



## A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

FEBRUARY 23-24, 2017



## Re- Imagining the Idea of Nation

**A** National Conference themed “Re-Imagining the Idea of Nation” jointly organised by TRACI and UESI was held on February 23-24, 2017 at TRACI House, New Delhi. The Conference began with a key-note address by Prof. Varaprasad Dolla of Jawaharlal Nehru University, underscoring how the idea of nation evolves over the centuries to take its present texture.

The Conference saw 11 scholars from different Universities, states and academic background coming together to read their papers, and exchanged ideas with one another, besides interacting with the audience. Thus each day, besides the scholars there were around 15 people in the audience – comprising of different academic background – who were interacting with the papers. Academic disciplines ranging from Theology, Philosophy, History, Economics,

Cultural Study and Literature shared their area of scholarship to learn from the past stories of failure and success and how best to establish a stable social and political order today.

The Conference was organised with the primary purpose of inviting like minded Christians to situate oneself within the various debates that have surfaced in the recent times particularly relating to the idea of nation, nationalism, patriotism etc. and how one is to respond to the dominant narratives in our society/nation today. This was done acknowledging the present political environment and scriptural revelation that the crucified and risen Lamb is seated on the heavenly throne.



*Theological Research And  
Training Institute*

### Research wing of TRACI:

*A research wing has been initiated as Theological research is an integral part of TRACI. This wing would take up research projects on relevant topic with a research cell. Apart from focusing on the research of a particular topic, it would provide the service of a guide to research scholars. The research work done would generate content for Journals and books. TRACI welcomes interns with a minimum requirement of a masters degree for a period of six months to work with the research team or any other specific activity of TRACI.*



*Jeremiah Duomai*  
RESEARCH DIRECTOR, TRACI

# On Capital Punishment



Last year around this time, triggered by an event organised to commemorate the execution of Afzal Guru, a raging debate on sedition, capital punishment and nationalism engulfed the whole of India. This year the death sentence given to Nirbhaya gangrape convicts is making headlines again. Given the gravity of the sentence and the complexity involved, capital punishment has been a contested topic for students of law and ethics. In the paragraphs below, a brief case against capital punishment would be made.

Punishment is usually given for one or more reasons to obtain deterrence, social security, character reformation and retribution.

In capital punishment, not much time is given for character reformation as the person is put to death in due course of time. However, in life imprisonment this is not the case.

There is a biblical reason why giving chance to a wrongdoer to repent and sort out the wrongdoing of his life is important. Humans live just once, and is to face judgement after that (Heb. 9:27). Sorting out the moral furniture of his heart will determine his fate beyond this earthly life. Since Jesus died for all and he invites all to come to him, it is doubtful if he would want a life to be cut short particularly when such a sentence would deprive a person the chance to repent and reconcile with his or her maker.

It is often argued that a quantum of punishment equivalent to the quantum of wrongdoing is required for justice to prevail. An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth – no more, no less. However, this is questionable from the biblical viewpoint. The Spirit teaches his followers a different principle – do not pay back evil for evil (Rom 12:17). This is to mean that if someone has damaged an eye, do not go for his eye, and if someone has smashed your tooth, do not go for his tooth. Vengeance is for God

to take, not us. Because we can be blinded by anger and hatred, our mode of paying back will not be just. Punishment to the wrongdoer for deterrence or social security is required, but the reason need not be to get even with the wrongdoer; it should not be to harm him for the harm he has done. Retribution is not the desirable response. Punishment to the wrongdoer equivalent to the quantum of wrongdoing is not quite the kind of equation that Paul underlines for the followers of Christ.

Capital punishment will perhaps deter criminal acts more than life imprisonment. But it is also true that countries with capital punishment does not necessarily have less crime than those countries that have abolished capital punishment.

The more petrifying reason and perhaps the strongest argument against capital punishment, however, is to learn that there has been past incidents where innocent

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## Research Director



**J**EREMIAH DUOMAI was part of the TRACI Board and has finished his PhD in Philosophy from Delhi University. He is passionate in developing people in their thinking and academics and helps them to integrate the biblical truths with their academics. He loves to read and is committed to enriching and developing the research wing of TRACI. His wife Savita is working with EHA and their children Daniel and Sophia are in First standard and Kindergarten respectively. He has taken up the responsibility as the Research Director of TRACI

ones have been wrongly sent to the gallows. Capital punishment is given only to serious and rarest of rare crimes. Yet, wrong judgements occur and innocent people have been hanged. Judicial systems that face pressure – political or workload – and have less efficient pattern are more likely to have pronounced unjust decisions. Since

death sentence to an innocent person is a very serious wrongdoing, doing away with capital punishment altogether will reduce chances of sending an innocent one to the gallows.

As a society, India is yet to invest much of its time and money in moral education. It has been the

fear for punishment that restrains the citizen not to do wrong. This has to change. Citizens need to develop a sense of obligation to do the right thing towards the other; or to develop the sense of respect, love or even common good that serves as the basis for being good; or to love humans as an expression of one's love to God. ■

## ALVIN PLANTINGA

**A**lvin Plantinga ( 1932- ): On April 25, Alvin Plantinga was named as the winner of the Templeton Award for 2017. The Award carries \$ 1.4 million, and is considered to be one of the most prized awards in the world. He had taught Philosophy at Calvin College and Notre Dame besides being a visiting professor at many leading universities in the world.

Plantinga is one of those scholars who has taken his Christian belief very seriously and has successfully crafted a new paradigm in his field of engagement. Working in the area of Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology and Metaphysics and later on in Philosophy of Science, his Christian footprints can be observed in his works. The Award is a confirmation of his contribution to the rich legacy of Christian scholarship as well as to his rigorous philosophical inquiry.



Snippet

## KATHLEEN DAWN NICHOLLS

**A** Thanksgiving Service was held on 24th June 2017 at TRACI House for the life of Kathleen Dawn Nicholls who went to be with the Lord on 7th of June. She served the Lord along with her husband Rev. Dr. Bruce Nicholls, one of the founders of TRACI through Interserve. Kathleen's contribution in the area of Arts and communications through TRACI during her stay in New Delhi from 1973-86 was well received by the Church and Society. She taught in Union Biblical Seminary and worked in TRACI and in Church of North India.

During the Service we read the memories of her by Dr. Bruce and other friends associated with her. Dr. Nalini Abraham, Rev. Dr. Christopher Raj, Dr. Jacob Cherian and Rev. Sunil Sardar shared their memories and experiences. In remembrance of her commitment to the redemption of culture, arts and communications and her vision of the coming of God's Kingdom on earth, we read scripture portions; artists Mr. Manickdeep and team and Rev. Sunil Sardar and team paid a fitting tribute with music and songs and a book review of "Voices at the Watering Places" was read.



## Thanksgiving Service

*We praise God for Kathleen's commitment to the Lord and her commitment to the mission of redeeming everything for the Lord and pray that God may comfort all her family members.*



# ACTIVITIES OF TRACI

## 1. Inter Church Sunday School

**Fest (ICSSF):** It is an initiative since 1997 to bring together all Sunday School Children once a year from various churches in Delhi for celebration. ICSSF is an interdenominational Festival where Children from the Age of 6 right up to 16 can have an entire day of fun filled and godly activities. Usually this happens on the second Saturday of October. The two fold purposes are to bring together Christian Children from all social, economic and cultural backgrounds and to bring together those who are involved in teaching children in churches to reinforce and celebrate the unity that exists among those who serve Jesus Christ as Lord.

## 2. Seminars and Conferences:

Periodic seminars, consultations, conferences and Think-Tank sessions are being organized to reflect on relevant topics so that the Christian leadership may get equipped to respond to various issues from the biblical perspective. Research scholars from universities and seminaries, professionals from their respective fields, leaders from various organizations and churches participate in such initiatives. Recent topics discussed in such forums organized by TRACI are 'Engaging the Universities' and 'Re-Imagining the Idea of Nation'

## 3. Theological students

**internship programme:** TRACI provides opportunities to a small number of Seminary students from various parts of India to jointly work on short projects related to the goals of TRACI. This is an effort to provide a broad exposure to issues of relevance to their ministry and in

particular those areas where students can relate and reflect with eminent Christian persons who have made contribution in their field of service be it Economics, judiciary, Science & Technology, Politics, Business etc. This is a one month programme begun in the year 2014.

**4. TRACI Lecture:** This is a public lecture primarily focused on the Christian community usually held in the month of November as an evening programme where the speaker will be addressing on a relevant issue. The first lecture held in the year 2016 was well received by the participants.

**5. Research:** A research wing is initiated in TRACI to take up various research projects on relevant topic with a research cell. Apart from focusing on the research of a particular topic, it would provide the service of a guide to research scholars.

**6. Internship:** TRACI welcomes interns with a minimum requirement of a masters degree holders for a period of six months to work with the research team or any other specific activity of TRACI

**7. Publications:** As TRACI generates content through seminars, lectures and research, various publications are initiated as journals and books.

**8. Library:** A small library is functioning in TRACI House. This is being updated for the effective use of readers and researchers.

**9. Retreat Centre:** A homely small

facility is being provided in TRACI House for retreat. This facility is being used by families and Christian organizations

**10. Partnership:** TRACI networks and partners with other agencies, organizations and churches to fulfill its vision. Thus far we partnered with UESI, Salt Initiatives, Research and Engagement Foundations, World Vision, EFICOR, Primalogue Publishing Media and various local churches.

## Finance:

*The monthly financial need of the organization is Rs. 3 lakh. As we have more activities and full-time staff we need regular inflow of fund to function effectively. We value your prayerful regular financial support along with participating in theological reflections. Since our FC account is dormant we don't receive any foreign fund till its dormancy is removed. The local contribution can be deposited in the following account. If any deposit is done kindly inform the transaction details with your address by email (tracinewdelhi@gmail.com) or sms / whatsApp (9871409402).*

## Accounts:

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