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TENT-MAKING

How Rural Initiatives Can Achieve Self-Sustainability

The younger generation holds the key to the future of rural communities in North India. The development of these communities hinges on the active involvement of young people who possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and passion to drive positive change.

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READY TO CONQUER THE CLASSROOM LIKE A TRUE TEACHER WARRIOR

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LIVING ROOT BRIDGES

Discovering Resilience and Innovation in Traditional Architecture

The Living Root bridges found throughout the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya are a testament to the self-sufficiency of the Khasi tribes and their deep connection with the forests. These unique bridges are constructed entirely from tree branches, trunks, and roots, showcasing the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the local people.

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NEW WINE IN OLD WINESKIN

One day Jesus was feasting in the house of Levi, a tax collector, when the Pharisees asked him a question about fasting – “John’s disciples fast, Pharisees fast, why the Lord’s disciples did not fast”? (Luke 5:33-39) Jesus could have given them a direct answer; yes, Jesus and his disciples did fast and pray. They may have fasted even more than everybody else but Jesus chose to challenge the cause rather than the symptom in his reply. Jesus asked them three questions that flushed out the root of their unbelief.

Jesus first asked them, "do they recognize that a bridegroom is in the room?" Do they recognize that he is the bridegroom and a wedding is about to happen? If they recognized him as the bridegroom, they would have listened to him. They would have made him the center of their attention; everybody’s eyes would be on him. He would have been the center of every discussion and they would have given him the honor worthy of a bridegroom. While asking them to focus on him first, Jesus also implied that there was a chance that they could miss the real reason for their prayer and fasting. Do we give Jesus the first priority in our life and keep him the center of our attention? Beyond all the hustle and bustle, do we still focus on the real reason behind our religious activities?



Jesus then asked the second question using a parable about new wine poured into old wineskin. In those days, wine was stored in containers made of animal leather. The new wine is active, ferments, and expands; the wineskin must stretch with the wine. Jesus first asked if the Pharisees accepted Jesus as the bridegroom. If they accepted Jesus as the bridegroom, Jesus would not be just a spectator; instead, he asked them if they were willing to stretch. David had a very simple formula for deciding what belonged to God vs. him. Anything leftover, free, and painless to achieve, i.e., costs little or nothing, belonged to him, but if it is expensive, it belonged to God. Are we willing to stretch for Jesus? What costs are we willing to pay to follow him?

Finally, Jesus asked them if they could withstand the stretching and avoid spilling the precious wine by bursting the wineskin. Simply put, Jesus asked them if they could hold it together. It is interesting to note that the only criterion to achieve eternal life is if one could cross the finish line.

It doesn’t matter how fast one runs, how many people one overtakes, how many overtake us, and how many times one falls. We could run limping, jumping, leaping, and tumbling, but if we can cross the finish line, we will win the prize – eternal life. How are we running our race? What are the hindrances to us crossing the finish line? When troubles come, persecution comes; can we hold it together?

Towards the end of his life, while writing his second letter to his disciple, Timothy, Paul talks about his confidence regarding achieving the crown, i.e., eternal life. He assures himself and Timothy that he has fought a good fight, has the line of sight to cross the finishing line successfully, and has kept the faith. He had many distractions along the way, but Paul was very clear about his priorities – forgetting the past while focusing on the future and discarding many things that were profitable along the way. Can we confess that Christ will be the center of our lives, the bridegroom, who deserves all our attention and focus? Can we confess that we will give our best to him, even when it costs us? Can we hold it together just as Paul did? I pray that the Lord will enable us to differentiate and prioritize what is eternal and celebrate together in heaven.

Dr. Giby Raphael

Associate Pastor,
Faithcity Church, Kochi
& CEO, Remote X
Corporation, USA

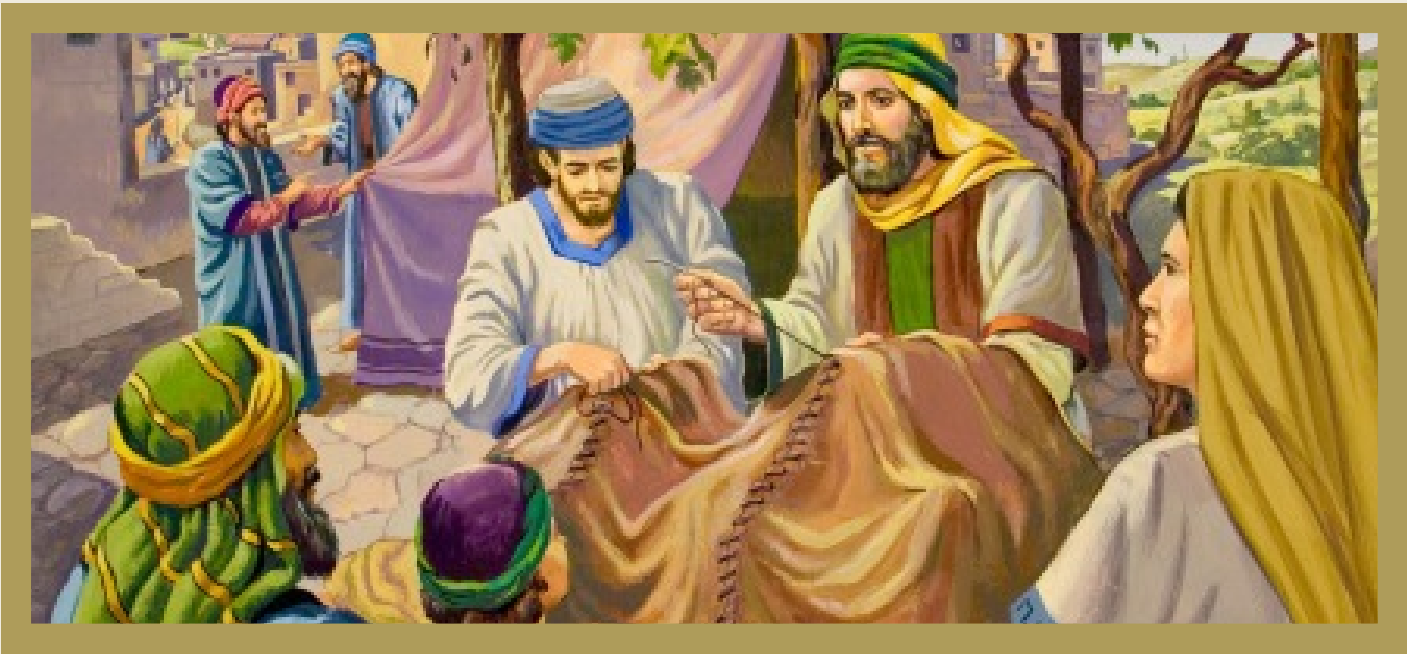


Kings Caravan 2.0



Kings Caravan 2.0 is inaugurated on 28 April 2024 by Pastor Y Reji, Assistant Overseer, Church of God (FC), Kerala State in the premises of Faithcity Church, Kochi in the presence of Sister Gracy Baby and Dr. Giby Raphael.

The Kings Caravan is a custom-designed truck equipped with a built-in stage, public addressing system, generator, and more. This innovative mobile platform enables us to bring our message on drug abuse to various locations within the community, ensuring accessibility for all with the support of local communities, organizations, and government departments. Specifically tailored for use in the Northeastern states of India, this mobile campaign vehicle plays a crucial role in addressing the drug use problem in the region. To effectively combat drug addiction in Northeast India, a comprehensive approach is necessary. This includes educational campaigns, the establishment of rehabilitation centers, and the eradication of social stigma surrounding addiction. By working together, the government, society, and individuals can make a significant impact in overcoming the challenges posed by drug abuse. Through collaboration and support, we can create a brighter future for Northeast India.



The Role of Youth on Rural Development in North India

The younger generation holds the key to the future of rural communities in North India. The development of these communities hinges on the active involvement of young people who possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and passion to drive positive change. They play a crucial role in advancing agriculture, healthcare, education, transportation, local businesses, and infrastructure. With their adeptness in technology, the youth can utilize digital tools to boost productivity and improve access to services and information. Engaging the youth is essential for the sustainable development of rural communities. It is imperative to include them in decision-making processes to ensure that their perspectives are considered and incorporated into development plans. Through mentorship, training, and active participation, young people can make a significant impact on the lives of individuals in rural areas, paving the way for a vibrant and enduring future for these communities.

Unfortunately, many young people in rural India face common challenges such as unemployment, social exclusion, and vulnerabilities. It is crucial to provide them with training opportunities to enhance their skills and guide them towards a better quality of life.

What is a Tentmaking ministry?

Tentmaking is a term used to describe the work of Christian individuals who dedicate themselves to spreading the Gospel while receiving minimal or no compensation for their efforts within the Church. Instead, these individuals take on other jobs, known as tentmaking, to support themselves financially. This approach to evangelism involves missionaries utilizing their skills and education to work full-time in the marketplace, rather than relying on financial support from the Church. The concept of tentmaking originates from the apostle Paul, who supported himself by making tents while preaching in Corinth (Acts 18:3).

This method allows missionaries to be self-sufficient and independent in their ministry work.

Engaging in tentmaking ministry in rural areas of North India can bring a fresh perspective, energy, and innovative ideas to address social issues and foster growth opportunities. The youth involved in tentmaking can make a significant impact by combining their passion for the Gospel with their skills and creativity to make a positive difference in their communities. Their receptiveness to change, energy, and enthusiasm are the driving forces behind development initiatives. They can identify and address their communities' challenges and develop sustainable solutions that benefit the community if appropriate guidance, motivation, and training are given. Young people are often seen as the future of their communities, and their involvement in rural community development initiatives is crucial in ensuring sustainable development in these areas. The core five roles of youth in rural community development in their village and how they can contribute to the overall development of their communities are:

The role of youth in rural development as innovators.

Young people are often more receptive to new ideas and unencumbered by traditional methods. They possess the ability to create innovative solutions to address challenges within their communities, such as implementing novel farming techniques or establishing businesses tailored to meet local demands.

The role of youth as agents of change.

Young people possess the vitality and enthusiasm necessary to instigate change within their communities. Through collaboration and mobilization of their peers, they have the ability to enact positive transformations. This can include initiatives focused on promoting environmental sustainability, as well as enhancing access to education and healthcare services.

The role of youth as entrepreneurs.

Young individuals have the ability to initiate and establish businesses, thereby generating new job opportunities within their communities. This not only leads to economic growth but also serves as a solution to the issue of young people migrating from rural areas to urban centers.

The role of youth is as advocates.

Young people have the power to empower their communities and raise awareness about the challenges faced in rural areas. By using their voices, they can advocate for policy changes and hold governments and other stakeholders accountable for their actions.

The role of youth is as leaders.

Young people have the opportunity to assume community leadership roles and actively engage in decision-making processes. By representing the interests of their peers, they can collaborate towards a common vision for the future of their community.

Role Youth as Good citizens

The role of youth as good citizens is crucial in shaping the future of society. With their energy, passion, and innovative thinking, young people have the power to drive positive change and make a lasting impact on their communities. By actively engaging in community service, participating in civic activities, and advocating for social justice issues, youth can contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable society. Additionally, being responsible citizens means respecting others, upholding laws and regulations, and contributing to the betterment of society through their actions. As young individuals transition into adulthood, they have the opportunity to lead by example and inspire others to embrace citizenship values such as empathy, integrity, and compassion. In doing so, they can help create a more connected and harmonious world for future generations to come.

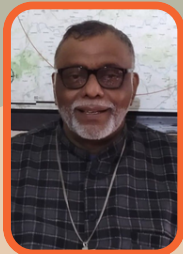
Conclusion

Young people are key to rural development through their creativity and energy.

The Kumbanad Institute of Technology should conduct a study to identify opportunities and establish projects to empower rural youth in North India by providing vocational training and collaborating with local organizations.

Dr. P J George

Former Director,
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University of Agriculture,
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PRAYAGRAJ, UTTAR PRADESH.



Village Knowledge Centre - Where inner growth meets physical strength!



The initiation of infrastructure for a Village Knowledge Centre in Mengittim village, located in the South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya, marks a significant step towards community development. This centre will serve as a hub for individuals to come together and share their ideas for the betterment of their community. The Village Knowledge Centre will house a non-formal education center that will cater to the educational needs of both children and adults. Operating from Monday to Friday, this center will provide a platform for learning and growth. Additionally, special gatherings for village residents will be held on Sundays, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

The foundation stone for this project was laid by Pastor Benny John, Overseer of the Church of God (FG), Central Eastern Region. The ceremony was attended by Dr. Giby Raphael, Associate Pastor of Faithcity Church in Kochi, and the CEO of Remote X Corporation, USA and Prof. Jacob Thomas an education Expert from Mumbai. Their presence underscores the importance of this initiative in promoting education, healthcare, and income generation activities within the community. Through various community development activities, the Village Knowledge Centre aims to transform Mengittim village into a model of excellence. This innovative approach will not only benefit the residents of the South Garo Hills district but also serve as a beacon of hope for other remote villages seeking to achieve sustainable development and spiritual enlightenment.

Guest House

Come stay with us and watch community grow!


A new guest house has been established in Rongringpal village, located in the South Garo Hills - a remote area with limited facilities for community development workers. This guest house will provide a much-needed accommodation option for workers, allowing them to stay in the area and carry out their work more efficiently.

In addition to providing lodging, this guest house will also serve as a central meeting point for community workers to gather, interact, and collaborate on development projects. The facility was officially inaugurated by Pr. Benny John, Overseer of the Church of God (FG), Central Eastern Region, in the presence of Dr. Giby Raphael, Associate Pastor of Faithcity Church and CEO of Remote X Corporation, USA.

The establishment of this guest house marks a significant step towards supporting community development efforts in the region, and will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the work being done by dedicated individuals in the area.



Ready to conquer the classroom like a true teacher warrior



A teacher training session was recently held at Gasa English Medium School in Dilma Chiading, East Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The focus of the training was on The Jesus Model Teaching, qualities that define a good teacher, and both soft and hard skills necessary for educators. Leading the discussions were esteemed professionals such as Dr. Giby Raphael, CEO of Remote X Corporation in the USA, Dr. P J George, Former Director of the Centre for Human Resource Development at Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences in Prayagraj, and Prof. Jacob Thomas, a retired Principal from the Indian Railways. Prof. Thomas is a recipient of two presidential awards from Dr. Abdul Kalam for his contributions to education and holds the top green certification award in India for his sustainability project. The training session proved to be invaluable for the teachers, helping them to enhance their knowledge and skills for more effective teaching practices.




The Vacation Bible School program was organized at Gasa English School. The program was coordinated by Raj and his team from Siliguri, along with Captain Mathew, Sister Sheba, and Pastor Rakbath Momin.

Empowering Tomorrow

The Mission of P R Baby Foundation

P R Baby Foundation is a non-profit organization Incorporated as section 8 (1) company under companies act 2013 and aslo an NGO under Niti Aayog, Government of India. We have been granted 80G status by the Income Tax Department (URN: AAOCP1413BF2024101), allowing donors to receive income tax rebates under Section 80G of the Income Tax Rules. This designation enables us to continue our important work and make a positive impact in community development activities.

CIN: U88900KL2023NP083840



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Living Root Bridges

Discovering Resilience and Innovation in Traditional Architecture



The Living Root bridges found throughout the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya are a testament to the self-sufficiency of the Khasi tribes and their deep connection with the forests. These unique bridges are constructed entirely from tree branches, trunks, and roots, showcasing the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the local people.

The process of building these bridges begins with carefully placing young, flexible aerial roots from Ficus Elastica trees into hollowed-out trunks of the Areca Catechu tree, a type of palm tree. These trunks not only provide essential nutrients and protection from the elements to the young roots but also act as a guide for their growth. A bamboo framework is used to support the entire structure during the initial stages of construction.

As the aerial roots grow stronger and thicker over time, the Areca Catechu trunks become unnecessary and are eventually removed. To further strengthen the bridge, a combination of stones, timber planks, leaves, and soil is

added to fill gaps and test the weight-bearing capacity of the living root structure. The humid climate of Meghalaya, along with the regular pedestrian traffic on the bridge, helps to compact the soil and dead load, enhancing the bridge's stability. After 15 to 30 years, the living root structure becomes robust enough to support significant weight without the need for the bamboo framework. Unlike traditional concrete bridges, Living Root bridges actually become stronger and more resilient with age and use, making them a sustainable and eco-friendly alternative for crossing rivers and valleys in the region.

Groundbreaking for Kindergarten Complex



Groundbreaking for the construction of new Kindergarten complex were inaugurated on 25 April 2024 by Dr. Giby Raphael at Gasa English Medium School, Dilma Chiadin, East Garo Hills, Meghalaya.



Kindergarten facilities for children are typically designed to be bright, welcoming spaces that promote learning and development in a fun and engaging way. These facilities often feature colorful classroom decor, child-sized furniture, and a variety of educational toys and materials to support hands-on learning. Many kindergartens also have outdoor play areas where children can run, jump, and explore nature. It's common for these facilities to have experienced teachers who specialize in early childhood education, creating a nurturing environment where young learners can thrive. Additionally, safety is always a top priority in kindergarten facilities, with measures in place to ensure the well-being of all students. Overall, kindergarten facilities provide a crucial foundation for young children as they begin their educational journey.



Kumbanad Institute of Technology: Where innovation meets education.



The newly renovated facilities of Kumbanad Institute of Technology were inaugurated by Sis. Gracy on 20/04/2024. A vocational training program will be organized for youths who have limited opportunities in society, identified from rural villages in Northern India. These youths will receive full scholarships for their training.

Upon successful completion, they will be guided to generate income for themselves and participate in community development projects in their villages.

The Philip John & Tom Philip Education Foundation (PCEF) was established in 1986 by two prominent businessmen from the USA, the late Mr. Philip John & the late Mr. Tom Philip. Their vision was to provide rural youths with the skills needed to generate income for their survival. The institute has successfully trained numerous rural youths and helped them earn a living. Unfortunately, the institute had to close during the COVID-19 pandemic.



The P R Baby Foundation shares a similar vision for rural India and has decided to continue the work of the Kumbanad Institute of Technology. Today, on 20/04/2024, the team is proud to inaugurate the activities with Mrs. Gracy, the wife of the late visionary Pastor P R Baby. We are hopeful that the institution will regain its former glory, equipping the next generation and fulfilling the commitment to the younger generations.