot do much with it. It is therefore not the responsibility of Christians to get involved in politics. The kingdom of God is beyond this world. This earth and this heaven should first disappear. Only then the kingdom of God will be established, God works in this world though 'the word and the Sacrament'. It is therefore not correct to say that God is present among other people and religions and that he works among them,
- Changing political and social structures is not our task. Individual conversion is the main thing. When individuals change, structures will also change,
- "Righteousness" is the gift of God. It is therefore in vain that men and women struggle to establish justice in the world. Awareness education and peoples struggle for justice are thus not Christian,
- The Gospel is not influenced by context. The search for a contextual theology is wrong. Indigenization, inculturation and dialogue with other faiths and ideologies are also therefore wrong.

Such a limited and narrow understanding of Mission or Witness needs review and revision.

## Hospitality As A Relevant Missiological Paradigm For Our Times

The traditional Missiology does not bring justice to many sections of the people, therefore, we need to look for an alternative Missiology. The mission history shows the misuse of religion, especially Christianity, as an instrument or agent to protect the interest of the rich and the colonial powers. A few examples would prove the point. (a) Since the time of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicea, Christianity has consistently maintained religious legitimacy of the Empire. Hence, the Council of Nicea was convened and the Council rejected and suppressed the claims and practice of the poor Christians and established

religious hegemony of the empire at that time. Gradually, faith became an obligatory state religion to express loyalty to the empire. (b) The history of Christian countries in the west shows that Christianity was used as an instrument to expand imperialism. The crusade was waged nine times by Christians against Muslims and Jews. Indigenous Christian communities were also not spared. The crusaders killed those who resisted, and destroyed and confiscated crops and properties by force. (c) The Western Christianity has been closely associated with colonial expansion. Using the military forces, Christianity was spread in Asia, Latin America and Africa. They considered colonial expansion as providence of God to bring good news to the heathen world. The colonizers not only invaded their territories, but also forcibly proselytized the people. Though some of the missionaries were critical of colonial interest, most missionaries conspired with the colonial governments and co-operated with them.

It was in this imperial historical context that Edinburgh Conference 1910 took place. The Conference was held under the patronage of colonial powers. The people who sent greetings to Edinburgh Conference included the King of England, the President of US and the rulers of colonial powers. The Edinburgh Conference clearly acknowledged that the colonial expansion was God's providence to evangelize the uncivilized and barbaric people. The Edinburgh Conference co-opted the poor and the marginalized in the scheme of Western empire. Without much alteration, we simply follow the tradition set by the Edinburgh Conference. Often mission agencies or ecumenical movements act as an agent of the empire. Mission of God should not be reduced to ruling class movement to serve the needs of the empire. It must take the position of and for the poor and must become the voice of the poor and exploited. This was greatly emphasized in the centenary celebrations of Edinburgh 1910 held in Edinburgh from June 2-6, 2010.

Under the patronage of empire, we also see a theological discourse that supports imperialism. Since the time of Constantine the Great, the theological metaphors developed in the churches supported the male rulers and oppressors. In other words, the theological concepts developed under the imperial regime not only legitimized a religion for the one who is the master and the ruler, but also sanctioned to exploit and manipulate all segments of God's creation for extraction of maximum profits. There is no place for the people who have been ruled and oppressed for centuries. We may cite three examples: (a) The concept of God. Theology is God-talk, discourse on God. The discourse is based on a language which is symbolic and metaphorical. Metaphors are constructed out of a cultural or social environment and context. The dominant images of God developed during the imperial power were images such as ruler, Lord, master and warrior. They are all patriarchal, political and military images. These images have made Christianity a religion of, and for the ruler, elite and the upper-class. The theological concepts or images of God which we uphold today are in deep crisis because they are not capable of liberating the poor and marginalized people from unjust system and practice. (b) The understanding of Mission. The discourse on God as ruler and master has reinforced a success oriented or triumphalist mission. The languages like "Mission Crusade", "Mission Campaign", "Home Penetration", "Mass Evangelization" etc. are all military language and concepts. Christians, by and large, are engaged in denominational expansion rather than God's mission. Success in mission is measured by how many churches have been planted, converted and baptized. Mission has been very exclusive and never recognized God's revelation in other religious traditions. Mission is God's mission. God is the owner of the mission and not the churches. The churches are sent to be missionaries to witness compassion and justice with the poor and the victims. The ecumenical calling is to witness compassion and justice with the poor. But we have manipulated and acted as if we are the owners of the mission. (c) The understanding of Creation. Western Christian interpretation of Creation is anthropocentric – human is the

reference point of all realities. Nature exists for human. Apart from rational beings, the other segments of God's creation cannot come under the scheme of salvation. There is no sanctity and mystery in nature, but it can be manipulated and controlled for the benefit of human beings. This one-sided theological interpretation justifies expansion of colonial power and exploitation of nature. The ideology of globalization and the expansion of global capital market are deeply rooted on this interpretation. The unprecedented exploitation of nature and present ecological crisis testify the failure of the Christian understanding of Creation.

Therefore, we need a new missiological paradigm where God is perceived as a fellow sufferer, a great comforter, divine power not as a dominating or controlling power nor as dialectical power in weakness but as liberating and transforming power that is effective in compassionate love, care and service. We need a radical departure from the imperial theology of the missionary movement because their Christian values are used to support rulers and oppressors, and perpetuate an unmindful exploitation of earth's resources.

There is an imbalance in the acknowledgement of the richness of theologies of the marginalized – the dalits, the tribals, and adivasis, which are accorded secondary status both in Theology and the Mission of the Church. Indigenous people demand the right to respect their culture, spirituality, language, tradition, forms of organization, ways of knowing and doing, and their intellectual properties. There is a need for the Church to go outside the walls of its institutional network and to tap the energy and vitality that exists beyond its present partnership boundaries.

Similar thinking process is being carried forward by theologians dealing with subaltern issues and one of them is Rev. Y. T. Vinayaraj, a Presbyterian of the Mar Thoma Church. His words are worthy of note: Modern Christian mission was the mission to 'the lost sheep'. Sociolo-

gically speaking, the mission envisaged by colonial modernity was empowerment programmes in order to 'lift up' the 'weak' and the 'vulnerable' to the modern/civilized/ developed civil life. Thus we had the 'missions' to Africans/ Afro-Americans/ Asians etc. Of course this has impacted changes in the life worlds of the missionized people, but on the other hand, it neglected their social agency for engaging to re-draw their own subjectivity, social space and social status. It was an empowerment programme. Empowerment is always a programme from outside while the internal discourses, habitus, practices and episteme remain intact.

The whole historical meta narratives of the modern missionaries and mission agencies were reports of their sacrificial work among the 'uncivilized people'... The time has come to re-read these colonial 'missiological meta narratives' and create new 'little'/ 'local' conversion stories of the so-called 'missiological other'... Today the 'missiological other' has become capable enough to de-construct their subjectivity and social agency. Thus mission in the modern sense has become impossible. In the postmodern sense mission is everywhere and not to be focused in a particular region or culture or people. It can be 'from everywhere to everywhere'. There is a hermeneutical imperative to attend the plural-local life affirming engagements or resistances of the subalterns in order to acknowledge and recognize the political/ epistemological differences of the plural life worlds. Thus the mission as it is envisaged in the project of modernity has become impossible today due to the death of the 'missiological other'... The mission in the postmodern sense is an invitation to a kind of hospitality where both the 'host' and the 'stranger' deconstructs each other and finds a renewed status mutually by celebrating their rights to be different. It is an invitation to enter in to a renewed understanding of relationship. It is the responsibility for the other, being for the other. It is an invitation to engage with new imaginations, new relationships, new practices and new dialogues of fraternity. The unity that neglects the dignity of the difference is hegemonic. It is in the differences that we find our

potentialities and strength. All the subaltern movements are to be located in their own specificities and particularities. Dalit itself is a plural category where we particularly attend the issues of Dalit women and children.

Thus treating Dalits or Tribals or Women as a collective/ essentialist/ unitary category and creating solidarity programmes while keeping the paternalist consciousness, seems untenable today. In the changed theoretical-theological-epistemological context, 'solidarity' means a re-imagination of ourselves; not mere a sense of 'standing along with' or 'speaking for' or 'representing somebody'. It is not just the burden of constituting some slogans for the transformation of the 'other', while keeping ourselves intact. It is a new journey of re-looking our own faith, tradition, theology and ontology. Thus doing theology means reconstituting our own ontology and theology. Christian faith is a total commitment to the ongoing journey of finding 'our-selves' dialogically and transforming our life-world theologically... Thus, in the postmodern context theological locatedness is very important. Who is speaking for whom gets importance here. This is the hermeneutical importance of the particular theologies like Dalit / tribal/ feminist theologies in the changed epistemological context (Re-defining Oikoumene: A Subaltern Perspective)

The subaltern communities are no longer objects to be evangelized. They are rather subjects in the conversations on Mission of God. Their role as subjects should find an adequate space in our missiology. There is no longer the "missiological other" as Vinyaraj eloquently argues. The subaltern communities are active social agents of a democratic society with their own stories and communal practices. They are overcoming their long-standing oppressed consciousness. Indigenous peoples of all continents are re discovering the wisdom and life affirming values of their own cultures. They thus are active players in the mission of God conversations and activities.

## Re reading The Great Commission Text : Mathew 28:18-20

For the above to happen, a re reading of Mathew 28:18-20 is mandatory. The Great Commission text had been taken out of its context and read as an autonomous decree. The text, which is an editorial masterpiece, is now read as a simple 'Great Commission'. The text is a worthy finale to the Gospel of Matthew and if so, it should be read as a part of the entire Gospel and not in isolation from other equally important texts. Such a reading of the text is dangerous and can lead us to a damaging missiology. Mission is no longer seen as the spontaneous and joyous communication of the experience of the risen Lord. Rather it is now seen as a 'duty' imposed on people. Mission fuelled by triumphalist statements degenerates into a 'conquest' where the numerical expansion of the church or political or economic advancement of its leaders become the goal. Mission ceases to be an act of service and becomes a selfish exercise of survival, expansion and power. A corrective to this understanding of mission can happen provided we engage in biblical interpretation with utmost seriousness keeping in mind it is the God of the Bible and not the Bible itself that we need to focus on in our reading and interpretation of the Bible. The following two hermeneutical methods or principles would be of help in such an attempt.

### a. Integrated Reading

The Great Commission text needs to be read along with other texts such as the Mission Discourse in Matthew 10: 1-42, and the largely neglected mission command found in Matthew 5:13-16. The first text talks about Jesus' mission instructions to his disciples as to how they should conduct themselves when they engage in God's mission. Those involved in mission are called to a life of missionary discipleship and not just a commissioning to missionary activity. Such a life calls for a radical detachment from possessions and family ties, a radical trust in God and a radical fidelity to Jesus in all conflicts and persecutions that they would encounter. Mission, as Matthew understands it,



is not a 'command' by means of which Christians are forced into some reluctant activity. It is not an enterprise that depends on human resources. But rather, it is carried out in poverty and powerlessness that relies on God alone. The 'Great Commission' text when read with the Mission Discourse in Matthew 10 challenges us to engage in God's mission in a spirit of poverty and powerlessness.

The other text of significance is Matthew 5:13-16. This text gives us an understanding of mission which complements that offered by the Great Commission. In it, mission is described in terms of being or witnessing than verbal proclamation. This dimension of 'being' or 'witnessing' strives not for 'church growth' but for the wholeness of creation. There is also a communitarian dimension inherent in this text, which is often overlooked. The mission command in 5:13-16 is not addressed to individual followers of Jesus but to the Christian community as a whole. It is this community that is supposed to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Any verbal proclamation to be authentic must be lived out in the Christian life of the community. This text also underlines yet another forgotten or ignored dimension of mission. It powerfully advocates the view that the mission command is not Ecclesio-centric nor Christocentric but Theo-centric.

The ultimate aim of mission is to lead people to give glory to God and this happens when we contribute to the establishment of the Reign of God on earth. The aim of mission here is not so much planting the church, nor conquering the world for Christ nor fostering church growth, as leading history to its fulfilment in the full realization of the Kingdom of God. This understanding of mission is relevant to our context today. Our missiology should be centred on God rather than on the Church or even Christ. Such a theo-centric focus is nothing to be embarrassed about, for it is very much biblical. The biblical story begins and ends not with the Church nor even with Christ but with God who is all in all. Thus this mission command offers a double corrective to the flawed understanding of mission.

Firstly, it extends the aim of mission from a narrowly Ecclesiocentric or Christo-centric to a fully Theo-centric one and that is building up of the Reign of God on earth. Secondly, it shifts the emphasis of missionary praxis from individual proclamation to prophetic community witness.

The integrated reading of the biblical texts help us to understand mission in a holistic manner bringing to light different dimensions of the text, which otherwise would have been hidden from us. The realization of such mission perspectives helps us to have a balanced understanding of God and God's mission. This in turn helps us to look at our neighbour not as an object of evangelization but as a fellow human created in God's image. This outlook of life will enable all of us despite our varied faith affiliations to work together in making the world a better place to live in.

#### **b. Perspectival Reading**

Another method we can employ in the reading of the Bible is to read the texts with a perspective. The perspective I adopt in my readings is the perspective of life. The central message of the Bible and of Christ, I believe is life in all its fullness and abundance. It is from this perspective I engage in biblical interpretation. When we view the Great Commission text from this perspective of life, it is to be noted that the Great Commission is given in the context of another military expansion that was happening, i.e. the expansion of the Roman Empire. Jesus' commissioning of his disciples to a worldwide mission was taking place in the context of another worldwide mission that was already operative, the mission of the Roman Empire. That was the time when the Roman Empire was engaged in a ruthless mission to dominate the entire world and bring the world under its authority and dominion. Anyone who challenged or posed a threat to the Roman rule was eliminated mostly by crucifixion. When Jesus was born and Herod came to know that the "King of Israel," a possible threat to the Roman authority was born, he wanted to eliminate baby Jesus. Later on at the time of crucifixion, Jesus was repeatedly mocked as the

“King of Israel” to show what would happen to anyone who challenges the Roman system. The Romans believed that their empire was founded by the divine orders and its mission to dominate the world was entrusted to them by the gods. The emperor was not just to be obeyed but also to be worshipped as he was divine. Thus, a Roman imperial theology was promoted by all agents of the empire.

Jesus was convinced that this worldwide mission of the Roman Empire was opposed to God’s purposes. As soon as the news about the resurrection of Jesus began to spread we see the operation of the empire - the guards were bribed by the chief priests, the agents of the Roman empire, and they were asked to propagate an alternate story of lies saying that the body of Jesus was stolen by his disciples to counteract the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, which would be a threat to Roman imperialism. Immediately after reporting about this ploy, Matthew reports about the declaration of Jesus, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me....” Under God’s authority given to Jesus, people were healed, fed, taught and freed from a life of fear and dehumanization to a life of fullness. Jesus commissioned his disciples to proclaim God’s empire to everyone on this earth and make more disciples who would carry on the work of enabling people to experience that life of fullness that was available to all. Jesus commissions his disciples to make more disciples who would resist all claims to pledge their loyalty to no one else but to God and act as agents of God’s reign of peace, justice and fullness of life. New disciples are to be initiated into such a new community of resistance by baptism. Baptism is a stamp that signifies the transfer of loyalty to God’s authority from allegiance to other empires such as that of the Roman Empire. It is not the shifting of any religious identity. What matters is the shifting of the loyalty and not the stamp itself. The new community is to be known by its loyalty to God’s reign of justice, peace and fullness of life and not by its religious label such as the baptism. The people who will be initiated into the new community are to be taught the truth about the reign of God manifested in the life and work

of Jesus and his resistance to all power and authority to thwart God's reign.

Creating such communities of resistance and hope is what the Great Commission text is about. The Church needs to re-read such crucial texts and thereby re-think her engagement in God's mission in the light of the re-read texts. Then the new reality dawns on us that the Church is called to be present in this world as an alternate community that pledges her loyalty to God as opposed to the Roman Empire or its contemporary manifestations. It is the promotion and preservation of life that the Great Commission beckons all to be involved in. For this, we need to resist all evil manifestations that destroy life and promote life in abundance. This is indeed the cardinal thrust of the Mission of God.

## Conclusion

Sallie McFague describes the whole world as God's Body. It is the creation of the world as God's Body that texts like the Great Commission text should pave the way to and this is to be undertaken in poverty and powerlessness and not with arrogance and pride. It is this task that has been entrusted to us. If our ministry becomes a means towards the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth", then we can proudly say we have understood what Jesus said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

As I conclude, a novel entitled 'A Place on Earth' comes to mind. The author is Wendell Berry who tries to communicate the power of transformation in the midst of pain and brokenness. In the novel, the daily life of a farming community in which people are deeply enmes-

hed in each other's hurt and pain is portrayed. Berry intends to characterize a human community in which people still have time for each other. There is the mention of a father who goes berserk as he watches his daughter swept away by a flood. There is a handicapped, lonely carpenter who commits suicide over the wife of another man whom he cannot have. The main characters of the novel are a family whose only son has gone missing in the war and eventually the family faces the reality of their only son's death. The community to which they belong was present with them in their grief just by being with them. Then the local Pastor makes a visit. Although he is a caring person, he is not of help. The conversation becomes stiff and irrelevant. After the Pastor is gone, the father observes that the Pastor was not of help to the family in pain, because he offers the hope of heaven while he and his family can be comforted only by being present in the hurt.

The novel is a portrayal of a religion that has moved away from the realities of life. The pastor practices a faith that is removed from the daily concreteness of life, which is a context of hurt and pain. It is high time that the Church today re-examines her understanding of mission not as a grand projection of the heavenly hope of the future but as a concrete embrace of pain and hurt of life in the now. It is only then our defence and our account of our hope will become authentic.





# Indonesian Perspective, GKPS



**To be a blessing and a caring Church**  
**Genesis 12: 2, Luke 10:37**

**Rev. John Christian Saragih**



## GKPS' MISSION

- developing and deepening the spirituality which is god centered
- on biblical basis applying fellowship, witnessing and diakonia
- building the solidarity, social care and economic care based on the gospel
- keeping our local value ; working together which could applied in the church and society
- developing love to others and to the whole creation

## Introduction

For 2010 to 2030 GKPS has a vision and mission with a strategic planning. And our vision is as mentioned above.

From 2010 up to 2030, it's also divided to four periods which are:

- 2010 – 2015: strengthen the synergy of witnessing
- 2015 – 2020: strengthen the Quality of Human Resources & Leadership.
- 2020 – 2025: build fellowship and human services whose impact.
- 2025 – 2030: empowering independence and caring of the Church to the world

Referring to the internal reality of GKPS currently, GKPS have to face the challenges of our external reality. Then in this period GKPS need earnest striving through all activities oriented to the synergy of the witnessing includes a range of activities:

1. Establish a solid theological basic of the ministry
2. Detecting threats and opportunities with the concrete actions in order to witness
  - 2.1. Periodical study to find a variety of threats and opportunities GKPS is facing nowadays
  - 2.2. Anticipating the trend of the symptoms that will emerge in the coming years and per service area GKPS.

3. Identify weaknesses and strengths are real in order to witness, through: Monitoring and evaluation of the process and the results of the annual GKPS activity as a means of looking into and know the weaknesses that need to be addressed and strength that need to be developed.

## **GKPS Mission Today in Indonesian Context**

Based on the strategic planning above, now GKPS concentrate in the field of witnessing (marturia) program. GKPS need to be strong and able to empower the congregation and the church to understand what the GKPS' mission is. So I mention here some of our project and program which are:

### **Developing Evangelistic Church-based**

Output:

- GKPS has 500 people trained personnel in the field of Evangelists, consists of pastors, laity and church members
- Each congregation has a team of Evangelists.
- GKPS providing the ministers in evangelism to the outside of GKPS.

Outcomes:

The exercise of his responsibilities in the Message of the Gospel.

Impact:

The Gospel message is getting redistributed and the presence of the Kingdom of God has revealed.

Strategy:

- GKPS formed a team, Commission or Division of Evangelists in every church.
- Develop implementation of Evangelists with a variety of methods such as Evangelism Explosion (EE), Alpha Course, and other activities.
- Hold coaching and training about evangelization to the church members

- Preparing and facilitating mission of evangelism outside of the church (outreach).

### **Pastoral care**

#### **Output:**

- GKPS has 500 trained pastoral workers.
- Every congregation has trained pastoral workers.
- Each district has a Pastoral Clinic.
- Each Church has a Pastoral Team.
- Ministers visit out visiting households regularly

Outcomes (benefits): GKPS becomes a caring and blessing church

Impact: Church members are increasingly strengthened in faith, hope and love in everyday life

#### **Strategy:**

- Recruiting skilled Pastoral care team
- Each Congregation has a Pastoral clinic.
- Provide a supply, especially to the Pastoral Team that already formed 2 times in one year.
- Do the coaching to the congregations about the Pastoral care 5 times a year.
- The pastoral Letter to the Church in any event common and specific issues.
- Each Church has a pastoral program visiting to the hospital, prison and others.

### **GKPS' challenge in nowadays mission**

- Changing the mindset and the attitude of the congregations from the object of mission to become the subject of mission
- Lack of human resources and church management which is really facing the situation of the society and the world.
- Our global paradox; finding our basic spiritual experience as a local church and the unity of the church in national and global context.

### **GKPS' hope in mission**

- The power of the Holy Spirit which we believe has a special mission through our culture and society which also could give contribution to the world and to the church
- Our partnership and unity with others churches which God can use in His mission.



# Indonesian Perspective, GMIM



**The Lord is Good to All (psalm 145:9a)**

**Together with all the nation's components  
we establish a civilized, inclusive, just and  
democratic Indonesia**

**Iwan Frederik, Member of the Department of Mission  
and Ecumenism of the Protestant Church in Minahasa,  
Indonesia**

The land of Minahasa is where GMIM called and sent forth to serve as the Church of Jesus Christ.

- Service area of GMIM covers 3 cities and 4 counties
- organized in 107 clasis and 898 parishes.
- consisted of approximately 212.072 family and 850.000 members
- served by 1.995 pastors and 311 teacher (68 % of them are women) elders and deacons of 23.336 koloms

### **Central theme of GMIM**

The Lord is Good to All (Psalm 145:9a)

### **Sub theme**

Together with all the nation's components we establish a civilized, inclusive, just and democratic Indonesia

### **Mission Statement**

“to be mission-minded, inclusive and an independent Church”

It means that GMIM as a Church is the presentation of God's Love; through the acts of stewardship for God's glory

### **To do that we have to:**

- Improving the Quality (pastors, elders & deacons, church members, staffs, etc.)
- Improving church members prosperity
- To ensure the continuity of the process

### **Some of the issues**

- Environmental issue; e.g. the source of fresh water is contaminated.
- Health issue; eat a lot drink a lot, make people suffer diseases such as high blood pressure (no.1 killer in Minahasa), uric acid, HIV/AIDS, etc.

- Globalisation / Modernisation
- Religious Fundamentalism
- Neo Pentecost: teaching about baptism of the Spirit and miracles (which are very attractive to the young people)
- Occultism
- Divorce numbers are increasing
- Creative Teaching and Preaching (pastors, teachers, trainers)
- Leadership Training for children, youth and adults
- Counseling and prayer ministry
- Expanding the ministry to remote area

**Mission Projects:**

- Mobil Misi
- Praise and worship team for the youth
- Counseling & praying for the sick and people in need





# Henry Martyn Institute, HMI



## The Christian Mission Today

**Father Dr. Varghese Manimala,**  
**Director of the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad, India**

- The need for re-defining the mission today. The 'why' and the 'what' of the mission; it can no more be 'conquering souls' for Christ. The old idea of proselytism cannot hold water, and hence there arises the necessity of discovering new meaning for mission.
- The meaning of Mission more as 'Witness' rather than 'Proclamation.' Although preaching can have relevance even today still, one needs to constantly critique the message as well as the mode of communication. We should not be thinking that we are anointed by the Spirit and send out, and that good intention is sufficient enough. There needs to be adequate preparation as well as the disposition of openness to reality – the pluralistic reality and the multi-religious context.
- Christian Mission in the context of pluralism: As all of us are aware pluralism of reality and especially of religions is a fact, and we are called to respond to it. Do we see it as a blessing or as a curse? E.g. Think of the World Parliament of Religions. Are we to look at other religions as creations of the devil, while God himself in his providential plan have allowed them to be? Are we to be the judge over them? Also let us remember that no religion is sufficient for itself, and every religion needs other religions for its own fecundation and fulfillment. This is the attitude we try to promote at Henry Martyn Institute (HMI).
- Attitude of collegiality and cooperation with other religions: It is high time that we give up the theological positions of 'exclusivism' and 'inclusivism' and reach out to other religions as partners in the path of liberation (mukti). Nobody is in a privileged position and let us remember that God is the dispenser of salvation, and he offers it to all irrespective of religions, race or region. God is not to be considered as a tribal god.
- Renunciation of the attitudes of triumphalism and superiority complex: with these attitudes today the church will become irrelevant and will lose the meaning of its existence. The church's role is to be yeast which has to get lost in the dough, and in this manner it has to find its relevance. The idea of domination has to

go and as Jesus taught his disciples it is through service one becomes great.

- Christianity's association with colonial powers and mission as part of the occupying empire affected the image of the mission very badly. Church indirectly approved all that colonial powers did, as the main concern was the spread of the church. Capitalism was endorsed by the church as the approved form of economy.
- Although the past is not very glorious we cannot rule out missionary activity altogether. A new look at mission is a must; a new theology of missions has to evolve. The problems of injustice and appalling poverty especially in the vast areas of the world are issues to be addressed by the church.
- In this context, what is the Mission of the Church today? The primary task is to infuse hope into others. Today's world situation appears to be hopeless, and there are many doomsday proclaimers. It is here that the Church has to project a counter-culture, a culture of hope despite all the negativities that are affecting the earth. Hope is the greatest virtue that we can infuse into others.
- Another important goal of mission is to oppose and expose the oppressive powers that promote poverty and impoverishment and be proclaimers of justice and liberation. This needs tremendous courage as our own governments are the perpetrators, and quite often as silent approvers we are also part of these structures. But unless we have this courage, which Jesus showed forth in his life, our mission will be ultimately a failure. Perpetuation of poverty continues through the new form of colonization (e.g. Globalization).
- Fight against nuclear arms race and sale of weapons has to become part of our mission today. The production and sale of weapons have become part and parcel of international dealings. Every company and all so-called Christian nations are engaged in this murky deal. Church seems to maintain a 'dignified' silence. Our conscience seems to have been blunted. Organized terrorism of nations is approved, it appears.
- Promotion of Human Rights has to become a central theme of our

mission. Our mission has to include advocacy of human rights, and taking up the cause of the oppressed and the deprived. Although some nations and governments speak vociferously about human rights, they themselves do not mind violating these when it comes to their own advantage. Human rights are rights of all, and not of a few privileged people. The rights of the deprived and downtrodden are the first to be protected. Does our Mission take up this as a challenging task?

- Gender justice: Promotion of gender justice should become a part of our Mission today. All religions including Christianity oppress women and deny them their basic rights. Hence, the promotion of gender justice has to become part of the Christian Mission today. There is too much of male supremacy in all fields of life; women have to be offered their rightful position to fulfil themselves. Therefore our mission has to be an all inclusive one.
- Today the mission has to strongly advocate intra-religious, inter-religious, and inter-ideological dialogue. Today Christian Mission can be fulfilled only through honest and sincere dialogue with an open mind and heart. We need to become self-critical and humble, and thus be servants of the Gospel. This is the mission we want to advocate and promote at HMI. Our mission has become so self-glorious and oblivious of other religions and ideologies that finally our mission becomes self-defeatist, and not in accordance with the plan of God.
- The most important mission today is to fight for the survival of Mother Earth. This has become a great concern, and in this we can collaborate and join hands with other religions and ideologies for highlighting this issue in the international circles. There is a talk about global warming but hardly anything is done concretely taking into account the future. The word development has caught the attention of all, and we think it is by exploitation of nature that we have to develop; this is a lopsided development, and we need expose this in our proclamation, if we are true proclaimers of the Good News today.

- Fighting Christian Fundamentalism is a great task of the Christian Mission. This we need to address with utmost care and concern. Anyone carrying a Bible and doing some proclamation does not become a missionary. Many people of other religions question the approach, and this fundamentalism foments fundamentalism in others.



# mission: a german perspective



**Giving Account of our Hope: Understanding of Christian Mission Today from a German Perspective**

**For God's sake – for the love of the world**



**Rev. Detlev Knoche, Director of the Ecumenical Center and Ecumenical Liaison Officer of EKHN, Germany**



Respected Bishop Pradeep Kumar Samanta Roy,  
Respected Church President Dr. Volker Jung,  
Dear Representatives from our Asian Partner Churches,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a great honor for me to speak to you at this historic seminar under the theme “Giving Account of Our Hope: Christian Witness Today” at this historic place in front of this great auditorium. As I remember this is the third time that I’m visiting the Earth Center, and for me it is very much connected to the former Bishop of the Diocese of Amritsar, Dr. Anand Chandu Lal, as well as to the present Bishop, my dear friend Bunu. The place is a historic place which is very much related to our theme today. In former times it was a hill station used for missionaries of the Church Mission Society in the 18th and 19th centuries as a place for recreation. I very well remember the times when together we went to the eed people in Bonn to convince them to give substantial support to upgrade and to renovate this historic place. And both Bishops were successful! And I’m happy that my Church was willing to support the initial programs run by the Earth Center, which was newly opened in 2001, at this place. Programs called: Stewardship of God’s Creation, Human Rights and Earth Rights, Creation Spirituality, Development of the Human Potential.

But now let me come to my topic. I would like to start with some remarks about how the term “Mission” is used in the daily German language.

## 1. Mission – Definition and Use in Everyday German Language

The term itself is derived from the Latin word “missio” – “to let go; to send; to dispatch,” and migrated into Church Latin from there.<sup>1</sup> The noun first appeared in German texts in the 16th century.<sup>2</sup> Since the

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1 Cf. *Duden Volume 7, Das Herkunftswörterbuch (German Dictionary – Etymology)*, 3rd revised and expanded edition, Mannheim 2001, p. 352.

2 *Ibid.*

17th century the application of the word “mission” has become generally accepted in German language cultural circles with the meaning of “(the sending off of Christian representatives for) the conversion of heathens.” From this the terms missionary (that is: “a cleric or layperson active in) the [Christian] mission,” and missionize (that is: “to do missionary work, to convert to Christian belief”).<sup>3</sup> Significantly more recent is the definition of the term mission with the meaning “dispatch, assignment” or “personal duty, responsibility.” The term mission within the context of diplomatic representations migrated from the French language into the German language end of the 18th century, and it is still used today with regard to certain groups of persons who have a particular assignment or mandate.

Our everyday visualization of the word mission is characterized by the perception that to do missionary work means, to convert people – or, more precisely: to convert people to Christian belief. That the term mission is, even today, understood by the peoples of the Federal Republic of Germany as having a Christian context is illustrated by the TOP 10 results when searching German language pages for the word “mission” on the Internet using the Google search engine:<sup>4</sup>

- 9 hits refer to Protestant or evangelical missionary projects;
- only the 7th item in the list shows a reference to an initiative “Mission Europe,” which is about the integration of the European Union as a political force.

I do not want to overemphasize the Google results, but this does leave

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3 *Ibid.*

4 On April 18, 2013 the Google search engine showed following results for the term „Mission“ on German language webpages: 1. Vereinte Evangelische Mission (United Protestant Mission); 2. mission.de – um Gottes Willen, der Welt zuliebe (mission.de – for God’s sake, for the love of the world); 3. Liebenzeller Mission; 4. Mission – Evangelische Brüder-Unität (Protestant Unitas Fratrum); 5. Marburger Mission; 6. Dienstbereich Mission im BEFG – Baptisten (Mission Services in the BEFG -- Baptists); 7. Mission Europe; 8. Mission-Net Kongress – European Evangelical Missionary Alliance; 9. Zentrum für Mission und Ökumene – nordkirche-weltweit (Mission and Ecumenical Center – Northern Church Worldwide); 10. Freundeskreis Christlicher Mission e.V. (Circle of Friends for Christian Mission e.V.)

the impression that the use of the word mission is most noticeably associated with Protestant and evangelical institutions, and does not have a comparable meaning in other religious confessions.

## 2. Mission – the Biblical Context

Mission in the sense of proclamation and conversion missions among heathen peoples is not a characteristic of Old Testament Judaic theological history. At its core, it touches on the question of the relationship between the God of Israel and the participation in the salvation of all other peoples. It is also about the role and the significance of the chosen people of Israel for the salvation of all other peoples. Here the authors of the Old Testament offer several models and interpretations, which must be viewed within the context of own experiences with neighboring peoples and religions. Thus a portion of the texts take the “one God – one people” relationship into greater account, while other texts more clearly reflect the universal horizon of the Israelite understanding of God and humanity.

There is also no consistent understanding of the word mission in the New Testament. Instead, one finds varying perceptions and terms for the actual substance as such. Further, there is also no exact equivalent for the term mission – the Latin term is *missio* – in Greek or Hebrew at the time of the New Testament. This means: the term mission cannot be found in the New Testament. Terms such as the Great Commission (in German: *Missionsbefehl*) and the missionary journeys of Apostle Paul are terms which were formed later.

A question often asked, whether the historic Jesus himself also called for mission, is currently being responded to by Protestant mission theology as follows: Jesus, together with his disciples, primarily sought the “renewal” of Israel via word and deed, he saw himself as sent to Israel only. On the other hand the traditions of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:25 et seq.) and the Roman centurion (Luke 7:1 et seq.) show that he attracted those beyond his own people with his message and his bearing concerning the Kingdom of God being near.

Ecumenical mission theology today in the sense of “mission in Christ’s way” attempts to emphasize this helping, healing and conciliatory approach Jesus took with the people of his time. But the boundaries of the Jewish people then crossed beyond others following major disputes with the original community: with Apostle Paul leading the way.

The central sections of the New Testament which are concerned with our topic include, besides the so-called Great Commission, the following:

Acts 1:8: “... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses ...”<sup>5</sup> in Greek “eseite martures” = to be witness to, to give witness.

In Luke 10 and Matthew 10 the message of the mission (in Greek: apostello, in Latin: Missio) of the 12 disciples of Jesus (in Matthew) or rather the 72 disciples (in Luke), was, combined with the task of preaching, that the kingdom of God was at hand and to call for healing. In Luke this served for the preparation of Jesus’ travels to these places. In contrast to Luke a mission to the heathens is expressly prohibited, *expresis verbis*, in Matthew: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans ...” (10:5). The baptism of Cornelius, as is handed down to us in Acts, chapter 10, includes a further important indicator (with view of that which is happening with regard to mission as it is carried out into the world): both sides are changed as they leave the dialogue! “Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34 et seq.)

Matthew 28:19 et seq.: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ...teaching them ...”

With view towards the so-called “mission order” in Matthew 28:19 et seq., Dr. Karl-Heinz Dejung, former director of the Ecumenical Center, pointed out three items during a presentation:<sup>6</sup>

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5 All Bible quotations are taken from the King James Revised Standard Version.

6 Dr. Karl-Heinz Dejung, „Lebe so, dass Du gefragt wirst!“ Grundlagen

- “Order” is only mentioned in the German translation of this text. In English the wording “the great commandment” is formulated in a much less authoritarian and much more circumspect manner.
- The words of the gospel according to St. Matthew don’t emphasize the beginning, but rather the conclusion of the reflection in the New Testament, of what is to be understood as mission. They serve, so to speak, to reign in the “proliferation” of missionary practice in early Christianity by summarizing that which belongs to mission.
- And, finally, this so-called “order” did not gain its dominating position in the history of Christian mission until the beginning of modern times. At a time when one – with view to massive criticism aimed at Christian mission since the European Enlightenment – sought to rely on the words of the resurrected Lord within the Christian mission movement as an irrefutable authority for missionary action.

Thus if one contemplates the biblical find, it doesn’t seem to offer evidence for the transitive verbs “to proselytize / to evangelize someone” in the New Testament. The corresponding Greek verbs mean “to convert” and “to turn around.”

“Proselytize / Evangelize’ is an artificial term, which is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible,”<sup>7</sup> according to Bernhard Dinkelaker, former General Secretary of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (Stuttgart). He further writes, “An all-encompassing mission is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament. Throughout the Gospel testimonial images of a minority are used (as, for example, in Matthew 5:13-16 –

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*und Perspektiven Christlicher Mission Heute („Live Your Life in a Way, That You are Asked!“ Basic Ideas and Perspectives of Christian Mission Today); presentation for the First Intercultural Conference of the Protestant Church in Germany in Frankfurt am Main on September 14, 2012; typewritten manuscript, Mainz 2012, p. 3.*

<sup>7</sup> Bernhard Dinkelaker, *Anmerkungen zur Entwicklung des Missionsverständnisses in der Ökumene und zur Frage missionarischer Existenz heute (Remarks Regarding the Development of Mission Understanding in Ecumenism and with Regard to the Question of Missionary Existence Today); typewritten manuscript, Stuttgart 2003, p. 1.*

‘You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world.’). Even Paul concerns himself with the exemplary presence of the congregation ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 13:47).”<sup>8</sup>

Thus one can summarize: “Christian mission begins with neither single words nor with commands – as Matthew 28, for example. It is rather through faith and the experience of God’s devotion as shown in Jesus Christ’s liberating words and healing acts. God’s actions – the *missio Dei* – sets the mission of the churches into motion. This ‘*missio Dei*’ is the measure of each ‘*missio Hominum*’.”<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Mission – Historical Complexities

I don’t want to get into a long discourse here about the historical development and complexity of the definition of mission, but would just like to point out a few important connections which are significant for us Protestant churches in Germany and Europe.

At the time that Protestant churches emerged there was no room for mission. In the 16th and 17th centuries missionary responsibility belonged to the duties of the reigning princes, who were to promote Reformation in their respective territories. The great missionary emergence did not occur until the transition from the 18th to the 19th centuries, and it is closely related to the revivalist movement of Pietism. Without the Enlightenment and Pietism this emergence would have been unimaginable. It is interesting to note that this emergence initially occurred against the resistance of colonial powers and beyond the structures of the ordered Church in mission societies (founding of the Church Mission Society in 1799 in London and of the Basler Mission in 1815). I very well remember my first visit to the graves of the two missionaries Riedel and Schwarz in Minahasa, the North Sulawesi province of Indonesia. Their missionary work was viewed most critically by the Dutch colonial powers! Later this changed, and a close cooperation with colonialism ensued.

<sup>8</sup> *L.c.*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Dr. Karl-Heinz Dejung, p.3.*

Both local and foreign missions enjoyed great support during the lay movement. “The impression left by the revival movement also meant that ‘the world’ ... was perceived as ‘hostile’. A dual world view with regard to other religions and other world outlooks was thus firmly entrenched,” according to Bernard Dinkelaker in his previously cited presentation.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of World War II and the end of colonial times a crisis erupted with regard to this understanding of mission, which during its conception had been closely connected with colonialism. This led to a fundamental reconsideration in which the concept of “missio Dei” became the new and defining frame of reference. This means: Mission is theologically founded in “Missio Dei,” in the sending of the son through God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ, and is expressed by: to “preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15; John 17:18). Missio Dei means that mission at its core is creation, in which he takes us[?]: God is the subject of mission, not the church or the missionary! All of us, as Christians, see ourselves as Christ’s envoys, sent by Him to assist in his works for salvation.

#### **4. Mission – Challenged by our Partner Churches**

Much in this regard is to be learned from them, our partners, the Christians from the so-called two-thirds world. They confront us with the positive sides of mission and the emancipatory content of the Gospel (education, medical care, the tending of local language cultures, and others) as well as with the negative sides of mission, which manifests itself mainly in the close cooperation with the interests of the colonial powers as well as the cultures which were represented by them. In a statement made by the Chamber for Mission and Ecumenism of our Church in 2003, the following position was formulated:

“The analysis of the history of mission has indicated that the idea of mission within European and American churches often was – being

10 *Bernhard Dinkelaker, p. 2.*

bound by their contexts – eclipsed by political and social ideas of colonization. This fact required a critical examination of our concept of mission. The churches and mission societies have learned that it cannot be their task to support a dominance of the Western culture. Today the gospel comes newly into non-western cultures, and through the young churches it also comes newly and critically back to the West.”<sup>11</sup>

This process of encounters between the Gospel and culture is also topic of the joint programs with our partner churches. Our conference is an example of that! In this manner we meet as equal partners and recognize that mission, based on the concept of “Missio Dei”, is a manifestation of the life of each local church with their congregations. Christian churches are present worldwide. These circumstances forbid us from understanding the meaning of mission as an assignment from our church to convert the unchristened in foreign countries. I am certain that most of you will not, under any circumstances, want to give up on the word “mission.” This all of us within the aging churches – including myself personally – have had to learn anew within the past years: even with a possible abandonment of the word “mission” we still wouldn’t be rid of the matter, to be accountable for the hope which lives within us. At the same time, however, we should not steal ourselves away from the responsibility for the history of violence which, by God’s will, must never be repeated.

We have also learned to recognize mission as being holistic. I remember my first meeting with Dr. Anand Chandu Lal, the former bishop of the Amritsar diocese, our current hosts. Dr. Lal was a dedicated advocate of the “THUM” process: Towards a holistic understanding of mission.

“The holistic concept of mission does not only take that sin seriously

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<sup>11</sup> *In Vielfalt leben – Gott auf der Spur sein. Mission und Ökumene, Zeugnis und Dialog als zentrale kirchliche Arbeitsfelder. (Living in Diversity – to Follow in God’s Tracks. Mission and Ecumenism, Witness and Dialogue as Central Spheres of Church Work.) A statement from the Chamber for Mission and Ecumenism of EKHN, typewritten manuscript, Frankfurt, November 4, 2003, p. 2.*



which has its seat within an individual, thus its objective is not exclusively aimed towards the conversion of the individual, but it also looks at “systemic sin”, i.e., sin which is found in and has a powerful impact on social, religious, cultural, political and economic structures. Holistic mission aims towards salvation (towards redemption / exoneration) not only of individuals, but also of society, social structures, and all of creation.”<sup>12</sup>

## **5. Mission – Dialogue: to be Differentiated but not Separated During Interreligious Encounters**

Mission is not an originally Christian concept as we Christians in Europe believed until very recently. There is broad consensus between religious and mission sciences that mission belongs to all universally oriented world religions nowadays, and that it has evolved from encounters between the world religions. The ecumenical “Recommendations for Conduct” regarding mission also proceeds on this assumption in the publication of its recommendations for the deferential conduct of missionaries, evangelists and other witnesses of the gospel who preach religious faith. This document<sup>13</sup> was presented to the public on June 28, 2011 together by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). It is based on the conviction that all men are equal before God, and that one becomes a member of a religion based on one’s freedom of choice. This ecumenical “code of conduct” is a contribution to the competition of the world religions in the sense that the passing on of religious faith is to be handled as peacefully as possible. This is why it emphasizes the right of mission for world religions, and stresses the right to active and passive freedom of religion.

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12 Cf. *The North India Churchman*, April 1994, p. 2 et seq.

13 *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World – Recommendations for Conduct*, Geneva, June 28, 2011.

Not only Christianity has its own mission story, but also Buddhism and Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. This is why the current missionary challenge of the world religions is not based on “whether” mission is – in my opinion this question has been determined to be true. We are also no longer contending with the question of “how” – this as certain forms of mission, as, for example, dissemination using any kind of violence in any form whatsoever, are shunned. Crucial nowadays is the question of “what” – what wants to and what should be relayed in the mission.

Thus mission and dialogue are not to be understood as alternatives. They are, rather, the two sides of an interreligious encounter. They are to be differentiated, but not be separated. We have learned much about this and received important impulses for our increasingly multi religious society in Germany during our gatherings at the Henry Martyn Institute, the International Center for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation, in Hyderabad. Here we experienced, in an impressive manner, that the “what” which wants to be passed on in mission can be described with the terms “peace” and “reconciliation.” A modern mission theology presumes “that God not only could have, but also in fact has already visited my brothers and sisters of other faiths, and that God’s voice is heard even now in diverse ways beyond my little circle,”<sup>14</sup> according to Dr. Andreas D’ Souza, former Director of the Henry Martyn Institute, in a fundamental article about the goals, the tasks and the basic tenets of the organization.

## 6. Mission – Basic Elements of a New Understanding

Now I will attempt to name basic elements of current mission understanding, which are, in my view, indisputable in the theological debates about mission in our Protestant churches in Germany and the World Council of Churches (WCC). These are also reflected in the

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14 “Theology of Relationship” in: *Forum In-focus, The Canadian Churches’ Forum for Global Ministries No. 14, 2002/2003 p. 6.*

new document: “Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes”, which will be presented to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, Korea in November this year. The member churches of the World Council of Churches want to base a renewed common understanding of mission and evangelization on this document.

- Mission must be understood as a participation in the “Missio Dei.” This means, that God is the actor [the protagonist]; and with his Son Jesus Christ and in the presence of the Holy Spirit he turns towards the world – his creation. In this context mission for us Christians means: we are messengers [envoys] in succession to Jesus (“As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” John 20:21). As such we are called upon to give account for the hope that is in us. (1 Peter 3:15)
- Mission must be understood as a process relating to the complete person and the life conditions which affect her/him – as a holistic mission. This includes the proclamation of God’s Word as much as service to humankind and society, and this irrespective of a person’s reputation or esteem.
- It is beyond controversy that mission is an expression of the church. As such, mission occurs there, where church is in the midst of and among people, and where it establishes itself first of all: in the local Christian congregations and facilities, and in their diaconal services.
- Mission occurs there, where we as Christians speak and give answer as to the hope which lives within us. (1 Peter 3:15) It cannot and shall not be delegated away to groups, associations or societies. It is also not to be delegated to so-called “professional missionaries,” as has happened over and over again in the past in the history of Christian mission with a view towards religious orders and missionary societies.
- In the great European churches mission is increasingly gaining an internal dimension, oriented towards its own members. This certainly has its sources in the increasing secularization and

individualization of our life connections, in the sinking membership figures and in an increasing distance which members of our churches have towards congregations.

- As is the case with the gospel, the missionary witness is also committed to the objective of creating peace and to pave the way for reconciliation – even beyond religious and cultural boundaries. To act in a missionary manner means: to bear witness to the glad tidings proclaimed by Jesus Christ, to approach and speak with people on the edge of and outside of the church, to be available and approachable where people grapple with truth and reconciliation, with salvation and peace, to go to the places where people live, work, suffer, celebrate – to stay in motion and approach “the others.”

This brings me to the end. What missionary action means for my church in separate activities and projects, this is something that Dr. Johny Thonipara will present tomorrow morning, when our topic will be the introduction of mission projects as illustrated by various examples. I thank you for your kind attention.

Rev. Detlev Knoche, Director of the Ecumenical Center of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau (EKHN); Earth Center Dalhousie, May 28, 2013)

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The North India Churchman, April 1994.





# Krishna-Godavari Diocese, CSI



**Motto of CSI: That they all may be one**



## Mission Statement

Church of South India affirms that the Church is the servant of God to carry on the mission rooted in Jesus Christ based on the scriptures. The Church through her mission expresses solidarity with the broken communities for a new hope to face the challenges of life. The cross continues to be the sign of hope for the witnessing Church which strives towards unity, peace and reconciliation as a vibrant channel of God

## About the Diocese

- CSI Krishna-Godavari Diocese is spread in seven districts with a congregation members of 350,000 approximately.
- About 800 congregations both in rural and urban with about 185 pastors and about 150 evangelists and commissioned bodhakulu.
- The diocese has about 300 primary and upperprimary schools estd. 100 years back and 9 high schools along with 2 colleges.
- There are 5 mission fields namely Araku, Paderu, Vishaka, Ramachandrapuram And Singarayakonda with about 125 full time evangelists.

## Pioneers of Mission in the Diocese

The mission started about 200 years ago. The missionaries from London Mission and Church Missionary Society contributed towards the mission planted and constructed many churches not only in the cities but also in the remote areas.

Initiated education and healing ministry towards the holistic mission.

## Continuation of Mission

Vision: To stimulate the missionary zeal in the congregations with a view of equipping every member to creatively and actively witness the risen Christ and obey to His command to make disciples. And we look at the Mathews 11:28 by inviting everyone to the Kingdom of God – “Church is for everyone” and recognising the 3 P’s of the Church mission today: P-Pioneers, P-Partners and P-Participants.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To promote and explore new models and strategies for mission to be adopted in the context of religious pluralism.
- To motivate and organise the people towards Holistic mission ie., preach, teach and heal by giving
- To encourage and create network among the Churches and mission boards to send a message saying “Together in Mission”
- Short term Training courses on Evangelism- and Proclamation-Step

## **Mission in today’s context of our partners**

### **Mission and Evangelism**

Praise to the God, the Almighty, He has showed his Miracles abundantly on all our activities carried under the able guidance of our beloved Bishop the Rt. Rev. Dr. Govada Dyvasirvadam.

I am very happy to present the report of our small presentation on “Mission in todays context of our partners”.

### **Diocesan Initiative**

- Discovering Gods face in every human being.
- The Church of South India Krishna-Godavari Diocese was initiating mission programmes where there is desperate need.
- Mission work among the Dalits, tribals, Mentally challenged, HIV affected and infected children, runaway or street children.
- Araku Valley is about 115 Km. from Visakhapatnam lying on the top of the eastern ghats. The area of the valley is roughly 36 Sq. Kms and the altitude is between 600 and 900 meters above mean sea level. The entire area is inhabited by aboriginal tribes and has a scenic beauty attracting visitors from all over the country.
- Adivasi is an umbrella term for a heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups claimed to be the aboriginal population of India. They comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India.

- The Scheduled Tribes numbering 35% in Andhra Pradesh present aspect of fascinating diversity socially, culturally and economically.
- The Diocese has about 11 mission congregations situated at Singarayakonda and Palakonda.
- About 90 percent of people belongs to Scheduled Tribes and other communities share the rest. Some of the sub castes in this area are Valmiki, Kodu, Bondu, Kondadora etc. tribes. Each village has a population of about 200 and in some cases it is between 50 to 70 households. Due to this, we see more number of villages every province or mandal in this area.
- Coffee is one of the major sources of income for the tribal communities in Araku valley. During the monsoon (June to December), they are engaged in cultivation of land by doing agricultural works in leased lands as they all are not having own lands and in lean season they go for daily labour in the nearby forests and agency areas or as daily labour in the near by cities.
- The daily labour may vary from clearing land slides, canal works and others provided by Government. Other than this they are also engaged in construction works, electrical works etc., in the towns as well in the nearby villages.
- In araku the number of villages are more in a particular province or mandal when compared in other areas, because the villages are scattered on the hills. Most of the villages are not accessible for conveyance like bus, auto, jeep etc., as the villages are in the interior from the main road. People walk upto 5 to 10 km to reach their villages from centre or main road.
- The quality of drinking water casually contaminated pipe water sources.
- The experience gained with the geographical area and outside has empty enable us to establish that the health of women in the reproductive age group and small children below the age of five years is of crucial importance for effectively taking the problem of growth of population.
- This is because if parents are assured of good health of their children

they take initiative to keep the family small. Most effective way of ensuring good health of the child is to ensure good health of mother.

- The major cause of infant and child mortality are prematurity due to inadequate maternal care and nutrition during pregnancy, inadequate new born care, acute respiratory infection, diarrheal diseases and vaccine preventable diseases. Malaria is one of the most common diseases in this area with which we will find more death rates with this disease.
- Tribal education has been a slow process of integration into formal mainstream education.
- Because the tribals has their own language and script and there are no trained teachers in their language.
- Hence the Government gives maximum reservation for the educated tribals.

### **Ramachandrapuram Mission Field**

- This is situated about 50kms from Kakinada. Diocese had a congregation since 150 years named St.Thomus church . The members of the church approached Bishop to start a mission work keeping in view of their 150 years of CSI church in Kakina-da. The Bishop sent a team under the leadership of diocesan missions director to identify the areas where the church plantation and mission work are necessary. In this process they identified some places in the villages where there is desperate need for the church intervention to start mission programmes .
- In this way we have initiated the mission work adopting one after another villages and now it came up to 50 villages. Every month the K.G.Dioceses supporting the evangelists to meet their daily needs not only for church plantation and also for the social cause. We thank GOD for the intervention through this diocese.
- The local congregation and Individuals are supporting the evangelism and in church plantation through their kind donations .
- Likewise we initiated the mission service in Singarayakonda and Vishaka also.

- In singarayakonda we successfully developed 16 congregations. There we planted the churches and developing in social manner also.
- In Vishaska mission field we planted 14 churches and working for progress in church plantations.

### **Asha Jyothi Home for the rehabilitation of HIV Affected and Infected children**

- Vijayawada City in Andhra Pradesh is a central city which connects North and South. So everyday about 400 trucks pass through the city and most of the trucks stand for the temporary joy. Heavy flesh trade is carried out carrying the dreadful disease of HIV/AIDS. Identifying this, the Diocese has initiated to take survey and analysis and surprised to identify about 200 families near the highway affected with this disease. The staff of the Diocese also surprised to see many children affected with this and informed the Bishop and the officers of the Diocese. Bishop approached the Kindernot Hilfe to intervene to support atleast 100 boys and girls under 12 years to be rehabilitated.
- KNH with a generous heart has come forward to support atleast 50 boys and girls immediately and to supply nutritious food for about 100 families every month. In this way, the project was initiated. The project building is now under construction with a support from the KNH and small support from the local congregations and individuals. The staff is supplying nutritious food to the affected families before starting the residential home.
- While matter stood thus, there is still funds deficiency and Bishop has approached EKHN through Rev.Johny Thonipara and Rev. Detlev Knoche to support for the infrastructure like electricity, cots and mattresses, kitchen ware, drinking water supply etc which is essential to complete for the rehabilitation of the children. Immediately Rev.Detlev has sent me a wonderful mail giving us happiness and good news for the children by supporting the project. On behalf of the Diocese, we whole heartedly thank the EKHN.

- This home rehabilitates about 100 street children found in bus stands, railway stations, parks and other places. The children mainly are aged between 5 to 12 years who runaway from their homes. Some of them are even addicted to drugs. The Diocese initiated this project with the help of Kindernot Hilfe rehabilitation 100 children giving them shelter, food and education and finally placing them with their families.
- 100 years mission at Akonduru at the wake of ineffectiveness, our partner church in Oberhessen, EKHN, Germany has come to the rescue to cater to the health needs to the Gypsie thandas in about 18 villages since about 25 years. The Doctors and nurses go to the centre every 3 days to visit the villages and giving awareness about the health and hygiene. The diocese also installed a dental chair with the support of KNH and started treatment for children and also people with dental diseases.
- Bishop Azariah School was established 75 years ago giving education to many unfortunate and poorest of the poor girls in and around Krishna district. The school has a strength of about 1800 and about 500 girls reside in the same campus. Due to the bad condition of the age old buildings, many buildings have to be demolished or unused causing students to sit under the trees to get education. At this juncture, the administration through Bishop has approached the partner church EKHN through Rev.Detlev Knoche and the partners has immediately intervened and helped in building a block accommodating about 500 students and also a trauma center for women for counseling in the same building.



## East Kerala Deocese, CSI



**“Mission is one beggar telling another beggar,  
where you will get the food ” – D. T. Niels**

**“Church is the only club which exists for its non  
members “– William Temple**



From the above passage we learn 3 things:

- Have respect of other faith and appreciate it.
- Find the point of contact from the other faith and culture – “unknown god”
- Maintain the uniqueness of Christ. He did not use name of Jesus at all, in the whole sermon, so that it was not given in the place of unknown god.

Giving account shows that there should be an accountability .

Romans 1:14

To God who gave the gospel

To the world to whom it should be given

So, it is an obligation and we can not get away from it.

Mission of church is done through the boards of the church

- Mission Board
- Social Board
- Education Board.
- Medical Board

### **Mission Board**

- Direct witness by going and being with the people.
- Evangelistic work
  1. 50 mission centres in the “kudis” or tribal settlements of Kerala
  2. Delhi slums and Agra villages called Asoli.
  3. Missionary training.
- The basic aim is that it is the work of the whole congregation. Where people support and involved directly with the mission fields, and activities.

### **Social board**

- Tea estate project of looking after of the 11 closed estates.
  - a. Girls’ education,
  - b. Women empowerment of starting Self Help Groups (SHG)

- c. Skill training for young - through the ITIs. All are employed
- d. Establishing the federations bringing all the SHGs together.
- Child centre and Child focus development project. - CFCD  
20 villages are covered.

### **Education Board**

- 17 Schools in the villages.
- Hostel projects . 90% of the children are from the mission centres. Here we provide food shelter and formal education, health and hygiene.
- New hostels,

### **Medical Board**

- 1 Hospital
- 1 village clinic
- Medical camps in the mission fields, especially in the time of rain and epidemic, conduct medical camps and health education programme. For example of no birth in a kudi for more than 5 years.

### **Future programmes**

- 3 New hostels
- Mission training centre
- Retreat cum and conference centre
- New Diocesan Office



## Diocese of Amritsar



»We visualize and discover; people being renewed in faith and service, in Jesus Christ, relating to the world towards constant realization of the kingdom of God.«

### Objectives

- To share the good news of the love of God with the people of all walks of life through words and deeds.
- To respond in obedience to God's call for restoration of peace, justice, and integrity of the whole creation.
- To empower the women, youth and children and to equip them to meaningfully participate in the mission of God.

### Statistics

Congregations	Rural	265
	Urban	35
Clergy	Male	38
	Female	10
Members	Male	10500
	Female	9500
Institutions	Educational	14
	Health	7
	Child Care	2
	Social	1

### People

Punjabi, Himachali, Ladhaki, Kashmiri

### Multi Faith Context

Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism

### Unity In Diversity

Respect for other faith communities

- Mutual partaking in festival celebrations
- Active participation in social functions
- Expression of solidarity in time of crisis

### **Journey together for Change**

- Dialogue process remained confined to the conference room and didn't touch the grass root.
- People got tired of talking about religion.

### **Results**

- Positive synergy enhanced effectiveness of all partners
- Need for use of common religious resources was felt
- Impact on people and government was felt

### **Diocesan Priorities**

- To vitalize and develop peoples' potential, through health and education programs, and bolster their economic capacities.
- To promote and build human rights movement among the common masses to create an atmosphere of human right culture.
- To make consistent efforts for new ministerial formation with ecumenical approach and look for theological basis for wider ecumenism in the human society.
- To provide a platform for issue based co-operation among different faith communities for common action.
- To Develop programmes for the empowerment of the children, youth and women.

### **Children**

- To help children to grow in faith and spirituality.
- To empower them to play a pro-active role as agents of change in the community.
- To challenge the church and society towards creating a healthy environment for children.
- To sensitize the children with regard to right to healthy environment and quality living.

### **Youth**

- To enable the youth to grow as responsible citizens and members of the Church.
- To sensitize and equip the youth to become active agents in the growth of the Church and the society at large.
- To sensitize and empower the youth for involvement in wider human concerns the global concern for the environment.

### **Women**

- Sensitize the women about their position in the church and the society.
- Promote witness, fellowship and service through active involvement.
- Encourage Women to take full part in the ministry and administration of the Church.

### **Social Development**

- To develop social dynamism to combat social evil.
- To inspire and instill flexibility in attitude towards emerging life styles.
- To encourage participation and involvement at the grass root and to enhance their organizational capacities.
- To groom and attune the youth for dynamic leadership.

### **Environmental**

- To sensitize the people to be responsible stewards of God's Creation.
- Sensitivity towards projecting, promoting and protecting human rights and Earth Rights.
- To develop a sense of Earth Spirituality in the hearts of the people.
- Evolution of new/alternate paradigms in networking with other like minded persons and agencies.

## **Educational**

- Spiritual Care with moral approach towards learning and growth of children.
- Holistic value based education which would develop professional competence, personality development and social relevance.
- Functional education with vision beyond school with emphasis on social-integration and concern for community and nation building.

## **Health**

- To promote and carry out medical services and training community health workers.
- Dispersion of useful medical knowledge, in the spirit of service and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Service to benefit all persons irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

## **Community Development**

- Holistic development of the Health of the Community with special emphasis on the women and backward classes.
- Awareness towards female feticide and family planning.
- Non-formal education and skill work training to girls for self-reliance.
- To stop abuse of drugs.
- HIV/AIDS awareness programmes especially among the youth and truck drivers.
- Care of the HIV/AIDS affected persons and their families.

## **Challenges**

- Sufficient financial resources for self reliance
- Ownership of mission work by the people of the Diocese
- Identification and development of human resource for second line leadership





# EKHN Mission Project: Stimulus Post



„Birthday not known  
In spite of that it is celebrated“

The Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau (EKHN) is one of the Protestant Churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). It covers parts of the states of Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia. Major cities in the EKHN are Wiesbaden (Hesse state capital), Mainz (Rhineland-Palatinate state capital), Frankfurt / Main and Darmstadt. The EKHN is divided into 47 deaneries.

- 1.7 Million Members
- 1.170 Congregations
- 602 Kindergarten
- 12.600 Child baptisms
- 1.200 Adult baptisms
- 20.000 Burials
- 10.000 Renouncing Church membership (resignations)
- 4.500 (Re)entries

Members 2013: 1,7 million

Members 2015 (forecast) 1,5 million

### **Stimulus Post - A Mission Project of the EKHN**

Background:

- Highly secularised society
- Loss of Contact with the Church
- Lack of knowledge of one's own religion
- Forgetting the meaning of the Christian traditions and content of the Christian message
- Individualism and Anonymity

Aims and Goals:

- "Through the stimulus post we want to make faith issues to subject of discussions on kitchen tables." (Church President Dr. Volker Jung)
- to reach all the members of the Church, especially those who are not reached by the normal Church activities

- To address people in their existential situation personally and sensitively
- to get people interested for Church
- to make clear the Church positions
- to stimulate the religious life of the members

How does it function?

- Twice in a year the Church President sends “stimulus post” to the members, in which he stresses the importance of a Holyday
- The internet Website and other activities in the social media help to go deeper in the subject of discussion
- Prayers, Sermons, Meditations, Material for lessons,
- Large banners and posters on Church buildings and on road side
- Articles in parish magazines
- Radio spots



Further Informations:

- [www.weihnachten-ist-geburtstag.de](http://www.weihnachten-ist-geburtstag.de)
- [www.lichtblick-ostern.de](http://www.lichtblick-ostern.de)
- [www.toleranz-ueben.de](http://www.toleranz-ueben.de)



# Final Statement



We, the representatives of all the Asian Partners of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau (EKHN), came together for a joint seminar on the theme “Giving Account of Our Hope: Christian Witness Today” from 27th till 29th of May 2013 at The Earth Center, Dalhousie. The seminar was hosted by the Diocese of Amritsar.

Coming from different social, political, cultural and denominational backgrounds, we contemplated together what it means today to bear witness to our hopes by recalling what we have in common, namely, the Word of God.

In this manner we met as equal partners and recognized that mission, based on the concept of “Missio Dei”, is a manifestation of the life of each local church with its congregations (Matthew 5:13-16). Christian mission begins with neither single words nor with commands. It is rather an expression of faith and the experience of God’s devotion as shown in Jesus Christ’s liberating words and healing acts. God’s actions – the missio Dei – sets the mission of the churches into motion. This ‘missio Dei’ is the measure of each ‘missio Hominum’. We agree that our testimony as Christians should be given in such a way that it stirs up the world. People should wonder why we are living in this particular way. Other human beings should feel the compulsion to ask us about the hope that lives within us. Signs of this hope are peace, justice and caring for God’s creation; in other words: helping the poor, caring for the sick, empowering the weak and giving hope to the hopeless. We see in their situation an expression of the suffering of Christ.

We agree to the following principles of understanding of mission:

- Mission is understood as participation in the “Missio Dei.” God is the actor; and with his Son Jesus Christ and in the presence of the Holy Spirit he turns towards the world – his creation. In this context mission for us means: we are messengers in succession to Jesus (“As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” John 21:21). As such we are called upon to give account for the hope that is in us in order to infuse hope into others (1 Peter 3:15).
- Mission must be understood as a process relating to the complete person and the life conditions which affect her/him – as a holistic mission. This includes the proclamation of God’s Word as much as service to humankind and society, irrespective of a person’s reputation or esteem.
- Mission is an expression of the love of Christ. As such, mission occurs wherever church is in the midst of and among people, and where it establishes itself first of all: in the local Christian congregations and facilities, and in their diaconical services. It has to be

prophetic as well as self-critical.

- Mission is witnessing the gospel, sharing of hope and a transforming process and not proselytising.
- Mission occurs wherever we as Christians speak and give answer to the hope which lives within us. (1 Peter 3:15) It should not be limited to groups, associations, societies or so-called “professional missionaries”, but is the task of every Christian and the whole church.
- As is the case with the gospel, the missionary witness is also committed to the objective of creating peace and paving the way for reconciliation – even beyond religious and cultural boundaries. This includes opposing the oppressive powers that perpetuate poverty, promoting justice, peace and human rights, and standing for the survival of “Mother Earth”.

To act in a missionary manner means: to bear witness to the Good News proclaimed by Jesus Christ, to approach and speak with people on the edge of and outside of the church, to be available and approachable where people grapple with truth and reconciliation, with salvation and peace, to go to the places where people live, work, suffer, celebrate – to remain open to situations and approach “the others.” Therefore the Church through her mission expresses solidarity with the broken communities for a new hope to face the challenges of life. The cross continues to be the sign of hope for the witnessing Church which strives towards unity, peace and reconciliation as a vibrant channel of God.

As partners in mission we wish to continue to learn from each other by mutual sharing. By remaining in dialogue and exchange as well as in mutual support we are expecting our mutual transformation.

Dalhousie, 29th of May 2013



The following representatives of the Partner Churches have been present:

- Rev. Dr. M. Mani Chacko Ph.D., General Secretary of the Bible Society of India
- Rev. Ayub Daniel, Treasurer Diocese of Amritsar, India
- Rt. Rev. Dr. K. G. Daniel, Bishop East Kerala Diocese, India
- Daniel B. Das, Director of SEDP, Diocese of Amritsar, India
- Dr. Susan Durst, Member of the Church Board of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany
- Iwan Frederik, Member of the Department of Mission and Ecumenism of the Protestant Church in Minahasa, Indonesia
- Samuel Sudhir Govada, Partnership Secretary of Krishna Godavari Diocese, India
- Rt. Rev. Dr. Volker Jung, Church President of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany
- Rev. Euijun Kang, Partnership Secretary of Gwangju Presbytery of PROK, Republic of Korea
- Rev. Detlev Knoche, Director of the Center for Ecumenical Work and Ecumenical Liaison Officer of EKHN, Germany

- Rev. Sohan Lal, Vice President of the Diocese of Amritsar, India
- Father Dr. Varghese Manimala, Director of the Henry Martyr Institute, Hyderabad, India
- Rev. Christine Noschka, Member of the Church Board of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany
- Rev. Valluri Isaac Ratna Raju, Treasurer of the Diocese of Krishna Godavari, India
- Rev. Lily Samantaroy, Presbyter of St. Paul's Church Amritsar, Diocese of Amritsar, India
- Rt. Rev. Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy, Bishop of the Diocese of Amritsar, India
- Rev. John Christian Saragih, Head of Marturia Department of the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church, Indonesia
- Rev. K. S. Scaria, Director of Mission and Evangelism in the Diocese of East Kerala, India
- Rev. Dr. Johny Thonipara, Secretary for Development and Partnership in the Center for Ecumenical Work of EKHN, Germany



