

**Workshop on Land Issues for Church Leaders**  
**26-27 May, 2009, Marathwada**

“I will give you and your children the land on which you are sleeping...” sharing the promise of the Lord, Rt Rev MU Kasab, Bishop of Marathwada inaugurated the two-day’s workshop for the Church leaders on land issues. It was jointly organized by Marathwada DBSS with the Diocese of Marathwada and CNI RCSA Pune on 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009 in St Phillip Church, Aurangabad.

In his inaugural speech, Bishop Kasab contemplating over the Lord’s assurance (Genesis 28:13) stressed on the importance of land in the lives of human beings. Giving example of *Jamin* as *Jaameen* (owned land serving as a bail/surety), he explained how land signifies the identity of an individual (and of the society too!) He also expounded the Mission of CNI SBSS & DBSS, citing the success stories from the field areas.

In next two-days, participants mainly comprising of the Diocesan & DBSS Board Members, Pastors and Members from the Congregation collectively worked in different groups developing clarity over the issue of land through Bible-study, group work, presentations, lectures, sharing of experiences, films and documentaries.

Rev PK Aksal, Coordinator, Marathwada DBSS engaged the first day’s Bible-study, stating the story of Naboth and King Ahab (1 Kings 21:1-16). “Sell my inheritance? No Never! The day I sell it... that day I’ll die” taking it as a central theme; he explained how a common man like Naboth asserted his right over the land and opposed the mighty king. Rev Aksal presented the current context of land as how government favouring the handful corporate has been snatching the lands away from the small farmers. He also shared the *gairaan* struggle, Marathwada is involved into...

Rev Ganesh Barve, Presbyter from Bhusaval Church simplified the Nazareth Manifesto and linked the mandate on today’s context. He said that this Manifesto should be the ultimate model to follow when we are planning to serve the people who are poor and in need. He also stressed that we must think beyond the routine rites and rituals and involve in His Mission guided by His wisdom. In next day’s Bible study, Rev Barve spoke on land struggle, citing scripture portions from Genesis 12, Joshua 10:40-43 and also narrating historical incidents from Sindhu Culture to the neo-liberal.

From the CNI Resource Centre for Social Actions on Land Rights and Dalit Studies, Pune team, Mervin Makhwan screened the films on SEZ Nandigram & Raigad and motivated the participants to identify similar issues concerning land and join the people’s struggle to fight for the rights. Sunil Mahajan shared on the NREGA while Vikram A Jadhav briefed about the CNI SBSS-DBSS’ present project phase *Speaking Out...* highlighting the Church Mission Engagement (CME) programme and its three models through which Congregation could engage in His Mission by being an Agent for Social Change. Presbyters Rev Shanti Mitra of Holy Trinity Church and Rev Ghule of St Philip Church moderated the sessions.

At the end of the workshop, participants held each other’s hands in unity, pledging to involve actively in the people’s struggles and prayed for the success of common man to restore his dignity and reinstate the sources of livelihood mainly land.