



## **REBUILDING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY**

## Mr. Mathew Varughese (TRACI Director)

In a competitive, profit mongering and greedy world when everything come to a halt, it is natural for people to be panicky and become desperate and seek for alternatives. If this is in the midst of a pandemic where **pain**, **death and grief are so common and immediate**, it would be so chaotic both in our mind and in our communities. Though uncertainties and sufferings are part of life, when it comes from all corners together in a short span of time, we tend to get paralysed. In such a situation unanswered questions in life seems to be increasing.

As we go through this reality of pain and suffering and as we try to remove or reduce them as much as we can, the message from the cross of Christ also needs to be kept close to our hearts and make it central to our conversations in all contexts of our lives. The preparedness to face all kinds of suffering, persevering patiently and identifying with those in sufferings are some of the truths we need to imbibe in our lives from the sufferings of Christ. Though we get connected with the people who have similar experience to share and comfort, and could relate with the Lord himself who invites us to participate with Him in His sufferings, the stark reality of distances and thus helplessness among us also need to be understood and accepted graciously.

This distance and thus loneliness is vividly expressed in His cry on the cross "My God, My God Why have you forsaken me." As we take the freedom to express, cry and question in our deep pain of loneliness, an inexpressible and deep loving relationship help us to give our life in the hands of the Lord. The same has been the experience of Jesus on the cross when He uttered "Father into your hands I commit my spirit." To a certain extent this is what we do when we lean on someone in our pain and silence. It is all the more comforting and reassuring when we lean on our Lord

The quality of life or human flourishing and the reality of suffering and death are not to be kept in contrast but to be understood in the context of the hope of resurrection and the hope of new heaven and new earth. Therefore, the power of resurrection or the presence of the resurrected Jesus through the Holy Spirit, helps us to journey through the valley of the shadow of death. As we face the suffering which is so intense and severe in many situations, we as a community are to be available as a healing community to lean on one another and continue to represent Christ in and around a suffering community.

In an individualistic, pleasure seeking and competitive world, it sometimes takes extreme situations like the pandemic to help us to relook at our lives as a community because we need one another and God. We have to give up the arrogance of our might and realise that we are not saviours either. We need to realise our fragility and yet demonstrate the strength in Christ to rebuild a community of resilience where His love, justice, forgiveness and peace are being practiced.

### WELCOME TO TRACI STAFF TEAM

AS TRACI, we are pleased to introduce two of our staff who joined in the month of June.

#### Mr. Paul N Tao

Paul hails from Manipur. His parents are farmers. Paul joins TRACI after his completion of M.Th (Theology) from Serampore University.

His passion and fascination, he says, is to dig deep into social activism and thereby serve God and humanity. He desires to listen to the calling of God responsibly and leave an imprint in the world as a Christian activist.



## Mr. Kishore Chandra Digal

Originally from Odisha, Kishore and his family live in New Delhi, pastoring the Bethel Community Church since 2010.

His passion has been to engage with the wider community, proclaim the Good news, address sensitive issues such as violence, gender inequality, caste discrimination etc., both



in the church and in the community where he lives. He sees himself as an agent of Kingdom of God.

Kishore is married to Ginuri Digal and they are blessed with two adorable daughters Ruth and Mercy. Kishore joins as part–time Field Associate in the Church Engagement Initiative of TRACI.

## CONTACT US

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### TRACI RESEARCH

# "Violence against Women in Indian Christian Families: A Case Study of Delhi"

TRACI is conducting a research on "Violence against Women in Indian Christian Families: A Case Study of Delhi". The study seeks to shed light on this pertinent

issue of violence against women. Raising this concern within the churches is important, as it may be the first step towards the church embracing its role with regard to gender violence and bring healing and restoration for the victims. The church needs to acknowledge that such a problem exists rather than normalising violence because of a false sense of shame and dignity. Being silent about violence and not questioning



their behaviour further emboldens the perpetrators of violence. Violence against women cannot be tolerated under any circumstance, and this study is an effort alongside many other initiatives to work towards eliminating violence against women.

The study will open avenues to engage with churches so that they can initiate definite actions that will make a difference for women who suffer in their congregations. It will also contribute to the larger discussion on gender equality within the church. Thus the primary objectives of the study are to determine the nature and prevalence of violence that Christian women face in their families, to understand the underlying reasons for the persistence of violence against women in Christian communities and to map the response of the Church, identify gaps and possible ways to meet these challenges. A greater awareness about violence against Christian women in the church, identification of factors that perpetuate violence against women and the major gaps in the response of the Church will aid in addressing the problem at multiple levels. It is hoped that the research will result in preparation of resource material for awareness creation and initiating training and intensive campaigns, which are necessary for equipping the churches for appropriate and adequate responses.

\*\*Dr. Bonnie Miriam Jacob\*\*

## **TRACI NEWS**

- We are joined by two interns for a month to assist in the research on "Violence against Women in Indian Christian Families": Ms. Ciinsiazo Guite has completed her post-graduation from JNU and Ms. Jasmine Ankita Bage is pursuing her graduation from JNU. We solicit your prayers for their work.
- TRACI has formed the Church Engagement Initiative and it is an important step towards engaging the poorer urban churches. We aim to help these churches understand Integral Mission and guide them in achieving a sustainable livelihood.
- We do solicit your support for our growing financial needs. Our monthly needs is between ₹ 4-5 lakh. Bank accounts are given below.
- Do look forward to TRACI Monthly Reflection:
- July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021: Faith & Justice (Asian Context), Rev. Philip Peacock (Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness, World Communion of Reformed Churches)
- August 28<sup>th</sup>,2021: Research Presentation: Violence against Women in Indian Christian Families, TRACI Research Team and Panel Response.

### TRACI MONTHLY REFLECTIONS

TRACI reflection in the month of May and June was a little different from usual. Being sensitive to the surge in Covid infections and its complications, we had the following events.

## I. Call for Prayer: LORD, HEAL OUR LAND!

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May, TRACI called for a time of prayer especially in the context of the pandemic. Led by Mr. Raaj Mondol, we had different leaders from the Church and Christian organisations who led us in a time of prayer for the Sick and Grieving, Frontline Healers, National leaders and the Church.

Rev.Dr Idicheria Ninan shared the Word as preparation leading into the time of prayer. Ms. Florence Manohar and her friends led us in intercession for those suffering due to the pandemic and for those grieving due to the loss of loved ones. Dr. A. K Lama elaborated on the duties of the government and instances where we have failed in our responsibilities, while leading in prayer for the people in the frontline. Dr. Ram Surat emphasized on the need for repentance for the sins we have committed against women and the discrimination through caste in India. He opened our eyes to see where we have failed as a nation. Rev. Thomas Jacob led us in interceding for the Church in India while urging us to stand by her needs. We sought forgiveness, where as Church we had turned a blind eye to the needs around us. Break-out rooms helped us hear from one another and pray for the needs shared. Interspersed through our times of prayer were songs, led by Mr. Lozaan Khumbah. They were songs that shared our hearts cry. Mr.Mathew Varughese, TRACI Director concluded the prayer time. Our hearts and lips continue to cry out Yes Lord, heal our land.

### II. Caring and Coping through the Pandemic

TRACI hosted a conversation with Selina & CB Samuel and Mini & Sathish Joseph on 26th June, 2021 as part of its monthly reflection amidst the struggle and brunt of severe strain and trauma caused by the pandemic,.

The conversation was moderated by Dr Bonnie Miriam Jacob centered on the theme "Caring and Coping through the Pandemic: Facing Challenges as Families and Communities. The panelists, through their rich experiences, shed wisdom on ways to navigate and cope during troubled times particularly sharing from their experience of having walked alongside struggling families and individuals during this pandemic. TRACI seeks to grow an inventory of resources for families and individuals as follow-up of this programme so as to find ways for effective engagement during pandemic and even beyond.

## **INDIAN ACCOUNT**

Account Name: TRACI A/c No. 072501000006876 IFSC: IOBA0000725





## FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT

Account Name: "Theological Research And Communication Institute"

Bank: State Bank of India.

Branch: 00691

A/c. No.: 40081602741 (FCRA Savings Account)

IFSC Code: SBIN0000691 SWIFT Code: SBININBB104