



**Today in Juhanon Mar Thoma Hall**

09.00 am - Nomination Committee Report

11.00 am - Installation of New Committee

Closing Worship, Holy Communion



# CCCA NEWS

VAARTHA വാർത്ത 03 OCT.

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



**Action  
Speech**

Dayabhai  
in CCA Assembly  
D.T. Niles  
Lecture

# CCA Delegates Bid Farewell to Kottayam

Prof. Philip koshi

Ecumenical colleagues from Asian countries and around the world met at Kottayam, the citadel of ancient Christian heritage in India in conjunction with the 15th General Assembly Meet of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), from 27th September to 4 October, 2023. The theme of the Conference was 'God, Restore Us In Your Spirit And Renew The Creation'.

The presence of 500 delegates was a firm confirmation that we continue to live up to our faith and trust in God's abundant mercies and assurances. It was also a demonstration of our individual and collective commitment to the ecumenical movement.

The Pre-Assembly Events were the Asian Ecumenical Institute, Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly, Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly, Stewards' Orientation, South Asia Sub-Regional Consultation on 'Ecumenical Diakona' towards attaining sustainable development goals, Asian Ecumenical Migrants Advocacy Network Forum on the Rights and Dignity of Asia Migrant workers in the Arabian Gulf.

The memories of the worship sessions will last for a lifetime, which was replete with ecumenical prayers, sharing of spiritual life and the exploration of the rich historical heritage of churches.

The General Sessions evoked much enthusiasm among the delegates. Keynote addresses, thematic presentations on the main

Assembly theme and sub-theme formed part of the deliberations.

The Business Sessions were on policy matters, presentation of reports. Voting on these matters were only by delegates. The Deliberative Sessions were an elaborate affair with review of past programs of the CCA and also set future directions.

'Churcha' which means 'conversation', 'discussion' or 'sharing' in different Indian languages, which came under the Deliberative Session was a space for ecumenical dialogue on emerging and pressing theological, social and geopolitical concerns which will help shape the future work of the CCA's programs and projects.

The Asian Ecumenical Festival, graced by the presence of the Honorable Chief Minister of Ker-

ala, Shri Pinarayi Vijayan, was a celebrative gathering showcasing the rich cultural Asian traditions.

Asia Sunday was celebrated on October 1, 2023 during the Sunday Worship held at 55 different churches in and around Kottayam with different local congregations.

The Assembly Local Host Committee needs to be greatly commended for the excellent arrangements made in regard to food, accommodation and transportation, braving the heavy downpour. For a full week the 'sleepy' town of Kottayam awoke like Rip Van Winkle and received the delegates in the best Indian tradition of hospitality. We are sure that the delegates will carry with them the blessed moments of this ecumenical journey at the 15th CCA General Assembly. □



## Activism for Change

Sundas Sali  
Thushara Lily Manuel

Daya Bai is an Indian social activist from Kerala, working among the tribals of central India. She lives in Barul village of Chhindwara district in Madhya Pradesh.

She has been delivering inspirational speeches, holding satyagrahas and campaigns to press local authorities to open schools and empower neglected villages in the interior and tribal Madhya Pradesh. She was associated with Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Chengara struggle, apart from her solo struggles representing the forest dwellers and villagers in Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Daya Bai, who practises the theology of liberation, settled down among the Gonds of

Chhindwara district in Madhya Pradesh. She set up a school in the Barul village. Daya Bai teaches each village she visits how to take care of itself and then moves on to the next village.

At Christian conference of Asia 15th General Assembly meet in Kottayam, when asked about the measures to be taken to protect environment Daya Bai responded that she doesn't consider herself only as an environmentalist, she lives according to her vision. She encourages others to look at the whole picture. Everything is interconnected, all should be living healthy relating to one another. She then highlighted that social hierarchy is the root cause for environmental and social issues. She continued that the common notion of planting trees as the only solution, but people living in healthy harmony is of prime importance. She then went on that

humans are driven by their greed and selfishness, and motivates for a change in attitude. Humans as the residents of the earth should have other-oriented thinking, minimized craving to live a balanced life.

When asked to comment on the greatest challenge faced by humanity, she went on that, loss of respect for people and other things are the biggest challenge. She quoted Matthew 19:24 "I'll say it again-it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of A needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" Note that He says "a" needle, not "the" needle.

She recalled her experience at the Karshaka Samaram (farmers strike) when she came to know that in Kerala there is no agriculture but agribusiness. For her agricultural is of seven 'Fs', fiber, fuel, fodder, furniture, food and medicine, all part of flesh and fish.

Corporate sector are the biggest enemy. They are deteriorating the soil by using Hybrid seeds, pesticides, fertilizer and feedicide.

She recollected, buying a piece of stony land 15 years ago which is now home to many earthworm and creatures. And she proudly says that her land has the No. 1 soil without using any chemicals. She calls attention to the existing educational crisis where there is only literacy. Education doesn't mean literacy, it is something much beyond that.

Parents have a significant role in moulding the right values in childhood. She noted that we all have the right to coexist and everyone should be respected. Everything in some way or the other is reusable.

In conclusion Daya Bai emphasised that, "For me agriculture means enriching the mother earth". □

# ATTAINING LIFE IN ITS FULLNESS

Malavika M Nair

The Thematic presentation was on the topic 'Renewal and Restoration of Creation: Attaining Life in Its Fullness'. The presentation was done by 2 speakers. The presentation was began by Rev. Dr Vicky Balabanski who is From Flinders University, Australia.

The presentation was all about creation. Creation is not just a place where life is revealed: it's actually the bridge for the believer to move from surface perception to depth perception, that is from unbelief to belief. In such a Gospel, not only sight and hearing are important but senses such as touch, taste and smell are also important. Through this senses, human imagination can perceive more than ordinary significance such as bread, wine, light and water.

Then she told about what is the picture of an abundant life for different people. For some, it will be a beautiful place with swaying palm trees and aquamarine water and for some it looks more like a celebration or maybe a fresh and

untouched ecosystem with flowers and rich birdlife. But in actual sense, Abundant life is something that we all desire, people of faith and people of no faith, where there is peace and harmony and plenty, where our senses are filled with the good things that life can offer. It is also where people of faith and people of no faith are vulnerable.

God created life to be abundant. In the story of Genesis 2, the Garden of Eden is likely to be means as the Garden of "luxury, abundance, delight, or lushness". The Garden of Eden is a perfect picture of abundant life.

All this happened as a result of humanity taken that desire for abundant life and worshipped the creatures rather than the creator and worship the abundant life rather than the one from home that abundant life comes from. Our desire for abundant life has become all about taking control of that abundance by accumulating it for ourselves, our families, our communities and for our own nation. She introduced three ideas which as a Christian leader

can draw on to help our community to recognise what the nature of Jesus's abundant life really is.

"Firstly I will say something more about the context of John 10 which is the setting for this saying about abundant life"

"Secondly I want to draw on some thoughts from the Christian philosopher James K A Smith about the way our desire for abundant life has been hijacked and reshaped"

"Third and finally, I will return to the teams of Eden and abundant life, noticing a passage in John 20 that invite further reflection. We will then offer a practical response that arises from these points"

So in the first Idea she mentioned John 10. This chapter is all about Jesus as a good shepherd who priorities the needs of the flock even to the extent of laying down his life. Through this chapter, we get to know about self giving love which is now a lacking factor among people. She concluded the point by saying that, "we too as followers of Christ need to perceive abundant life

from this perspective to"

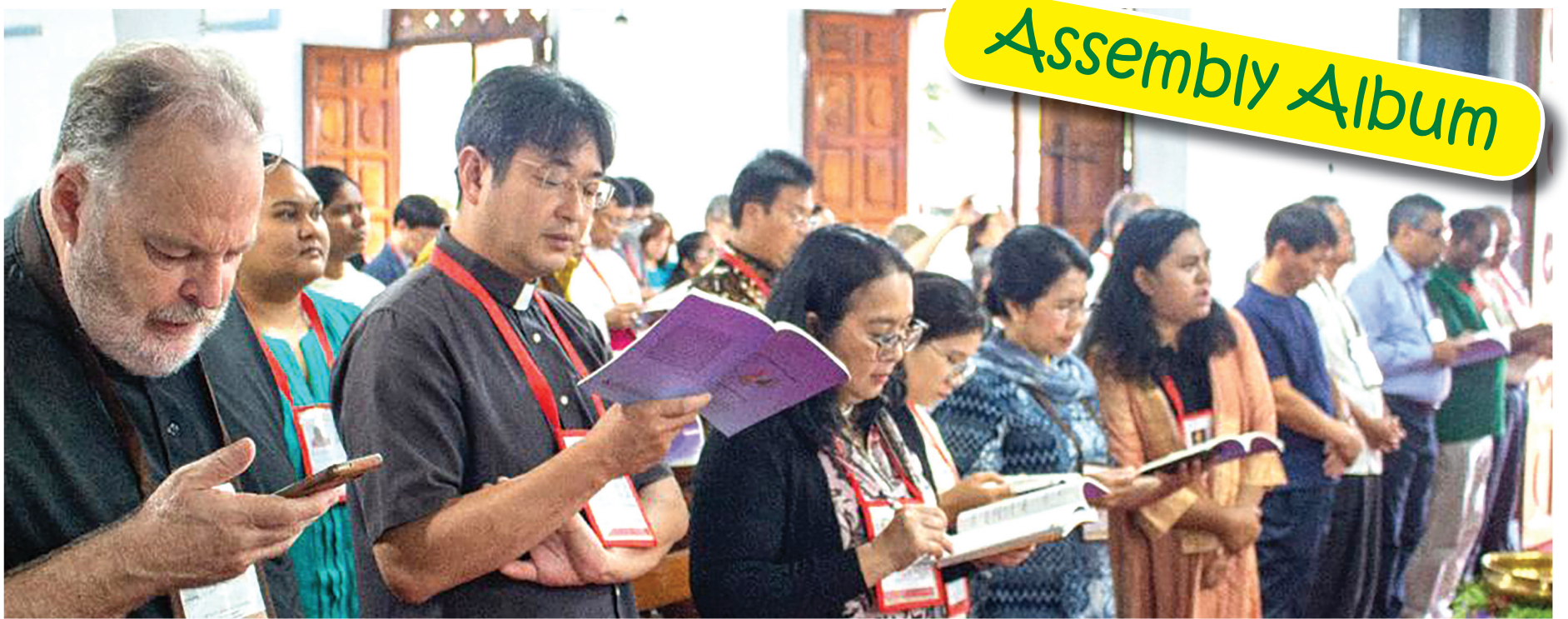
The second one was about drawing our attention in shaping of our desire for abundant life. Human beings are always driven by desires so she mentioned the term consumerism as given by Smith. Argues that we need to form habits and practices that shapes our desires through worship and education.

Third and final point Rose Mary ma as Jesus to be a gardener in this goes Bell nothing is superfluous. Jesus being considered as both the teacher, the lord and also the gardener.

Also she had shown up a video stating the importance of protecting the natural resources and utilising it in a sustainable way. In relation with that she mentioned about 'Life Giving Agriculture' (LGA) by Rev. Han Keong Ho from South Korea and Rev. Dr Daniel Premkumar from India.

She concluded by explaining about the importance of Life giving agriculture. It is a kind of awareness to the farmers and people of the rural churches and society. □







# Bypath to Restoration and Renewal

The delegated members of CCA Assembly gathered together to foster ecumenical dialogue to deliberate on the recurring and underlying issues that preclude restoration and renewal of creation.

“Holistic Approach to Economy, Ecology, and Oikoumene in the Asian Context”, at CMS College, with Rev. Eleuterio J. Revollido as moderator, rapporteur Dn. Windy Yessy Veronica Lucas and facilitators Rev. Prof. Dr Dietrich Werner and Dr. M.A. Oommen.

“Restoring Balance for Gender Justice and Environmental Healing”, held at CMS college with Dr Anish K Joy as the moderator, the rapporteur, Ms Joy Han and the facilitators, Ms Nirmala Gurung, Ms Wellorich Sokhlet, Rt Rev Emelyn G Dacuycuy and Rev. Agnes.

“Theology of Fullness of Life and Restoration of Creation”, held at Mar Thoma Seminary, with moderator Rev. Jimmy Marcos Immanuel, rapporteur, Ms. Trudy Hepshiba Bandara, and facilitators Bishop Feliciana Tenchavez, Dr. Citra Fitri Augustina, Ven. Ngodup Dorji, and Mr. Aan Sasono. “Developing New Social-En-



Rev. Eleuterio J. Revollido, Rev. Prof. Dr Dietrich Werner, Dr. M.A. Oommen, Dr. Mathews George Chunakkara

vironmental Ethics to Restore Ecological Balance”, at the Orthodox Seminary, with moderator Rt. Rev. Dr daniel Selvaratnam Thiagarajah, the rapporteur, Ms Loini Simeti and facilitator Ms Hui Fan Chung, Rev. Dr. Victor Tinambunan, Dr Adv. John Suresh.

“Reconciliation With God's Creation For Moving Beyond Conflicts And Building Peace”, at Mar Thoma Seminary with moderator Mr Mervin Toquero, rapporteur Rev. Jyoti Singh and facilitators, Rev. Jong Seng Kim, Rev. Dr Dowoong Park, Ms Youngmi

Cho and Mr Kipyung Nam.

“Challenges of the Digital World and Pitfalls of Technological Advancement”, held at Orthodox Theological Seminary critically examined the impact of technological advancement in our societies and how that advancement leads to exploitation. The moderator was Rev. Mahn Palmerston and the facilitators were Rev Tara Tautari, Rt.Rev. Steven Lawrence, Rev. Prof. Dr. V. Varghese Thomas.

“Understanding Ekklesia and Diakonia: Supremacy and

Self-referentiality or Creative Collaboration”, held at Marthoma Church Seminary. The moderator was Rev Mahn Palmerston, the rapporteur was Rev. Reuben Qamar and the facilitators were Rev. Tara Tautari, Rt.Rev. Steven Lawrence, Rev. Prof. Dr V. Varghese Thomas.

Inputs by:

Silpa Ann Zachariah, Alisha Reji, Krishna Shaji, Rev. Sister Wantihun N Kynter, Malavika M. Nair,

Compiled by: Smriti Priyansha

□

## Kottayam Assembly What they say...

Krishna Shaji, Silpa Ann Zachariah

- **Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza** (United Church of Christ in the Philippines) : He loved the Church visits that took place on Asia Sunday. Having attended the Holy mass of an Orthodox Church, he was happy to be involved in the chanting and singing despite of not understanding the language.
- **Rev. Shaw Shwe Lin** (Myanmar Council of Churches) : As a guest he got to observe and examine the activities of CCA sessions and looks forward to future directions that will be given by CCA officers.
- **Ms Patricia Talbot** (United Church of Canada) : As an Ecumenical partner it was a gift and a joy to be able to gather in person after several years of not being able to greet each other. Despite all challenges faced by the Ecumenical family we could sit together and have a dialogue respectfully in a way that reflects who and what the CCA really wants to be.
- **Rt. Rev. Dhiloraj Canagasabay** (Church of Ceylon in Srilanka): CCA is an umbrella organisation, a place of Multicultural, linguistic, faith based people coming together. We come here as wounded people with our stories asking the lord to heal us with his spirit and restore the whole of his creation; this can be achieved by accepting the reality.
- **Ven. Kekirawe Sudassana Thero** : (Lecturer at the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.) He is happy to be a part of an interfaith representative in this CCA Assembly. Kottayam became a host for his first experience with churches, met new faces and also learned many things.
- **Rev. Dr. Kang Hee Han** (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea): As a moderator for the 'Churcha' session he came across useful information and lessons. CCA is an interesting platform for sharing ideas and our life experiences.



Chandy Oommen MLA in the Assembly

**Raj Bharat Patta:**  
**A Man of Soil Theology**

Alisha Reji  
Malavika.M Nair

He is a minister of the Andhra branch of the Lutheran Church but currently works for the catholic Church in Great Britain.

It was his first time attending the general assembly but stated that he was previously involved in the activity of CCA as he works for the national council of churches in India and hence is associated with CCA.

When asked about his motivation that led him to spread such a message through his thematic presentation he went on to say that it is because of his dalit ecospirituality and the kind of hierarchy that they faced which gave him a vision to talk about the level of hierarchy that exists between all forms of life on earth. He thought of the word creatureliness where humans forget they are a part of the creation. He wanted to know where we lost it and how to regain it. The only way is to go back into the soil and listen to the plants and animals, he says.

As a message to the youth of today he wants the children to play with the soil, to make our hands and feet dirty with the soil so that we gain an in-depth relationship and feel that they are our siblings who helps us to move forward in life. □

He concluded his presentation by showcasing the audience with a Tamil song 'Enjoy Enjaami' which provided a beautiful illustration of the people of the soil and how important soil is for the sustenance of humans. "The earth bleeds because of our greed", quoted Rev. Dr. Patta. Hence, we need to take care that everything falls back into its place for the peaceful existence of all. □



Pic.: PR Devadas

**Life not a Monopoly or Possession: Raj Bharat Patta**

Alisha Reji

The thematic presentation by Rev. Dr. Raj Bharat Patta commenced by asking a question to the audience "What is life?" He further answered by saying life in the human worldview is concerned only about humans and not about the other forms of life. Life is not a possession or a mere monopoly but instead it is something that should be enjoyed by all forms of life on Earth. He explained the context of lifelessness by elaborating on the definition of the words 'anthropocene' and 'de-ecologisation', along with stressing on the importance of transforming life into its fullness by turning critically to plants and soil. According to the anthropocene, humans are the centre of creation.

De-ecologisation takes place when we humans forget that there is a striking interdependence between all forms of life and if disrupted, will cause the ecology to take a backseat. This happens

usually because humans crown themselves to be the most dominant or powerful from the rest of God's creation and hence all the other disruptions occur. He also stated that we tend to complain and put out the blame on a certain group of people thinking they are the only ones creating the disruption but in the actual sense, each and every human being is responsible for what is happening to our biodiversity.

Rev. Dr. Patta went on to explain the three different aspects that we humans always need to revive in our mind. The 1st one being 'un-creatureliness', where he talked about how we humans forget that we are a part of the creation of God and not different from the other creatures. It is when we humans forget this, we begin to exploit and destroy every life form for our very existence, which will eventually take us to our dead-end. 'Uncreation' was the 2nd one which was related to alienation which uproots life from the face of creation. Here the dominant ones declare and vul-

nerable ones are left helpless. The third one — 'uncreativity' — is the process of discontinuation of the flow of life where humans are on the side of receiving. He suggests that it's more about self-expression or more about ourselves rather than others, where our needs are limitless.

Rev. Dr. Patta elaborated on returning back to the soil to enrich the fullness of life because soil is pivotal for the growth of life because "from dust we came and unto dust we return". Plants, animals and humans share the commonality of depending their life on soil.

His second offering was to return to the call of the plants and to the birds to see the fullness of life. Stressing the importance of birds, Rev. Dr. Patta explained how the Holy Spirit chose to come down in the form of a dove indicating the importance of birds in human life; similarly is the case of plants because these beings help provide balance in temperature and are agencies who provide us with a number of things.





Assembly stewards with CCA News



Media Team— 15th CCA General Assembly Meet- Kottayam From left: Krishna Shaji, Malavika M. Nair, Alisha Reji, Rev. Sister Wanti Hu Kynter, Dr. Paul Manalil, Prof. Philip Koshi, Silpa Ann Zachariah, Smriti Priyansha, Sundus Sali, Thushara Lily Manuel.



Dr. Francis Serrao

## LIFE IN WHOLENESS

Sr Wantihun N Kynter

The Most Reverend Dr. Francis Serrao is an FABC member. He is a member of the Society of Jesus Congregation. He attended the CCA's 15th General Assembly for the first time to speak on behalf of the entire Indian Roman Catholic Church. He was well-liked since the rich biblical topics they had chosen for this event were still applicable in the modern world. He claims that life as a whole is fully grasped not just in human beings but also in siblings. We must adopt as our life's motto the teachings of our elder siblings, Mother Earth, the animals, the skies, and the birds of the air. Because if we don't, we'll think that life just refers to humans, and we'll end all other life to support our own.

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