

TRACI *Reflections*



FIFTH TRACI INTERNSHIP 2018 REPORT

The 5th TRACI Internship for seminary students was conducted from the 23rd of April to the 22nd of May 2018 with the theme 'Challenges of Indian Christian Leaders'. 12 students from 10 different seminaries all over India attended 2018 internship. In line with TRACI's vision the internship facilitated theological reflections on contemporary and relevant issues in the fields of Sociology, Politics, Education, Health, Gender etc. Experts from these fields gave talks on these issues and helped the students to ruminate on them. The students were given exposures to institutions of national importance and reflect on what these institutions stand for. In light of these reflections the students were facilitate to explore what church today is and what church ought to be. This helped the students to deliberate on and develop an integrated view of the role of church in the larger context of the nation. The students

visited various Christian leaders from different fields and attended sessions by them on the theme 'Challenges of Christian Leaders'. These exposures aided them to understand the various challenges faced by these Christian leaders and how they tackle with these challenges while they engage in the World. The internship also helped the students to understand different denominations better and gave an ecumenical platform beyond dialogues through living and learning together. The students discussed about and presented papers on various topics on the question 'How we can bring about transformative engagement as church in the contemporary world?' Some of the papers were 'Re-interpreting the Kingdom of God: A Critical View on Gender Issues within Ecclesia'; 'A Socio-Economic Analysis of Recent Economic Policies and Reforms in India: A Community-Oriented Response.'

The impact of the internship can be inferred from the feedback given by students. One of the students expressed that "the internship exposed to him the 'larger space' in which the church needs to work on." While another shared that "It strengthened her to know that there is a team to

work along, irrespective of the differences." All of them expressed their will to engage in the 'larger space' in their own places of assignment as they went back. This we believe is the highlight of the internship as we prayerfully dedicated them. ■



PANDITA RAMABAI STUDY GROUP

The group comes together for book study generally on the 4th Saturday of a month. For March 2019, however, we met on the 8th as meeting could not take place during peak winter. Anna, Bincy, Remya and I were there for the presentation. Each of us presented something on what we have been reading these days. Each presentation was followed by a brief period of seeking clarification or critiquing of the thesis or suggestions to make the paper better.

At our last meeting I discussed a few themes and

questions emerging from my ongoing research. I have been going through the archives of the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society towards the second half of the nineteenth century particularly those reports that focus on South India. There was a great anxiety related to the educated upper castes being educated in government secular education institutions – that these students were being exposed to rationalist thought, that voluntary Bible lessons were prohibited in these schools, meant that there was no Christian or moral

influence over them. While all this is well known I have been thinking how these sources can be useful in thinking about the life of these categories such as 'secular', 'religious' and moral in the particular historical context of the colonial south India, and how different social groups come to think of categories and invest themselves in them. Other questions is about the historical processes that led to the development of the secular educational institution as we know it today? I have also been thinking about this new kind of education in the British government universities where science is attempted to be taught outside a theological framework. What kind of an impact did the exposure to this kind of new education have on the mentalities of the emerging middle classes – in how they interpreted their society and their times? In other words, what was their engagement with colonial modernity like?

– **Anna Jacob**, PhD Scholar, History, Delhi University.

In the book I discussed the book **Religious Freedom in India: Sovereignty and (anti) Conversion** (Routledge, 2012) by Goldie Osuri. In this book, Osuri tries to stretch the discussion beyond its accusation of instrumental purpose through material incentives. She studies conversion by linking past and present anti-conversion campaign through the anchor of sovereignty. She uses post-structural and post-colonial theoretical approaches. India's religious heterogeneity is continuously subject to the sovereign or state politics of homogenising norms and laws, disciplining the discreet religious communities in the interest of national life or order. According to her, conversion is one such important site of regulation. The author here explains how India's Hindu normative understanding of history is translated by Hindu nationals into discrimination and violence

against religious minorities through the liberal and secular instrument of the state and international law of religious freedom. They function through liberal discourses such as multiculturalism and inter-faith dialogue. She argues for profanation of conversion i.e. removal of anti-conversion law and its free usage among people.

– **Bincy George**, Independent Scholar.



I discussed the interaction between social media and childhood by looking at the case of the blue whale challenge. One of the points that came up for discussion was the difference between children and adults in their interaction to the internet. What was it that was particular to children that cast them in a position of vulnerability and became a site of moral panic. The discussion led to different suggestions including lack of experience by children and the inducement of going to another world in their own terms. Another theme that came up for discussion was how the modern idea of childhood cannot be uniform, and that it has varieties within it including both the bourgeois and the working class, and that in my work I should bring in the nuances of these aspects.

– **Remya Mathew**, PhD Scholar, Sociology, Delhi University.

*I discussed the idea of emotion drawn primarily from the book **Emotion: A Very Short Introduction** (OUP, 2001) by Dylan Evans. Evans explains how the cultural theory of emotion came to be dethroned by the idea that emotion is a universal language. This is to say that certain emotions are universal and basic to every human though certain emotion like 'being like a wild pig' is cultural specific. Among those universal emotions, six are basic: joy, distress, anger, fear, surprise and disgust. The author goes on to argue that emotion is not opposed to reason, as many used to understand in the past, as without*

emotions humans would extinct. Reason and emotion are complementary. For example, if disgust is absent, humans would not stay away from rotten objects or excreta that are filled with bacteria and other harmful germs. This emotion, disgust, thus aids reason in the survival of the agent.

– **Jeremiah Duomai**, Post-doctoral Fellow, Philosophy, Delhi University.

The group is open to having more people come and present their research work. For further contact, I can be reached at **jeremiahduomai@gmail.com** or **9821949211**. ■

ANNOUNCEMENT

SIXTH TRACI THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME 2019 **23 APRIL - 22 MAY 2019**

Check website: <http://traci.in/internship-programme-2019/> for more details
Moreover you can contact the phone numbers or email address given below

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BANK ACCOUNT

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FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT

Account Name: Theological Research And Communication Institute
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