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## Appendices : codes, statements, action plans

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Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Stückelberger, Christoph
Publisher	Globethics.net
Rights	Creative Commons Copyright (CC 2.5)
Download date	2026-07-05 18:12:46
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/216689">http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/216689</a>

# A

## APPENDICES: CODES, STATEMENTS, ACTION PLANS

### A1) India 2001: Code of Transparency for Churches

*This code was worked out at an ecumenical consultation on the Programme for Ecumenical Rethinking and Leadership, in Hyderabad, India, 29 November-1 December 2001 (see above, chapter 3.1.1.2).*

#### **Code of Transparency for the Churches**

- a. Avoidance of leasing out of church properties for 98 or 99 years and sale of properties with the reason of meeting the current liabilities.
- b. Not to attempt closure of institutions, which were centres of empowerment but to revamp the efficiency in serving the poor.
- c. To strictly utilise the finance that is earmarked for specific programmes and purposes without mismanagement and diversion.
- d. To adhere to at least minimum labour standards with fair appointments, selection procedures, issuing of employment contract letters, pension benefits to church employees and the families of the deceased.
- e. To avoid involvement of family members in the decision-making as well as administrative bodies of the church.
- f. To restrain from pursuing litigations and avoid decades of case pendency and seriously attempt to establish Ecumenical Adjudi-

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cating Authority consisting of presiding officers (retired judicial & civil officials) appointed by respective churches.

To come forward voluntarily to declare the personal assets by the heads of churches and institutions in order to minimise the allegations of corruption and misappropriation, and to be transparent.

## **A2) India 2004: NCCI Plan of Action, Code of Leadership and Campaigning**

*National Council of Churches in India (NCCI): Quadrennial Assembly in Tirunelveli, South India, 9-13 February 2004 (see above, chapter 3.1.1.2).*

### **Truth and Peace through Corruption-Free Churches. National Council of Churches in India: Plan of Action on Corruption**

Unanimously approved by the Assembly

We, the delegates and fraternal delegates to the 25<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Assembly, who participated in the pre-assembly meeting on 'Life of the Church' that was held from 6 to 8 February 2004 at Tirunelveli

- strongly affirm that the church embodies ethical and Christian values of truth, peace and justice that ensures equal opportunities to all, to enjoy the fullness of life;
- We also strongly affirm the heritage of eminent church leaders and religious personalities who have been and are excellent stewards in the service of the Lord and society;
- However, we recognise that corruption which is rampant in society has penetrated the life of the churches undermining truth, justice and peace, dividing the community and destroying the credibility of the institutions and of the life and mission of the churches;
- We also recognise that the root cause of corruption lies in the misuse and abuse of power or privilege and therefore is an unethical act leading to moral crisis and conflicts.

Therefore, we recommend the following *plan of action* for approval by the NCCI Assembly.

*I NCCI, the member churches, Regional Christian Councils, Related Agencies, All India Christian Organisations*

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1. make anti-corruption a high priority in their mission and *activities* between now and the next assembly;
2. add anti-corruption clauses and mechanisms in the different regulations on church-related free and fair elections of the respective bodies at all levels;
3. adopt and implement the Code of Leadership (Appendix 1);
4. recommend that all candidates for elections of the respective bodies sign the code;
5. take immediate action to declare all church-related institutions like schools, clinics, hospitals, offices etc. ‘corruption-free zone’ and conduct their business on transparent basis. The institutions should establish a mechanism of monitoring and control;
6. support efforts for sufficient and fair salaries for leaders of churches and staff of Christian institutions in order to meet the basic needs and to overcome the temptation to increase income and allowances by corrupt practices;
7. promote an annual anti-corruption week including biblical reflection, practical action and publication;
8. encourage networking with churches and NCCs in other countries and continents (e.g. All Africa Conference of Churches’ programme against corruption), other religious communities, civic society groups and governments committed to expose and end corruption;
9. improve mutual transparency and accountability between donors and the churches;
10. campaign effectively to eradicate corruption (Appendix 2);
11. share annually with the NCCI information on their activities and action against corruption. NCCI secretariat will synthesise, coordinate and disseminate this information and provide an annual progress report to the members for their study and consideration.

## *II Process of implementation*

The Assembly requests the NCCI, the member churches, Regional Christian Councils, related agencies, All India Christian Organisations to implement these recommendations in order to eradicate corruption.

### *Appendix I*

#### **Code of Leadership for Leaders of Churches, Church-Related Organisations and Christian Institutions in India**

Realising that responsible leadership is a central part of the strategy to fight corruption, we urge on the NCCI, the member churches, Regional Christian Councils, related agencies and the All India Christian Organisations to impress on the leadership that the adoption of the following code will be a crucial contribution towards overcoming corruption:

1. to give precedence to public interest over personal interest;
2. to refuse to accept money or gifts which can be construed as bribes;
3. to maintain and update inventories that list out the properties of the institution and to ensure that properties are registered on behalf of the institution;
4. to avoid leasing and selling of church properties (both movable and immovable) on the plea that current liabilities have to be met;
5. to declare the personal assets (movable or immovable) to the governing body while taking charge and relinquishing the office;
6. to decentralise powers and duties to allow proper control and management of responsibilities;
7. to refrain from engaging in long-term litigations and pending cases and to establish an Ecumenical Adjudicating Authority to arbitrate between conflicting parties;
8. to encourage and support people who are working against corruption as well as to protect the whistleblowers who expose corrupt practices;

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9. to avoid attempts to close institutions which are reputed centres of education and empowerment;
10. to strictly utilise the finance that is earmarked for specific programmes and purposes without mismanagement;
11. to adhere to minimum labour standards with fair appointments and selection procedures, issuing of employment contract letters, medical and pension benefits to church employees and their families;
12. to avoid involvement of family members in the decision-making as well as administrative bodies of the respective institution.

This code was designed and approved by the 25<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Assembly of the National Council of Churches of India 9-13 February 2004.

This code shall be ratified by the organ that plays the role of governing body, represented by its president.

### ***Appendix 2***

#### **Campaigning for Corruption-Free Churches in India**

The journey to a corruption-free world has to include the leaders and also to involve the broad participation of the whole community. Recognising the challenges of overcoming corruption, we underline the necessity of proper and planned campaigning to bring in constructive changes.

We therefore urge on the NCCI, the member churches, Regional Christian Councils, related agencies and All India Christian Organisations to adopt the following for campaigning:

1. to lobby to include the topic of corruption-free churches in the agenda of the respective institutions;
2. to encourage women, men, youth and children to join in the struggle for corruption-free churches;
3. to adopt different methodologies such as poster competitions, essay writings, debates, skits, cartoons, paintings, pastoral letters on the theme of corruption-free churches;

4. to engage in awareness building through signature campaigns and distribution of publications;
5. to call for introspection to strengthen Christian values and attitudes;
6. to increase theological reflections on the subject in liturgy, sermons and publications;
7. to involve leaders of churches and church-related institutions in a dialogue on the implementation of the plan of action.

We are convinced that overcoming corruption is an important contribution 'Towards truth and peace in the life of the church' and part of 'Our common pilgrimage' towards a better tomorrow.

### **A3) India 2010: Appeal to Concerned Church Leaders**

*The Pastoral Fraternity, with the support of the leaders of the Prophetic Forum, the Bangalore Think Tank and the Abundant Life Movement, adopted at a meeting in Madurai, India, on 18 August 2010 the following text, addressed to church leaders in the Church of South India. See also chapter 3.1.1.*

#### **A Statement of Purpose and a General Appeal to Concerned Leaders of the Church**

Respected Church Leaders,

Greetings of peace and warm regards in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We wish to inform all bishops that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit several groups of pastors and lay leaders have begun to meet with concern to bring change and renewal in our churches. Such meetings, we want to affirm, are not gatherings merely to air grievances, but primarily to think through theologically and biblically in a spirit of prayer how to bring change and renewal. The Prophetic Forum under the leadership of Dr Gnana Robinson and the Bangalore Think Tank under the leadership of Dr E.C. John, the Abundant Life Movement in Vellore under the leadership of Dr Jayakaran Isaac have been meeting and issuing statements and appeals. More recently under the name of A Pastoral Fraternity, groups of pastors and lay persons have been meeting together in Coonoor, Dharapuram, Coimbatore and Madurai. This Statement comes out of the Madurai meeting, comprising mostly of its Alumni and also a few other pastors and lay leaders. Inasmuch as the Madurai meeting had representatives from the other groups mentioned above this Statement is

issued on behalf of all of them with consent from its respective leaders. The following statement consists of two parts. First there are some theological observations and convictions which have found general credence among us. Second there are some observations regarding the Episcopal form of Government which seems to be developing into a major stumbling block for renewal and change. At the outset we plead with all the bishops to give a careful hearing with an open mind and to make way for a further discussion in a spirit of humility setting aside all bureaucratic and traditional hurdles. We do hope after reading this through, you will be led by the Spirit of God to initiate a broad-based theological discussion by first calling for theological conferences in each of the four language areas of South India. In the Madurai meeting there were quite a few who belonged to the Lutheran churches also.

### **1. Regarding a new Theological Posture**

We are concerned that we as pastors and bishops have not done enough to equip the local congregations for mission in God's world. Most people still maintain exclusivist convictions that only Christians will be saved and that salvation is entirely futuristic. In this world God gives special blessings to the Christians and it is in accordance with God that there is disparity between the rich and the poor that the rulers in the world and in the church are appointed by God.... All such beliefs have serious implications for the way our church is maintaining a very poor witness to the gospel. Therefore, we took note of:

- 1 the urgent need to enable our people *to throw off all exclusivist attitudes and tendencies*;
- 2 To understand that repentance has to be as much horizontal and collective towards the offended and hurt people and groups as vertical towards God; In this we were greatly encouraged by the historic step taken by the worldwide Lutheran Communion expressing its sincere apology and seeking their forgiveness from the Mennonite

Church who were severely persecuted during and after the time of the Reformation, with some reformers themselves actively promoting persecutions against all Anabaptists and Mennonites in particular.

- 3 To interpret the meaning of the Cross as the continuing Cross of the Son of Man who is in inseparable union with all those who are oppressed and those who suffer unjustly; thus giving up the traditional way of understanding of the Cross as God's punishment for sin vicariously borne by the Son of God.
- 4 To develop partnership links with all those who are working for a new human community of peace with justice irrespective of faith affiliations.
- 5 To understand Christian life as a life of struggle against all unjust power structures responsible for the misery of millions.

## **2. Wrong tendencies which need to be set right**

This discussion inevitably led us to the realisation that there is a lot of wrong which needs to be set right at the institutional level and at the level of top leadership in our churches if pastors and bishops as a team should concentrate on equipping the whole people of God for mission. We took note of several widely prevalent tendencies amongst our leaders which make it difficult to develop the team work that is imperative if we are to do what is expected from us of God.

- 1 There is now a deep discontent among clergy and the laity about the way our *bishops function in monarchical and arbitrary ways*. There indeed is the committee structure but it is either bypassed or manipulated.
- 2 *Bishops do not keep themselves aloof from the elections*. They want people who would readily endorse their ways come to the committees so they induce presbyters even to remove persons who are likely to be dissenters from the primary membership of the church.

On the one hand they claim that it is by virtue of the bishops ordaining the pastors only members are truly integrated into the body of Christ by baptism administered by the ordained pastors and then daringly those who are so united to the body of Christ are by a stroke of pen declared to have been removed from the membership of the church i.e. severed from the body of Christ. It was interesting to note that the Mennonite Church came into being by twelve non-ordained persons baptising each other. God indeed has blessed this persecuted church to be greater an instrument of peace though their numbers are so small.

- 3 In the way in which discipline is administered we feel that there has to be *a real repentance on the part of most bishops* in that they do not seem to want to follow the example set by our Lord who restored Peter who denied him and entrusted the responsibility of the whole church. In case of an erring pastor, if the error is due to a strained relationship between the bishop and the concerned pastor(s) in the first instance, we feel the bishop should ask himself whether he was not the cause for the stumbling. In case of other violations the bishop should strictly follow the constitutional provisions.
- 4 We are greatly disturbed also by the blatant *double standards* in this regard. Erring bishops' follies are covered up if they do not become widely known, as for example with regard to misappropriations of the ERD funds for relief of tsunami victims. When the folly could no longer be pushed underground but out in the open, and even when it has drawn the attention of the judiciary eliciting stringent remarks, the bishops' club of mutual solidarity works to take action in a most soft manner such as offering a sabbatical leave with full salary and allowances and also a convenient hideout. We want the bishops to examine themselves seriously in this matter.
- 5 Much of the problem is also due to the *bishops declaring themselves as managers of all institutions in the diocese*. This enables the bish-

ops to control most lay leaders who are diocesan employees. For powers of transfer threaten the family stability of employees and so they dare not voice any opinion in an honest manner.

- 6 Many bishops without any concern for continuity of ministry or the needs of particular congregations *transfer pastors* simply to tell them if it so pleases them they would place pastors in comfortable stations and if a particular pastor has been found to be a courageous dissenter and has shown himself/herself to be a nuisance he/she would be sent to places where they cannot function with their full potential.
- 7 In order to consolidate their own position of authority many bishops do not hesitate to instigate *mafia elements in congregations against pastors* who do not do their bidding. Such undermining of the pastor's position, especially of good pastors who do their ministry well totally inhibits the pastor from doing any work for God.
- 8 *Curbing the freedom of association* and also freedom to carry out the ministry in non-traditional ways again is not conducive in equipping congregations for mission. Under strict rules regarding the wearing of ecclesial uniforms for example, a pastor cannot demonstrate to his/her congregation that in God's sight there is no difference between an ordained and a non-ordained person. Ecclesial uniforms do tend to enhance an unhealthy spirit of reverence among the non-ordained people of God. At the beginning of the Congregational Movement (a part of the Church of South India, CSI) it needs to be remembered the pastors of the denomination used a slogan 'I shall wear nothing to distinguish myself from my congregation'.
- 9 At the same time, however, *heretical preachers of the Charismatic Prosperity Cult* perspective are given *full freedom*.

Much of the widely prevalent tendencies mentioned above among the heads of churches is most unbecoming of bishops who hold the

shepherd's crook as a servant of the Good Shepherd and who sign their names with the symbol for Humbly, 't' (the letter tau of Greek alphabet, the first letter of the word *tapeinos*). We are enclosing a paper which gives a rationale for the emerging pastoral fraternity.

We hereby request that all concerned bishops to call for a broad-based theological conference and allow free space to listen to dissenting voices so that we together will work for God's glory. What is needed from all of us is a deeper discipleship commitment.

Yours in the fellowship of God's just reign,

[Signatures]