

# Be More Sensitive, Church Tells Its Followers

New Delhi, Dec 28: The Indian Church has asked all Christian groups to guard against aggressive evangelism or denigration of other religions in an effort to become "More sensitive" towards local cultures.

The decision came at this month's meeting of the Christian United Forum, which includes Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, Seventh-day Adventists and Pentecostal groups among its members.

The resolution adopted at the meeting also asks the clergy and lay people to follow a simple lifestyle and try to be as environment-friendly as possible.

Aggressive evangelism by certain Christian groups has been earning the Church bad publicity by creating a perception that Christians are out to degrade and defame other religions, the resolution says. The "impression" that Christian groups are receiving money for every act of conversion does not help either, it adds.

The meeting, however, denied that Christians received money for conversions, or that they carried out "forcible conversions" - as alleged by the Sangh parivar which wants a ban on conversions.

The conference has appealed to all Christian denominations to refrain, especially during preaching, from badmouthing other religious communities, their deities or the traditions they hold sacred since 'this violates Christ's teaching of love, harmony and peace.

The resolution says the beauty of Christianity is tarnished when Christians denigrate others. "We have to work positively to build a harmonious relationship with people of all religions and cultures," it says.

The Church leaders took the view that aggressive evangelism and attempts to denigrate other religions were partly responsible for the September 2008 communal riots in Karnataka. The National Commission for Minorities had given a similar report after the violence.

The Christian groups have also decided to set up a committee to formulate measures to end interdenominational conversions - known as "sheep stealing" - and strengthen Christian unity. They have stressed the need to have more co-ordination and dialogues among themselves.

The Church has also decided on a code of conduct for priests and seminary students, encouraging them to lead simple and austere lives. "It is time for introspection," the resolution says.

Under the code, priests and seminarians are not expected to use expensive consumer goods but to eat and dress simply. The code asks the priests to turn down offers of luxuries.

While traveling, they should not choose high-end facilities but travel with the common people. "The Church wants to curb lavishness of all kinds and set a model of austere and simple life," said Fr Paul Thelakkat of the Catholic Bishops Council of India.

Priests have been asked to create a platform in every parish for interaction with lay people.

The laity should be educated on the importance of the environment and encouraged to turn parishes "as green as possible" and use solar power whenever possible.

(The Telegraph - 29-12-09)



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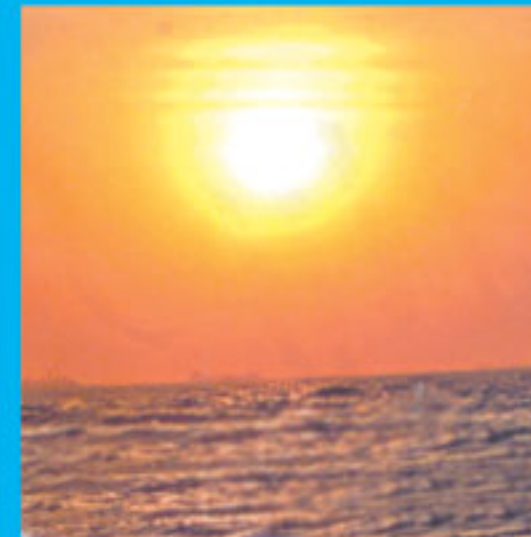
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Articles on **Eternal Faith and Culture** and different Socio-Cultural movements in Northeast are invited for publication.

## 'Don't give Muslims, Christians Same Facilities as SC, ST'

Guwahati, Nov 26: The Anusuchita Jati Sanrakshan Suraksha Mancha opposed the alleged move of the Government of providing Muslims and Christians with the same Facilities identical to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Mancha secretary Rajib Kumar Das and president Jiten Sarkar said at a press meet today that when the UPA Government came to power in 2004, it constituted a committee headed by Justice Rajendra Sachchar in this regard, and on the basis of the recommendations of the committee, the Government announced facilities for the Muslims and the Christians of the country on par with the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes only to lure them. Another committee had been constituted by the UPA Government for the same purpose headed by Justice Rangaraj Mishra and that committee too came with the same recommendations. On the basis of the recommendations, the Government announced the same facilities for the Muslims and Christians to the tune of the former one, Das said.

Opposing this move of the Government, the Mancha demanded not to provide the Muslims and Christians with the same facilities as was being enjoyed by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to hike the reservation percentage for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(The Sentinel – 27-11-09)

## AGP MLA Demands Separate Muslim Land'

Guwahati, Dec 11; AGP MLA Abdul Ajj playing an unacceptable communal brand of politics, demanded a separate Muslim land" in Assam in the State Assembly today. He said such "separate Muslim land" will cater to the needs of the "25 lakh Muslim of the State".

It is now for the AGP to deal with such mischief-mongers.

(The Sentinel – 12-12-09)

## State Revels in Gaan-Ngai Festivities

Imphal, Dec 29: Gaan-Ngai, the largest festival of the Zeliangrong community, was opened today by Chief Minister Okram Ibobi amid cultural and religious rituals.

The State level Gaan-Ngai festival organised by the State Level Gaan-Ngai Celebration Committee, Manipur at BOAT, Palace Compound was graced by Chief Minister O Ibobi as chief guest.

Gaan-Ngai is a traditional festival of the Zeliangrong community settled in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam. Usually, the festival is celebrated for five days in winter after harvesting the annual crop.

During the festival, homage is paid to the progenitors by offering sacred wine and light. It is also a festival of merrymaking in which cultural dance and music are featured unfailingly.

Today's Gaan-Ngai celebration was opened by offering sacred wine to Tingkao Ragwang. This was followed by yelling 'Hoi' by members of the Pongringjang United Organisation.

Chaopok Khangnah Khangbon, Thoubal district lit the sacred fire by rubbing bamboo (Meiba Chingba).

After this, dance and music took over the

celebration with cultural troupes coming from different districts presenting cultural dances one after another.

Earlier, addressing the gathering, Chief Minister O Ibobi exulted at the arrival of Gaan-Ngai festival. He said that Gaan-Ngai festival is a matter of pride not only for Zeliangrong community but for all the people of Manipur.

The State Government has declared general holiday on Gaan-Ngai day so that all can celebrate the age-old festival together, Ibobi stated.

If there was no such unique culture, customs and traditions, the identity of Zeliangrong community would have been lost or diluted. As such, people should promote such festivals as Gaan-Ngai, he added.

Stating that there is no question of discrimination among different communities of Manipur, Ibobi said that all the people of Manipur are one.

The Chief Minister further expressed his desire for all communities to take part in celebrating Gaan-Ngai festival.

Today's Gaan-Ngai function was presided by Vice-Chairman of Hill Areas Committee Manipur, MLA Khanthuanang Panmei.

Prof. Gangmumei Kamei, Imphal (Patron of Janajati Faith & Culture Protection Forum) said in the Executive Body meeting on 4th Jan.2010 held at Guwahati, while narrating Tribal Religions.

"Unless you understand Hindu Spiritual-Philosophy, you can't be able to understand the Tribals' Concept of God, Religion and Culture".

"We are not Animist, we pray to Almighty, The Supreme Being only"

"The Sanskrit term of Sanatan Dharma (Eternal Faith & Culture) is relevant for all the Tribal Religions and Culture in India".