

## Report

### **National Ecumenical Youth Assembly 2010 (NEYA2010)**

## **Come, Let's Be Friends**

*Organized by*

**National Council of Churches in India - Commission on Youth**

**6-10 January 2010**

**Kolkata, India**

### **Friendship is the New and Inclusive Paradigm of Relation in Ecumenism**

2010 could not have begun any better for youth than by attending the National Ecumenical Youth Assembly in Kolkata. Seven hundred young people from diverse Christian denominations and religious traditions from different parts of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Australia and other Ecumenical Organizations were convened by the Commission on Youth of the National Council of Churches in India. The national ecumenical youth assembly was also an occasion to commemorate the Centenary year of World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh 1910 by identifying new and creative perspectives in the direction of ecumenical mission in the 21st century.

#### **Inaugural Session NEYA 2010**

The youth assembly began with the inaugural worship began with a team of young enthusiastic youth leaders of various denominations. The worship had an enactment of *"The story of the Rainbow"* emphasizing the need for each other and that in unity all barriers could be won. The worship team then led the Hymn "Help us accept each other", during which all participants came forward and tied ribbons on a dry and barren branch symbolizing the readiness in accepting each other and thus making it colorful. The participants then joined together in making a joint affirmation of instilling hope, light and peace to make our world a beautiful one. The worship ended with each participant praying the Lord's Prayer in their own mother tongue followed by the benediction. NEYA 2010 was officially inaugurated with the release of white pigeons by the Bishops, General Secretaries of South Asian Christian Councils, Bishops and other dignitaries. A welcome dance by Ms. Urmi and group enthralled the audience as they danced to Shri. RabindranathTagore's 'Aguner Poroshmoni' in a contemporary style.

#### **Introductory Address**

In the introductory address briefing the main purpose of organizing the National Ecumenical Youth Assembly, Fr. Vineeth Koshy, Executive Secretary of Commission on Youth of NCCI, pointed out that this gathering youth assembly is to rejuvenate and revitalize the youth participation and leadership in Church and Ecumenical movement. He pointed out that youth is a state of life and mind when there is quality of thinking, pre-dominance of courage and appetite for adventure. This adventuring nature and courage made them pioneers of ecumenical movements like World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, the World Young Women's Christian Association the World Student Christian Federation. There may be various arguments and reasons for the decline of youth partaking and participation in church. Mainly it is the failure of the members of the church that failed to recognize the gifts of the Holy

Spirit are distributed equally and widely in the Church. It is essential that the spiritual experience of each member must be recognized and drawn into the common spirituality of the church and society. Thus the concerns of the Church must be broad-based involving the youth, women, and children.

Speaking on the theme he observed that Friendship is a new and inclusive paradigm of relation in ecumenism. He believes that friendly relation alone will bind and unite humanity together. He pointed out that during the four days youth will focus on the need and the process through which we can develop friendship with God, nature and humanity, and he observed that the up-coming era or this century is a CENTURY of FRIENDSHIP where humanity will be united and share good friendship with each one another irrespective of denomination, religion, class, caste, gender or region.

### **Presidential Address**

In the presidential address President of NCCI Bishop Taranath Sagar, brought greetings on behalf of the all the Orthodox and Protestant Christians. The two fold purpose of this event he stated was - bringing an awareness of ecumenism and fostering unity to transform the world. The clarion call he gave was that the 'Present' belonged to the youth moving away from the parlance and that the youth is the future of the church. The element of 'Now' is where we should find ourselves. Bishop pointed out that "Youth need to remove the barriers of race, color and class, and preach friendship and unity taught by Christ. Even Christ called us friends." He continued: "We always say future belongs to youths. I want to rephrase this by declaring that it is the present that belongs to youths. Waiting for the future makes us lazy and isolated. This is the time and we must begin serving God."

### **KeynoteAddress**

Dr. Mathews George Chunakkara, Director of Commission of International Affairs, World Council of Churches, gave the Keynote address on the inaugural day. In his message, he pointed how ecumenism is being greatly affected by lack of youth leadership and strength which he said is pushing the world to chaos. He stated that today the ecumenical movement all over had deteriorated and an event such as NEYA was a step towards its revival. "The 20th century has seen unprecedented violence. Violence perpetrated against man from man. In this rapidly developing world, we undoubtedly need better relationships."

He deciphered ecumenism as friendship. And in true friendship he said, "There is care and love; without friends, life becomes monotonous, narrow and fragile. Christ by calling us friends has placed us in intimate relationship with God." During his keynote address he explained in detail on the crux of NEYA deliberations that is Friendship with God, Friendship with Humanity and Friendship with Nature. Elaborating on the need for friendship with God, he said, "The adventurous life of Abraham and David is a classic example of friendship with God. God's intentions were revealed to Abraham and he humbly followed it. This is beautiful." To conclude, Dr. Chunakkara reminded the youths of Christ's crucifixion which he said was an ultimate example of love and friendship.

### **Ice-Breaking Sessions & Concert**

In the afternoon session Mr. Suman Biswas lead the ice-breaking session. The participants were grouped according to different groups mentioned on their Identity Cards. They were asked to make the respective animal sounds in order to find their groups and interact. The participants decided gestures/signs for their respective animal groups, which they shared on stage while introducing themselves. In the night there was a concert performed by Mr. Vijay Benedict and his son, Mr. Ruel which brought vibrant and energetic turn of events at the assembly on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2010, encouraging the delegates to celebrate on the central theme of Come let's be friends.

### **7 January 2010**

#### **Ecumenical Worship**

The morning session was commenced with a heartwarming musical worship led by the youth of the Durgapur Diocese. Representatives from Mokokchung Town Baptist Arogo (MTBA), followed in with some popular choruses. Hezia Pearl then led the congregation through an innovative bhajan with audience interaction. A meaningful confession then prepared us for the ministry of the Word (John 15: 9-15) and a reading from Kahlil Gibrans, 'Jesus the Son of Man'. All were blessed by a special song, which was a contemporary rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In" by members of MTBA led by pastor Yanglo. The opening worship came to an end petitioning God in prayer.

#### **Bible Study**

Rev. Vinod Victor from Church of South India and SAEPP, in his Bible Study began by raising the question "How many good/genuine friends do we really have?" In reply to his own question, he related a story by which he provided the participants with multiple answers. He said 'good' to people with one 'good friend', 'lucky' were those with two, 'blessed' were the ones with three and people with four friends were obviously lying. Referring to the meeting of Pandemonium in Milton's 'Paradise lost', Rev. Victor brought forward how Satan had discovered, that the only way to defeat God was through hurting His supreme creation, human beings. This proves the intensity of God's love for humans.

He probed, saying "what had happened to our friendship with God?" "We are literates in many fields but are we spiritually literate, i.e., are we aware of God's dreams and plans for us?" He went on to emphasize that family is a gift of God. To illustrate this point he referred to the Book of Genesis, where he posed the question; what was it that God said was "not good?" In response, everybody shared the common knowledge that man was not created to live alone. He shared that man was created for companionship, spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically. He pointed out that Morning Prayer, breakfast prayer, family prayer and personal prayer were the marks that explained the signs of quality time spent together with God. Sitting and eating at the dinner table would involve talking and sharing with parents (Psalm 128).

Rev. Victor invited the participants to share their possible feelings if they were patients of leprosy. Responding to his call, a participant shared his apprehensions on being isolated by family, friends and society in general. Giving voice to what may have been one of the perplexities that the leper faced, would have been the life question "Why me, God?" On touching the leprosy affected person, Jesus

broke the religious boundaries of the pollution codes so prevalent in society. In defining who a friend was, he said, "a friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and shift it, keep what is worth keeping with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away".

By touching the leper, Jesus was rendered unclean. So, we see God's willingness to suffer for the sake of those who suffer. He said that healing is not just curing and friendship regained was life regained. Jesus traded places with the leper, because of whom Jesus could no longer enter the city. He took his place outside the city which is best epitomized by the cross. Whatever separates us from God is addressed at the cross of Calvary. The evil in the world, the structures of injustice make every effort to keep us from being friends with God. It wants to silence us in the face of injustice making us people with blind eyes and deaf ears. He ended his bible study by affirming that changing possibilities is itself the good news. God comes, hugs, and says that we are friends with God. The bible study ended with a word of prayer by a delegate.

### **Session I**

Mr. Sudipto Singh former Youth Secretary of NCCI led the first session of the youth assembly. The first question he posed to the audience was; what friendship was to them and referred to it as a single soul dwelling in two bodies. With biblical references he showed how friendship was expressed through sharing of bread mentioned in the Old Testament.

According to him friendship with God had the following characteristics:

- Desire to befriend, as expressed by King David in Psalm 1:24
- Value of that friendship
- Care proved by Paul's agenda in line with God's.
- Honesty shown as God defended Job.
- Connecting with God and doing his will.
- Obedience which is emphasized in what God says in John 15:14.

He highlighted the greatest Agrarian crisis today being Farmers Suicide. He pointed to the ever widening gaps in society where the rich only become richer. He spoke about us living in disparity, where we are challenged to be friends with God. We should identify with the people at the periphery sharing their pain and agony. Stating examples of the extent of effect the youth had in Tiananmen Square in China and Dhaka, Bangladesh incident Mr. Singh emphasized on how only the youth can bring forth huge and effective changes. He concluded by reminding the youth to fight for the needy and resist oppressive forces. They have to play a prophetic role in making the church a church of the people.

### **Session II**

Dr. Evangeline Rajkumar, Professor from United Theological College began her speech on the topic 'Relationship with God' by drawing a difference between the relationship we share with our mobile phone and that we share with God. She stated that our mobile phone works as our identity and its

absence brings about an identity crisis. The mobile phone connects us regardless of distance, time and space. Evangeline however, pointed out that there is a difference between being connected and related. God's relationship with us is unlike the relation we share with our mobile phone; God wants to be related to the world while the mobile only connects. She said that God knew us even before we were formed in our mother's womb; He knows our lifespan. She asserted the fact that God's knowledge of us gives Him power over us but he uses His power to transform us through His potential love. This is the area where God gets vulnerable. She stated that the only thing that converts the power relationship into an intimacy is the unconditional love He has for us.

She related to Micah chapter 6 where the prophet reminds the people of Israel that God was always with them, when they were weary, he carried them. She further stated that the one aspect that keeps the relationship going is pain; God gets hurt when we move away from his presence and that shows that God yearns for a relationship which is not of power but of love. She reminded the assembly that God wants us to walk humbly with Him, that God's relationship with us is simply encompassed with the aspect of love and He celebrates His love with us through Christ.

"Jesus desired not the holiness of a few but the wholeness of all" – this was the keynote of Dr. Rajkumar's message to the assembly. She cited the example of Zacchaeus an ill-reputed tax-collector who was changed because Jesus brought the potential of love in him. She commented that there is a purpose in friendship; it is to bring a blossoming of the love relationship. She gave an example from her life about an experience in Manipal Hospital where a well-to-do patient donated one of his kidneys to someone unknown with the bond letter saying, "He is my brother". She pointed out that if the gift of love does not recognize others in a relationship, then it is a very instrumental use of friendship and God's friendship with humanity is that of an unconditional love. She further added that youngsters use social networks like Face book to connect with each other which can be shut out anytime; they are faceless. In order to bring a real face a warm love relation is required which only God can build.

She concluded her session by referring to the victory of Barack Obama in the presidential election of America in the beginning of 2009 which is evident of a paradigm shift in the mentality of a nation which loathed the blacks. She ended by encouraging the youth of the assembly to move forward and make friends during their stay at the assembly.

### **Workshops & Talent Night**

In the afternoon the participants attended various workshops led by eminent personalities. In the night youth were treated with a special performance by the famous singer Mrs. Usha Uthup.

### **8 January 2010**

#### **Ecumenical Worship**

The morning worship began with the Mokokchung Town Baptist Arogo (MTBA) leading the participants in the action song "Mercy is falling". The theme for the days worship was "Friendship with Nature": A call to all participants to rediscover their lost wonder and joy. The order then prepared all the

participants through the singing of a bhajan, confession and scripture reading, to make a Creation Covenant. The MTBA choir then presented a special song entitled “Testify to your Love”

### **Bible Study II**

Based on the theme for the day, “Friendship with Nature”, the Bible study was led by Rev. Arpana Rangayya, CNI ordained minister. She reflected on Ps 8:3-4, affirming that all things were made in God, by God and through God. She emphasized on the words of the Psalmist’s; that nature speaks about the beauty and glory of God. She also cited examples of the galaxies, the mystery of the black hole, the complexities that constitute our being – all pointing towards an ‘Intelligent Being’ who is the master designer of all creation.

Bringing a sense of wonder and awe she also spoke on the disparities that we find in nature. She said how sparrows had become a vanishing species in the city of Mumbai as a result of the loss in their natural habitat. She explained that how the promise in Genesis 1:26 no longer held value due to the fallen status of human beings. The pantheistic view of life also doesn’t really come to our help. The solution that she puts forward is an understanding that human kind is created in the image of God and it is in discovering this identity that we can realize our selfishness and begins our journey back to God.

One point forcefully made was that we were not here by chance. But have been created with a purpose to conform to the mind of Christ. She went on to say that it is “in Christ” that fallen human kind can be restored its beauty, creativity and imagination. It is only a renewed mind that can love God and show grace to nature. She ended her study by endorsing the apocalyptic warning, saying ‘Today’ is the beginning of the end of the ages. She explained that we can be on God’s side only when we realize our role as co- partners and co- heirs in the ultimate plan of God, who gives us the ability to preserve in perishing times.

### **Session III**

The session on later conducted by Mrs. Shiluinla Jamir, currently a graduate at the Yale University, focused on the theme “Friendship with Nature” on the third day at the NEYA assembly. She began by mentioning a common trend prevalent in the North Eastern states of India where women are always reminded to bear their own cross. She stated that the natural calamities taking place all over the world is the very evidence of the exploitation of nature by humans; it is in no way God’s wrath that falls upon us in the form of these calamities.

Through her multimedia presentation she referred to a map showing basins and hydroelectricity projects in Arunachal Pradesh. In its context, she emphasized on the point that development comes from creativity which is often detrimental to the preservation of nature. Mrs. Jamir, then, pointed out that this creativity of humans can be reused to save nature and that nature should be characterized by sacramental theology. In order to get some interesting views and opinions, she encouraged the delegates to participate in a question and answer session at the end

## **Session IV**

Ms. Meenakshi Arora from India Water Portal, in the second session pointed on the relationship youth should share with Nature. She referred to the Upanishad to elaborate on the Session theme 'Relationship with Nature'. Ms. Arora explained that nature has its own identity and that we should have enough respect for nature. She stated that industrial farming, negligence of nature and the various harmful activities of human beings have been disturbing nature and causes major changes in the environment. In order to make an effort to conserve nature, different international summits are being held throughout the world like the Mexico World Summit, Copenhagen Summit and Kyoto Protocol. She suggested an alternative, which is, an intimacy that we should build with nature, to protect and guard it. This relationship with nature can be built only through behavioral change.

## **Friendship Rally**

In the afternoon Rt. Rev. Ashoke Biswas, Bishop of Calcutta, flagged off the Friendship Rally and led the with a word of prayer from the St. Thomas' School by 2.30pm. Shouting slogans of "peace, justice, friendship youth paraded a distance of more than 5 kms to culminate at the St. Paul's Cathedral grounds. The delegates formed a human chain in solidarity with justice for the youth in the compound of St. Pauls. Rev. Andrew Simick blessed the occasion with a closing word of prayer. The rally concluded with a pledge by the participants to protect all of God's creations.

## **9 January 2010**

### **Ecumenical Worship**

The morning praise in songs was led by a group of enthusiastic youth who came together in NEYA 2010, from different church traditions and regions, leading the delegates towards a time of congregational worship. The Order of Worship was in tandem with the day's theme; "Friendship with Humanity". The order was aimed at realizing and exercising youth's responsibilities towards our fellow human beings, which would make us a ray of joy and hope in their lives.

### **Bible Study III**

Rev. Philip Peacock, Professor at Bishop's College took very interesting Bible study. He used an interactive model of Bible study to engage the minds of the participants. The scriptural portion used (i.e., II Samuel 13:1-22) was then enacted by the youth from Mumbai. The participants were then divided in groups, who were asked to commence their group activities with a word of prayer. Rev. Peacock opened the discussions asking the groups their views on "who were the characters in the section and what the participant's views on them were". He then went on to ask individual questions to the groups like "identify three things that promote friendship?" and "Identify three factors, which destroy friendship?" Each group came with important observations.

The next question asked of them was "There were a lot of powerful people in this story and how power had affected their relationship?" To this the general observation was that there has always been power adulation and a cult of possessiveness. One conclusion that could be drawn was that, being good friends did not automatically imply that one could expect good things always.

On being asked to identify one male character and what he had done to destroy friendship, everybody was forced to think really hard. The choicest answer by most of the groups being David made the leader further probe as to how one defined power - is power understood as standing with the powerless or is it standing with those with grandiose and pomp? One thing that clearly emerged out of this was that; power seemed to destroy friendship.

To certain people making peace at the cost of justice was more important. To which the leader commented that - Are we called to be peace makers or Justice Seekers? The truth of the matter was that political agendas matter more than personal relationships. Rev. Peacock left the groups with the following questions to be pondered upon:

1. What could they have done differently?
2. What do you think is the relationship between power and friendship?
3. Can you outline some power structures that destroy friendship?

### **Session V**

The first session of the day was enthusiastically started by Rev. Packiaraj Asirwatham, Intern from World Council of Churches. His interactive session began with the question “Why is friendship with humanity necessary?” to which he received different responses. Rev. Packiaraj added that friendship is mandatory; being humans as well as Christians we have a greater obligation towards humanity. He reinstated this point by referring to the coming of Jesus in the form of man who preached as well as practiced the message of loving our fellow beings. Thus the incarnation of Jesus made way for humanity to be friends with God. Rev. Packiaraj emphasized on the fact that we do very little to spread love which is the watch word of Christianity. Here, he related to Jesus’ friendship with Judas whom He referred to as ‘my friend’ even on the night of His betrayal. This changes our attitude towards the perspective of friendship and enhances our friendship with humanity.

The next point he stressed on was that crucifixion has paid the cost of friendship and that the resurrection of Christ sustains our friendship with humanity. In this context, he referred to the struggle of Martin Luther King Jr. who fought for Civil Rights to bring about equality among humans. He concluded the session by asking the youth assembly to commit themselves to God so that they may work for the welfare of humanity.

### **Session VI**

Ms. Monideepa Banerjee an eminent journalist with NDTV, Kolkata, spoke about media and human relationships. She reminded the participants of recent headlines and how people react to the way media portrays sensitive issues rather carelessly. Belonging to the same profession she admitted that the media industry itself regretted their role in provoking jingoism among the viewers of the 26/11 Mumbai attack. She warned the audience against being carried away by what the media displayed. Ms. Banerjee then spoke of how the youth today were forgetting real relationships and losing themselves to a virtual world. Cinema also often demonstrates wrong values she added.



According to her Media has been called the fourth pillar of democracy, watch-dog of democracy and a truth telling machine but there are related issues like hyper-commercialism and vulnerability, which make the media's task difficult. "Is this media doing what it's supposed to be doing?" was the question she asked the audience to ask themselves before jumping to any conclusions on reading or viewing a particular report. Throughout the session she urged the young audience to be careful and observant and think before reacting in a particular manner.

### **Workshops:**

#### **1. Climate Justice**

Mr. Sudipta Singh started his workshop on "Climate Justice" by asking a few questions like 'What is global warming?', 'What is greenhouse warming?' and 'What is climate change?' He even made a PowerPoint presentation on the theme and spoke about the conservation of nature.

The participants with the help of the facilitator drew up the following action plan:

- Plant more trees.
- Campaign for saving water.
- Promote use of bio-degradable materials.
- Identify causes that harm nature

#### **2. Ecumenical Water Networking**

The workshop on 'Ecumenical Water Networking' conducted by Mr. Angelious Michael laid emphasis on the value of water. With literal examples like the Coca Cola case in Kerala the privatization of water in recent times had been highlighted. The key points resulting from the discussion to be worked upon were:

- Rain water harvesting
- Provide drinking water to rural people
- Use water wisely

#### **3. Domestic Violence**

A workshop of 'Domestic Violence' was conducted by Ms. Finella Lyngdoh. She shared that Domestic Violence was addressed in the Sec 498 of the Indian Penal Code. The Act provides security to the woman, i.e., wife or sister from her husband or relatives. She then elaborated on the different kind domestic violence such as verbal, physical and sexual violence. Laying down an Action Plan she said that printing pamphlets and handouts would heighten awareness. Organising workshops within the church with the involvement of women was also very important according to her. Also that it was important to ensure youth committees participation in order to ensure Church's action. Last but not the least; appointment of a legal consultant would further provide the much needed impetus.

#### **4. Human Sexuality and Transgender Issues**

Ms. Karuna Roy probed into some of them in her workshop on Human Sexuality and Transgender Issues by saying that there are many misconceptions about sex. She said that human sexuality refers to sexual behavior and the different sexual orientations were Bisexuality, Homosexuality, Heterosexuality and

Incest. She explained that sexuality is for reproduction and maintenance of social bonds. Ms. Roy stated that holding hands, touch, eye to eye contact, being with each other are generally mistaken as sexual. She also mentioned the risks involved in sexual activities like STD's (HIV, Hepatitis B, C & D) which damages the reproduction tract, causes unwanted pregnancies, which many a times lead to prostitution. Some of the questions put forward in the workshop were:

- Where sexuality should be taught?
- Whether methods of prevention should be included in school?
- Whether abstinence should be taught alone or in addition to disease and pregnancy?

Transgender issues were also discussed by the facilitator. She stated that the LGBT community should be given due respect and churches should take up the responsibility to sensitize the people. She closed the workshop by giving information on Section 337 of the Indian Penal Code-Chapter XVI, which talks about the legalization of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) communities.

## **5. Faith and Politics**

This workshop by Mr. Samuel Mathew was conducted. Mr. Samuel said that the call to serve and not be served has to be seen in the wider realm of public arena. This is where the youth should take their stands and not fear politics. They must look upon it with a sense of responsibility. Also that it should be used as a platform to advocate the cause of the oppressed, marginalized and the downtrodden sections of our society. The challenge of being involved would be to get dirty in the act of cleaning.

## **6. Career Management for Youth**

The resource person Mr. Pradeep Rachapudy was the resource person for the workshop on Career Management for Youth. For the workshop he started with an old adage, "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail". He went on to emphasize the use of skills reminding that a person remains a student forever. He stressed that one's fundamentals must be clear. Giving lessons on how to prepare a good resume, he said that it was necessary to keep it short and simple. Having it in the bulleted form made for clear presentation. He shared on the pre and post interview preparations. Keeping the fundamentals in mind, he shared that it was best to keep it simple and have a positive attitude.

## **7. HIV/ AIDS**

The resource person Mr. Christopher Rajkumar explained the nature of the disease and spoke about the modes of transmission. He shared how in recent years HIV has shown rapid growth almost to the point of being identified as an epidemic. The important observation is that most victims are women and children. In realizing the mission of the church we are called to be friendly to God and to people suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Five areas that could help in getting the church involved are:

- Church Sunday
- Educational Institution
- Refer it to the Social concern Department.

- Theological colleges
- Health Sector/ medical centre can help.

## **8. SEZs & Farmers Suicide**

Mr. Rajesh Jadhav, the resource person, he emphasized that the church has to play an important role in educating both the rich and the poor to understand each other's necessities. Chartering an action plan he said that the church must become the voice of the voiceless. For this the church is called upon to analyze it's the new economic policies so that it can act as a catalyst in bringing the changes in the SEZ'S rules and policies. Politics is where the church's involvement is looked for so that the government is enabled to take the necessary steps in eradicating of the poor by the rich.

## **9. Social Networking**

Rev. Aswin Fernandez was the facilitator for the workshop on 'Social Networking'. In today's world the youth is many a time searching for a true friend. This search of his has led him to explore the bounds of the World Wide Web through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Orkut. These social networking engines rather than solving the crisis of friendship creates more complications with request rejections and false virtual friends; whereas our true friend has never been very far from us. He is God, our creator who created man in his own image and loves him the most. He can be our truest friend without any conditions only if we try and have a little faith.

## **10. Employment**

In the workshop on employment Dr. Vijay Kumar from Lutheran World Federation of India, James shared the problem of unemployment faced by the Indian youth today. He further went on to provide solutions to come out of this situation saying that one has to be open, confident and grab opportunities to create opportunities.

## **11. Youth Overcoming Violence**

Mr. Samuel Jayakumar, General Secretary of Student Christian Movement of India, started the workshop 'Youth Overcoming Violence', by probing into the Telangana issue. He said that violence takes place at many levels:

- At Home
- At schools or colleges
- At workplaces
- At the Global Level

The participants, with the help of the facilitator, drew up the following action plan:

- Violence should be checked, at first, at the family level, then at the local level.
- It was important to identifying the target points.
- Awareness programmes were to be organised
- Just and peaceful solution to problems were to be looked into
- Check violence against nature.

## **12. Trafficking & Aftercare**

Mr. Prateek Pyne along with his Justice and Care group members namely Rocky, Shikha and Rishabh started the session with a slideshow. After defining trafficking they divided the acts, means and purpose of trafficking. With many a biblical verse they asked the group to see treat any victim as one's neighbor. They told the participants how aftercare is as important as rescue and concluded by answering queries from the participants.

## **13. Ethnic Conflicts**

Rev. PBM Basaiwmoit shared several experiences that he faced at different corners of the World. He further went on to explain the adverse situations in the North Eastern states of India, caused due to ethnic conflicts. He cited the example of violence against Asians in some European countries as not being the byproduct of racial intolerance but caused due to the fact that Asians capture the job market, which in turn results in increased unemployment for the European themselves. The participants went back with a clearer picture of the root causes of 'Ethnic Conflicts' and pledged to promote advocacy to eradicate this senseless slaughter of human by humans themselves.

## **14. Movement Against Manual Scavenging**

Mr. Wilson Bezwada from Safai Karmachari Andolan explained that the constitution of India says that a person engaged or employed for manually carrying human excreta is a manual scavenger. A movement by the name of "*safai karmachari andola*", was started to put an end to this inhumane practice. Mr. Bezwada said that in order to make this movement a success, it was really necessary that this be carried out by the youths. He further added that latest scientific machines should be used and that the sweepers were to be stopped from entering the tanks for cleaning. In our developed world today it was totally unnecessary to have scavengers and that women should be strictly stopped from this work. So the youths are requested to participate in this movement against humanity.

## **15. Corruption and Transparency**

Ms. Anjna Masih, an advocate by profession, started the workshop 'Corruption and Transparency' by giving the description of Corruption. Transparency International describes corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for private gains. Corruption takes place. According to Transparency International, there are two types of corruption: According to rules, against the rules. The levels where corruption takes place are: Politics, bureaucracy, judiciary, police, and religious organization.

She described transparency as a principle that allows those affected by the administrative decisions, business transaction or charitable work to know not only basic facts and figures but also the mechanisms and processes. The enactment of the Right to Information Act (RTI) in 2005 and its implementation in 2006 turned out to be more effective than its predecessor. Based on this information; the workshop prepared the following action plan:

- Sensitization of the common people, through pamphlets, arranging festivals, giving advertisements.
- Mobilizing the youth, through social networking.

- Self –empowerment
- Acquiring legal knowledge

## **16. Disaster Management**

Mr. Dinesh Suna, former Youth Secretary of NCCI and presently the Policy Officer for the Churches Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), conducted the workshop on Disaster Management. He started by creating a correct understanding on some of the common terms related to the subject such as disaster, hazards, capacity, relief, development, mitigation and preparedness. Later with a power-point presentation he discussed the operational framework for disasters, elaborating on different the phases relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

## **17. Gender Concerns**

One of the most talked about issues in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are gender concerns. Taking India into consideration, Ms. Finella Lyngdoh, Vice-Chairman of Meghalaya State Law Commission stated that in spite of the different laws and the protective rights adopted by the government, India is still lagging behind in the upliftment of women. In fact, the women, especially in the rural section, have been conditioned in such a way that they are fearful to stand up for their rights.

The following action plan has been taken up in the workshop:

- Provide value based education
- Promote of self empowerment
- Organise awareness programmes
- Acquiring legal knowledge
- Organising Government based programmes.

## **18. Emotions & Relationships**

Ms. Karuna Roy in her workshop began with drawing a distinction between thought and feeling. Thought erupts from the mind whereas feelings come from the heart. Both of them should be tapped in a balanced manner. There are positive and negative emotions as well as healthy and unhealthy emotions. She also described relationship as a mutual bond with a person or a group of people. She ended with a note that one should always control one's emotions in order to maintain a stable relationship with others.

## **19. Goal Setting**

One of the workshops at NEYA 2010 was 'Goal Setting', conducted by Mr. Devaraju Patta. He shared with the participants that difficulties were bound to creep up in the absence of goals and that failures were inevitable in the lack of perseverance. So in order to be a winner one needs to have very specific goals and an unfaltering perseverance. At the end reminded us to always remember:

- What things did we desire that, makes us feel important?
- What were the qualities of our character?
- What legacy were we going to leave behind?

## **20. Right to Information Act**

Adv. Rodney Rider spoke about using the law as strategy. He asked the group to understand the law and play by rules. He reminded us to use contracts to define and strengthen relationships and also use intangible edge. The youth were told to be open to good legal advice and manage disputes.

## **10 January 2010**

### **Sunday Worship**

All the delegates participated in the Sunday worship in the St. Pauls Cathedral. The worship was led by Rev. Argho Biswas and the main preacher was Rev. Asir Ebenezer. During the liturgy the congregation also observed the NCCI Sunday, Dr. Mar Atsongchanger introduced the congregation of Kolkata briefly about the NCCI and Dr. Solomon Rongpi spoke about the importance of NCCI Sunday.

### **Valedictory Function**

NEYA 2010 concluded with an exquisite valedictory session followed the Sunday worship in St. Thomas School. Various choir groups performed number of songs praising and glorifying God for enabling youth assembly a huge success. Mr. Suresh Koshy, Treasurer of NCCI offered the opening prayer, Rev. Asir Ebenezer Acting General Secretary felicitated Mr. Suman Biswas, Rev. Argho Biswas and all the local volunteers of youth assembly for their hard work and dedication in lending their helping hands for making the youth assembly run smoothly and successfully. Later on participants were divided into fifteen groups and were asked to discuss in the groups their feedback and opinions on the youth assembly, whereby fifteen youth representing their groups presented their evaluation of the youth assembly. Rev. Raj Bharath Patta Executive Secretary-Commission on Dalits led the youth to take a pledge of friendship as a sign of their commitment to work towards building friendship with humanity, nature and creator.

Fr. Vineeth Koshy, Executive Secretary-Commission on Youth offered the final Vote of Thanks to all the individuals who had contributed to make the youth assembly a huge success. Mr. Christopher Rajkumar, Executive Secretary-Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation, NCCI offered the final prayer and Dr. Chungyi, Executive Secretary-Commission on Adivasi's and Tribals gave the benediction to the gathering. Thus youth left Kolkata with a new vision of befriending with nature, humanity and creator in all walks of their life.

