

Today in Juhanon Mar Thoma Hall

9.30- Moderator's Report  
General Secretary's Report  
11.30-Thematic Presentation

Dr. Judy Berinai,  
Rev. Dr. Ferdinand Anno



Asian Ecumenical Festival

Saturday 30 September

Mammen Mappila Hall

03.00 pm Cultural Presentations

05.00 pm Public meeting

Chief Guest Mr. Pinarai Vijayan  
Chief Minister of Kerala



# CCANEWS

VAARTHA വാർത്ത 29 SEPT.

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY KOTTAYAM | 28 SEPTEMBER - 03 OCTOBER 2023

## Festival of Ecumenism in Kottayam

September 28, 2023 will go down in the history of the Indian town of Kottayam, Kerala, as a day of Christian awakening and revival, in the true spirit of ecumenism.

500 delegates from Asian countries and Australia and New Zealand are in attendance at the CCA 15th General Assembly Meet.

The main venues, Jerusalem Marthoma Church and The Mammen Mappilai Hall has a very festive look with delegates milling around the campus, exchanging pleasantries and re-creating old friendships.

The event began at 3 pm at the Mammen Mappilai hall with an Opening Worship graced by bishops, clergies and the public of Kottayam and beyond. The Choir's melodious rendering set up an atmosphere of hope and



faith. The meeting was well attended. The foreign delegates were full of praise for the efficient way in which the event was organized. Many delegates complimented on the delicious food. The delegates were happy to meet people of different cultures.

Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay inaugurated the Assembly. Dr. Mathews George Chunakkara welcomed the gathering. Bishop Dhilloraj Canagasabay presided. His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III Catholicos, Dr. Theodosius Marthoma Metropolita, Joseph Mar Gregorios, Rt. Rev. Dr. K. Reuben Mark, Cyril Mar Baselios, Abraham Mar Paulose, Dr. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, Rev. Asir Ebenezer, Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza spoke.

Dr. Jerry Pillay General Secretary WCC lighting the lamp



Inaugural Session: Rev. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary, NCCI, Rev. Dr. Abraham Mathew, Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza, Rev. Dr. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara General Secretary CCA, Dr. Jerry Pillay, Bishop Dhilloraj Canagasabay Acting Moderator, H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III Catholicos, Augustine Karmagar, Dr. Theodosius Marthoma Metropolita, Rt Rev. Dr. Ruben Mark, Joseph Mar Gregorios, Dr. Abraham Mar Paulose, Cyril Mar Baselios on the dias.



Dr. Jerry Pillai addressing The General assembly at Mammen Mappila Hall.

## Dr. Jerry Pillai presented the assembly theme

Rev. Dr. Prof. Jerry Pillai delivered the thematic presentation after the inaugural session of the 15th General Assembly Meet of the Christian Conference of Asia being held at Kottayam.

Dr. Pillai's presentation was based on the theme of the Conference—God, Renew us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation.

Dr. Pillai commenced his speech by saying that we are called to respond to the ecological crisis now engulfing the world as never before. He dwelt at length on the challenges facing humanity. The words Renew and Restore implies that we have lost something vital. The church is in dire need for reformation. The church is the microcosm of the world.

Creation is an expression of God's Divine Grace. The planet has been created by God to be shared by all. As God loves and cares for all creation we too must love and care His creation. Human beings are stewards of everything God has conferred on us.

Dr. Pillai's powerful message reminded us of the cardinal principle of Christian faith that God's love extends to all creatures in the Oikumene (inhabited earth).



LIM Su Hong, the Associate Editor of Taiwan's New Messenger Magazine, is in attendance as a voting delegate for the General Assembly CCA's Prayer service. He belongs to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. He arrived at Kottayam on Monday 25, September. He loves the delicious food of Kerala and he is happy to meet people from

different cultures. He was astounded by the vibrant attire Keralites wore. He says Kerala has a greater distance to travel than Taiwan because Taiwan is an Island nation.

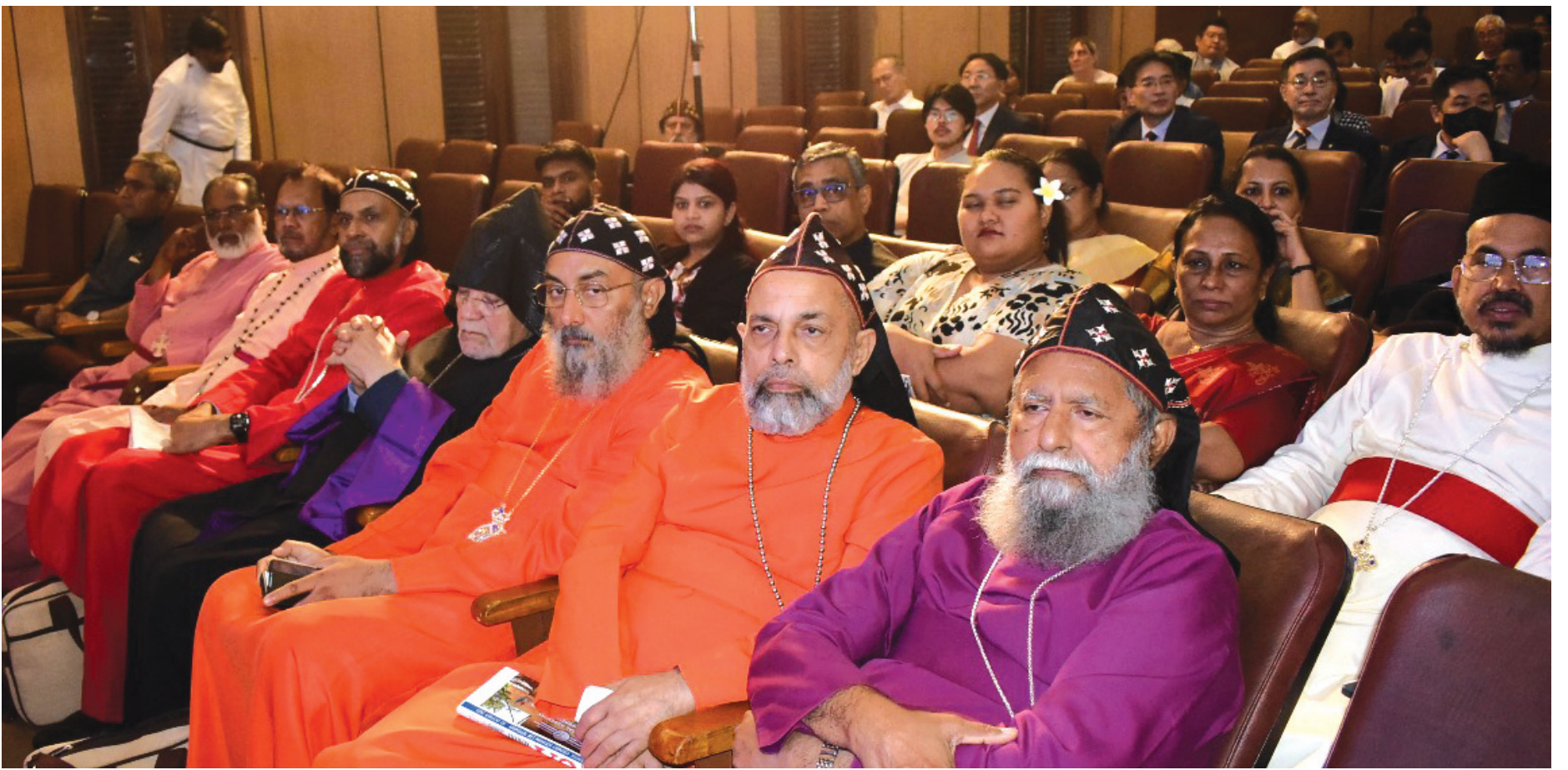


Hyun Ju Leey from South Korea, the Choir Director and Worship Committee Member flaunting a modern version of the Korean traditional outfit, Hanbok.



CCA welcomes the Assembly delegates with the melodious beats of the Chenda, a cylindrical percussion instrument from the state of Kerala.

# Inagural Session...Audience





Aryananda R A, Abhina S Sajeesh and Ananthalakshmi A, students of BCM College performing Mohiniyattam Dance for Thanksgiving Praises for God's Creation

# The Spirit of Ecumenism in the Opening Worship

The first day of CCA General Assembly Meet perches as the leading light for the further events/days to follow. Remembering the mercies granted by God and celebration of people of faith, the opening worship united all people in the spirit of ecumenism.

With the echoes of drum rolls, a procession displaying the diversity and symbolic representations of light, cross and scripture- the

worship began. The congregation tuned to the symphony sung by the choir as they joined voices proclaiming "we are the household gathered round Jesus, sharing one table, one cup and one light".

The elements of worship were beautifully incorporated with dance and songs to raise praise and prayers to God. The reading of the scripture was taken from Romans 8:18-28.

Rev. Idan Topno, an ordained clergy of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chotanagpur and Assam & a theological professor from Jharkhand, India, shared the message of renewal and restoration of creation inducing justice for all creation. She highlighted the forestories of the Adivasi community facing manifold issues concerning Jal, Jungle and Jamin literally translating to Wa-

ter, Forest and Land. She used the scripture to press upon the spiritual bankruptcy and lack of life in abundance. Yet, highlighting the remnants of unspoken harmony between humans and environment.

This ecumenical worship set the tone for the Assembly hoisting the flag of justice and awakening that leads to restoration and renewal of all.



Rev. Idan Topno, an ordained clergy of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jharkhand, India, delivering Homily at the opening worship.



Dr. Yakob Mar Ireneoas Leading the opening worship.



Ms Agnes Souisa, an ordained pastor of The Protestant Church in Maluku lighting the lamp during opening worship.



Mr. Reuben, conducting the choir in singing Rab Ki Howe Sana Hamesha, an old Hindi Hymn meaning Blest Be God, Praised Forever.



Prayer of Confession in the opening worship

# Churcha

## Sessions on Fifteen Topics



In its God-guided passage over time, the CCA has been able to focus on areas of concerns affecting the society from time to time in various ways. The theme of the 15th General assembly in Kottayam is “ God Renew us in Your Spirit and Restore Creation”

A very special feature of the present General Assembly is a session by name Churcha. The word Churcha in Malayalam and certain other local languages mean discussion. The word also alludes to conversation, sharing of thoughts, opinion, concerns and so on. It is a deliberative and discursive session which provides a genuine space for theological deliberations and discussions on emerging theological , socio-political and other concerns.

Fifteen topics have been identified by the CCA to be taken up in the Churcha sessions. At the time of registration for participation in the Assembly, all delegates were asked to select any three of the fifteen topics which were close to their hearts, and in which their expertise and interest lay. In this way it was possible to bring these 15 topics in to thought process of all delegates and make them specially ponder over three areas in the list.

Another important decision of the CCA leadership was to ensure the participation of Seminary students from the four Theological Seminaries in Kerala ; the Orthodox, Jacobite, Mar Thoma and KUT Seminaries. Twenty students each have been recommended by the four Seminaries for participation in the programme. This makes possible for the young students to be aware of developments in areas of concern in our society and to be vigilant about these.

The Churcha sessions are therefore attended by the delegates to the General Assembly as well as selected Seminary students. Since the topics of the Churcha sessions were announced sufficiently early and made known to the participants, it becomes possible for them to prepare for these discussions earnestly.

The Churcha Sessions are being held on October 1st Sunday afternoon in three different venues in Kottayam viz. The Orthodox Theological seminary, Mar Thoma Theological Seminary and CMS College Kottayam. Eminent Theologians have been assigned to lead each session.

The fifteen topics selected for the Churcha Session are:

1. Responsible Stewardship and Participation in God’s Mission of Renewal and Restoration of Creation  
@ CMS College Great Hall
2. Ecospirituality and Liturgical Innovations : An Asian Theological Appraisal.  
@ Mar Thoma Seminary
3. Climate Crisis Mitigation and Adaptation : Environmental Sus-

tainability in God’s Oikos.

@ CMS College, Theatre

4. Eco-anxiety : Churches in Asia Engaging to Address Health and Healing.

@Orthodox Seminary

5. Dwelling in Harmony with Creation : Indigenous People in Asia

@ Orthodox Seminary

6. Welcoming the Stranger : Displacement, Statelessness, and Trafficking in Persons.

@ Mar Thoma Seminary

7. God’s Design for Life and Human Dignity : Practical Application of Bioethics.

@ CMS College, E-Learning Centre

8. Resilience of Ecosystems for the Sustainability of Creation : Towards Life-giving Agriculture in Asia.

@ Orthodox Seminary

9. Restoring Balance for Gender Justice and Environmental Healing.

@ CMS College, Malayalam Dept.

10. Theology of Fullness of Life and Restoration of Creation : Social and Ecological Ethics for Fullness of Life and Restoration of Creation.

@ Mar Thoma Seminary

11. Holistic Approach to Economy, Ecology, and Oikoumene in the Asian Context.

@ CMS College, Joseph Fenn Hall

12. New Social Environment Ethics for Restoring Ecological Equilibrium.

@ Orthodox Seminary

13. Reconciliation with God’s Creation for Moving Beyond Conflicts and Building Peace.

@ Mar Thoma Seminary

14. Challenges of the Digital World and Pitfalls of Technological Advancement.

@ Orthodox Seminary

15. Understanding Ekklesia and Diakonia : Supremacy and Self-referentiality, or Creative Collaboration ?

@ Mar Thoma Seminary.

Let us all hope and pray that the Churcha Sessions be a source of abundant Blessings, a venue for the exchange of ideas and experience, where new ideas evolve and help us all to commit ourselves with renewed strength and vigour for the Glory of God and the betterment of Humanity.

**Dr. Joseph P. Varghese** □



Mark and Allison, Australian Delegation to CCA General Assembly at the Jerusalem Mar Thoma Church, Kottayam.



Ngodup Dorji, Buddhist from Bhutan. He is a member of AIN (Asian Interfaith Network) and is a delegate for the CCA General Assembly. His message to the young generation is that being a good human being is the basis of a better life.



# Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly



From left to right Dr. Jaisy karingattil, Arceli Bile, philippines (CCA Staff ), Rev. Dr. Aye Nive, Myanmar, Dayabhai, Social Activist, Hennette Hutabarat Lebang , Indonesia, (WCC Asia President) Supapern Yarnasarn, Thailand ( CCA Executive Member), Rev. Jyoti Singh, NCCI Executive Secretary for women

Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly held from September 26 to 28 at the Chaithanya Pastoral Centre in Kottayam, marked a resounding success. With the theme, "Asian Ecumenical Women: Journeying Toward the Renewal and Restoration of God's Creation," the event brought together women from diverse backgrounds, inspiring unity and purpose. The assembly was an enlightening experience, thanks to the contributions of esteemed resource persons who shared their knowledge and insights:

WCC Asia President Hennette Hutabarat Lebang delivered a powerful keynote address on women and climate change, resonating deeply with attendees. Derlene Marques Carmanzana (GBCM Asia Pacific Region) presented on Climate and Gender Justice, setting the foundation for meaningful discussions.

Rev. Jyoti Singh, NCCI, presented a paper addressing the challenges faced by women and girls in India in the face of climate emergencies. Social activist

Dayabhai left an indelible mark with her powerful drama highlighting the Endosulfan issues in Kerala, drawing attention to crucial social and environmental matters. Rev. Dr. Awe Nye (Myanmar Baptist Convention) and Dr. Vedakani Vedanayakam (Church of South India) nurtured spiritual growth through profound Bible studies.

Supapern Yarnasarn, a CCA Executive member from Thailand extended greetings from CCA emphasising the importance of collaboration and unity.

The assembly also featured a panel discussion on "Sharing Best Practices for Climate Justice Advocacy," led by Monisha Sarkar (YWCA Bangladesh), HluFang Chung (KCEMSIC), and Dr. Gaymanodan (NCC Philippines), further solidifying the commitment to climate justice. A delightful cultural night organized by Asian women added a touch of celebration to the assembly, showcasing the rich diversity of the region's cultures.

Distinguished leaders like Dr. Mathews George chunakara, CCA General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Asir Ebanazer, NCCI General Secretary, and Rev. Dr. Abraham

Mathew, Coordinator of CCA General Assembly, Dr. Jaisy Karingattil, Co-ordinator Asia Ecumenical women assembly delivered speeches aligning with the assembly's theme. Arceli Bile received special mention for her exceptional organizational skills, ensuring the smooth execution of assembly activities.

The assembly also featured a panel discussion on "Sharing Best Practices for Climate Justice Advocacy," led by Monisha Sarkar (YWCA Bangladesh), HluFang Chung (KCEMSIC), and Dr. Gaymanodan (NCC Philippines), further solidifying the commitment to climate justice. A delightful cultural night organized by Asian women added a touch of celebration to the assembly, showcasing the rich diversity of the region's cultures.

The presence of esteemed ecumenical leaders throughout the event added wisdom and support to the assembly's endeavors.

Special acknowledgment goes to the hardworking team behind the scenes, including CCA staff Arceli Bile and Aimy Chiu, stewards Check Yan Yu, Steffy Varghese, Anju Susan, and the entire crew dedicated to ensuring the as-

sembly's success. The Chaithanya Pastoral Centre's warm hospitality and the delectable meals provided by dedicated individuals, with a special mention to Sheeba Sister, nourished both bodies and souls.

The assembly's vibrant discussions and shared experiences were made possible by the enthusiastic participation of every attendee, contributing to the event's meaningful and impactful atmosphere.

As the assembly concluded, participants expressed their commitment to stay connected through WhatsApp and eagerly anticipate future gatherings. Together, they aim to make a positive difference in their communities and beyond.

In closing, heartfelt thanks are extended to all who contributed to the resounding success of the Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly. Their dedication, wisdom, and camaraderie have left an indelible mark, inspiring positive change that continues to resonate within the hearts of all involved.

Dr Jaisy Karingattil



Opening worship presentation in Mammen Mappila Hall

## CCA NEWS - 2023

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