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# DEEP

The Light



Vol.: 203

Monthly Newsletter of the Diocese of Durgapur (CNI)

August 2024

## Tribal Identity: Challenges and Opportunity

Tribal identity in India represents a rich tapestry of culture, language, and tradition, showcasing the diversity of our nation. However, these communities often face significant challenges, such as economic disparities, marginalization, and the struggle to preserve cultural heritage in the face of modernization.

Many tribal areas remain underdeveloped, with limited access to education and healthcare. This economic hardship often results in migration and the dilution of cultural identities. Yet, these challenges present opportunities for action. Initiatives aimed at social justice, education, and healthcare can empower tribal communities, helping them thrive while maintaining their unique identities.

Culturally, tribal identities offer a distinct perspective through which to experience and express faith. The oral traditions, music, and communal practices inherent to these communities can enrich broader community life, fostering a deeper connection to shared values and beliefs.

By valuing tribal identities and advocating for justice and equality, we can help ensure that these communities not only survive but thrive.



Rev. Simon Mandi  
Diocese of Durgapur  
CNI

Embracing the diversity and resilience of our tribal brothers and sisters honours the image of God reflected in each unique community, contributing to a more inclusive and vibrant society. ■

## Confirmation Service at St. Barnabas Church, Purulia

On 21 July, St. Barnabas Church in Uffmanpur, Purulia, witnessed the confirmation of 23 candidates before a congregation of 350 people. The service was led by the Bishop, The Rt. Revd. Sameer Issac Khimla preached about new life. His sermon emphasized the transformation and spiritual rebirth that comes with faith, drawing parallels to the biblical story of Nicodemus. The event was also graced by the presence of Rev. Samuel Helder, Rev. Swapan Darmon, and Rev. Sandipan Sinha, who assisted the Bishop Khimla. After the service, the extended burial ground inauguration by the Bishop was another highlight, reflecting the church's commitment to serving the needs of its community. The ceremony was a significant occasion for the local Christian community, marking a day of faith and renewal. ■



## An Awareness Rally on the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

Sarenga: The Diocese of Durgapur in partnership with USPG organized an impactful awareness rally against human trafficking on World Day Against Human Trafficking on 30th July. The main objective of the rally was to sensitize the community about the serious issue of human trafficking and take collective action against it. The total volume of 200 people were present in the rally. The gathering was attended by schools from various divisions of the Diocese, including students of St. Michael's School (Sarenga), Sarenga Mission School and Sarenga Nursing Training School. Among the dignitaries, guests of honour Rev, Samuel Halder, who presented the biblical perspective on Anti-Human Trafficking (AHT) and also spoke on occasion, BDO of Sarenga Mr. Rocky Das, IC Mr. Sudip Hazra, Forest

*Continued to Page 3*



## Bishop's Meditation

### Tribal Identity: Challenges and Opportunity

The concept of tribal identity holds significant importance in the Bible, reflecting both the challenges and opportunities faced by various tribes. In biblical times, tribes were not just social units but spiritual communities with distinct roles and blessings, as seen with the twelve tribes of Israel. Each tribe had a unique identity and purpose, contributing to the overall plan of God.

In the Bible, the twelve tribes of Israel illustrate a clear example of tribal identity. Each tribe descended from Jacob's sons and had distinct roles, land, and characteristics (Genesis 49). This diversity was not seen as a source of division but as a tapestry woven by God's hand to fulfil His purposes. The tribes maintained their unique identities while collectively forming the nation of Israel, illustrating that unity does not require uniformity.

However, tribal identity also presented challenges. The Bible recounts numerous conflicts among tribes, such as the rivalry between Judah and Israel. These conflicts often stemmed from pride and a lack of unity, hindering the collective purpose God intended. Yet, amidst these challenges, there were opportunities for growth and reconciliation. The story of Joseph and his brothers exemplifies forgiveness and restoration, turning familial strife into a testament of God's grace.

In the New Testament, tribal identity evolves with the message of unity in Christ. Paul emphasizes that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, breaking down tribal barriers and promoting a unified identity in the body of Christ. This unity allows tribes and individuals to transcend their differences, embracing a collective identity that aligns with God's redemptive plan.

Today, the biblical perspective on tribal identity encourages us to celebrate our unique cultural heritages while striving for unity in diversity. It challenges us to overcome divisions by recognizing our shared identity in Christ, transforming tribal loyalty into a collective strength that glorifies God and serves humanity. Tribal identity is not merely a relic of the past but a dynamic force for unity and growth in the present. ■



The Rt. Rev. Sameer Issac Khimla, Bishop, Diocese of Durgapur (CNI)

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## Sunday School Teachers Training Program 2024

A Sunday School Teachers Training Program was conducted at Sarenga Central Church on July 28, 2024. The event saw the participation of 20 dedicated teachers. Key resource persons included Rev. Sumanta Naru and Mr. Kamakhya Biswas. The program covered crucial aspects of Sunday School teaching and encouraged collaboration and innovative thinking among the teachers. The event commenced with a word of prayer by Rev. Simon Mandi, Assistant Presbyterian of Sarenga Pastorate and Sunday School Co-ordinator, followed by uplifting chorus songs that set a harmonious tone for the day. The morning session featured presentations by the resource persons, covering crucial aspects of Sunday School teaching, such as lesson planning and student engagement strategies. The second session concluded with a Q&A session, allowing teachers to address their queries and receive personalized guidance from the experts. Before the closing prayer, Mr. Shanti Saren, Secretary of the Sarenga Pastorate, delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the resource persons, participants, and organizers for their contributions to the success of the event. The program wrapped up with a closing prayer led by Rev. Subhendu Kumar Saren, Vice-President of the Diocese of Durgapur and Presbyter-in-Charge of Sarenga Pastorate. The training was a resounding success, leaving teachers motivated and better equipped to make a positive impact on their students. ■ (Simon Mandi)



### Power of Prayer



My name is Mantu Kawra, from Raniganj Church. I came to know Jesus Christ several months ago. A year ago I had a tumor on my cheek, and for that, I went to a doctor for a check-up, but the report was not good. Then I went to Bankura Medical College, and after Kolkata, doctors told me in the last stage of cancer. I will save the month. The doctor answered that I would live for some more months. When I was broken, I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ would mercy me during this difficult time in my life. I started to believe and come to the Raniganj Church. When I came to church my chemo was going on. Then I prayed and began to come to church I felt that I was getting healed. Now my cheek tumor has healed, the chemo is over, and now the doctor says I don't need any more chemo and I'm fine. All reports are fine. If I had not known the great Lord Jesus Christ, I would not have seen the glory of Lord Jesus Christ in my life. So I thank the Lord for giving me a new life.. ■

## New Beginnings: Two Believers Baptized at Ascension Church

Purulia, July 21, 2024 - On 21 July 2024 held a sacramental baptism ceremony at Ascension Church in Purulia. Ascension Congregation welcomed two new members into the family of God. Lakshmi Ram and his son Gautam Ram were baptized by Rev. Devjit Das, marking a significant milestone in their spiritual journey. The sacramental baptism ceremony, attended by approximately 70 devotees, was a testament to the congregation's support and love. They had been attending fellowship services at the congregation for two years, diligently studying the Bible and growing in faith under Rev. Devjit Das's guidance. As they witnessed the transformative power of God in their lives, they embraced Jesus as their Saviour.

The congregation extends its warmest congratulations to Lakshmi and Gautam, celebrating their decision to follow Jesus. May their faith continue to flourish, inspiring others to seek a deeper connection with God.

. ■ (Sushma Sarkar)



## Bishop Khimla's participation in the 17th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia

The 17th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) took place from 11th to 14th July 2024 in Sydney, Australia and it was a privilege for us as a Diocese, to witness it through the presence of our Bishop, Rt. Revd. Sameer Issac Khimla as a guest in the Assembly. This auspicious occasion also marked the installation of Rev. Charissa Suli as the 17th President of the Uniting Church in Australia. UnitingWorld (The international aid and partnerships agency of UCA) have been partnering with the Diocese of Durgapur for the last 15 years especially supporting us in transforming the lives of marginalized communities so far the journey has been appreciated and the UCA Assembly created a platform for our Bishop to express his theological perspectives and its role in societal development through reflective sessions as well as extending the relationship with the other partner communities and learning about the different cultures especially the aboriginals which encompasses UCA. During his visit, his interactions with the UCA dignitaries and UnitingWorld Team not only helped to broaden the areas of advancement but also created a scope for us to work in a deeper level with the communities which can change the ways of life and social structures of society making it a better and peaceful place to live in. ■ (Debonmita Biswas)



## 78th Independence Day Celebrated in the Diocese of Durgapur

Durgapur, August 15, 2024: The Diocese of Durgapur celebrated the 78th Independence Day with great enthusiasm and patriotic spirit across all pastorates and institutions. The celebrations were marked by the hosting of the national flag at various locations to honor the sacrifices of the freedom fighters and to remember the nation's journey towards independence.

In a special event organized by the Diocese, all hostels under the Diocese of Durgapur (DOD) took part in the celebrations, making the day memorable for residents and staff alike. The highlight of the day was the tree planting ceremony at the Baldahura Safe Home Compound, where the girls of the Safe Home planted 17 tree saplings. This initiative, aptly named "One Girl, One Tree," is a significant step towards environmental conservation. Each girl was responsible for nurturing a tree, symbolizing their commitment to the environment and the nation's future. ■



## Editorial

### Tribal Identity: Challenges and Opportunity

Tribal people, primarily living in jungles and geographical isolation, share common ancestors, culture, language, outfit, and religious practices. Originating from Rome, tribes were divided based on society, money, class, and family. Today, tribes in India's Northeast states have strong unity, self-sufficiency, and self-farming. However, in the twenty-first century, tribes face numerous challenges to their livelihood and growth. The education system has improved, but some tribes remain regarded as backward and uneducated due to their remote lifestyles. Tribal communities rely on farming and labor, with their children often assisting their parents in economic activities.

Acute poverty, land rights, seasonal droughts or floods, climate change, lack of traditional knowledge and culture, and religious division among tribes further complicate the situation. The Santal tribe and Munda tribe, once one community, now practice the Christian religion, leading to questions about identity and identity loss among tribes. Climate change further complicates the situation, making it harder for tribes to earn a living from the land.

To help tribal communities, guidance and education are essential. Sunday schools can help tribal kids learn the best way of living and make informed decisions. Campaigns and awareness building can help them understand the importance of education, clean water, and healthcare. The Church can reach these communities through various means, such as distributing the Gospel and Bible in their language, and visiting, and hearing them. ■



Rev. Santosh Soren  
The Diocese of Durgapur (CNI)

make informed decisions. Campaigns and awareness building can help them understand the importance of education, clean water, and healthcare. The Church can reach these communities through various means, such as distributing the Gospel and Bible in their language, and visiting, and hearing them. ■

## Youth Beacon

### Tribal Identity: Challenges and Opportunity

Joshua 3:12-13: "Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord- the Lord of all the earth-set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap. The concept of tribal identity is prominently featured in the Bible, particularly in the context of the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribes descended from the twelve sons of Jacob (also known as Israel) and formed the foundation of the Israelite identity. Understanding tribal identity through the lens of the Bible provides insights into the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of the Israelite people. The tribal identity of the Israelites is deeply intertwined with their covenantal relationship with God. This covenant initiated with Abraham and renewed with Isaac, Jacob, and the entire nation at Mount Sinai, establishes the Israelites as God's chosen people. The allocation of land to each tribe is a significant aspect of their identity. The land serves not only as a physical inheritance but also as a symbol of God's promise and blessing. The Book of Joshua details the distribution of the Promised Land among the twelve tribes, emphasising the importance of land in their identity and sustenance. ■

.(Swarnali lakra)

## Diocese of Durgapur Hosts Child Care and Development Workshop

The Diocese of Durgapur, in partnership with UCC (United Church of Canada), organized a two-day workshop, on the child care and development program, theme "Fireflies in Darkness," on July 31 and August 1, 2024. The event aimed to empower caregivers and field workers in child protection, focusing on identifying and supporting vulnerable children. Mrs. Jaiashree Francis led the sessions, covering crucial topics like child safe care, child rights, and dealing with temptations. 35 participants, including teachers and field workers, attended the workshop. The initiative seeks to create a safer environment for children and combat human trafficking. The Diocese of Durgapur expressed gratitude to UCC for their constant support and prayers. This workshop is a commendable step towards raising awareness and providing practical skills to those working in child protection. The "Fireflies in Darkness" metaphor poignantly highlights the vulnerability of children, emphasizing the need for such initiatives to continue shining a light in the darkness. ■



Awareness Rally

Continued from 1st Page

Officer Abhijit Garai, President of Sarenga Panchayat Samiti, Mrs. Moushumi Singh Mohapatra and friend of the earth Mr. Shyamaprasad Bandyopadhyay (locally known as 'Gach Dadu'), Rev. Suwendu Saren (Vice President of Diocese), Rev. Sumant Naru, Rev. Simon Mandi, Rev. Tarun Mandi, Rev. Abhijit Mahata, Rev. Shiben Tudu, Rev. Saswati Roy, Mr. Hemant Marandi (Diocese Treasurer) and Ord. Babul Sardar. Several members of AHT's various branches (Sarenga, Kaliaganj, Samadi, Barikul, Balurghat and Bankura), CDP's field staff and congregations of Sarenga Central Church participated along with AHT Coordinator Mr. Raja Moses. The rally served as a platform to promote mass awareness. The rally raised slogans about preventive measures, individual rights and warnings against child marriage, child abuse and trafficking with the Community members, including government officers. The rally was held to create awareness among people through campaign slogans, and placards, which instilled a sense of solidarity. The rally brings people together by emphasizing against human trafficking. The Anti-human trafficking project under the Diocese of Durgapur continues its work in the fight against this heinous crime by raising awareness and increasing cooperation. ■

## Women's Voice

**Tribal Identity: Challenges and Opportunity :** Around 200 groups of Indigenous Peoples currently live in voluntary isolation and initial contact. They reside in remote forests rich in natural resources in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Venezuela. They choose to live detached from the rest of the world and their mobility pattern allows them to engage in gathering and hunting, thereby preserving their cultures and languages. These people have a strict dependency on their ecological environment. Any changes to their natural habitat can harm both the survival of individual members and the group as a whole. There are an estimated 476 million Indigenous Peoples in the world living across 90 countries. They comprise less than 6 per cent of the world's population but account for at least 15 per cent of the poorest. They speak an overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7,000 languages and represent 5,000 different cultures. Indigenous Peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite their cultural differences, Indigenous Peoples from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples. Indigenous Peoples have sought recognition of their identities, their way of life and their right to traditional lands, territories and natural resources for years. Yet, throughout history, their rights have been violated. Indigenous Peoples today, are arguably among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people in the world. The international community now recognizes that special measures are required to protect their rights and maintain their distinct cultures and ways of life. In order to raise awareness of the needs of these population groups, every 9 August commemorates the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, chosen in recognition of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations held in Geneva in 1982. ■ (Ishita Hansda)

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E-mail : stmichaelschoolbankura@gmail.com

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Chief Editor : Rev. Sandipan Sinha  
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 Durgapur - 713212,  
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 Ph. & Fax: +91-343-2536220  
 E-mail the Editor at -comm.dgpdio@gmail.com  
 & newsletterdeep@gmail.com

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**Bible Quiz 144**

- 1) In whose were the spies lodged?
- 2) Who cried immediately after the rooster crowed?
- 3) What was the name of the great star that fell down from the sky?

**Answer of Bible Quiz 143**

- 1) Jolham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (Micah 1:1)
- 2) The Samaritans (John 4:42)
- 3) Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:14)

Name of those who submitted the Correct Answer

**Brajendra Sanial**

Please send answer of Bible Quiz in this no. -9064863735