

GOSSNER EVANGELICAL – LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR AND ASSAM

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Volume:

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Content:

- Letter of information of admission from G.L.T.C.R.
- Summary of resource book
- Order of worship of LWF Golden Jubilee Celebration
- Spare copies of office order and letter
- Request & application
- Correspondence of letter in miscellaneous subjects

File No. _____

RIND
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G. E. L. CHURCH

IN

CHOTANAGPUR AND ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL

Miscellaneous

1997

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206-97

प्रिय प्रार्थना एवं दान सहयोगी मित्रों,

प्रभु यीशु के मधुर नाम में आपको फ़ीबा परिवार की ओर से
जय मसीह की, भाई हमने आपको जून-जूलाई-अगस्त की समाचार
विज्ञापित भेजी थी जो कि हमारे पास लौटकर आ गई है आप पत्र
द्वारा तुरन्त सूचित करें कि क्या आपने अपना पता बदल लिया है।
या फिर पोस्ट में आपके घर ही नहीं पहुँचा आप तुरन्त इस बात की
पुष्टि अपने डाकिये से करें तत्पश्चात हमें सूचित करें यदि आपका पत्र
हमें सिद्ध प्राप्त नहीं हुआ तो मजबूरन हमें आपका नाम अपनी लिस्ट
में से काटना पड़ेगा इसलिए आप अतिशिघ्र ही समय निकाल कर हमें
इस पोस्ट कार्ड पर अपनी प्रतिक्रिया लिखकर भेज दें
नोट :- पत्र में अपना नाम व पता पूरा-पूरा लिखें ताकि खोजबीन
में दिक्कत न हो हम आपके पत्र की प्रतिक्रिया कर रहे हैं।
फ़ीबा की सेवकाई को अपनी दैनिक प्रार्थनाओं में स्मरण रखें।
परमेश्वर आपको आशीष दे,

मसीह में आपका भाई

रेव्ह० डा० बेनजामिन जेम्स
मिनिस्ट्री स्पॉट डिपार्टमेंट

Registered Office : 7, Commissariat Road, Bangalore - 560 025. Phone : 5585019, 5584101

MEMBER OF FEB RADIO INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN PROGRAMMING DAILY FROM SEYCHELLES AND MANILA

TO,



MR. GERSON TIRU.
GEL CHURCH
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE,
RANCHI : 834001. BIHAR.



267. msd

Ministry Support Department
FEBA-India, FEBA House,
A-42-44, Commercial Complex,
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GURUKUL LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr. K. Rajaratnam
Director

June 18, 1997

Rev. Dr. D.W. Jesudoss
B.A., B.T., D.Th. (Germany)
Principal

Mr. Gerson Tiru
General Secretary
G.E.L. Church
Ranchi 834 001
Bihar


Dear Brother,

I am in receipt of your letter dated June 9, 1997 regarding Mr. Niraj Bage. He has come to Gurukul to write the entrance examination and we are glad to inform you that he has passed the examination.

Herewith I am sending a copy of my letter of admission to him for your information and necessary action.

With greetings,

Yours sincerely,


(Rev. Dr. D.W. JESUDOSS)
PRINCIPAL

GURUKUL LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr. K. Rajaratnam
Director

Rev. Dr. D. T. Jesudoss
Principal

94, Purasawalkam High Road
Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010

Phone : 64 21 007
Fax : 91 44 64 21 870

Date : May 8, 1997

To

Dear ... *Mr. N. RAZ. BAGE* ...

We are pleased to inform you that you have been selected, subject to fulfilling all Serampore and College admission requirements, to undergo B.D./M.Th. course at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College & Research Institute, Madras.

The College reopens on 15th June 1997 with the Director's Tea at 4-00 p.m., followed by Worship Service at 4-30 p.m. You must be present for the Director's Tea and Opening Worship Service.

- I. You will have to produce the following documents in ORIGINAL (which will not be returned until you finish B.D./~~M~~Th Course) on 16th June 1997 to the Registrar, Gurukul.
 - i) Concerned Certificate (all your Secular and/or Theological Degrees etc.)
 - ii) Transcript of Marks from Senate/Theological College where you studied or other Secular Universities.
 - iii) Letter of financial guarantee from the Sponsor (if you have not already produced).
 - iv) Letter of Sponsorship from the Church/Diocese/ Association of Churches.
 - v) A Chest X-ray of yours taken in May 1997.
- II. -- You are given accommodation in the Men's/~~Women's~~ Hostel at Gurukul.
 - You have to make your own arrangement for your accommodation outside Gurukul Campus at your expense.
 - You will be a Day Scholar from the City of Madras.
- III. The Hostel Mess will begin to function with noon meals on 15th June 1997. Hostel students must arrive before lunch time on 15th June.

IV. Payment of College Fee and Study Expenses

You will hear from the Bursar, Gurukul, the amount you have to pay towards fees on the day of registration i.e., June 16, 1997.


The College is now revising the fee structure and other study expenses. When it is finalised that will be informed to you and the balance amount for the academic year will be collected in December 1997.

- V. i) For academic study of the Senate of Serampore RSV (Revised Standard Version) Bible is used. Hence you are advised to bring RSV Bible with you.
- ii) During the period of your study in Gurukul, you are not supposed to do any other Course (either Correspondence Course or Evening College).

VI. Please inform the date and time of your arrival at Gurukul by return of post to the Principal, Gurukul.

Wishing you a fruitful preparation for God's ministry,

Yours sincerely,


(Rev. Dr. D. N. JESUDOSS)
PRINCIPAL



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND - FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL - FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

General Secretariat - Office of the General Secretary - The General Secretary

**TO: ALL MEMBER CHURCHES OF THE
LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION**

June 6, 1997

Dear Friends,

The Prophetic Mission of Churches in Response to Forced Displacement of People

For the first time in history 150 representatives from Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches worldwide gathered in November 1995 in Addis Ababa in order to seek new understandings and common Christian positions on the root causes and effects of forced displacement of people. The three convening organizations were Caritas Internationalis, World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. The consultation approved a "CALL TO ACTION: Accompanying forcibly displaced people and denouncing the violence which uproots them".

The LWF Program Committee for World Service recommended several actions: to share the report with all LWF member churches, to encourage member churches to actively participate in the "1997 *Ecumenical Year of the Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted people*" recently launched by the WCC in close partnership with LWF and to approve a fund for "LWF/DWS Assistance in Training/Capacity Building of Member Churches in addressing the needs of Refugees and Displaced People" within the LWF/World Service Statement of Needs for 1997 and 1998.

The purpose of this letter today is to share with you the report from the Consultation in Addis Ababa 1995 (the CALL TO ACTION has been translated), as well as to provide you with some material promoting the "1997 Year of the Uprooted People" and to encourage each one of you in your continents and regions to be in solidarity with the uprooted: refugees, internally displaced, migrant workers or any other forcibly displaced people. We would like to support this initiative and draw your attention to another document enclosed in this letter entitled: "Global Update". There are a number of regional and national activities proposed. Some of our member churches are already working in the LWF regional networks together with the WCC/AACC networks on this topic. Caritas Internationalis is presently restructuring its refugee work and has indicated that also their networks will join us in dealing with the question of uprootedness, its root causes and the needs in order to avoid uprootedness.

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It is the churches who are involved first in complex refugee situations before the news reach the head-lines of the international media. Therefore, building of capacity of our member churches is of utmost importance. Through the ecumenical networks LWF is committed to follow up on the "Call to Action" as recommended: strengthening the capacity of the churches.

To this extend the WCC has developed a Resource Book "A Moment to Choose: Risking to be with Uprooted People". Attached we are sending you a summary of its content. The purpose of the book is two-fold: it helps policy makers and academics, as well as all who wish to understand the causes and consequences of the forced displacement of people. Secondly, the book aims to challenge the churches to prophetic and practical responses promoting that promote human dignity and sustainable communities. In doing this, it identifies a number of Signs of Hope. Over 50 concrete examples are given with regard to the practical work with uprooted people. Please let us know (LWF/Department for World Service) in case you would like to receive this resource book.

We are sure that your church is already involved in a number of activities, either in workshops or networks dealing with displaced persons or programmes for refugees, etc. It would be very interesting for us to know about your activities as we would like to contribute wherever you feel you could make use of our experience and resources.

With best regards,

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a cursive 'S' and a horizontal line.

Dr. Ishmael Noko
- General Secretary -

A CALL TO ACTION:

Accompanying Forcibly Displaced People and Denouncing the Violence Which Uproots Them



As church-workers with forcibly displaced and uprooted people, we have met, together with representatives of humanitarian agencies, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from November 6 to 11, 1995, brought together by Caritas Internationalis, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. Coming from different parts of the world and from diverse Christian traditions, we have rejoiced in our full ecumenical sharing. Learning from our exchange of experiences in working with forcibly displaced people, we have renewed our ecumenical and personal commitment: to support, defend and accompany all uprooted people; to try to prevent the causes of their forcible displacement; to strengthen advocacy for their rights.

I. An Appeal to All Churches in All Societies

The Crisis of Uprootedness

We cannot turn a deaf ear to the clamour of suffering of hundreds of millions of people forced in this century to leave their home and heritage. We have visited forcibly displaced people, mainly destitute women and children, from the recent civil war in Ethiopia and Eritrea. We have heard of a Rwandan refugee woman who would not name the murderers of her family lest the cycle of violence continue. We have prayed for Filipino migrant women, abused and exploited to the point of slavery. Our hearts are heavy that we have often failed to respond sufficiently to such uprooted people (refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and migrants, who often have no status or protection). Yet we have also heard shouts of joy, as families are reunited, or voices of hope, as a welcome is given.

A Challenge to the Churches

The United Nations Organization estimates that there are more than 125 million refugees and migrants living outside their countries of origin – more than one in every 50 human beings. Nearly 20 million of these are recognised refugees and 30 million are internally displaced persons; in addition, many other migrants have been forcibly displaced by political, economic, and environmental factors. Yet we find ourselves facing a reality that goes beyond statistics. We confront situations of pain and human tragedy, but also of courage and dignity. We therefore appeal to our churches to strengthen ecumenical cooperation between themselves and with other institutions, and to renew their commitment to a prophetic mission of service, advocacy and community-building with and for uprooted people.

Our Appeal to All Societies

We appeal for greater awareness of the scale and intensity of the problems of forced displacement. We urge people of goodwill to show solidarity and express their sense of outrage as so many people are being excluded from equal opportunities in their own country or in their country of exile, and thus forced, perhaps several times, to escape or migrate over international borders, to be hindered from or pressured into repatriation.

II. The Teachings of the Prophets and the Example of Jesus

A Call to Solidarity

Like a loving mother, God bends down to nourish the people kept under the yoke of slavery (Hosea 11:1-4). We see God's constant presence and empowering love, particularly for the oppressed, in the life, ministry and teaching of Jesus, which we are called to share. We, the people of the churches, are called to be God's partners by joining, in selfless solidarity, with the most vulnerable in our societies. With them we seek to bring about justice, to uphold the rights of the lowly and destitute, to "deliver the needy from the hands of the wicked" (Psalm 82:3-5; Luke 4:18-20).

A Call to Repent

We are also called upon to examine ourselves – both as individuals and as members of churches and local communities. Some of us have been active participants in the predominant culture of individualism, consumerism, ignorance, prejudice, and violence. We confess our sins in this regard, opening ourselves to be renewed by God (Isaiah 6:5-8). We actively repent for the harm which we continue to cause toward those who are most vulnerable and uprooted. We rededicate ourselves to follow Jesus' Gospel mandate of unselfish love and acceptance toward all. We must bring the fruits of our faith into our daily life, speech, work, and social structures (Matthew 7: 20-23).

A Call to Compassion

God, who listened and responded to the cry and misery of the people in Egypt (Exodus 3:7), calls on today's people of faith to do the same – to listen attentively to the cry of uprooted people in the present-day world and to advocate respect for their rights. The God of life and love is present in all human experiences (Romans 8: 35-39), including the sufferings of those who are forced to leave their homes because of war, conflicts, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation.

A Call to Hospitality

The God of love and justice reminds us that our spiritual ancestors were "strangers in a new land" (Deut. 10:18-19). We have obligations, therefore, to love all strangers without regard for their ethnicity, race, religion, and gender, as Jesus exemplified in his conversation with the woman of Samaria (John 4). We must accept strangers as the sons and daughters of God, as our own sisters and brothers.

A Call to Witness

God's call has been powerfully issued by the prophets, by our churches' traditions, and by the witness of countless modern-day prophets and martyrs. We are called to speak out honestly and bravely against the root causes of forced displacement. We are appointed to destroy the unjust practices and false peace in our communities, and to build and plant justice, harmony, solidarity, and reconciliation (Jer. 1:10; 6:13-15). We are called, and empowered, to be steadfast (Eph. 6: 10-16).

A Call to Enjoy Fullness of Life

As we struggle to integrate our ministry with and for uprooted people within the essential mission of our churches, we recall that the Scriptures are filled with examples of the profound experience of God enjoyed by migrant people. Abraham followed God's call into a strange land. God accompanied the people who walked in the desert and brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey (Deut. 26:5-9). Jesus makes us accountable to feed the hungry, to welcome the stranger and to visit the prisoner, so that we may inherit the fullness of eternal life (Matthew 25:31-46; John 10:10). The disciples were able to recognize the risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread once they were willing to welcome and accompany the stranger on their journey to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-28). We may enjoy the gifts of personal and cultural diversity, which strangers bring to us as we work together. It may even be the foreigner, the Samaritan, who teaches us how to show love for our neighbour and therefore for God (Luke 10, 25-37).

III. Challenges to the Churches to Expose the Root Causes and Effects of the Forced Displacement of People

Structures of Injustice

Those who influence global economic forces are deliberately excluding large sectors of societies from participation in every level of the world's economic, political, social and cultural life. International financial pressures, crushing foreign debt, and the unjust effects of some structural adjustment programmes increase inequalities within and between nations. They often drive people from their lands and wreak havoc with the environment. Some grandiose development projects such as large dams and the introduction of inappropriate and unsustainable technology make many people homeless or jobless and also provoke conflict and violence.

Violence and the Culture of Death

Despite some benefits, the end of the Cold War has led to many new crises and, in some places, to chaos. Ethnic conflicts, often rooted in a colonial past, in new nationalisms, or in the collapse of authoritarian regimes, have also been inflamed by irresponsible media propaganda or disinformation and have led to the slaughter or displacement of millions of people, especially women and children. Wars and conflicts increasingly target civilians and destroy families. Rape is a military strategy. Children are recruited as soldiers. As social order and structures collapse, armed gangs and militia terrorize whole populations with widely-marketed and inexpensive weapons such as handguns and anti-personnel mines.

Violence and Displacement

People are increasingly uprooted because of gross violations of human rights, destructive and unsustainable development, oppressive actions by governments, and, above all, warfare. Churches must be analytical, self-critical and confident in exposing and seeking to correct such root causes of forced migration and displacement, and the sin and greed underlying those causes on local and global levels. But exposure and understanding are not enough. We must act.

IV. Our Commitments to Confession and Action

At the close of our international ecumenical conference we address this call to action to our respective churches and their agencies but above all to ourselves:

1. Confession and Commitment

Let us acknowledge where we may have contributed to the forcible uprooting of people, or where we may have prolonged their suffering through our action or inaction. Having done so, let us engage in energetic prayer and encourage each other in service, assured of forgiveness and empowerment through God's grace.

2. Developing New Attitudes in Society

Let us promote educational, artistic, media and interactive communications programmes, such as electronic mail systems, which could help church members and society at large to transcend barriers of ethnicity, race, nationality, and religion, to value the dignity of each human being, to affirm the blessings of diversity, and to be vigilant in overcoming the language and practices of hate. This may require extensive dialogue with some church communities in order to ease their fears and promote clearer understanding of issues.

3. Strengthening the Churches' Pastoral Care and Advocacy

Let us intensify and promote programmes such as: pastoral care and support for the uprooted; civic education for human rights; conflict resolution; advocacy for the protection of the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and migrants, whether they are documented or not.

4. Seeking to Prevent the Uprooting of People

Let us develop the capacity to recognize, give early warning, and take preventive action where situations are developing which may lead to forced displacement. Communication facilities need to be improved, but above all civic training programmes, such as conflict resolution, peaceful negotiation, and mediation, need to be planned and promoted.

5. Commitment to Ecumenical Collaboration

Let us commit ourselves to a more dedicated and effective ecumenical and interreligious collaboration and let us cooperate with other relevant organizations and experts as we seek to express our solidarity with uprooted people. This should lead us to concrete actions in the three areas of service, advocacy and community-building:

(a) Service

- We shall acknowledge that it is only by working together as organizations, congregations and individuals in partnership with uprooted people, and only by exposing ourselves to their hopes and fears, that we can become effective servants and partners.
- We shall give priority attention to the needs, vulnerabilities and potentials of uprooted children and uprooted women.
- We shall persevere in service for and with uprooted people even where society or governments seek to discourage or obstruct us and especially where churches are asked to provide sanctuary. The needs of uprooted people should be seen as more important than harmonious relations with the authorities.

(b) Advocacy

- We shall support and defend the protection of the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and migrants, whether documented or not.
- We shall protest against the negative effects of restrictive asylum policies, against policies which obstruct family reunification, against unsustainable development policies, against oppressive economic embargoes, against the arms trade, including light weapons and mines, and against racism and xenophobia wherever they occur.
- We shall seek to strengthen family life: by promoting responsible and voluntary planning of families, allowing respect for our various religious traditions; by facilitating the voluntary repatriation of those who long to return to their homes; by supporting family reunification for those who have settled in new lands.
- We shall condemn idolization of market economics or of any other ideology, wherever they create injustice, exclusion or forced displacement.

(c) Community-Building

- We shall work with uprooted people so that they may themselves be empowered in the search for solutions.
- We shall give particular encouragement to youth and women's organizations in their engagement with uprooted people.
- We shall develop appropriate and critical means of communication and seek to give uprooted people access to it. This will call for cooperation with broadcast and print journalists, in order to check disinformation, to promote inter-cultural understanding and to motivate community-building.
- We shall promote ecumenical dialogue and collaboration, extending this as far as possible to people of other faiths and to people of goodwill. This means working together in planning, staffing and implementation at local, national, interregional and international levels.

We pray for God's grace to help us to fulfil these commitments.

Recommendations concerning the International Ecumenical Consultative Committee for Refugees

We reaffirm the importance of the International Ecumenical Consultative Committee for Refugees (IECCR) since it was set up in 1986. We particularly thank the IECCR and its sponsoring agencies for bringing us together in this conference.

Without suggesting that IECCR should become a coordinating or operational agency, we recommend that IECCR facilitate a strategic planning process whereby specific churches or agencies could be invited to take responsibility for fulfilling particular objectives. This may involve a change of name for IECCR – in order to reflect that its mandate extends beyond refugees – as well as an openness to new members. As part of this process, IECCR is asked to secure input from regional and national organizations as to their priorities and willingness to assume new tasks.

The objectives might include, by way of illustration:

1. Proposal of organizational means, at appropriate levels, to respond more effectively to refugee emergencies, especially in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
2. Advocacy and partnership with UNHCR and governments to promote greater protection for refugees and internally displaced persons, for example through the Partnership in Action (PARinAC) process.
3. Advocacy with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Migrants' Watch Committee, other agencies, and governments to promote greater protection for migrants (documented and undocumented), especially through wider ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
4. Advocacy with the United Nations Commission for Human Rights to promote greater protection for internally displaced persons in those situations where the UNHCR does not have a mandate.
5. Actions to address effectively the special needs, and to make use of the resources and potentials, of uprooted children and of uprooted women.
6. Enhancement of opportunities for individual Christians and congregations to become directly involved with uprooted people, in cooperation with other groups in their community.
7. Consideration of the specific recommendations in the presentations and group reports received in Addis Ababa.

8. Follow-up within respective constituencies of the three sponsoring agencies as to how the recommendations of the Addis Ababa Consultation are being implemented.

9. Formation of a group of eminent persons who would address issues and concerns related to uprooted people at the highest possible political levels.

10. Establishment of Internet sites and resource data banks through which IECCR members could exchange information; care should be taken to ensure that equipment, training, and on-line time is not only the prerogative of certain "privileged" agencies.

11. Development of other practical means for churches to respond to their calling to care for the most vulnerable – "the least of these".

We urge our three sponsoring agencies – Caritas Internationalis, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches – to reflect in their own programme planning and budgets, on international, regional, and national levels, the priority concerns raised in this consultation.

* * * * *



March 1997, Issue # 2

The annual meeting of the WCC's Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People took place in Geneva from Saturday, 1 March 1997 through Tuesday, 2 March 1997. The network which has representatives from all regions of the world is the advisory body of the Refugee and Migration Service of the WCC. Besides hearing reports from the various regions, around 30 participants from the network discussed communications and advocacy issues, wrote a letter of concern to the UNHCR about the forcible repatriation of Rwandan refugees from Tanzania, and participated in the Geneva launch of the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People. The members of the network took part with WCC General Secretary, Konrad Raiser, in a worship service commemorating the launch. Raiser preached on the theme of the Church of the Stranger (text available). All churches in the Geneva area were invited to take part in the launch, as well as members of the international community. The following Communique was issued by the Global Ecumenical Network for Uprooted People:

A MOMENT TO CHOOSE: RISKING TO BE WITH UPROOTED PEOPLE

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these. John 14:12

The plight of uprooted people is for us now a time of crisis and a moment of kairos. This is a critical moment, an opportune moment given by God, a time of commitment for our churches.

Different 'storms' are affecting our world - the 'storm' of racism and xenophobia, the 'storm' of obsession with security, control and defending borders, the 'storm' of war, environmental disasters, impoverishment and oppression. The globalization phenomenon, especially the free market economy, adds to these storms, compelling more and more people to leave their homes in search of refuge, security, peace, and life in dignity and life. The storms are intensifying.

These forces uproot people. The causes are complex. This is a crucial and urgent time for ecumenical and political action.

At our two-day meeting of the WCC Global Ecumenical Network of Uprooted People, we heard of borders being closed to refugees and migrants, of refugees being coerced, even forced to return to the chaos and uncertainty they fled from. We heard of walls being erected to block people from crossing while agreements are enacted to encourage the flow of goods, of wealth and technology. We heard of migration being seen as a crime not as a right, of racism and xenophobia, of uprooted people used as scapegoats for all of societies' ills.

We heard of the devastating effects of embargoes and sanctions against innocent people, particularly children and the most vulnerable members of society. We heard of refugees detained for months even years, some under the most inhumane conditions. We heard of people living in refugee camps for generations and internally displaced people trying to survive in conflict situations. We heard of the environmental consequences of logging, mining, deviation of water flows, testing of nuclear weapons and their devastating effects on whole populations, particularly indigenous peoples. We heard of the effects of all these on women, who are the majority of the world's uprooted people.

We listened. We learned. We reflected. We prayed. We mapped out actions.

Uprooted people are struggling to be actors and shapers of their lives. They are not faceless numbers out there. They are our brothers and sisters. We worship, work, live, struggle, cry, laugh, celebrate with them. We took time to close our eyes and open our hearts to again see their faces, to feel their suffering, their struggle and most of all their courage, determination and dignity.

We did not allow the 'storms' raging in our world today to cloud the rainbows. We shared the various signs of

hope. The enthusiasm with which churches all over the world embraced the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People - with some deciding to continue the theme into the next year - sends a clear message to all that we are not discouraged by the enormity nor complexity of the issue. The churches' campaign against landmines, the work to ratify the migrants' convention, to educate and mobilize ourselves, our leaders and the grassroots on these and other issues affecting the uprooted are indications of our commitment to look beyond effects and address causes.

In this context, the WCC statement on uprooted people and the just-completed resource book, are extremely useful in helping us gain an in-depth understanding of the issues. They provide a challenging and unique analysis of the situation.

Coming together to look at these issues as an ecumenical network is very liberating. It helps us to see we are not alone. We have our faith and each other. By bringing us together, the World Council of Churches helps unleash the energy in each of us. Belonging to a vital network provides us with the energy and support essential to do advocacy. It allows us to have a more concerted action and gives us a strong and united voice that can be heard by our churches, our governments, the various United Nations bodies and other national and international organizations. Together our advocacy is stronger and more effective.

The WCC plays an essential role in mobilizing our energy in the many different networks we are involved in. We affirm WCC's openness to embrace other networks. Despite the challenges facing the Council, it is crucial that it maintain its commitment to uprooted people and continue to play this vital role in our ecumenical network.

As the WCC prepares to seek a "common understanding and vision" and prepares for the Assembly in Harare, we call on the Council to continue to give the priority, focus and energy that the issue of uprootedness calls for. This is a moment to choose.

Lord, strengthen our faith and confidence in a living God who is with us all the days. Lord, bless our limited time and efforts. Lord, at thy word, we shall let down the nets. In Jesus' name, Amen.

3 March 1997, Geneva

WCC Resource

The brochure and poster promoting the ecumenical year have been widely distributed by the WCC Unit IV, Refugee and Migration Service. This material has also been reprinted by the Canadian Churches, and Church World Service in the USA. As well, the logo for the year has been reproduced and used in a variety of ways across the regions.

The Resource Book - A Moment to Choose: Risking to be with Uprooted people was published last February. (Available from RMS, see address below.) As announced in Global Update Issue # 1, this 90-page document aims to help policy makers and academics as well as all who wish to understand the causes and consequences of the forced displacement of people. The book lays out the reasons which compel people to leave their communities and countries of origin. Secondly, the book aims to challenge the churches to prophetic and practical responses that promote human dignity and sustainable communities. In doing this, it identifies a number of signs of hope. Over 50 concrete examples are given of groups involved in various work with uprooted people. Details and contact addresses are given for readers who wonder, 'What can I do next?' The resource book can be used for bible studies, sermons, awareness building workshops, basic material for policy development and advocacy and by all those interested in knowing why so many millions of people are uprooted and who wish to do something to change the situation.

Finally, a collection of poems and pictures of art forms by uprooted people is being put together as a way of expressing their spirituality, their experiences, hopes, and talents.

Other WCC activities

WCC Secretary General's Christmas Message for 1996 referred to the flight to Egypt and the image of the stranger, stressing the importance of service to the uprooted. It was distributed to member churches and gave much visibility to the Ecumenical Year.

Strong interest has been expressed by the Catholic church with respect to the Ecumenical Year. WCC Unit IV director, Rev. Myra Blyth, together with an RMS staff person, Patrick Taran, visited the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant people in Rome, in order to explore the ways of future cooperation.

Sister organizations

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) as well as other Christian world communions located in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva are closely associated to the Ecumenical Year. LWF is sending a package of information to its 150 members, which will include the WCC brochure and poster, as well as the Global Update. Liturgical material from the Australian Kit will also be included.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

AFRICA

To celebrate the year in the African region, the week of June 15 to 22 will be the week of the continental launching of various activities of the churches in solidarity with the uprooted people. Ecumenical services will be held, visits will be made to camps. Youth and women's groups will join in the launching of the week. Posters, pamphlets and T-shirts will also be produced to mobilize the churches and the communities to continue their solidarity with the uprooted people and to denounce the causes that uproot people. Exchange visits of staff or committee members during the week are planned. It is hoped that representatives from one country/region will participate in the activities of others. These activities will continue even after the week has ended and will culminate in presentations at the AACC assembly in October in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Refugees will be invited to take part in the presentations. The refugee week has been deliberately chosen to cover Africa Refugee Day. Organizations and institutions, both church and secular, will also be invited. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is planning to encourage the participation of other sister regional organizations in the activities of the week.

ASIA

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)/WCC Working Group on Migrants, Refugees and Internally Displaced in Asia (MRIA) have advanced in their plans for the year. Last December, Human Rights Sunday focussed on the issue of the uprooted. In addition:

- a poster calling churches to mobilize around migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced communities in Asia has been sent to all churches;
- three flyers are being prepared, each with a specific focus, i.e. migrant workers, refugees and internally

displaced communities in Asia. The flyers will include: (I) theological basis, (ii) information and statistics on the issue concerned; (iii) short impact stories and (iv) alternative actions for the churches in solidarity with MRIA;

- Bible study material on the theme "Becoming the Church of the Stranger" will be produced;
- a directory of "service centres" and contact persons in selected countries for migrant workers will be developed;
- a church leaders consultation on churches' response is planned on refugees in October 1997 (two consultations on migrant workers and internally displaced communities respectively, took place in 1995 and 1996). The consultation will aim at producing concrete recommendations and realistic actions for churches;
- representatives from theological schools will be challenged to include ministry to/with uprooted people in their curriculum;
- a "Learning through Encounter" exposure programme is being developed over a three-year period (1996-98) involving church leaders and MRIA practitioners;
- the Joint CCA/Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) programme is organizing exchange visits of church leaders and persons involved in ministry (1996-98);
- local initiatives are underway linking MRIA related issues and human rights.

CCA NEWS, the publication of the Christian Conference of Asia, will publish regular information relating to the Year.

The National Council of Churches in Australia has endorsed the 1997 Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People. Two kits have been prepared: a Resource Kit on Uprooted People and a Liturgy Kit. A series of events are planned for 1997.

EUROPE

The European launch of the Ecumenical Year took the form of two related events in London. The first Pan-European Ecumenical Conference organized in London, from 6-9 March, under the joint auspices of the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the WCC, as well as a central London public rally addressed by national church leaders and members of Parliament. A fuller report will appear in our next issue.

Individual European countries have also embarked on a

series of activities. For instance, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy (FCEI) has produced a package of information around the theme of the Ecumenical Year. The package contains a circular letter asking the question "How do we Live the Year of the Uprooted in our Church?". It announces that regular information will be disseminated throughout the year and details the content of the package. This includes the WCC statement's translation which was published in *Riforma - Testi & Documenti*, theological and biblical reflections, background material on the political and legal framework in Italy, documents on the theme "Being the Church Together", Sunday school material as well as a list of videos and bibliography, together with useful addresses. The FCEI has also produced a poster, which integrates the image featured on the WCC logo and poster, into a more urban background, which is more in keeping with the Italian reality.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

As part of the Ecumenical Year, the Ecumenical Network for Refugees and Migrants (South America) plans to hold a regional consultation on human rights and displacement. The last one took place in Montevideo in 1993 and marked a major step forward in the pooling of information and endeavours at a time when the phenomenon of migration was only beginning to engage the attention of agencies.

In addition, various activities are underway in the various countries in the region. In Argentina for instance, CAREF, the Ecumenical Service for orientation of Refugees and Migrants, is planning 5 specific actions: i) 4 theologians have been asked to elaborate a theological perspective for the work; ii) a special issue of the Sunday school magazine will be published; iii) ecumenical services focussing on uprooted people will be held; iv) CAREF is planning joint activities with human rights organizations and v) CAREF will strengthen its advocacy work for ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The "Week of the Migrant" which was celebrated in Central America at the end of February was the first in a series of initiatives which will take place in the region throughout the year. Exchange workshops will be organized as part of an awareness raising campaign for the general public. Country specific activities are also underway. A regional consultation is planned for the

Caribbean region later in the year.

ARMIF (Spanish acronym for the Regional Association for Forced Migration) based in Costa Rica, is also joining in the Year's activities. ARMIF is a member of the WCC's Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People. ARMIF considers that the Year should become a wide space for exchange for NGO work at the national as well as regional and international level, as the actual migratory complexity embraces new social actors and processes. The Year should be oriented towards finding durable solutions, including human development with gender equality. Prevention should include advocacy work in the areas of justice, human rights and empowerment for human dignity, as well as the protection of migrants at the national and international level.

MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)/WCC Working Group on Refugees, Displaced and Migrants widely distributed the material and poster produced last year (see Global update # 1, October 1996). In addition, a flyer entitled: "Choosing to be with the Strangers in our Midst" has been produced and distributed. The flyer, available in English and Arabic, incorporates useful data on uprooted people in the various countries of the region. Practical actions are also suggested for churches, putting the emphasis on building understanding among various communities. A useful bookmark has also been produced, which gives some background on the Ecumenical Year, in Arabic and English. The poster and flyer have met with a large popular response and presentations were made to youth groups, seminars etc... However, MECC's scarce capacity had to be overstretched to meet this growing demand.

For the last 3 years, the issue of uprooted people has been the focus of the week of prayer in the Middle East region. This year, MECC is planning to organize an Ecumenical Prayer Event on this theme.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada

The Canadian ecumenical launch will take place on April 3. Church leaders will hold a press conference in the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, to challenge the government to do more for the rights of uprooted people.

A joint planning committee, the Canadian Working Group on the Year in Solidarity with Uprooted People, composed of key ecumenical social justice coalitions was set up last year. Together with the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada, they have produced a substantial Education & Action Kit.

The Kit contains a series of church bulletin inserts and a poster produced by the various coalitions, as well as the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR). Inserts subjects include rights in Canada for uprooted people, uprootedness as a result of development, protection of migrant workers, uprootedness because of war and human rights and internally displaced. The kit also contains the WCC Statement on Uprooted People, as well as liturgy of accompaniment with uprooted people, adapted from a liturgy prepared by NCC Australia, and the booklet "The Bible and the Outsider" produced in September 1996 by the ICCR. Material necessary to conduct workshops on domestic workers and on the limits to deportation is also included. The Anglican Church also included some specifically action-oriented material, including activities for children, and a calendar of event planned throughout the year (see Global Update # 1).

All member churches of the Ecumenical Coalitions have agreed to use the kit.

In addition, the United Church of Canada Mission study theme for 1997(September) to 1999 will focus on Uprooted People. The Baptist Church published a special feature article in its journal *The Canadian Baptist* titled "Canadian Churches: A Bridge for Refugees" in February 1997. The Canadian Lutheran Relief Services issued an educational packet for churches also using the ecumenical kit. The Christian Reformed Churches are also asking their members to use the ecumenical kit and added their own action piece.

United States of America

The USA launch will take place on 25th March. An Interfaith Service will be held in Washington DC. Three missions are planned to Africa, in cooperation with AACC, in May and June. Members of the National Council of Churches are organizing a series of activities at the national synods and assembly meetings. Churches are considering expanding activities throughout 1998 as well.

For Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Programme (CWS/IRP) the Ecumenical Year is an organizing principle and a rallying point. CWS will raise awareness around it on issues of asylum, racism and declining interest in international issues which have been identified as three priority issues for the work with uprooted people in the United States.

A package has been produced by CWS/IRP and sent to churches. It contains the WCC statement on uprooted people as well as the WCC brochure and poster for the Ecumenical Year, which have been reprinted in the USA. The package also contains a Bulletin Insert entitled: "Choosing to Be with the Strangers in Our Midst", as well as reprints of the National Council of Churches in Australia Refugee and Migrant Service "Resource Kit on Uprooted People and Liturgy". The booklet "The Bible and the Outsider" produced in September 1996 by the Canadian Inter-Church Committee for Refugees is included, as well as a logo, inspired from the WCC one. A petition to ban landmines has also been added. Signatures collected will be returned to Church World Service to be forwarded to President Clinton.

PACIFIC REGION

A consultation organized by the Pacific Conference of Churches programme on Justice, Peace and Development, held in Fiji in August 1996 represented an important step in awareness raising to help formulate strategies for the region. Activities planned in the Pacific also seek to link the issue of uprootedness to that of human rights. A day of prayer will be organized for people in Bougainville. Excerpts from the WCC's Secretary General 1996 Christmas Message, focussing on the Ecumenical Year for Churches in Solidarity with the Uprooted, featured in the February 1997 issue of the *Vêa Porotetani/ Mensuel Protestant de Polynésie Française* magazine.

NGO NEWS

As mentioned in Global Update # 1, the Amnesty International (AI) campaign on refugees will be launched this month. Throughout the campaign, AI is planning to publish materials (i.e. regional papers, and policy papers concerning themes such as women, children, international displaced persons etc...). These documents will be available in various languages from AI's 54 national sections (addresses available from the WCC Refugee and Migration Service, see below).

Youth Appeal

The WCC Unit IV Networking & Advocacy has received a request from a youth group in Southern Africa for information on special youth programmes or activities planned throughout the Year. The WCC Unit III Youth team is open to distributing material related to the Ecumenical Year but their capacity is too overstretched to embark on a joint programme. We would be interested to receive any information you may have on plans or programme involving youth, which we would in turn transmit to youth networks.



LANDMINES UPDATE

Over 4000 copies of the joint LWF/WCC brochures: "What is your Church doing about Landmines?" have been distributed since last year. A list of church related organisations involved in the campaign has been compiled (available from the Networking & Advocacy Team, same address as below, e-mail: mgm@wcc-coe.org).

Since WCC started its signature campaign last year churches around the world have been collecting signatures in support of the international ban on the use, production, stockpiling and sale of anti-personnel mines. As of 1st March 1997, over 11,000 signatures have been received by WCC, for transmittal to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). The ICBL is a coalition of 750 NGOS working together in 44 countries.

The 4th International NGO Conference on Landmines took place in Maputo, Mozambique, from 25-28 February 1997. This was the biggest of the NGO landmines conference with 450 people attending, representing 60 countries. One of the main success was

the involvement of southern NGOs in the campaign. 20 governments made statements at the conference. A few days prior to it, the Government of South Africa declared a total ban on landmines and pressed other members of Southern African Development Community (SADC) to join the ban. Mozambique did so during the conference. The final declaration called on governments to support a ban and the Ottawa process.

Through its involvement in the ICBL, the WCC is closely monitoring the development of the so-called "Ottawa process". Out of dissatisfaction at the poor outcome of the revision Conference of the UN

conventional weapons treaty, in May 1996, Canada invited states to Ottawa in October 1995 in an effort to move towards a world ban on anti-personnel mines. Various preparatory conferences are underway during 1997 and the process will culminate in early December, when states will be inviting to a signing conference in Ottawa.

An interfaith service was held during the conference, led by Baha'is, Bhuddists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Moslems, Baha'is and Spiritists. Members of the Global Ecumenical Network in Southern Africa have been involved in setting up workshops on church involvement, at the NGO Conference. The Christian Conference of Asia is planning a National Consultation on Churches' Participation in the Campaign against Landmines, in New Delhi, India from 15 to 17 August.

The WCC-Unit IV Networking & Advocacy Team takes part in regular meetings of the Geneva Working Group on a Landmines Ban together with another 20 NGOs and church organizations. This group is currently planning a briefing seminar for African diplomatic missions in Geneva, jointly organized with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) representative in Geneva. The meeting will aim at debriefing missions on the 4th International NGO Conference on Landmines.

The group has also recently had to opportunity to hold strategy discussions with the ICBL coordinator, Jody Williams, as well as with a representative of the Canadian Government.

We are planning to provide news about uprooted people, particularly about the work of our member churches by electronic mail as well as sending out regular bulletins. The use of e-mail will help us to reduce our costs significantly as well as provide for more rapid communication. Would all of you who use e-mail please send us your e-mail address as soon as possible (send it to: rms@info.wcc-coe.org). We have set up a list server called uprooted-people. Subscribers to uprooted-people can send a message to the list server and it will be automatically sent to all other subscribers. You can subscribe by: Sending an e-mail to majordomo@info.wcc-coe.org, leaving the subject line blank and putting the following one line message (use no carriage returns) in the message box: subscribe uprooted-people <your e-mail address>. We will collect all messages from the list periodically and send it out to those in the network who do not have access to e-mail.

A MOMENT TO CHOOSE:

Risking to be with
Uprooted People



A Resource Book

World Council of Churches
Unit IV, Sharing and Service
Refugee and Migration Service

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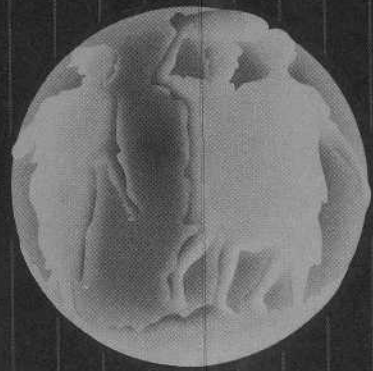
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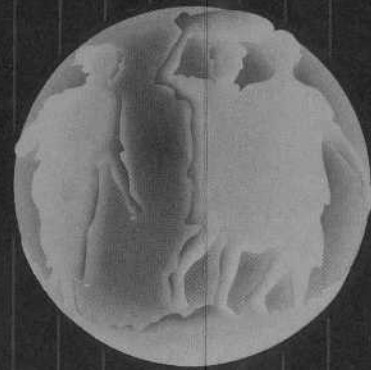
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People

Uprooted People: A Jubilee People



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Uprooted People: A Jubilee People



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Candt. Niral Bage
Gurukul Lutheran Theological
College & Research Institute
94, Purasawalkam High Road
Kilpauk, Chennai - 600010.

To

19. June 1997

The Bishop

S.E. Diocese G.E.L. Church Kaduna, Kaduna.

Sub: Application for study leave.

Sir

With due respect I beg to state that
I Candt Niral Bage have been selected for
B.D. Study for two years at Gurukul Lutheran
Theological College madras on 13 June 1997.

Therefore I request you to kindly
grant me study leave. I will be grateful
to you.

Thanking you

yours faithfully

Candt Niral Bage

C. C.: General Secretary

Central Council, G.E.L. Church Ranchi.

: Chairman,

Perish Council, G.E.L. Church C.K.P.

: Chairman

Pastorate G.E.L. Church Anandpur.

From

can. Nival Bage
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Kilpauk, Chennai - 600010

To

General Secretary (G. Tiru)
Central Council
G.E.L. Church Ranchi
Dist - Ranchi

Bihar



*For consideration
in Syn. Council
already
24/6/97*

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION - 50TH ANNIVERSARY

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION - SUNDAY

13, JULY, 1997

Leader Procession Hymn of Thanksgiving—

Pastor : Sisters and Brothers in Christ, we are assembled today to worship Almighty God and to celebrate Jesus Christ, who is present with us in Word and Sacrament. In Christ, we are all baptized into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

To Christ we are called to witness as we give thanks for His great works, let us remember what God has done in and through the Lutheran World Federation.

Let us praise, adore and glorify the God of grace for His wonderful and successful 50 years of the historical events of the Lutheran World Federation.

Congregation: We praise, adore and glorify your Holy name,
O Lord,

Prayer: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Bestow your Holy Spirit on each and every one of us to worship you in spirit and truth. Grant us your mighty presence and guidance to offer a meaningful and sacrificial worship to your glory. Amen.

Hymn: The Church's One Foundation.

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C : Amen

P : O Lord, open my lips

C : And my mouth shall show forth thy praise

P : Make haste, O God, to deliver me

C : Make haste to help me, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

P : The Lord is near to all who call upon him

C : O come, let us worship him.

Psalm 95: (Responsive)

P : Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord

C : Let us shout with joy to the rock of our salvation

P : Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving

C : And raise a loud shout to him with psalms

P : For the Lord is a great God

C : And a great King above all Gods

P : In His hands are the caverns of the earth

C : And the heights of the hills are his also.

P : The Sea is his, for he made it

C : And his hands have moulded the dry land. (Let the congregation kneel down).

P : Come, let us bow down and bend the knee

C : And kneel before the Lord our maker.

P : For He is our God

C : And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of his hand

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen. (Let the congregation be seated).

Scriptural Readings:

1. Old Testament: Isaiah 42:5-8

"Thus says the Lord, God, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it. I am the Lord, I have taken upon by the hand and kept you. I have given a Covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name, my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols.

P : Let us pray :

Almighty God, you have called witnesses from every nation and revealed your glory in their lives. Make us thankful for their example and strengthen us that like them we may be faithful in our service through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

2. The Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 4:1-8: 11-16

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the Unity of the spirit in the bound of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God the Father of all, who is above all and through all in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it is said, when he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive, he gave gifts to His people.

C: Alleluah (3 times)

3. The Gospel Lesson : Luke 2

C. Glory to you Oh, Lord.

A dispute arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you, must become like the child, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

C. Praise be to you, Oh Christ.

Nicene Creed:

We believe in One God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten, not made of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic church. We acknowledge One Baptism for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Hymn: We are one in the Spirit

Sermon: Text St. John 17:23 or
Hebrews 12: 1-3; 12-13

Theme: "In Christ, called to witness."

Points to ponder over:

To be a Christian means to be a witness.

- * There is some thing that needs to be communicated, reported and be made known
- * Jesus Christ invited people to join him on his way for them to 'see' and 'hear' subsequently to 'report' on.
- * One truth needs to be affirmed, namely what is true in Christ.
- * In the Church's History, many martyrs, as "blood witnesses" have paid their lives for their task of witness.
- * They had such a strong faith that gave their lives meaning, strength and power and a future.
- * Without faith life sickens;
Without love, it becomes hell;
Without hope, soul destroying.
- * For this belief, they were prepared to accept disadvantages, persecution, even death
- * They claimed the world needs this witness for its well-being and its salvation
- * Without mercy, without justice and without proper worship, it would perist~~e~~
- * "God's love for world" (John 3:16) motivates and enables us to commit to the great task of witness.
- * God's love for the world is the motive and the content of witnessing. To witness the gospel is exciting.

Litany (Special Prayer for LWF and Ninth Assembly-Hong Kong):

Priest: Let us pray for the whole church of God, for our own churches, for the nations and peoples of the world, for ourselves and for the Ninth Assembly of LWF which is being held in Hong Kong between 8-16, July 1997.

Congre: We give thanks, O God, for your One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic church. For the whole church, that it may be strengthened in its faithfulness to the Gospel, its witness to the world, its life of service mercy, its deepening commitment to full unity.

Priest: We give thanks O God, for the One Baptism which makes us all a part of One Church. Almighty God, we pray for ourselves, that we may live a life worthy of our Baptismal calling, in all humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another in love, and maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Priest : We give thanks, O God, for all faithful servants of the church. For all bishops, pastors, leaders, theologians, teachers, missionaries that they may more boldly witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Cong. : We give thanks, O God, for the fifty years of the Lutheran World Federation and for the good You have enabled it to do. That the Federation may continue to use its gifts to serve with mercy in the world and to build up the whole body of Christ; and that the Holy Spirit may guide and inspire the Ninth Assembly in all its deliberations.

Priest : Let us pray to our gracious God for the lands of the world from which the participants of the Assembly have gathered in Hong Kong and especially for the people of China and Hong Kong that this territory may be a place of justice for all its people and that the people of Hong Kong may have courage and hope in this time of transition from the British to China.

Cong. : We give thanks, O God for all your mighty guidance in the preparations, deliberations of the Ninth Assembly of the LWF. Especially we pray for the people of Hong Kong and for its peace and harmony.

Priest : Let us praise and give thanks to our Gracious God for His creation of variety of people and cultures in the world. For the many diverse peoples of the world of Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America that there may be an end to all conflicts violence and war; and that all who are poor, hungry, or are refugees may be freed from their oppressions.

Cong. : We pray, dear Lord, our father, mercifully grant them thy peace that the world cannot give, redeem and liberate all those who are in their bondages and oppressions.

Priest : Let us give thanks to God for He has made us a light to the nations with His strength and courage to bring light to all who need our prayers - the sick, the lonely and the desperate, the destitutes the orphans, Let us pray for all the children of the world, youth women especially for those who are in great dangers and distress fears and poverty, that they may be nurtured in security and wholeness in their lives.

Cong. : We pray Oh Lord, be merciful to all those who are in need of your blessing, healing, forgiveness of their sins.

Priest : Let us pray to God that we may receive forgiveness for our families to be one body of Christ in the world; our failure to show the grace and the love of God in all that we do and say; our failure to acknowledge or communion Lord, the one faith that we share; and the one Baptism we have received.

Cong. : Oh, Gracious God, be merciful on us the wretched sinners.

Priest : Let us pray to almighty God to grant us Holy Spirit to commit and dedicate ourselves to the great cause of witnessing Christ in the divided world.

Cong. : Help us Oh Lord, by Your Spirit to commit ourselves to witness Christ in the divided world.

7

Priest : Let us pray for men and women of all other faiths in the world.

Cong- : Lord, bless all those people of other faiths and give us a proper discernment and understanding to witness them in Christ. *understanding*

Priest : Oh Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, we trust in your Holy Word and beseech for thy Holy Spirit to enable us to grow more in Christ, to realize our call in Christ to witness. *beseech*
Accept all our prayers in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *beseech*

Cong. Amen.

HYMN OR LYRIC: OFFERINGS

Slaves of Christ, His mercy we remember

Priest : The Peace of the Lord be with you always

Cong. : And also with you.

(The people share with one another a sign of God's peace, by the action of shaking their hands)

Priest : Blessing

Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; return no evil for evil; strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak and help the suffering; honour all people; love and serve the Lord;
In Christ, be a witness, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Cong. Thanks be to God.

Amen.

E. B. H.

NOTE : 1. Interim relief, if any, paid as per central council Office circular No. CC-87/578 Dtd. 29.11.96 shall be adjusted to the claims of the church workers.

2. Pastors and full-time workers of the G.E.L.Church who attain stagnation stage in their Revised Pay Scale but are yet to be retired shall be entitled to get ONE MORE increment to their pay after attaining the stagnation stage.

3. Chairpersons of Parish Councils with School/Schools or any Diocesan Institution shall NOT claim any special allowance.

4. Officers not holding elective posts but are appointed and drawing prescribed scale of salary with additional charge allowance shall NOT claim any further special allowance.

Memo No. CC-87/158.

Dated 23.4.97

Forwarded to :

- All Bishops/Vice-Presidents, G.E.L.Church
- Dean, C.R.C.
- Head Accountant, Central Council
- All Chairpersons of Parish Councils
- Principal, Gossner Theological College, Ranchi.
- Head Master, Gossner Bible & Buniyadi Training School Govindpur.
- Director, H.R.D.C./C.E.L., G.E.L.Church Ranchi.

- for information implementation and record.

(Mr. U. Sanga)
Treasurer
G.E.L.Church.

(Gerson Titu)
General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

NB: Rules for implementation of the New Pay Scale, 1996 enclosed.

RULES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PAY SCALE, 1996 (GELC)

(The Rules shall be the same as existing one)

- (a) According to qualification, the difference of the starting basic in the old (1993) scale and the starting basic of NEW 1996 Pay Scale be worked out.

Example :

(Trained Catechist)

Old : 800-25-925-30-1075-35-1250

New : 1040-35-1215-40-1415-45-1640

Difference of 800/= and 1045/= is 240/=

- (b) The Difference of the basic of old and the New Pay Scale be added to the existing pay of any Church worker presently drawn as per 1993 Pay Scale (excluding allowance/allowances of any kind).

Example : Vide (a) above

Difference is Rs. 240/= . If the worker is presently drawing Rs. 925/= in the old pay scale 240/= be added to Rs. 925/= means it comes to 1165/=

- (c) After adding the difference to the existing pay, any amount required to be fitted into the new scale be immediately given if it is not fitted in the new Pay Scale.

Example : Pay fixed as per (b) above is 1165/=

To reach the nearest of 1165/= in the new pay scale 3(three) increments @ Rs. 35/= shall have to be added. It comes to Rs. 1145/= Therefore, the amount required is Rs. 1165- Rs. 1145/= = Rs. 20/=. This amount be allowed and the scale be fitted at Rs. 1180/=

Any further clarification required may be obtained from finance section of the Central Council, Office.

(Date of effectiveness of the annual increment is the month of April every year. Revised rate of the quantum of Pension payable to beneficiaries, will be circulated very soon).



(Mr. U. Sanga)
Treasurer
G.E.L.Church
Central Council

(Gerson Tiru)
General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.
Central Council.

G.E.L.CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:NO.CC- 49/284

Dated :8.7.97

To
All Parish Chairpersons,
G.E.L.Church in Chotanagpur & Assam.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Central Council Office
in the precious name of Lord Jesus.

In continuation of this Office letter
No. CC-33/187 dtd. 10-5-97 which contained the recommendations
of the Church Ministerium as approved by the Central Council
held on 15-18th March, 1997 we forwarding below an extract from
the minutes of the above meeting of Central Council for your
information and implementation.

"Item No. 07 : Information on life and work in Dioceses: From
the report of the Bishop of N.E.Diocese the matter relating
to pastoral works continued to be rendered by suspended Pastors
and the situation created by such pastoral works was taken
up for consideration. After some discussions it was decided
that pastors/workers of other Dioceses whether under suspension
or not should not be allowed to take up such works or programmes
in other Dioceses which would encourage the suspended pastors/
workers of that Diocese in their divisive activities".

The matter be kindly considered extremely
urgent and strict vigilance be maintained in this regard.

With prayerful wishes for unity and integrity
of the Church.

Sincerely yours,


General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

Copy to :

- = All Bishops, G.E.L.Church,
- = Dean, CRC, Ranchi.
- = Director, H.R.D.C., Ranchi
- = Principal, Gossner Theological College,
Ranchi.

TO,

Rev. Hisnimus Lugun
Chairman

G.E.L. Church Madhupur

P.O. Rangiati Kda

Dist - Sambalpur

ORISSA

G.E.L.CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:NO.CC- 49/284

Dated :8.7.97

To
All Parish Chairpersons,
G.E.L.Church in Chotanagpur & Assam.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Central Council Office
in the precious name of Lord Jesus.

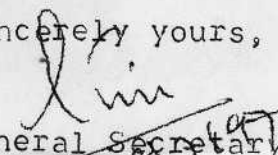
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With prayerful wishes for unity and integrity
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General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

Copy to :

- = All Bishops, G.E.L.Church,
- = Dean, CRC, Ranchi.
- = Director, H.R.D.C., Ranchi
- = Principal, Gossner Theological College,
Ranchi.

Bibhu Prasad Mohanty
President 'THE MOTHER'

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

'THE MOTHER'
Sikshyakpada, ANGUL:-759122
ORISSA
Phone No. 06764-32151
Fax No. 06764-30179

To,

G.E.L. Church C.C.O.
Ranchi, Bihar.

Date. 27.07.97.....

Ref. No.

Dear Sir,

GREETINGS FROM 'THE MOTHER'.

We are a group of young professionals in the field of Rural Development and Organisational Development. We have deep concern over eradication of poverty, misery, hunger, exploitation, communalism, environmental pollution and all the odds those obstruct our physical, vital, mental and spiritual progress.

We are indebted to RURAL UNIT FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, Christian Medical College & Hospital Vellore, Tamilnadu for their kindful cooperation in making us more competent in this field through their training facility and kind suggestions. We are successful in providing consultancy & training services to 21 organisations in Orissa and other states (M.P. & BIHAR).

In most of the cases we look in to the areas such as Organisational Development; Project Formulation, evaluation & monitoring; Preparation of policy papers for organisation or projects; Process documentation; Human resources development; PRA & Microplanning and etc, at a moderate service charges.

Therefore we request to give us chance to serve the noble objectives of your organisation and serve our Great Nation. Kindly, write us few words and keep us in your mailing list.

Thanking you with regards.

N.B. Kindly Communicate this message to other VO's those who need of our support in above areas of activities. We have interest in Participatory Development programmes.

Your's Sincerely

Bibhu Prasad Mohanty
BIBHU PRASAD MOHANTY
President
'THE MOTHER'

523 12/1821

सेवा में,

श्रीमान् जनरल सेक्रेटरी,
जी०ई०एल०वर्च राँची,
बिहार.

A/c section to
verify and
pmt wp

विषय:- भविष्य निधि बावत् ।

महोदय,

Dr. me
29/1/97

सनम् निवेदन है कि मैं जीवन कुजूर लूथरन हास्टल अम्बिकापुर
से सन् 1963 से कार्यरत हूँ । उपरोक्त विषय के संबंध में मेरा निम्नलिखित
निवेदन यह है कि :--

1- 15-3-90 से अप्रैल 95 तक पी०एफ० काटा गया किन्तु मुझ
आवेदक को आज तक ज्ञात नहीं है कि मेरे पी०एफ० कटौती की राशि
प्रत्येक माह किस दर तक कट रही है? मेरे पी०एफ० में कितनी राशि
जमा है? पी०एफ० की कटौती 3-4-95 से क्यों रुकी गई है कृपया
स्पष्ट करें ।

2- मेरा आपसे निवेदन है कि उपरोक्त कटौती का पूर्ण विवरण
भेजने का कष्ट करें तथा पुनः पी०एफ० की कटौती शुरू की जाए ।

उपरोक्त संदर्भ में मैंने दिनांक 13-01-96 तथा 5-6-96 को
आवेदन पत्र प्रस्तुत किया, किन्तु आज तक मेरे इस प्रकरण का निर्णय
नहीं किया गया, जिससे मुझे आर्थिक क्षति हो रही है ।

दिनांक :- 21-7-97

आवेदक
जीवन कुजूर
जीवन कुजूर बावर्ची
लूथरन हास्टल
23 एकड़ गोधनपुर, अम्बिकापुर

प्रतिलिपि:- 1- श्री यू० साँगा खजांची जी०ई०एल०वर्च राँची ।

G.E.L.CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref.No. CC-153/307

Dated : 29.7.97

To

All Bishops, G.E.L.Church,
Vice-Presidents, S.E.Diocese
Moderator's Commissary, Madhya Diocese.

Sub : Service Records of Pastors

Ref : This Office letter No. CC-153/147 dt
dtd. 14-4-97

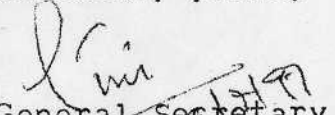
Respected Bishops and Vice-Presidents,

Greetings from the Central
Council Office.

In inviting a reference to the above this is to bring it to your notice that the response **received by this** office so far from the Pastors concerned (vide list enclosed with the letter referred to above) has been very discouraging. This is to make further clear that the Pastors whose records are not available in this office shall have to face immense difficulties during the time of payment of pension after they retire from service if they are contributing members as well as in other welfare schemes which are under active consideration to be taken up for the pastors.

We once again request you to kindly direct the listed pastors of your Diocese to send their particulars immediately to this office for record. This is also for your information that we have introduced individual Pastor's personal file in this office for maintenance of service records of the Pastors of the Church.

Sincerely yours,


General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

Copy to :

All Parish Council Chairpersons.

पता

वासुदेव कापसे
मु० पो० पुष्पात पट्टन
(आम्बेडकर चौक)
तहसील - मुलताई
जिला - बैतुल (म.प्र.)
पिन - 460665

पोस्ट कार्ड POST CARD

प्रति,

श्रेष्ठ० हेमन्त कुमार शर्मा
के० एल० एस० एस० एस० एस०
जी० ई० एल० चर्च
मेन रोड राँची

पिन PIN

8 3 4 0 0 1

15

भारत
INDIA



21/10/96

महाशयजी, मैंने बन्धियों का लंछु

नामक लंछु बाइबिल की पुस्तक पढ़ी
फाफ़ी शेचक एवं ज्ञानवचक लगी।
"प्रभु यीशु मसीह आज भी जीवित हैं। वह आपके
बारे हुए जीवन से आपको मुक्ति देकर आनंद
और शान्ति की एक नयी जीवन देना चाहता
है।"



To

Mrs. Daisy Kongari
K.S.S. Office, G.E.L. Church
G.E.L. Church Compound,
Main Road, Ranchi - 834 001
Bihar, India

WOMEN'S DESK—UELCI

Surukul Campus

14, Purasawalkam High Road,

Gilpauk, Madras - 600 010.

South India

To

Dt.4.10.96.

The Women Secretaries
Constituent Churches of U.E.L.C.I.

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Greetings to you in the Matchless and Mighty Name of our Lord Jesus. I inform the good news that the UELCI Executive Committee has nominated Mr. Amar Thomas, Secretary, J.E.L.Church to be our Chairperson. His commitment, youthfulness and development initiative will definitely add richness to our experiences.

I am glad to inform you that our Annual Women's Committee meeting will take place on the 14th of November, 1996 at Gurukul at 10.00 AM. I request you to briefly present the following:-

1. Annual Report of your Women's Ministry for 1996.
2. Needs and concerns of your Church Women
3. Proposals for the next year.

Your reports should include Ecumenical Decade Activities, World Day of Prayer, Fellowship of the Least coin and any other networking with the development and Church agencies.

Like the year before, we are preponing our committee meeting to coincide with the U.E.L.C.I. Enlarged Executive which is from 15th - 17th Nov, 96 to which hopefully, we could be invited as observers till such time when we will have constitutional provision for our inclusion in the committee. Since we need to effectively utilize our opportunity to raise women's concerns to the churches, I suggest that you bring posters, and other exhibits that could be displayed for the perusal of the church leaders voicing our concerns and contributions to the churches pictorially.

Kindly let me know by return of post, your need for return reservations, specifying dates etc., The venue and accommodation arrangements would be intimated as soon as they are finalised.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Priscilla Singh
(Priscilla Singh)

cc: To Executive Secretary,
To Chairperson, Women's Desk, UELCI.



Mrs Nilmani Sokey
Secretary
Women Organisation of
GEL Church
RANCHI
BIHAR

SATRIBARI CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL
GUWAHATI-781008

Christian Medical Association of India

HVS COURT, 3rd FLOOR, 21, CUNNINGHAM ROAD, BANGALORE-560 052



Phones : 2205837, 2205464
Fax : 080-2205826
Grams : 'CHRISMED'

30.09.96

Mrs. Nilmani Sokey
Secretary
Women's Organisation of BEL Church
Ranchi

Dear Mrs. Sokey,

This to express my thanks to you for having so graciously given your valuable time to us to meet you in the morning of 25th of September at Ranchi. The meeting was very productive and informative especially on the activities you have interacted and carrying on among women in you church.

I thank you again for all your input into our study and I close with kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

DR. SUKANT SINGH
Office Incharge/Consultant

SS/mj



A FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND HEALTH INSTITUTES SERVING THE CHURCHES IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALING, HEALTH & WHOLENESS

To,

Chairman

Governing Body

Goesher College

Ranchi

If undelivered please return to :

KSS OFFICE

G. E. L. CHURCH

MAIN ROAD

RANCHI-834001

BIHAR

Phone : 311513



GOSSNER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM

(Registered Under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860)
Vide No. 273-J of 30-7-1921
NORTH-EASTERN DIOCESE

Rt. Rev. S. Mohan MG
Bishop
N. E. Diocese

Diocese Office :
G.E.L. Church, Bamunihill,
Tezpur - 784 001, Dist. Sonitpur,
Assam

Ref. No. :

Date : **01.10.96**

To

The Secretary,
Gossner College, Ranchi

Sub : Nomination for G.B.

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you that I , Rt. Rev.S.Mohan MG, Bishop, N.E. Diocese of the G.E.L. Church hereby nominate Mr. Gerson Tiru (presently the General Secretary of the G.E.L. Church) as my nominee for attending the Governing Body of the Gossner College for all meetings of the G.B. whenever I am unable to be present in all such meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Rev S.M.G.
1/10/96

(Rt. Rev. S.Mohan MG)
Bishop, N.E. Diocese,

Dtd. 1.10.96

Copy to :

- 01: Chairman G.B.
Moderator, G.E.L. Church.
- 02: Principal, Gossner College, Ranchi
- 03: Mr. G. Tiru,
Central Council Office, Ranchi.
- for information.

Bishop
North East Diocese

ADIVASI CHRISTIYA SAMAJ, KORAPUT.

(THE J. E. L. CHURCH REGD. UNDER SOCIETIES REGISTRATION ACT. XXI OF 1860)

Rev. John Muduli

PRESIDENT

Rev. K. K. Dalpathi

VICE-PRESIDENT

Letter No. F-53/158/97



Mr. Lobo Manding

TREASURER

Mrs. B. B. Kulesika

SECRETARY

Date 5th June '97

The Most Rt. Rev. C.R. Topno
Moderator & Bishop GEL Church
Main Road
Ranchi - 834 001
Bihar

Honourable Sir,

Greetings to you in the most precious name of our Lord and
God Jesus Christ.

I on behalf of the Pastors and Deans of the Adivasi Christiya
Samaj, Koraput thank you very much for kindly granting us an
opportunity to have short discussion with your goodself in your
chamber. on 26th May 1997.

We beseech always your guidance and prayer for the spiritual
upliftment of the Adivasi people of Koraput District.

With my best regards I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Rev. John Muduli
President, ACS.

Topno
Miscellaneous or
Ecumenical Church.



GOSSNER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM

(Registered Under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860)

Vide No. 273-J of 30-7-1921

NORTH WEST DIOCESE

Diocese Office : G. E. L. Church, Ranchi - 834001, Bihar, India

Ref. No.

Date

To
Rev. William Back,
Pastore Chati Parish,
Ranchi.

(Through: Rev. A. J. Ekka, Chairman, Chati Parish)

Ref: 27 NWD-97/24 F dtd.

Sub: Transfer and posting of Rev. William Back, Pastore, Chati Parish to Mission Field Surguja with immediate effect.

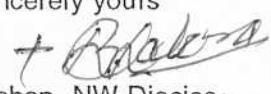
Dear Sir,

Our best wishes and love in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Kindly see the above subject under reference. You are hereby transferred and posted to Mission Field Surguja with immediate effect. The decision of your transfer and posting was taken in the Officer's meeting held on 15.5.97.

You are, therefore, requested kindly to submit your relieving charge report to Chairman, Chati Parish with immediate effect and to join M/F Surguja and report Rev. O. Toppo, Superintendent for the posting from his end.

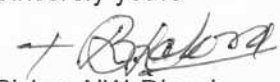
Sincerely yours


Bishop, NW Diocese
RANCHI

Copy to:-

1. ✓ Rt. Rev. C.S.R. Topno, Moderator, CC Office, Ranchi
- for information.
2. Mr. G. Tiru, General Secretary, CC Office, Ranchi
- for information.
3. ✓ Rev. A. J. Ekka, Chairman, Chati Parish, Ranchi
- for information with request to obtain relieving charge report of Rev. W. Back and the same may be forwarded to this Office for record.
4. Rev. O. Toppo, Superintendent, M/F Surguja
- for information and request to obtain joining report of Rev. W. Back and forward the same to this office for Office record.
5. Dr. Rev. C.K. Pall Singh, Director CEL,
- for favour of information.

Sincerely yours


Bishop, NW Diocese
RANCHI.

Minutes of the Madhya Diocese Church leaders meeting held on 23/24-9-96 C.C. Office, Ranchi at the invitation of the General Secretary, G.E.L.C.

01. Church Leaders present :-

1. Rev. Anjor Dungdung,
2. Rev. S. Kerketta
3. Rev. Lukas Kerketta
4. Mr. Santosh Kerketta
5. Mr. Alia Kerketta
6. Mr. Kalyan Kerketta, Koronjo
7. Mr. Lorence Kerketta, Takarma
8. Mr. Junul Kandulna
9. Mrs. Lily Tigga

all from Madhya Diocese and Koronjo - Takarma.

10. Most Rev. C.S.R. Topno, Moderator,
11. Mr. G. Tiru, General Secretary,

Rt. Rev. B. Lakra, Rev. N. Topno, Dean CRC and Mr. U. Sanga, Treasurer were also present for sometime on 23-9-96.

The meeting started with devotion led by the Moderator. The purpose of the meeting and the situation in Madhya Diocese vis-a-vis the visit of the special committee to Khuntitoli on 17.5.96 was explained to the leaders present.

The Members who favoured immediate transfer of areas from Koronjo and Takarma to Madhya Diocese re-iterated their demand to accept the Diocesan election result of 24.10.95 in full and allow the Diocesan Secretary and the members C.C. to function. The other leaders who opposed this, were of the opinion that nothing unconstitutional should be done or allowed to be done.

It was explained to the leaders that the Central Council in its meeting held on 28th - 30th October, 1995 has directed to hold fresh election of the Diocesan Secretary and the Layman and Youth representatives in the Central Council of the Church and as such the Madhya Diocese should agree to this. The leaders favouring the election result of 24-10-95 did not agree to this.

On 24-9-96 the meeting was again resumed and all the leaders were urged upon to agree to hold the election on the basis of the direction given by the Central Council. After great persuasion all the leaders representing both the views unanimously agreed to the proposal that fresh election of the Diocesan Secretary and the laymen and youth representatives in the Central Council of the Church be held at the earliest and that the candidates for the above responsibilities should be from within the established and recognised jurisdiction (the area of the erstwhile Madhya Anchal) of the Madhya Dioceses and not from outside.

The meeting was closed with thanks to all the leaders for their co-operation and with prayer.

T. Topno
Madhya Diocese

L. Tiru
24/9/96
GENERAL SECRETARY,
G.E.L. CHURCH.

To,

The Director,
United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India,
National Lutheran Health & Medical Board,
1, First Street,
Haddows Road,
MADRAS -600 006 (South India).

Sub : Selection for Sponsorship by the United
Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, for
Admission to M.B.B.S./B.D.S. in Christian
College, Ludhiana.

Sir,

Thank you very much for your letter 29th April,
1997 for selecting me for sponsorship by the U.E.L.C.
in India for admission to M.B.B.S. in Christian College,
Ludhiana. But I am unable to come in person along with
my parent to your office collect the sponsorship letter
due to my illness. I am suffering from Typhus & Zoonosis
last 13th May, 1997. As Doctor suggest me to take
complete ~~rest~~ rest.

I, therefore, request you to kindly provide me a
chance for admission to M.B.B.S. in Christian College,
Ludhiana in future.

Thanking you sir,

Yours faithfully,

Dated: 2/6/97

Shishir Kumar Purti
(Mr. Shishir Kumar Purti)
Kusai Basti,
Nankun Road, Doranda,
Ranchi-834 002(Bihar).

Copy to the Moderator
G.E.L. Church Ranchi

G.E.L. CHURCH DRAFT REVISED PAY SCALE, 1996
AS RECOMMENDED BY CHURCH PAY COMMISSION AND
REVIEWED IN JOINT MEETING OF THE BISHOPS AND
OFFICERS, CENTRAL COUNCIL

I. PRACHARAKS/PRACHARIKAS

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Untrained | - 910-35-1085-40-1285-45-1510 |
| 2. Trained | - 1040-35-1215-40-1415-45-1640 |

II. CANDIDATES

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. B.Th. | - 1430-40-1630-50-1880-60-2180 |
| 2. B.D. | - 1690-40-1890-50-2140-60-2440 |
| 3. M.Th. | - 2015-50-2265-60-2565-70-2915 |
| 4. Dr. Degree | - 2505-55-2750-65-3105-75-3480 |

III. PASTORS

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Short Course | - 1430-50-1680-60-1950-70-2300 |
| 2. Seminary | - 1625-50-1875-60-2175-70-2525 |
| 3. B.Th./L.Th. | - 1885-65-2210-75-2585-85-3010 |
| 4. B.D. | - 2210-65-2535-75-2910-85-3335 |
| 5. M.Th. | - 2665-75-3040-85-3465-95-3940 |
| 6. Doct. Degree | - 3120-85-3545-100-4945-115-4620 |

IV. ELECTIVE POST

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|---|
| 1. Moderator | - 6000.00 | Officers in elective
Pastors to get their
=annual increments and
P.F./Pen.benefits on
the basis of their scale
of salary as pastors. |
| 2. Bishop | - 5500.00 | |
| 3. Dean Hd.Qr.Cong. | - 5000.00 | |
| 4. General Secretary | - 5000.00 | Service limited for ONE
Term only or upto 65
years of age whichever
is earlier. |
| 5. Treasurer | - 1500.00 | |

V. APPOINTMENTS

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Office Secretary | - 1950-65-2275-75-2650-85-3075 |
| 2. Education Officer | - 1755-55-2030-65-2355-75-2730 |
| 3. Diocese Supervisor | - 1625-55-1900-65-2225-75-2600 |
| 4. Propt. Manager | - 1625-55-1900-65-2225-75-2600 |
| 5. Propt. Asstt. Mgr. | - 1495-40-1695-50-1945-60-2245 |

VI. OFFICE STAFF.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Head Accountant | - 1755-55-2030-65-2355-75-2730 |
| 2. Cashier | - 1625-55-1900-65-2225-75-2600 |
| 3. Asstt. Acctt. | - 1495-55-1770-65-2095-75-2470 |
| 4. Clerk (UDC) | - 1495-55-1770-65-2095-75-2470 |
| 5. Clerk (LDC) | - 1365-40-1565-50-1815-60-2115 |
| 6. Rent Collector | - 1300-40-1500-50-1750-60-2050 |

VII. OFFICE STAFF

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Driver | - | 1170-35-1345-45- 1570 155-1845 |
| 2. Peon | - | 1110-35-1255-45-1510-55-1755 |
| 3. Mali | - | 1040-35-1215-45-1440-55-1715 |
| 4. Cook(Central Inst.) | - | 1040-35-1215-45-1440-55-1715 |

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE ALLOWANCE

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Principal, G.Theo.College | Rs. 300/= P.M. |
| 2. Teaching Staff, G.Theo.College | Rs. 150/= P.M. |
| 3. Non-Teaching Staff, G.Theo.College | - Rs. 125/= P.M. |
| 4. (a) Head of Tabiya & P.T.S. | - Rs. 225/= P.M. |
| (b) Teaching Staff, Tabiya & P.T.S. | - Rs. 100/= P.M. |
| (c) Head Acctt. | - Rs. 300/= P.M. |
| 5. Youth Director(Central) | - Rs. 150/= P.M. |
| 6. (a) Parish Chairman without School | - Rs. 150/= P.M. |
| (b) Parish Chairman With School | - Rs. 225/= P.M. |
| 7. Director, HRDC/CEL(BEL) | - Rs. 300/= P.M. |
| 8. M/Field Supervisor | - Rs. 225/= P.M. |

IX. FIXED D.A.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Category I and VII | - Rs. 100/= P.M. |
| Category II to VI (except IV.) | - Rs. 200/= P.M. |

X. SPECIAL BENEFIT TO PENSION HOLDERS OF PRE.1992 SCALE CATEGORY :-

- (a) Pastors who retired before implementation of 1992 Pay scale shall be entitled to get their existing rate of Pension increased by Rs. 150/= P.M.
- (b) Catechists and Widows to get their rate of Pension increased by Rs. 100/= P.M.

XXXXXXXXXX

Handwritten calculations:

$$\begin{array}{r} 1365 \\ 1050 \\ \hline 315 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1495 \\ 1150 \\ \hline 345 \end{array}$$

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

VIEWS FROM GERMANY 1/96

Supplement to »der überblick« and »EKD Bulletin« — Articles from German newspapers and periodicals on topics relating to church and society

Jens, Viola and Others

Youth and Church youth work
in the former East Germany

by Johannes Toaspern

22
2020
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Church youth work in eastern Germany is confronted with a generation of almost completely secularized young people. Very few children and young people living in eastern Germany today were ever baptized. In towns and cities at least, the Church no longer even exists in the minds of the young. Church youth work faces a choice in this situation between renouncing its traditional form and content at the risk of »becoming just another organizer of leisure activities«, and actively seeking a Christian profile.

Learning about the changes in eastern Germany means studying people's biographies. I would like to show how past and present differ for young people in eastern Germany by briefly presenting some of my experiences with the young people (names changed) who I encounter as pastor in a perfectly normal parish and youth group. The young people whose stories I mention are now

around twenty years old. Their lives underwent a major upheaval at a time when they were at least partially able to make their own comparisons and to judge the situation for themselves — a dimension that today's sixteen and seventeen-year-olds are already too young to have experienced.

Jens, now a young man, is a police trainee. Although unbaptized, he has long helped arrange young people's services and Nativity plays, and regularly came to the Parish Youth Club. This Easter Saturday he was baptized, having swapped his night patrol shift to attend. For western Germans this is a completely normal turn of events, but for us it was hard to reconcile the one thing with the other. We still find it remarkable that a Christian not only wants to, but is actually able to join the police force. There were some things that were as certain for us young East Germans as the Berlin Wall. Among

these things was a belief that the police, army, secret services and anything to do with school were light years removed from the Church, and in most cases its self-professed antagonists. The State and its organs were our arch-opponents (some would say enemies). The young man from our midst who is joining the police, and who is still a little surprised about this himself, has taught us that we are living in new times.

Viola asked me for some theological text books. She is in the Lower Sixth and was writing an essay in Political Education on a topic relating to peace ethics, based on passages from the Sermon on the Mount. When she handed in the essay, her teacher asked me for my expert opinion of it so that he could arrive at a fair mark. Simply unbelievable for my trained reflexes: School and Church working together.

Today such occurrences are slowly beginning to be perceived as normal, but in people who grew up with East German conditions they still invoke associations of contact with the enemy. This military phrase is no longer in keeping with the times, but for young people and servants of the Church alike, encounters between school and belief almost always meant confrontation. Today however, as with Jens, the familiar contrasts and taboo zones no longer exist; they are to be found elsewhere. These two examples stand for a radical change that is for the most part positively received, adopted and used.

Churches in Germany after Reunification

Editorial

Ecumenical congresses and meetings show time and again that the opinions uttered on current issues in German churches are rarely heard abroad. It is more or less unknown outside Germany what the people in our churches discuss and what range of opinions is represented in this discussion.

This is not because no one in the ecumenical community is interested in learning, say, what has become of the churches in eastern Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall, or what people in our churches think of xenophobia and racism, or what place ecumenism has in our thoughts. No, the reason why voices from German churches are hardly heard abroad is simple: Few people abroad understand the German language. It is the language barrier that hinders participation in the ecumenical dialogue.

This publication aims to help make up this deficit. It presents articles in English on current topics in German Church and society. In these articles, Christian authors each express their own opinion, and to this extent they reflect the variety of opinion in our Churches. Accordingly it goes without saying that these articles do not represent the opinion of the editors of this publication, nor that of the Evangelical Church in Germany or its member churches.

All articles that we publish here in English translation have previously appeared in Church or secular newspapers or journals in Germany, and have been made available for us to reprint free of charge. For this we express our thanks.

In this first issue of Ecumenical Dialogue we have selected three articles that illuminate the situation of the churches in eastern and western Germany.

We would naturally be interested to learn how you judge this attempt to overcome barriers to communication in the ecumenical movement. Hence we would be especially pleased to hear your views, and next year we will take the liberty of asking for your detailed opinion as to whether, and how far, we have succeeded in this attempt.

The Editors.

New freedom

This contrasts with the experience of the new freedom with regard to career prospects, to training places and opportunities on the jobs market. »The world needs you like you need the world, The world can't exist without you.« - Young people who lived by this fragment of a song learned in their East German days have since experienced the exact opposite on the jobs front: The fight for the few training vacancies in the collapsing industrial and agricultural zones of eastern Germany has taught and continues to teach them they are neither needed nor expected on the jobs market.

57.000 young people were competing for 11.500 training vacancies in 1995 (according to the head of the Chancellor's Office, Bohl). Since the social order that has re-established itself since Unification measures success in life by career success, we should never underestimate the effects of mass youth unemployment with all its repercussions for the future of Germany as a whole. Part of our youth migrates to the West and is no longer available to help build eastern German society.

Besides the wide-ranging (and also public) youth work by the Churches, work with young people in homes and in everyday life in East Germany was almost exclusively in the charge of state

bodies (chiefly the FDJ Free German Youth organization). Despite their state affiliation, »youth clubs« up and down the country played an important part as meeting points and centres that kept young people of the streets. In many cases, loyalty to the State took only a nominal place (maybe a picture of Mr. Honecker in the hallway), but the severity of youth club restrictions on the free choice of music and freedom of speech limited their attractiveness (for example, sixty per cent of the music played had to come from socialist production).

Only a few of these youth clubs survived unification. Claims to recover expropriated buildings, tight funds, and unclear patronage are some of the many factors that contributed to their disappearance. The decentralized regrouping of youth work, its organizational structures and its integration into local authority facilities have been able partly to fill the vacuum, but in most cases the staffing, and above all the available funding remain modest, the structures shaky and in an early stage of consolidation. At the same time, empty town hall coffers mean drastic cuts in funding for youth work, which in the end can only reach and provide for only a fraction of young people.

In addition, people's motivation to try and achieve something, to find a responsible place in society, is hindered by the current turmoil in schools. The conversion of the schools system in imitation of the western German establishment has not only caused great uncertainty among (erstwhile socialist) teachers as to how they can take an active part rather than merely doing their job. At least in the period of upheaval and adjustment from 1991 to 1993 it also exposed children and young people to numerous experiments, found good on one day only to be discarded the next.

In my experience, the uncertainty among schoolteachers has meant that the new-found freedom of speech and opinion is exploited fruitfully and actively by only a few teachers and schools. This is especially so in the elementary and lower secondary sectors.

In East German times teachers were

not allowed, under threat of dismissal, to bring their own opinion into the classroom situation. Today, at least in Brandenburg, many teachers still have much difficulty discussing hot topics or dealing with religious or ethical questions – in short, individualizing their lessons – partly because they are not used to it, and partly out of fear that they could be the next for the »chop« on the headmaster's list (unlike elsewhere in Germany, many teachers here do not hold positions with life tenure).

The ones to suffer are the children and young people who consequently fail to learn how to form their own value judgements by argument and counter-argument. The schools that educate them are a bazaar of insecurities, with pseudo-religious ceremonies like the Jugendweihe (when fourteen-year-olds assume adult social status) enjoying an unbroken boom, without rhyme or reason and sometimes affecting whole classes at a time. One of my confirmation candidates sadly withdrew at the last minute – the pressure from her classmates and parents in favour of the secular ceremony was too strong.

Although, and this should be stressed, a large proportion of young people gladly make use of the new opportunities (leisure, education, and travel) and do benefit from them, for the remainder the new lifestyle is not the way to go, being undesirable. They see it either as part of the general collapse or as something that is openly self-destructive. For younger children, the differences between them and their western German contemporaries have begun to level out. The hollowing out of society morals is no longer a purely eastern German phenomenon; it is just that the symptoms differ.

These symptoms include people's dealings with the Church – with that which enables us to experience Christian belief. The East German regime was truly »successful« in secularizing (in the religious sense) eastern German society. With some regional variation, only a small fraction of children and young people are now baptized, and often baptism is already lacking in the second generation.

Churches in East Germany were perceived from within and without as an au-

tonomous space, always endeavouring to uphold their social and to some extent also their theological identity against outside and, partly, inside pressure. Generations of young people associated the Church with protection and happy freedom. But this cannot hide the fact that – at least in towns and cities – the Church today simply no longer exists in the thoughts and minds of young people.

Overall, young people in eastern Germany seem to me to approach life more pragmatically than in the West, because every so often an ability shows through that their parents' generation developed in forty years of East Germany, an ability to seek out and breathe meaningful life into niches of freedom. This non-religious realism is a factor for example in the relative failure of so-called youth sects, which thrive and prosper in a saturated environment emptied of meaning, to gain a footing in eastern Germany.

Irrelevant to life?

For most young people religion seems irrelevant to life. The social relevance of the Church brought in with the new (schools) system, with its sharp odour of State affiliation (religious studies, church tax, pastoral work in the armed forces, crucifixes in schools) will help bring religion back into the public eye, but in my view it cannot help spread a living Gospel. Like bringing up children, this can only be done by setting a convincing example, in parish life and in that of Church communities, where people credibly live out their creed – or not, as the case may be.

In eastern Germany too now, Church youth work in its many and various forms finds itself having to compete with facilities of every shade, all vying for scarce federal, state and local funds. In this free market abundance of youth work the Church throughout Germany must once more actively seek a Christian profile for the sake of its existence. Renouncing its traditional form and content including prayer, Bible study, and reflection on ethical and moral issues, also with reference to the Bible, bestows upon the Church a highly questionable popularity

and entails a risk of it becoming just another organizer of leisure activities. Those who were involved in Church youth work in East Germany are shocked by the lack of distinction between some Church offerings and those of other organizations.

To me this seems to lie not only in a fear of the sometimes uncomfortable Biblical message, but in funding practice and its administration by the Church. The East German State was always only too eager to know what we offered at our days of preparation for young people. We refused these requests, referring to the autonomy of the Church corporation and the substance of freedom of worship. Of course we received no funding as a result and had to be content with very modest, but self-paid accommodation.

If I wanted to stage a youth seminar weekend today, for example, to obtain public subsidy (often it isn't worth asking the Church) I would be very happy to submit programmes, materials, working reports, success reports and minutes of the seminar weekend, and let (East) German civil servants unconnected with the Church decide whether the planned content, form and participants are worthy of support.

This description is not intended to say anything against claiming subsidies, which are a keystone of the welfare state, but merely to make clear where the danger lies in selecting subjects for Church work: seeking the lowest possible independent profile for the sake of winning the greatest possible funds. Being shy of going out and working as a Christian has nothing to do with the strength that Christians ascribe to believing in the Resurrection, if only it is passed on as such. I have every confidence that in youth work, too, contemplation of genuinely Christian issues and forms leads more surely to a strengthening of Church and belief than its considerate restriction to consensus entertainment under an ecclesiastical roof.

This article is a reprint from »Lutherische Monatshefte«, no. 10, 1995, slightly abridged and translated for publication in this magazine.

No cause for resignation

*The situation of the Protestant Church
in eastern Germany*
by Wolf Krötke

Almost seven years after Unification, the minority situation of the Protestant Church in eastern Germany remains unchanged. While it has new opportunities to take part in community life, the Church is also under heavy pressure to cut costs. The author, a Professor of Systematic Theology at the Humboldt University Faculty of Theology in Berlin analyses problems and opportunities in these times of upheaval.

Much has changed for the Protestant churches of the various Federal States in eastern Germany since 1990. From an outside position at society's edge they have become a factor in the public life of a pluralistic, democratic society. Under the laws governing the state-church-relationship in the Federal Republic of Germany they are allotted tasks and functions in many areas of society that they were not allowed to carry out in East German times. In place of suppression by the totalitarian state they are now bound by a wide range of obligations under democracy.

All these changes yield substantial growth potential for their services at both parish and society level. One might expect the churches to react with unbounded joy and make the most of the bounty that has dropped into their lap. But in practice this is the exception, and instead we are met above all among pastoral workers by an atmosphere of discontent, complaint and scepticism. The new opportunities gained by churches in eastern Germany are generally seen more as a burden than as a chance to start afresh. The reason for this general mood is not hard to pin down: With all the changes in the Church's social and political environment, one thing has remained constant, and that is its clear mi-

nority status in the population. The question is whether the options now open to the Church are the right way of adjusting to this situation and of preparing for the future.

Atheism is deeply rooted as a natural way of life

The developments in five years of German union and hence legal unity of the German Protestant churches prove to many that this is not the right way. The structures and options that the Church now has are those of a Church that is firmly anchored in the population and in the life of society. They consume resources at grass-roots level, in nation-wide work and in the social domain that are not available in sufficient quantity to a minority Church. Conversely, they tie up the energies that would be needed to intensify and extend congregational life. They pass up an opportunity that this situation clearly offers, the opportunity to build a new form of church in the vague hope that the people will one day return to the People's Church. This hope has not been fulfilled in the last five years and there are few signs that it will be in the foreseeable future.

This has reasons that originate in the history of the churches in East Germany, and it is essential to understand this history if we are correctly to understand the situation that has arisen today. When East Germany came to an end, only about twenty per cent of the population remained members of the Church, and most of those were not active members by any means. This figure has stayed more or less the same. The new social and political

conditions did not bring about a new return to belief in God and thus to the Church among the population at large. The great national importance that the Protestant Church attained in 1989 proved to be a political and religious interlude: The atheism that became a natural way of life for generations under two ideological dictatorships is very deeply rooted.

This is no surprise to anyone with experience of East Germany, since atheism was the one element of the Marxist-Leninist ideology that most people voluntarily endorsed. In practice, this endorsement found its expression in sheer disinterest towards belief in God, causing congregations to shrink to such an extent that in many places it was not even possible to maintain the Sunday service. State pressure additionally ensured that people in socially and economically relevant positions no longer belonged to the Church. The Church lost its living roots in the population.

This loss also had a positive side. It gave the Church a credibility boost so far as Church membership was not derived from social conventions, but was in its own right a profession of faith requiring personal commitment. This concentrated the message and the work of the Church on its central purpose.

On the other hand it was already clear in East German times that this shrinking process must have long term consequences for the structure and methods of the Church. But one of the most important reasons for the difficulties faced by the churches in eastern Germany today is that precisely these consequences failed to materialize. Realistically, the Church ought to have regrouped as a Church of professed faith, which necessarily could only be present in places where the members of the congregation were in a position to finance the clergy, Church instruction, Church music, etc.

The need to cut costs dilutes the local presence of the Church

The Church retained the structure and approach of a major national institution. It was organized as a people's Church but lacked the people. This gave it a decisive handicap: it could not pay for its own

work. It lived only partly from voluntary church tax. Apart from State subsidies deriving from the history of the Protestant Church in Germany, it was above all the churches of the »West« who bore the financial burden. Now it must do this on its own, and for this reason almost all problems relating to the way and the work of the Church in eastern Germany have turned into agonizing questions of funding.

Under the *financial equalization* arrangements between the Protestant churches in Germany, large sums were poured into the eastern German churches in the years following unification. Without this money the clergy and other workers could not have been paid. But these payments will be reduced as of the next year. The goal must be *self financing*. This means drastic savings, of a kind that run contrary to what the Church now needs.

What the Church needs is a missionary offensive at local level. It needs close cooperation between pastoral workers and in fact all servants of the Church and the community. And it needs to activate members of the congregations to do visiting work. In many places all this is being attempted, since people will not find their way back to the Church except through personal encounters and experience of people who believe. But the need to cut costs promotes the opposite trend. It dilutes the local presence of the Church, since effective cost-cutting primarily means cutting staff. This is why hundreds of clerical and pastoral posts are not being reoccupied. The Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, for example, must reduce its staff by some thirty five per cent.

However, the resulting need to broaden existing works means a lower concentration of Church service precisely where it is most needed. This is at its most visible in secularized rural areas where churches are becoming derelict and where there are even thoughts of putting them up for sale. But the current situation, which will not stabilize in the near future, also weighs heavily on the psyche of those in the service of the Church. They not only feel overstretched, but overburdened with bureaucratic tasks that are unrelated to their

work and follow from the Church's new legal status.

On the other hand, the unavoidable cost-cutting policy of Church government means that people who wish to enter the service of the Church cannot do so. Many of the churches now have »waiting lists« for accepting theology graduates into Church service. This is especially bitter for students who chose such a course of study in East German times. Back then, this was a decision for life, for the sake of a Church that was dependent on young people unselfishly accepting all the drawbacks of such a career and placing their lives at its disposal. The drop in new student numbers is one long-term effect of the new received wisdom that there are no longer any career prospects for young people in the Church. A course of training that was specific to East Germany college-style training of preachers who initially entered other professions no longer has any future, and the Paulinum preachers' college in Berlin is due to close.

Latent resistance to religious instruction by state schools

Another branch of Church work in East Germany will also come to an end in the long term. This is Christian Teaching instruction provided by the Church after the East German government put an end to religious instruction in schools and the Church was not even allowed to use school premises. This instruction lives on in many places, especially where it is carried out by catechists. But if training for this vocation is discontinued, it is foreseeable that religious instruction in schools will become the only form of education in belief that children receive. With a few exceptions, this latter form of religious instruction is hard to establish. Secularization being especially widespread in precisely the generation whose children are now required to attend school, such groups as are formed at all tend to be very small. In addition, the grass roots of the Church exhibit latent resistance to religious instruction by state schools.

Furthermore, one can well doubt that

religious instruction for the generation that is currently growing up can impart a belief that assures our congregations a future. Thus intensive work with children and young people in the Church including extra-curricular work must be given clear priority.

Church of Jesus Christ and subsystem of society

There is admittedly something else involved in the whole question of religious instruction: a sort of unease in dealing with forms of Church work that depend upon State support. This unease defies entirely rational analysis because it manifests itself in contradictory ways. For example, there was no opposition worth speaking of when the eastern German churches closed their own theological colleges, which had been the guarantors of theological freedom in East Germany, and handed over theological education lock, stock and barrel to the theological faculties of the state universities.

When it came to the problem of pastoral work in the armed forces however, the eastern German churches put up hefty opposition to this being integrated into the army as it always has been in the West, so that this work will continue to be carried out by local clergy until the matter is decided. Conversely, people have largely come to terms with *church tax* being collected by the State, although there are in fact serious misgivings about a church collecting financial contributions from its members in this way. All this derives from a conviction that arose in East German times that the Church should take care of its own matters without state support.

The understandable, and far from undue concern here is that people might perceive the Church as the promoter of a »conservative« state ideology that has taken the place of the »socialist« ideology. The identification of the totalitarian with the democratic state that more or less unconsciously accompanies this concern is admittedly fatal. Not only that it is unjustified in that, as anyone can observe, all cooperation between the State and the Church enshrined in the body of

law governing the position of the relationship between State and Church leaves the latter free, for example in schools, universities and even the army to work fully according to its own criteria. It also shows that it is not easy for the Church, after such a long time living under an anti-ecclesiastical dictatorship that has since proved to have been an historical interlude, to regain the role of that public religion which has continually developed within the relationship between Church and State in Germany.

In a study entitled »Minority with a Future« on the mission and form of churches in eastern Germany, submitted early this year by a working party of eastern German theologians, fundamental doubts are expressed that these churches can continue to develop along the same lines as their western German counterparts, since these reflect a tendency to cling to established structures that in fact are gradually disintegrating. And the situation of the Church as a minority in the »market« of our pluralistic society can only be done justice by fundamental reform that makes its work more dynamic.

Thus the principle of parishes of providing nation-wide Church coverage should be renounced in favour of a »regionalization« of Church services based in key centres, the pay structure of all people in the service of the Church should be linked not to that of the civil service, but to the actual number of members, and absolute financial dependence on church tax should be overcome by developing other, donation-style funding schemes.

Exploit the asset of Christian credentials

One can argue about the proposals in detail. The main question is whether the path of reform should not be such that the central services of the churches and their large, expensive administrations be reduced and »made more dynamic« in favour of strengthening the work at local level. For it is very difficult to make a new start with the life of the Church in places that have become »white patches« on the Church map. And the wish to provide regional offerings will not by any means develop of its own accord.

This apart, however realism the broad secularization of the population demands, we must be sure not to regard this as an irreversible fate. All changes in the Church must be directed towards the expansion of congregations if an underlying mood of resignation is not to spread throughout its ranks. Nonetheless, the above study, and to an even greater extent the considerable debate at all levels of the Church in eastern Germany have made clear that these churches are yet to face the task of independently creating the new conditions for their own existence.

This will require both realism and fan-

tasy. But, most importantly, it must take place in a spirit that ascribes incomparably more strength to the power of the Gospel than to the tides of difficulty. It was in this spirit that the churches in East Germany were able not to resign under incomparably and unforeseeably difficult conditions. Hence it is in this spirit that today we can resist the many sorrows and the helplessness that the new situation in the Church has brought in its wake.

This article is a reprint from »Herder Korrespondenz« No. 12, 1995, slightly abridged and translated for publication in this magazine.

»Lacking profile and averse to risk«

*A Munich business consultancy has examined
the Church's image*

by Heinz Brockert

In the Bavarian capital of Munich, the Protestant Church is at risk of losing 22 per cent of its membership by the year 2010 and hence 37 per cent of its current income from church tax. Do the Church and its parishes come up to members' expectations? Global business consultants McKinsey put this question to the congregations of Munich in a product and acceptance study.

A Munich inner-city parish meeting. On the agenda are the plans for the next parish newsletter. All parish workgroups are represented. The director of the social welfare work association, the initiator of the mother-and-child group, the choirmaster and all the others dutifully report what they intend to write about in the next issue. Then it is the turn of the parish youth club rep. »Yes, we'll be writing something as usual,« he says, glibly. A member of the Parish Council pointedly asks if he intends to say what. The answer this elicits is a

frank but equally haughty »No!«. They would let them know in due course. Then the young man adds, »Your persistent questions get on my nerves!« And anyway the Woodlice, the youth group, had always got anything down on paper in time . . .«

An embarrassed silence. The young woman pastor pretends to riffle through her papers. Most look away. The Parish Councillor visibly gasps for breath. »If the young ladies and gentlemen see it like that, then we shall just have to put up with it,« he says, testily. »But let me remind you that we only recently approved 10 000 deutschmarks for youth work in the Parish Council. One of these days we want to see something for it.« Slam! The next potential contributor is called on«

Scenes from a protestant parish in a major city. Frustration is rife. The Church situation affects everyone, but no one picks up on the problems, and complaining is not on. The situation of this inner-city parish is typical and hard. The parish

boundaries were drawn long ago to criteria that no longer mean anything. The population is very heterogeneous, and there are many old, lonely people. And then many young singles whose loneliness factor smart talk notwithstanding must also be on the high side.

Population mobility in the city is very high. Those who deliver the parish newsletter experience this more strongly than the pastor, since on each half-yearly round, about eight percent of the Church Messenger goes undelivered because the name on the letterbox has changed. What parishes need today is management. Are they still following the right goals with the right methods? What do the rising conflicts between the various working groups mean? Which works have a future, and which bear little fruit despite great effort and may have to be discontinued? Which workers need encouragement, or even consolation? And which need to be reintegrated into the whole because they no longer do anything but ride personal hobby-horses? Crisis management! As a major social grouping the Church has little practice in this field. Who may intervene and when? An unanswered question.

Ten kilometres as the bird flies from this city parish lies the Protestant town parish of Ottobrunn: 10 236 souls, four pastors and one vicar. The congregation includes many young families. Problems in the parish are reacted to quickly and flexibly. Within the parish is the headquarters of the major German aerospace group. When a wave of redundancies reached even the most highly qualified employees, many of whom live in the parish, Pastor Johannes Minkus reacted immediately and established a local alternative to the well-reputed centre for the unemployed run by the Protestant Church in Munich: discussion groups for redundant managers. The effort was a raging success and gained a lot of media attention. The pastor's wife Melanie Graffam-Minkus, who shares her husband's post in the parish, is active in another field: as »Germany's first on-line woman pastor« she recently began counselling Internet users who click their way to the Bavarian Protestant Church's site with a message to get off their chests.

Another parish resident is Peter Barrenstein, Director of the Munich office of

McKinsey, the global business consultancy firm. He is a member of the Parish Council, but is not only involved in analysing, debating and deciding. He is also an adept with the collecting box. The parish was recently able to unveil its new Church organ to the value of DM 600 000 (about £ 275 000). He finds his inspiration in Jesus' parable of the talents (also referred to in some Bible translations as »pounds«). Matthew 25, Verses 14-18: »For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. . . « He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. «

Barrenstein made use of his »talent« and offered the Church as part of McKinsey's charitable activities a free (»pro' bono«) product and acceptance study of the Church in Munich. This was gladly accepted by the local Church work organizers, the Deanery and the Dean Helmut Ruhwande (who has studied social sciences), and also the Bavarian Protestant Church.

A surprising, unequivocal conclusion

Detailed surveys have so far been completed in two parishes and a Protestant education centre. Questionnaires and interviews were used to determine how firmly members are rooted in their Church and to contrast their expectations of the Church with the actual use made by the congregation of what the Church has to offer. On the basis of its findings the consultancy drew up a profile of Church members that is probably common to all large cities. For McKinsey there are five groups in evidence: members without belief (9.1% in the Munich survey), non-members of self-defined beliefs (43.1%), seekers distanced from the Church (20.5%), believers critical of the Church (8.6%), and believers with strong Church ties (18.7%).

Merely by checking against these ca-

tegories, every parish can see whether its programme is tailored to suit all members, or if instead they follow the maxim, »This is the way we do things round here.« But within each group McKinsey also asked why people are (still) members of the Church. Ten reasons were offered, of which respondents could tick more than one. The statement »I am a member of the Protestant Church. . . « could be supplemented with statements on belief (». . . because I can actively live my belief there«, ». . . because the Church gives me inner support,« or ». . . because the Church strengthens me in my belief«), on events and community (»because the Church gives me the chance of belonging to a community«, or ». . . because I find the events offered at parish level attractive«), on social involvement (». . . because the Church tries to help with social problems«), on church's services at certain occasions (». . . because I would not want to go without marriage and a Christian burial,« or ». . . because I would like my children to be baptized/confirmed«), and on social norms (». . . because it is the right and proper thing to do«, or ». . . not only because my parents are/were in the Church«).

The conclusion surprised many, but is unequivocal: In the four groups who are critical of the Church – that is, 81.3% of the respondents – Church membership stands or falls with the desire for ritual Church accompaniment on milestone occasions (birth, coming of age, marriage, and death). In second place, likewise a long way ahead of other reasons, came »I am a member because the Church tries to help with social problems.« Consultants and theologians were equally surprised by the fact that the primary mission of a Church, »to communicate the Gospel of the love of God to people today« (as McKinsey put it) represents no motivation for the overwhelming majority to be members of the Church, and for two of the groups even comes behind the reason »I am a member of the Church because it is the right and proper thing to do.« Let everyone draw their own conclusions from this.

»Prophet« McKinsey also warns the Church against leaving too much time before it acts. If people continue to leave the Protestant Church in Munich at the cur-

rent rate (1.6% a year), the Church will lose a projected 22% of its members by the year 2010, and with them 37% of the current income from church tax. McKinsey director Barrenstein directs most attention in the preliminary analysis to the fact that, save for the »believers with strong Church ties« group, the Church is ascribed hardly any competence in questions of conscience and belief.

»The Church today lacks profile, it stands for everything and nothing, and also follows a pervasive universalism through its representatives,« he criticizes. True, the Church provides »a basis for differing opinions«, which is something to be highly valued. »But anyone who does not study the Church scientifically will wonder, what does it stand for today?« The Church is also »miserable when it comes to realizing its vision.« There is a lack of reflection about its everyday work.

For Barrenstein, the Church's »product«, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is timelessly good. Servants of the Church are generally well motivated, but many good ideas go to seed because diffuse, uncoordinated action predominates over team-work. This is especially so in major cities.

»Many Church leaders are afraid«

The McKinsey study concludes that the Lutheran Protestant Church »is caught

in a negative feedback loop. Deficits in meeting members' expectations« result in »an inner distancing of the membership.« And the »conversion of this inner distance into resignations undermines the Church's financial base.« This would provoke »internal arguments and internal rifts« which would be made all the worse by the »lacking overall concept of the Church.« The conclusion: »Growing introspection will bring yet more neglect of members' expectations.«

This naturally summons up the question of leadership and motivation. Many Church leaders are »afraid, lonely, barely capable of reflection, speechless.« Self-concern prevails; workers' motivation is weak. The Church acts without a profile and is averse to risk. Barrenstein's recommendation: »The Churches should go back into competition and show what they have to offer.«

Bavarian Bishop Hermann von Loewenich takes this ball »flanked« by Barrenstein and advances with it. He stresses that he takes the consultancy's proposals »very seriously.« The Church's historical legacies of »bureaucratic structure« and »management by committee« are indeed due for reform, he says. The Church must regard itself far more as a »service agency.« But any reform of the Church would entail neither staff cuts (which McKinsey did not even propose in this case) nor a new »religion lite«, but clearer focus on the central message of the Gospel. And however much its work is criticized for inefficiency, the Bishop emphasizes that the Church will remain true to its »participatory principle« of directly involving servants and members of the Church in all important decisions.

For pastor Johannes Minkus, who counts McKinsey-Barrington among his remaining »flock,« the direction of change is clear: »The Church is not the Church unless it is the Church to others.« Shortly before his execution, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a letter to Eberhard Bethge in which he validly described the new Church that must welcome those who have come of age, as follows: The Church must »take part in the worldly work of community life, not as master, but as a helper and servant. It must tell people of all vocations what life with

Christ is, what it means to be there for others.«

Johannes Minkus accompanies his citation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with a warning against wanting to seek God only at life's extremities: »One tries to show the world which has come of age that it cannot live without God's guardianship.« It follows, at least for Minkus, that the Church »cannot solely concentrate on fringe groups, but must also be attractive for »the strong in society«, that is, for the intellectual and economic ruling classes.«

The communication of belief may be summarized in three maxims: »Belief is an offer, not a necessity. Belief is an offer of help in life not an extra burden. Belief is living passionately not doctrine drained of life.«

This, or something like it, might describe the »corporate philosophy« of Values plc, the Church. But what about the corporate strategy? »If it matters today that the Church shows a clear profile, if it is important to set priorities, then bureaucracy as an organizational form has probably had its day,« says the pastor. Minkus cites an example: An inner-city church in Munich (along with churches in other major cities) is successfully experimenting with a form of service originating in Finland, the St. Thomas Mass. Elements of different types of service are combined to a new whole. »Apart from two articles in the Church press I have no information about it,« Minkus complains. »Is it not conceivable that the Church appoint a group not only to observe this form of service, but to take it up, have it tried out, put together an information pack and make this available within two months? Business thinking would make it possible to develop on promising models of parish work.«

Bonhoeffer foresaw this, too. He knew, says Minkus, »that new understanding is not only attained through mental effort.« For Bonhoeffer, »deeds, too, can give hermeneutic inspiration, that is, only accomplished deeds open up new paths of understanding for thought.«

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Dr. Job distributed blankets, Bibles and household utensils to our Christian widows and children whose husbands and fathers died as martyrs for Christ in Sudan.



Richard Wurmbrand writes:

"For he, (the centurion) is worthy" (Luke 7:4)

Our dearly beloved,

Jesus was once told that a Roman officer was worthy of being helped. We may pray for individuals, but our request alone is not sufficient. If others ask us to pray for them, we must understand that our entreaty alone will not help. They must also take steps to sweep with their own brooms—they must allow Christ to cleanse their hearts and lives.

Jesus is the greatest guest you will ever receive into your life.

There is a story about a Christian father who told his son to clean up the garden "because Jesus and His disciples will visit us today." The boy knew Jesus and loved Him, so he worked diligently in the garden before telling his father, "I'm finished."

The father, after walking through the garden, said, "Everything is really clean, but not clean enough for Jesus."

The child went back to the garden with renewed vigour, picking up every withered leaf and every scarp from the pathways. The father then had a second look, saying, "Bravo! The garden is really clean now, but not with the special cleanness needed for the Son of God."

The boy asked, "What is this special cleanness like?"

The father replied, "For such a guest it is not enough to eliminate what is ugly. You must also embellish the garden as never before. Quickly, as a friend of Jesus, plant

in it beautiful orchids, roses, and lilies—things it never had before—to adorn it. Then add lights to give it a warm glow. Jesus is a guest of unsurpassing excellence and must be hosted accordingly."

Romanian Martyrs

Thinking of this cleansing of the heart, I remember a Romanian martyr. In Communist Romania, many Christians died a martyr's death. I knew a number of them personally. Nelu Sultaniuc was in prison for his faith. Hungry, cold, beaten, he fell sick of pulmonary tuberculosis, like so many other prisoners. The prison doctors were unable to help because they had no medicines, but his family brought him streptomycin, the cure for this disease.

The political officer of the jail said to him, "I will give you the medicine on one condition: you must become an informer". Now, the inmates were all there because of their anti-communist Christian faith? Because of this, even their conversations with their cellmates were spied on, in order to provide an excuse for new accusations and longer sentences.

Sultaniuc refused. Matzkevitch, another young Christian (of Jewish origin), also refused. Both died of tuberculosis in jail. They sacrificed their lives to maintain their integrity. What would their lives have profited at such a price? They died as martyrs.

Virgil Ionescu was tied to a chair,

with a strong electric lightbulb shining in his eyes. This meant certain blindness. He could escape this torture only by agreeing to be an informer. Today he is completely blind, in utter poverty, but happy to have remained clean in heart.

Problems of conscience

While I was in Romanian prisons (and surely now in Muslim jails), individuals with a tender conscience had problems.

In the morning the guard would ask through the opening of the door, "How many in this cell?"

Now, if a prisoner had died during the night and we still answered "Sixteen" rather than "Fifteen", we would have an extra piece of bread that day. This was a great boon to a sick prisoner. Should we tell this lie? We remembered that David once did a forbidden thing in order to feed his hungry soldiers (1 Samuel 21: 1-6). But what about us?

Several times when some prisoner was scheduled for twenty-five lashes with a whip for some trespass against the rules, the Hebrew Christian Milan Haimovici stepped forward and offered to take the beating in place of his fellow prisoner.

Since the guard who specialized in beatings did not know the people on his list for the day, it was easy to deceive him. But is it right to tell the obvious lie, "I am so-and so" in place of another? Isn't this being deceptive?

We also had other problems besides those of conscience. In winter the Communists would offer the prisoners hot tea and hot soup. We had the choice of declining these

and suffering the piercing cold or accepting a little bit of warmth and then suffering the protracted pain of needing to void and not being taken to the toilet. In the end, we sometimes solved the problem by using for this purpose the bowls from which we ate.

The brethren living lives with such choices were far from being depressed. How could they be? They desired to live according to the Bible, which says nothing about being depressed! This word isn't even mentioned in Scripture. Instead, the Bible tells us to overcome every difficulty with the joy that God is ready to give abundantly to those who ask.

In Sudan, the priest Bagriel Dwatuka was whipped while he hung from a rope, then salt was rubbed into his wounds. He and others who were beaten were obliged to say "Thank you" after every ordeal.

A Christian can do this even when not constrained. Those who hurt us ennoble us if we understand the mystery of suffering.

In Sudan, many Christians have been killed. Some were confined in churches and tied to chairs with thick ropes. A Muslim officer then said, "We are going to shoot you in your church May God come and save you!" Then the soldiers emptied their guns on the helpless people and the building was set on fire. We are shipping help to Sudanese Christians.

The martyrs live outside of time. The apostle Paul wrote, referring to such martyrs, "We are surrounded by them as by a great

cloud of witnesses." They have been the inspiration of our mission which publicizes the heroic stories of martyrs in over forty languages. They "surround" us when we preach, write, and minister to the needs of today's martyrs and their families.

Jesus desires to work together with His church. If you are willing to let Him unite with you, then you will continue on the path of the heroes of the faith, past and present.

Number of Christians triples

Shanghai is the second largest city of China. In the last ten years, the number of Christians there more than tripled. Among its seven and a half million inhabitants, 1,27,000 are Evangelical Christians. They gather in 111 registered churches, but there are also many house churches. These latter are persecuted. Three house church leaders were beaten to death by the Chinese police. One is Sister Zhang Xiuju, 36 years old.

The Christian Li Moxi, 90, wrote thirty letters in his own blood to government officials explaining to them that Christians love the Communists but cannot compromise their beliefs to curry favour with them.

Mission to Armenia

"You have made us a strife to our neighbours, and our enemies laugh among themselves" (Ps.80:6)

These words could have been written for the Armenian people. Since the third century they have been Christians and have conse-

quently left behind them a history of continuous persecution. The last holocaust of Armenians was perpetrated by the Turks in 1915.

Our German mission has printed Armenian language Bibles, Tortured for Christ, the Other Face of Marx, and What Christians Believe... These have been brought into the country and distributed freely. We have also created a Stephen Center in Armenia, as in several other countries.

Cleansed through long suffering, Armenian Christians have a high spiritual tenor. The fire of love still burns in their hearts.

In our own Christian life and work we should all show ourselves worthy of the abundant blessings God gives us by being faithful to Him. May God bless you!

Christianity stagnant worldwide, Islam grows quickly

Despite missionary outreach and evangelism efforts, the percentage of the world's population which practices the Christian faith has remained the same for a quarter of a century, while the number of Muslims has grown dramatically, according to religion statistician David B. Barrett.

According to Barrett's figures, Christianity is still the world's largest religion with 33.7 percent of the world's population—the same as in 1970. Then, there were 1.25 billion Christians among the 3.7 billion people on earth; today, 1.95 of the 5.8 billion inhabitants adhere to the Christian faith.

However, during the same period, Muslims doubled their numbers, increasing from 564 million to 1.13 billion people. The main cause of this dramatic growth, according to Barrett, is the higher birth rate among the Muslim population. Thus, the Muslim percentage of the world population rose from 15.2 to 19.4 percent. Barrett calculates that both religions will show slight growth by the turn of the millennium.

The third largest group is comprised of the "non-religious", totaling 876 million people or 15.1 percent of the world's population. Barrett predicts that by the year 2000 this group will fall below the 15 percent mark as in 1970.

Though the worldwide propor-

tion of Christians has remained unchanged, the global distribution of believers has changed. While the numbers of Christians in Europe and North America are decreasing and the Christian faith is stagnating in Latin America, the Christian population is gaining momentum in Africa and Asia.

Barrett says the non-evangelized population worldwide has decreased from 1.4 billion 37.6 percent) to 1.12 billion people (19.3 percent). By the year 2000, he expects this percentage to fall to 16.6 percent—despite the proliferation of plans designed to bring the number down to zero by the millennium's end.

—Christian Info News, August 1996, Vancouver B.C.

Prayer needs in the Muslim world

Satellite dishes have been banned not only in Saudi Arabia but also in Iran (1995) where there were estimated to be 250,000 satellite-dish users in Tehran alone. This reflects a desire to keep out all non-Muslim influences. Pray that Christian truth may be made known in these countries.

As the economic, social and political situation of Iran continues to deteriorate, many Muslims are interested in finding out what Christianity teaches. But this is very dangerous for them, and they are not allowed to enter church buildings. Pray that those who seek the truth will find it.

A Christian leader in the Sudan has recently stated, "There are international laws to protect the

rights of animals, yet we are being slaughtered indiscriminately, while the world and its conscience remains silent." Pray that world leaders may not turn a blind eye to the situation in Sudan, but may act wisely, courageously and, if necessary, sacrificially to bring justice and peace.

The Christian Community in Mozambique is fearful that Islamic extremism will come to dominate their country as it is doing in many other parts of Africa. Pray that they will be both wise and just in their response. Pray that the current religious liberty in Mozambique may continue.

If there is increased insurgency or if Islamic forces gain control of

(Continue on Page 10)

Young pastor's hanged body found in Mazandaran forest - Iran

A young Iranian Christian pastor has been found dead in a forest near his home in northwest Iran, according to confirmed reports from Christian leaders inside the country.

The body of assemblies of God pastor Mohammed Bagher Yusefi, 34, was reportedly discovered September 28 by local authorities in a forest near Sari, capital of Iran's Mazandaran Province.

A convert from Islam to Christianity, Yusefi is the fourth Christian leader murdered in Iran under unexplained circumstances since 1994.

According to Yusefi's family, the pastor left his home in Sari at 6 a.m. for a time of private prayer and never returned. That evening, local officials informed the family that his body had been discovered hanging from a tree in the forest.

"The government is saying that he went there and committed suicide, that he hanged himself", said one Iranian pastor who had heard from sources inside Iran. "But then why are they refusing to give up his body?"

Iranian authorities have resisted producing the bodies of previously murdered Christians, some of whom were beheaded, stabbed repeatedly or mutilated.

Although local officials claimed that Yusefi's death was being investigated, a press release from the London-based Elam Ministries declared, "There can hardly be any doubt that he has been martyred because he was

a Christian leader from a Muslim background."

After converting to Christianity at age 24, Yusefi had studied theology at the Garden of Sharon Bible School in Karaj, near Tehran. He pastored Christian congregations in Ghaem-Shahr, Gorgan and Sari.

Also a gifted evangelist who wrote a number of indigenous Mazandarani hymns, Yusefi became known in Iran's Christian community by the Persian name "Ravanbakhsh", which means "soul giver".

Yousefi had also helped raise two sons of Rev. Mehdi Dibaj, a long-time convert to Christianity who was imprisoned for nine years for refusing to return to Islam, and then murdered in July of 1994, six months after his release.

Yusefi is survived by his wife Akhtar, also a Christian convert from Muslim background, and two children, daughter Ramsina, 9, and son Stephen, 7.

Pending the expected release of his body, the Iranian church has planned to hold Yusefi's Christian funeral and burial on October 5.

Since the government ordered execution of convert pastor Hussein Soodmand in 1990, the Islamic regime in Iran has escalated efforts to stop the spread of evangelical Protestant churches in the country. Soodamand's house-church movement in the city of Mashad had drawn many former Muslims to faith in Christ, including Yusefi's wife Akhtar.

According to sources inside Iran,

government-sponsored persecution of local Christians has again intensified in recent weeks.

"Many people in Tehran were taken in recently and beaten, especially the converts," a Christian from Iran told Compass Direct. "Some of them had physical injury. This is nothing new. They have always taken people to prison, and tortured them there, and beat them. But now, they have killed

another pastor!"

According to what we see," one Iranian Christian leader now living outside Iran told **Compass Direct**, "they are determined to eliminate the pastors, one or two every year. Some pastors have left the country, or they would kill them, too. Now after four or five years, there is hardly anyone left. — World wide Photos and Media, 4 October 1996. ◆

Iranian Christians International Reports on Martyred Pastor.

Pastor Mohammed Ravanbakhsh, an Iranian Christian, was reportedly killed in Iran on or about Wednesday, September 25, and his body was found hanged on a tree in the forest near Ghaem-Shahr. He had been reportedly detained prior to his death.

Thirty five year old Ravanbakhsh was a Muslim convert to Christianity and an "apostate." He converted to Christianity when he was 24 years old and studied theology at the Garden of Sharon Bible School in Karaj, Iran.

He was appointed to the position of Christian clergy in about 1990 by the late Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr, Director of the council of the Jama'ate Rabbani (Assemblies of God) Church. He served as a pastor in the cities of Sari, Gorgan and Ghaem-Shahr. (Iran's Ministry of Islamic Guidance closed the home church in Sari in 1988, and forced the churches in Ghaem Shahr and Gorgan to go underground in 1985 and 1993 respectively.) He is survived by his wife,

Akhtar, and two small children.

Pastor Ravanbakhsh cared for Rev. Mehdi Dibaj's children while Rev. Dibaj was imprisoned for ten years. Rev. Dibaj was like a father to Pastor Ravanbakhsh.

It is ironic that pastor ravanbakhsh was killed within days of the first annual International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians which was held on Sunday, September 29, last week's passing of the U.S House Resolution 515 condemning the persecution of Christians worldwide, and the upcoming October conference on Christianity and Islam hosted in Tehran and co-sponsored by the World Council of Churches and Iran's Ministry of Islamic Guidance.

When will these atrocities against Christians end? Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr was Killed in January 1994 after leading and international campaign to free Rev. Mehdi Dibaj from prison and to expose the atrocities against Evangelical Chris-

tians in Iran. Rev. Dibaj and Rev. Tateos Mikaelian were found murdered in June 1994.

According to recent reports, persecution of Iranian Muslim converts to Christianity and other evangelical Christians in Iran is more severe and widespread than previous reports indicated. The persecution is escalating. Muslim converts to Christianity, other Evangelical Christians, pastors and church leaders continue to be arrested, imprisoned and tortured, simply because of their religion. Some are kept under heavy surveillance, with their phones tapped and letters routinely opened, while others have received written and oral death threats. Some have escaped assassination attempts. Others have lost their jobs or been refused gainful employment, housing and education. Ethnic Armenian and Assyrian Christian also continue to face officially sanctioned discrimination, particularly in the areas of employment, education, housing, public accommodations and the court system.

In early July 1996, Mr. Shahram Sepehri-Fard, a Muslim convert to Christianity as a child, was arrested and imprisoned in Iran. His father, Reverend Sadegh Sepehri-Fard, was the Director of the Iran Bible Society until its Closure by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and his escape from Iran to Germany in 1990. Due to international pressure and

other intervention, Shahram Sepehri-Fard was found innocent of all charges and released on August 14, 1996.

Bishop Hovsepian-Mehr stated in his January 10, 1994, Fax, "....our Executive Board has also reached the conclusion that the policy of 'let us keep silent and see what will happen next!' is a satanic policy. If we die or go to jail for our faith, we want the whole Christian world to know what is happening to their brothers and sisters..."

Contrary to Bishop Hovsepian-Mehr's directions, some pastors and Christian leaders in the West have led a conspiracy of silence. Pastors and church leaders in Iran have been pressured into denying the severe persecution to the world. Therefore, some Western countries have ironically found Iran to be "a safe country to where Iranian Muslim convert refugees can return." Christians, including heads of state and other government officials, must continue to speak out. By speaking out, you can also help the suffering Iranian Christians.

Recommended action:

Send faxes, telegrams of tel-exes, or express and airmail letters to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Protesting the killing of Pastor Ravanbakhsh. Also urge the Iranian government to discontinue the arrest, imprisonment, interrogation and torture of Iranian Christians, particularly Muslim converts to Christianity

and to allow Christians freedom of religion.

Faxes for Iranian officials in Iran should be sent:

c/o Embassy of the Islamic republic of Iran London, England, U.K.
+1-44-71-589-4440

Telexes should be sent to:
214231 MITI IR, 213113 PRIM IR

Addresses:

His Excellency Mohammed Ali Besharati Jahromi
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
Dr. Fatemi Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
(Marked for the attention of Interior Minister)
Salutation: Your Excellency
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Tehran, Iran

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
(Marked for the attention of President Rafsanjani)
Salutation : Your Excellency
Phone: Iran +1-98-21-6161
Telegrams President Rafsanjani, Tehran, Iran.

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Ambassador—
Permanent Mission of the
Islamic Republic of Iran
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1209 Geneva, Switzerland

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ambassador
Permanent Representative to the
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United Nations
New York NY
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Ambassador
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
London England, U.K.
Phone: +1-44-71-584-8101
Fax: +1-44-71-589-4440

Send Faxes to the following number also requesting that they protest the killing of pastors Ravanbakhsh:
UNHCR - Geneva: +1-41-22-739-7377

Contact your Government leaders and representatives requesting their continued protest until the aforementioned is attained. — Iranian Christians International, Inc., Press Release, 2 October 1996.

Your sacrificial contribution can be sent to:

M/s. Tortured For Christ
V-31, Green Park, New Delhi-110016

(Continue from Page 5)

Xinjiang, China, what little freedom there is for Christian mission in this vast province will be reduced still further. Pray that the Lord will be in control and work out His purposes. There may well be 50,000 Christians amongst the Chinese communities of Xinjiang. —ISIC Bulletin August /September 1996. ♣

Personal encounter with Christ in Indonesia

Not long ago an Indonesian ulama (Muslim scholar with social and religious authority) and his wife were on their way home from the Haj (Pilgrimage to Mecca). They got into conversation with a bearded bus driver who said to them: "Why are you spending so much time and money on this Haj? You should get to know Jesus and you don't have to spend all that money?" The couple were very indignant and lodged a complaint with the tour operator about non-Muslim drivers making the trip haram (forbidden).

Before the Haj, one of the husband's staff had been suffering from cancer. The disease was very advanced. The doctors gave up and sent him home to die. Some Christians were called and they prayed for several days.

Kuwaiti Christian flees to U S A

Robert Hussain Qamber Ali, a Christian convert from Islam who was convicted of apostasy in Kuwait earlier this year, fled to the United States August 17 and is deciding whether to seek religious asylum here. ♣

The man was healed and sent to the doctor for confirmation. The man then converted to Christianity and began to share his joy at his workplace. His employer, the ulama, dismissed him from his job.

So on their return from the Haj, the ulama and his wife sought out the man they had dismissed and told him their story.

Their former employee introduced them to a pastor, who led them to Christ. In the pastor's home, there was a picture of Christ on the wall, which the couple immediately recognized as the face of the mysterious bus driver. Thirty or forty other Muslims from their local community also became Christians because of this.

—Servents Fellowship international, August/September 1996.

Christianity growing fast, say churches

Christianity is growing in China "at breathtaking speed," the world Council of Churches said.

A delegation returning from an 11 day trip said official estimates put the number of baptised Christians at 10 million and growing, with

Christianity developing much faster than any of the other faiths.

The 13-member delegation visited Beijing as well as Henan and

Shenyang provinces.

In Henan the group found more than 600 churches and 3400 places for Christians to meet. But the trip seemed to have been stage-managed by officials from the Religious Affairs Bureau, their report revealed.

"Free conversations with church leaders and believers were virtually impossible," it said, adding that the problem of corruption appeared to be widespread.

Reports were heard of officials who demanded arbitrary fees for registration of worshippers' faith, or refused registration until "under the table" payments were made. And the visitors found that other restrictions on religion still applied.

Baptism was limited to those over 18, Sunday schools were banned, and public events like funerals were often forbidden. During the Cultural Revolution, churches were closed and worship forbidden.

China prayer requests

China has more than 5 million blind people. The Beijing School for the Blind was started by a Scottish missionary in 1874, but is now State-run. Pray that overseas Christians will make a real contribution to their education and share the Gospel with them.

The 1995 census revealed that there are now 108 million national minority people in China (9 per cent of the total population) - and an increase of 17 million since 1990. Most are unevangelised. Pray!

But the open door policy declared by China in the 1980s has given the church new opportunities, said the council, with representation of more than 300 Anglican, Protestant and other non-Catholic Christian churches from more than 100 countries.

The visit was made following an invitation to the World Council from the China Christian Council.

— China news letter May/June 1996. ♣

Pray for :

Dr. P. P Job

&

his evangelistic campaigns

13,14,15 December 1996

Ashram High School Ground,

Perumbavoor, Kerala .

7,8,9 March of 1997

Nizam College Ground ,

Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

For more details:-Ph: 0488-523048

Pray for the flourishing Korean churches in Northeast China and that they may increase their contacts with the suffering, underground church in famine-stricken North Korea.

The church in Shanghai has more than tripped in the last ten years to 127,000 baptized protestants according to official figures, meeting in 111 church buildings. Pray for Gospel outreach in China's largest and most modern city.

—Pray for China Fellowship, September 1996. ♣

News briefs from Vietnam

In July 1996, ten Christian workers of one house church group were released from detention following strong advocacy by Dr. Paul Yongi Cho, of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, with the Vietnamese embassy there.

A Christian Evangelist in Central Vietnam was harassed by being told to destroy his newly built house "because the permission papers are not in order". (A uniform, enforced building code in Vietnam does not exist!) Failure to comply, led the police to engage someone else to tear the house down, to charge the Christian evangelist for the labour costs, and fine him for not complying in time.

A pastor in Vietnam's central highlands was arrested and fined for carrying Bibles on a public road. When he showed the security police the official imprint (the government

recently allowed the United Bible Societies to sponsor a local printing of the Bible—the first permission for Christian materials since 1975), the police told him that the Bibles were only for use in church buildings and that carrying them on a public road to give or sell to someone was illegal propagation of religion.

The leader of a large house church movement was forbidden in July to continue leading a long-standing weekday session in which he taught and trained a good number of local house church leaders.

Persistent reports from various locations in Vietnam indicate continued harassment of recent converts to Christianity among tribal minorities.

This includes physical abuse of leaders, confiscation of land and fines, both cash and in kind.

—World wide Photos and Media, 16 August 1996.



Dr. Job listens Sudanese Christians who are persecuted severely



GOSSNER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM

(Registered Under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860)

Vide No. 273-J of 30-7-1921

Head Office : G.E.L. Church, Ranchi - 834 001, Bihar, India • Ph. : 311513

Fax : 91-651-200224

G. Tiru, L.L.B.
General Secretary

Most Rev. C. S. R. Topno
Moderator

Mr. U. Sanga
Treasurer

Ref. No. : **CC-21/P/268**

Date : **26-6-97**

To

The Principal,
Gossner Theological College,
Ranchi.

Sub : Activities of Rev.Y. Soreng
Librarian, Gossner Theo.College.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed please find a copy of letter received from the Secretary G.E.L.Church, Rajgangpur Congregation which speaks for itself. The matter has also been forwarded to undersigned by the Rt. Rev. Bishop, S.W. Diocese who is also the Moderator of the Church.

In this connection your attention is also drawn to this office letter No. CC-21/P/234, dtd. 5.6.97 where in you were requested to take appropriate steps to curb the doubtful integrity of such worker of your Institution and to report back to this office about the steps taken by you at the earliest which has not yet been furnished to us by you till date. The matter has also been discussed in the joint meeting of the Bishops' Council and the officers of the Central Council on 24.6.97 and the members have expressed serious concern on the deteriorating standard of discipline in the administration of the Gossner Theological College.

The matter be kindly ~~be~~ as extremely urgent and ~~serious~~ and steps taken accordingly without further delay.

Sincerely yours,

(Gerson Tifu)
General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

Copy to : Bishop, S.W.Diocese, Rajgangpur and Secretary GEL Chhurch, Rajgangpur for information.

GOSSNER THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

(Estd. 1866 Affiliated with Serampore 1949)

MAIN ROAD, RANCHI - 834001 BIHAR, INDIA



Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church

(Est. Nov. 2/1845)

No. 115/97.....

Dated.....June 22,.....19 97.

To,

Mrs. S.B. Topno,
Principal
Gossner College, Ranchi.

Dear Mrs. Topno,

This is to remind you that inspite of our repeated reminders we do not receive regular payment of building rent. Please refer to our letter No. 442/96 dated November 28, 1996 in which we have given the bill of building rent payable to Gossner Theological College for the period Covering from May 1991 to May 1996.

The total payable amount comes to Rs. 1,68,289=50

Payment received on 6 -3 -1997

(by cheque No. 152818 of
Indian Overseas Bank.

Rs. 0,10,000=00

Standing ... dues = Rs. 1,58,289=50

till May 1996.

June 96 to May 97.

Rs 25,000.00
Rs 1,83,489.50

Please treat it urgent and make immediate payment. I wonder why inspite of our repeated reminders Gossner College is violating the gentlemen agreement made between the faculties of Gossner Theological College and Gossner College in regard to payment of rent and other relationship.

Sincerely,

C. C:-

Dr. S. Kerketta, Bursar
Mr. S. Lakra, Secretary, G.B.

✓ Most Rev. C. S. R. Topno,
Moderator, Chairman,

Mr. G. Tiru, General Secretary, C. C.

(Rev. Dr. R. Dang)
Principal,

copy of Letter No. 442/96 is enclosed
herewith for information

for your information

Gossner Mission Fennstraße 31 D-12439 Berlin

To the Moderator
Bishop C.S.R. Topno
G.E.L. Church

INDIA-Ranchi 834 001

Fennstraße 31
D-12439 Berlin

Telefon
030/6317809
Telefax
030/6361198

6. Mai 1997

Liebe Kuratorinnen und Kuratoren,

das Protokoll der Sitzung vom 17. bis 19. April ist fertig und geht Ihnen hier zu.

Für diejenigen, die nicht an der Sitzung teilnehmen konnten, schicken wir den Entwurf des Jahresberichtes mit.

Für diejenigen, die sich noch nicht auf der Liste der Wiederwahl-Bereitschaft eingetragen haben, schicken wir einen Brief mit der entsprechenden Erklärung und Bitte mit.

Alle seien noch einmal daran erinnert, daß unsere Kandidatensuche für die Kuratoriumswahl bis Mitte Juni abgeschlossen sein soll. Bitte helfen Sie mit und werben Sie vor allem neue, junge Interessierte.

Für Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten wünsche ich Ihnen eine aufgeräumte festliche Stimmung! Wer predigen wird, möge dies mit Lust tun! Wer frei hat, möge mit Wonne frei sein! Wer verreist, möge den Segen Gottes mit sich führen, auf der Straße und für seine bzw ihre Gastgeber! Und wer Sorgen hat, möge gute Freunde finden, die sie ihm oder ihr erleichtert. Wir grüßen Sie ganz herzlich hier aus der grauen Fennstraße, wo es gerade grünt und donnert.

Ihr *Gottfried Kaseh*

+ Prof.



GOSSNER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM

(Registered Under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860)
Vide No. 273-J of 30-7-1921

Head Office : G.E.L. Church, Ranchi - 834 001, Bihar, India • Ph. : 311513

Ref. No. :

CC-5/6/572

Date : 26.11.96

To

The Vice-President,
Madhya Diocese,
G.E.L.Church
At P.O. Khuntitoli,
Dist. Gumla/Bihar

Reg : Other support Programme/Seminar.

Respected Sir,

Please receive a sum of Rs. 7000/= (Rupees seven thousand) only towards advance of seminar will be held at Madhya Diocese as per scheduled date. This amount is for expenditure for seminar and expenditure vautre may submit at our Central Council Ranchi.

With all good wishes,

for JMM
(Rev. J. Sanga)
Head Accountant,
G.E.L.Church.

Yours sincerely,

Gerson Tird
(Gerson Tird)
General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church

GOSSNER THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

(Estd. 1866 Affiliated with Serampore 1949)

MAIN ROAD, RANCHI - 834001 BIHAR, INDIA



Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church
(Est. Nov. 2/1845)

No..442/96.....

Dated...November.28,.....19 96.

To,

Mrs.S.B.Topno
Principal,
Gossner College, Ranchi.

Subject : - Payment of building rent.

Dear Mrs.Topno,

May I draw your attention that we are not getting regular payment of building rent because of which there is a huge amount of standing dues. We checked our files and found the following dues payable to Gossner Theological College till May 1996

Standing dues as on May 31, 1991

(Vide our letter No. 212/91
dated 27-4-1991).

... .. Rs. 1,12,689=50

Amount payable from June 1991
to May 1996 (for 5 years).

@ Rs.25,200/- yearly x 5=Rs. 1,26,000=00
Total = Rs. 2,38,689=50

Payments received from June
1991 to May 1996 are as under -

Date of receipt.	Cheque No.	Bank	Amount.
(1) 2-7-91 ...	113635 of	Allahabad Bank dated 1-7-91 (Ref. your letter No. GC-531(i)/91 dated 1-7-91)	..=Rs. 0,20,000=00
(2) 2-4-92 ...	0938623 of	Indian Overseas Bank dated 30-3-92 (Ref. your letter No. 693/92 dated 31-3-92).	=Rs. 0,10,000=00
(3) 4-12-93 ...	0547934 of	Indian Overseas Bank dated 4-12-93 (Ref. your letter 805/93/BR. dated 4-12-93)	=Rs. 0,0

GOSSNER THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

(Estd. 1866 Affiliated with Serampore 1949)

MAIN ROAD, RANCHI - 834001 BIHAR, INDIA



Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church

(Est. Nov. 2/1845)

No

Dated.....19

Page - 2 -

B/F...Rs. 30,000=00

(3) 4-12-93 Cheque No.0547934 of
Indian Overseas Bank
dated 4-12-93(Ref. Your
letter 805/93/BR dated
4 -12-93) = Rs. 20,000=00

(4) 12-5-94 Cheque No.0300777 of
Indian Overseas Bank & Ref:
dated 5-5-94 (Ref. Your
letter No.903(i)/94
dated 10-5-94) ... Rs. 3,400=00

(5) 1-7-94 Cheque No.0300794 of
Indian Overseas Bank
dated 23-6-94 (Ref: Your
letter No.939(i)/94
dated 28-4-94). ... Rs. 1,700=00

(6) 21-2-95 Cheque No. 265847 of
Indian Overseas Bank
dated 17-2-95 (Ref: Your
letter No.10435/95
dated 20-2-95) ... Rs. 13,600=00

(7) 23-3-96 Cheque NO. 3519766 of
Bank of India dated 28-2-96
(Ref:- Your letter No.257/96
dated 2-3-96) Rs. 1,700=00

=====
Total = Rs. 70,400=00

Total amount payable till
May 1996 ... Rs. 2,38,689=50

Total amount received till
then (May 1996) Rs. 70,400=00

=====
Dues = Rs. 1,68,289=50

contd. p- 3 -

GOSSNER THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

(Estd. 1866 Affiliated with Serampore 1949)

MAIN ROAD, RANCHI - 834001 BIHAR, INDIA



Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church
(Est. Nov. 2/1845)

No.

Dated19

Page - 3 -

NOTE :-

Please note that the monthly rent is Rs.2100/- and not Rs.1700/- as you have been paying so far inspite of our repeated reminders. From October 1988 we have given you additional rooms for your office purpose. Rent of these rooms is Rs.400/- per month which you have to pay with effect from November 1988 (Vide our letter No. 477/88 dated December 8, 1988).

I request you to kindly make regular payment of rent.

Sincerely,

c.c: Mr.S.Kerketta
Bursar, Gossner College

(Rev.Dr.R.Dang)
Principal,

Mr.S.Lakra, Secretary
G.B., Gossner College.

- 2 -

GOSSNER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM

Bef.No. CC- 87/578

Dated : 29.11.96

To

The Bishops,

- North East Diocese,
- North West Diocese,
- South East Diocese and
- Vice President,
- South West Diocese,
- Madhya (Central) Diocese,
- Dean, CRC
- Principal, Gossner Theological College,
- Director, H.R.D.C.

Sub : Revised Pay Scale, 1996.

Dear Sirs,

As decided in the Joint Committee of Bishops' Council and the Officers of the Central Council, the Revised Pay Scale, 1996 as reviewed and modified by the above joint committee after receiving the comments from different Dioceses of the Church is being endorsed to Central Council of the Church for consideration and finalisation in its next meeting.

However in view of the fact that the Revised Pay Scale is already over due in the Church and also in view of other important factors necessitating the matter to be taken up as a most urgent one, it was unanimously decided to grant an INTERIM RELIEF to all the regular workers of the Church as detailed below :

01: Date of effectiveness : It is unanimously decided that the date of making the Revised Pay-Scale effective be 1st April, 1996 on Principle. The Diocese and the CRC shall, however, be free to decide and fix the actual date from which the Revised pay scale should be made effective in their respective Dioceses/Unit but the date if re fixed by the Dioceses/CRC shall not be earlier than 1.4.96.

02: Endorsement to Central Council : It was unanimously resolved that the Revised Pay Scale, 1996, of the Church as recommended by the commission and reviewed and modified by the Joint Committee of Bishops' Council and the Officers of the Central Council be placed in the next Central Council meeting for final consideration and approval.

Contd/2..

in their
units/

03 : Interim Relief : In view of the decision to forward the Revised Pay Scale recommendation to Central Council for finalisation and the reality of enormously rising trend in the price index of the essential commodities on the one hand and because of the fact that the revision of existing Pay Scale of the Church is already over due, it was agreed that some provisions be made for immediate benefit or relief to the paid Church workers. It was, therefore, unanimously decided to grant an INTERIM RELIEF to the regular Church employees (workers) @ 10% of their basic on the existing pay Scale. It was also decided that this relief of 10% on the basic shall be payable per month with effect from April, 1996 onward which shall be adjusted to his/her pay after finalisation of the scale of Pay by the Central Council. The Dioceses/CRC shall however, be free to decide whether to accept 1.4.96 as the date of its effectiveness for the payment of interim relief/or to fix another subsequent date/month as may be convenient for the Diocese/Dioceses of the C.R.C.

04 : Quantum of Interim Relief in some specified categories :

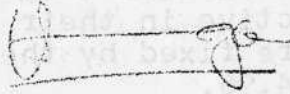
The joint committee of Bishops' Council and the Officers of the Central Council unanimously decided to approve the quantum of Interim Relief to some specified categories of incumbents as below :

(i) All officers on elective posts (category IV) shall be entitled to get interim relief of 10% on the basic pay (i.e. excluding their officiating special allowance as in the case of Moderator, Bishops' Dean) of their respective Original Pay Scale payable to them as pastors as at 1.4.96 onward.


(ii) It was unanimously decided that the General Secretary of the Church whose monthly fixed emolument has been reviewed and fixed at Rs. 4750/= (to be finalised and approved by the Central Council) shall also be given an Interim relief.

You are, therefore, requested to kindly take early necessary steps for release of the Interim Relief as allowed by the joint committee of Bishops Council and Officers of the Central Council to all regular Church workers under your Diocese/CRC by considering the points left over to you for finalisation at your discretion.

With kind regard and prayerful wishes for the Advent season.


(Mr. U. Sanga)
Treasurer,
G.E.L. Church.
G. E. L. CHURCH,
RANCHI

Sincerely yours,


(Gerson Tiru)
General Secretary,
G.E.L. Church.
GENERAL SECRETARY
G.E.L. Church in Chotanagpur
And Assam
RANCHI, BIHAR

आर० पी०- 54 / R. P.-54

प्राप्ति-स्वीकृति (रसीद) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

* एक रजिस्ट्री
बीमा पत्र/पोस्टकार्ड/पैकेट/पार्सल प्राप्त हुआ

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Addressed to (name)

Elisabeth Pradhan
C/o. Chittaranjan Pradhan
Dolanand Sahi P.O. Deogarh
Dist-Deogarh / Orissa
Pin - 768108

क्रमांक

No.

433/
9/6/19

† बीमे का मूल्य रूपयों में

† Insured for Rupees

वितरण की तारीख

Date of delivery

... 199

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DEPARTMENT OF POSTS—INDIA

भेजने वाले का पता/ Sender's address

तारीख मोहर



Date-stamp

MOST Rev. C.S.R. Topno

GEL Church Main Road

Ranchi - 834001

प्रमाण भुवनेश्वर/ MPP. BBSR. P. O. No. - 7/92-93, 1, 10, 70, 000 LOOSE

RFD/43/PPP/92-93 Dt. 1.4.92

16/6/92

G.E.L.CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:NO.CC- 49/284

Dated :8.7.97

To

All Parish Chairpersons,
G.E.L.Church in Chotanagpur & Assam.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Central Council Office
in the precious name of Lord Jesus.

In continuation of this Office letter
No. CC-33/187 dtd. 10-5-97 which contained the recommendations
of the Church Ministerium as approved by the Central Council
held on 15-18th March, 1997 we forwarding below an extract from
the minutes of the above meeting of Central Council for your
information and implementation.

"Item No. 07 : Information on life and work in Dioceses: From
the report of the Bishop of N.E.Diocese the matter relating
to pastoral works continued to be rendered by suspended Pastors
and the situation created by such pastoral works was taken
up for consideration. After some discussions it was decided
that pastors/workers of other Dioceses whether under suspension
or not should not be allowed to take up such works or programmes
in other Dioceses which would encourage the suspended pastors/
workers of that Diocese in their divisive activities".

The matter be kindly considered extremely
urgent and strict vigilance be maintained in this regard.

With prayerful wishes for unity and integrity
of the Church.

Sincerely yours,


General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

Copy to :

- = All Bishops, G.E.L.Church,
- = Dean, CRC, Ranchi.
- = Director, H.R.D.C., Ranchi
- = Principal, Gossner Theological College,
Ranchi.

APPROVAL SLIP/ESTIMATE

Sl. No. 132

Date... 2/1/7...

K. 55

[illegible]

Annapurna Duplicators & Stationers
(Manufacturers, Stationers & Offset Printers)
5, MAIN ROAD, RANCHI - 834 001

311057

25/11/2019

21/3/97

Gossmer Theological College
Campus, Main Road,
Ranchi- 834001.
May 16, 1997.

To,
Rt. Rev. C.S.R. Topno
Moderator GEL Church and
Chairman, Governing Body
Gossmer College, Ranchi.

Sir,

I want to remind ourselves of a very relevant remark made by Dr. Mani Jacob, General Secretary AIACHE on the New Building Inauguration Day and the Silver Jubilee celebration of Gossmer College, Ranchi. He said, "For the best use of the new facilities of Gossmer College, the College should work out a ten years academic plans for this College." As the founder Principal of this College, this remark of a very much concerned person for the future growth of this college, has remained in my mind for many days and it still hounds my mind again and again. The vision for the next ten years academic development of the College needs to be worked out. Who will initiate this programme or process? I pondered over it for quite sometimes and finally decided to write to you about it. The Governing Body with the Principal of the College is the right authority to move this matter. There will be many persons of good will who will be prepared to help us in this matter. Dr. Mani Jacob will surely be one of the best persons in realising this idea. I will be ready to contribute my mite in this matter, if wanted.

May I, therefore, request you ^{as} ~~and~~ the ^{Chairman} ~~Chairman~~ of the G.B. of College to kindly move this matter at earliest convenience. I will remain ever grateful to you for taking pains in initiating this process. If you want me to discuss this matter with you and the Principal I would be most pleased to offer my self for the same.

With Greetings and good wishes for your ministry in the Church and society,

Sincerely Yours

Wm 2
16/5/97
Rt. Rev. Dr. Nirmal Minz
Founder Principal
Gossmer College

CC: 1. Dr. K. Rajaratnam
Building Committee, Chairman
2. Mrs. S.B. Topno
Principal, Gossmer College

Rt Rev. C. S. R. Topno
Moderator
G. E. L. Church
Ranchi

CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE
G. E. L. CHURCH, RANCHI



GOSPEL FOR ASIA

P.O.Box 4, Tiruvalla - 689 105

Kerala, India

To

REV. C.S.R. TOPNO
THE UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
- CHURCH

P RAMUK ADHYAKSH GELC GROSSNER -
- EVANGELICALCHURCH.COM

RANCHI, MAIN RD 834001

BIHAR





GOSPEL FOR ASIA

June 18, 1997

THE REV. C S R TOPNO
THE UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
PRAMUK ADHYAKSH GELC GOSSNER EVANGELICAL CHUR.COMP-
RANCHI, - MAIN RD. 834001
BIHAR

Dear co-labourer in Christ,

Greetings in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am re-sending the enclosed letter of invitation from Dr.K.P.Yohanan just incase you did not get the first one.

I join with Dr.K.P.Yohanan in inviting you to a historic conference on the theme *TRAINING WITH THE END IN MIND*. About three hundred Theologians and Mission Leaders from all over India will be getting together from 16th to 21st December 1997 at Tiruvalla, Kerala.

We shall be very happy to have you come especially because we do value the impact of your ministry on the efforts being made for the kingdom.

With much prayer and regards,

Yours in His service,

Ebenezer Samuel
Conference Coordinator.

Encl: as above



GOSPEL FOR ASIA

June 20 1997

Rev. C S R Topno
The United Evangelical Lutheran Church
Pramuk adhyaksh Gelk Gossner
Evangelical Church Comp.
Ranchi Main rd. - 834001

Dear Rev. Topno,

Greetings to you in Jesus' precious name! This letter is regarding an important meeting that will take place from December 16th evening to December 20th morning, this year.

You are one of the three hundred delegates selected from a National level. Please read this letter carefully and respond as soon as possible.

We are privileged to live in India at a crucial period of unprecedented evangelistic explosion, with the church growing at a phenomenal level. However some of the leaders have been concerned about the lack of adequate Biblical theological content in a lot of missionary training programs.

There is also a deficiency of missionary zeal in some major theological training programs. Perhaps 95% or more of the current theological graduates from established training institutions are not destined for mission fields for evangelism and church planting among the unreached villages/people groups.

Some how there seems to be a chasm between training institutions, missionary practitioners and the local church.

These concerns were discussed by Bro. Ebenezer Sundar Raj (IMA), Br. Patrik Joshua (FMPB), Br. Sam Dharam (YWAM), Dr. T. C. George (AG), Dr. Narendra John (ATA), Dr. Idicheria Ninan (ICPF), Dr. K. P. Yohannan (GFA), Rev. Joy Punnoose (GFA) and Rev. Samuel Mathew (GFABS) who met at GFA Headquarters, Tiruvalla on 23rd March, 1997.

The Missionary challenges of India require that there be a *paradigm shift* in our training agenda - towards a vision for **TRAINING WITH THE END IN MIND**. There is an urgent need for bringing the key mission strategists and leaders along with the theological educators so as to bring about a more vital partnership between

P.O. Box 4, Manjadi-689 105, Thiruvalla, Kerala State, India.

Phone. Cable: Gospel-689 105.



GOSPEL FOR ASIA

:page 2:

the two. Therefore it was resolved to convene a conference of about 300 *key church leaders, mission leaders, and theological educators* from December 16 to 20, 1997 at Gospel for Asia Biblical Seminary, Tiruvalla, Kerala State, India.

The following have consented to be the convenors of the conference: Dr. Saphir Athyal - World Vision International, Ebenezer Sundar Raj - IMA, Dr. Ken Gnanakan - ATA; Patrik Joshua - FMPB; C.B. Samuel - EFICOR; Dr. Graham Houghton - SAIACS; Dr. T.C. George - AG South India; Dr. K.P. Yohannan - GFA.

If you are interested to send one of your leaders, please let us know his/her name and designation so we can send a separate invitation. Please confirm your availability using the enclosed form right away. You may reply via fax also. Our fax Nos. 0473-630793/630273/630672 or you may call over telephone to our Nos. 0473-630654/ 630771/626942.

Looking forward to your positive response.

Yours for His Kingdom's sake,

K.P. Yohannan

P.S. If for some reason you can not come to this Conference, please indicate that on the form and send it to us so that we can make space for others.

P.O. Box 4, Manjadi-689 105, Thiruvalla, Kerala State, India.

Phone:

Cable: Gospel-689 105.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION FORM

Training with the End in mind

A national conference for key theologians and mission leaders on fulfilling the Great Commission 16 - 21 December 1997

P O Box : 4, Manjadi, Tiruvalla, Kerala - 689 105

Your Name :

[illegible]

Address :

[illegible]

Name of Church/Organization/Bible College/Ministry

[illegible]

Your office address with phone & fax No.

[illegible]

Your designation : _____

Main areas of ministry you are directly involved in : _____

Travel :

Date of your arrival : _____ Expected Time of arrival : _____

Mode of travel : _____

Note : There will be Conference Reception Booths at the Tiruvalla Railway Station/State Transport Bus stand. Conveyance to Conference venue will be available.

Return Journey :

It is safe to book your return ticket right from where you are. In case it is not possible to do so please let us have all the needed information at least 60 days in advance.

Date of travel : _____ From _____ To _____

Class _____ Your age _____

Note : Although we encourage all the participants to fully take care of their travel expenses, we are willing to provide II class two-way travel fare (to and from your ministry base) to any participant who makes a request at the time of returning this form to us.

Accommodation :

Free Accommodation on a twin sharing basis in the seminary hostel.

Diet :

Indian/ Any special need : _____

About your ministry :

We desire to have the following information about your ministry if you do not mind. This is completely optional.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Any printed brochure | 2. Any sample copy of your magazine |
| 3. A brief note on your ministry | 4. Curriculum of your Bible College/Institution/Short term training program. |

Please Note :

We request you to plan to stay through the end of the Conference.

The temperature in Kerala is 25°C in December.

Your Comments/Suggestions :

The last date for confirming your availability is 10th October. Please send in the Conference Information Form as early as possible.

G.E.L. CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR AND ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:CC-47/267

Dated : 25.6.97

To

All members of the G.E.L.Church
Ministerium.

Sub : Ordination of Pastor.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Central Council
Office.

As recommended by the Council of Ranchi Congregation of the G.E.L.Church and approved by the Bishops Council held on 9.5.97 the under mentioned Candidate has been accepted to be ordained as Pastor (Dharmopadeshak) of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam on 24.8.97.

Name of the Candidate :-

Candt. Simant Tirkey
S/O G.E.L.Church Hd.Qtr. Congregation
Central Council Premises,
Main Road, Ranchi

Members of the G.E.L.Church Ministerium are, therefore, individually requested to kindly submit to this Office in writing if they have any reservation against the ordination of the above Candidate within 31st July, 1997. Silence on the part of the members of the Church Ministerium in this regard shall be considered as approval to the decision of the Bishops' Council to ordain the above named Candidate.

Sincerely yours,

B. Lakra

(Rt.Rev. B. Lakra)
Secretary, Church Ministerium.

Forwarded to :

Rev. J. Samad
..... N.W. Diocese

G.E.L. CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:CC-49/263

Dated: 23.6.1997

To

All Pastorate Council Chairpersons,
G.E.L.Church in Chotanagpur and Assam.

Sub : Financial support to Gossner Theological
College Ranchi and Gossner Bible and
Buniyadi Training School, Govindpur.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the G.E.L.Church Central
Council Office in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May we draw your kind attention to Item No.1
of the Recommendations of the G.E.L.Church Ministerium held on
March 14, 1997 as approved and circulated by the Central Council
vide our letter No. CC-33/187, dtd. 10.5.97. In this connection
this is to add here as below :-

Gossner Theological College Ranchi and the
Gossner Bible and Buniyadi Training School, Govindpur are the
only hope of the G.E.L.Church for future leadership development
in the Church. We need not perhaps mention that these are the
only two Institutions of the Church where leaders and workers
of all categories of Pastoral ministries, right from the grass
root levels are being trained up to serve and minister the Church.
Financial support and development of these two noble Institutions
should therefore, be the primary concern for all members and
workers of the G.E.L.Church in Chotanagpur and Assam. When these
two Institutions occupy such a high and important position and
play such vital role in the Church life, worship and our
spiritual growth, it is very discouraging to ~~not~~ the lack of
serious concern for these Institution. The Church Ministerium
has, however, lately expressed its concern for these two Ins-
titution and has also recommended that all the Pastorates of
the G.E.L.Church should contribute their financial support
at the minimum rate of Rs. 300/= per annum (even more may be
remitted). This will not only help the Institutions regenerate them-
selves but also open out a scope for the mass people of the Church
to involve themselves in this great task.

You are therefore very earnestly requested to
send your generous contributions as decided by the Church
Ministerium and the Central Council and thereby help this
Office to overcome the present financial crisis. (We have not
been able to pay the salaries the staff of these two Institutions
since April, 1997 which comes to around Rs. 45000/= per month).

With prayerful wishes and regard.

Sincerely yours,

Copy to : All Bishops, G.E.L.Church,
Dean, C.R.C. Ranchi.

(Gerson, 23/6/97)
General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.



To
Rev. J. Samad
G.E.L Church Bihatotamd
P.O. Bihatotamd - 825314
Dist. Bazaribagly
Bihar

CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE
G. E. L. CHURCH, RANCHI

only hope of the G.E.L. Church for future leadership development in the Church. We need not perhaps mention that these are the only two institutions of the Church where leaders and workers of all categories of pastoral ministries, right from the grass root levels are being trained up to serve and minister the Church. Financial support and development of these two noble institutions should therefore be the primary concern for all members and workers of the G.E.L. Church in Chotanagpur and Assam. When these two institutions occupy such a high and important position and play such a vital role in the Church life, worship and our spiritual growth, it is very disconcerting to note the lack of financial concern for these institutions. The Church Ministerium has, however, lately expressed its concern for these two institutions and has also recommended that all the pastors of the G.E.L. Church should contribute their financial support at the minimum rate of Rs. 300/- per annum (even more may be remitted). This will not only help the institutions regenerate themselves but also open out a scope for the mass people of the Church to involve themselves in this great task.

You are therefore very earnestly requested to send your generous contributions as decided by the Church Ministerium and the Central Council and thereby help this Office to overcome the present financial crisis. We have not been able to pay the salaries the staff of these two institutions since April, 1997 which comes to around Rs. 45000/- per month. With grateful wishes and regard.

Sincerely yours,

(Signature)
General Secretary,
G.E.L. Church

Copy to: All Bishops, G.E.L. Church,
Dean, C.R.C. Ranchi.

G.E.L. CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref: CC-49/2003

13.08.2003



~~Reddelivered to Sisi~~ ~~Burra~~

Received
13/8/03

Rev. William Beek
G.E.L Church Siyang
P.O Bhamo ~~Siyang~~
Dt Gumla 835203
(Bihar)

CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE
G. E. L. CHURCH, TALCHI

Gospel Bible and Baniyad Training School, Government are the only hope of the G.E.L. Church for future leadership development in the Church. We need not perhaps mention that these are the only two institutions of the Church where leaders and workers of all categories of pastoral ministries, right from the grass root level are being trained up to serve and minister the Church. Financial support and development of these two noble institutions should therefore be the primary concern for all members and workers of the G.E.L. Church in Chotanagpur and Assam. When these two institutions occupy such a high and important position and play such vital role in the Church life, worship and our spiritual growth, it is very disappointing to not the lack of serious concern for these institutions. The Church Ministerium has, however, clearly expressed its concern for these two institutions and has also recommended that all the pastors of the G.E.L. Church should contribute their financial support at the minimum rate of Rs. 100/- per annum even more may be expected. This will not only help the institutions regenerate themselves but also open out a scope for the mass people of the Church to involve themselves in this great task.

You are therefore very earnestly requested to send your generous contribution as decided by the Church Ministerium and the Central Council and thereby help this Office to overcome the present financial crisis. (We have not been able to pay the salaries of the staff of these two institutions since April, 1997 which comes to about Rs. 45000/- per month). With prayerful wishes and regard.

Sincerely yours,
General Secretary
G.E.L. Church

Copy to: All Bishops G.E.L. Church,
Dean, C.R.C. Ranchi.

G.E.L. CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR AND ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:CC-47/267

Dated : 25.6.97

To

All members of the G.E.L.Church
Ministerium.

Sub : Ordination of Pastor.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Central Council
Office.

As recommended by the Council of Ranchi Congregation of the G.E.L.Church and approved by the Bishops Council held on 9.5.97 the under mentioned Candidate has been accepted to be ordained as Pastor (Dharmopadeshak) of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam on 24.8.97.

Name of the Candidate :-

Candt. Simant Tirkey
S/O G.E.L.Church Hd.Qtr. Congregation
Central Council Premises,
Main Road, Ranchi

Members of the G.E.L.Church Ministerium are, therefore, individually requested to kindly submit to this Office in writing if they have any reservation against the ordination of the above Candidate within 31st July, 1997. Silence on the part of the members of the Church Ministerium in this regard shall be considered as approval to the decision of the Bishops' Council to ordain the above named Candidate.

Sincerely yours,

(Rt.Rev. B. Lakra)
Secretary, Church Ministerium.

Forwarded to :

Rev. William Beck

N. W. Diocese

G.E.L.CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR & ASSAM
CENTRAL COUNCIL OFFICE

Ref:NO.CC- 49/284

Dated :8.7.97

To

All Parish Chairpersons,
G.E.L.Church in Chotanagpur & Assam.

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Central Council Office
in the precious name of Lord Jesus.

In continuation of this Office letter
No. CC-33/187 dtd. 10-5-97 which contained the recommendations
of the Church Ministerium as approved by the Central Council
held on 15-18th March, 1997 we forwarding below an extract from
the minutes of the above meeting of Central Council for your
information and implementation.

"Item No. 07 : Information on life and work in Dioceses: From
the report of the Bishop of N.E. Diocese the matter relating
to pastoral works continued to be rendered by suspended Pastors
and the situation created by such pastoral works was taken
up for consideration. After some discussions it was decided
that pastors/workers of other Dioceses whether under suspension
or not should not be allowed to take up such works or programmes
in other Dioceses which would encourage the suspended pastors/
workers of that Diocese in their divisive activities".

The matter be kindly considered extremely
urgent and strict vigilance be maintained in this regard.

With prayerful wishes for unity and integrity
of the Church.

Sincerely yours,


General Secretary,
G.E.L.Church.

Copy to :

- = All Bishops, G.E.L.Church,
- = Dean, CRC, Ranchi.
- = Director, H.R.D.C., Ranchi
- = Principal, Gossner Theological College,
Ranchi.