**Some explanatory notes on the Church of South India’s “Green Protocol for Green Discipleship”**

**Water Conservation**

Water pits and harvesting rainwater. Many CSI churches are built in large compounds – these compounds will often include housing for the pastor and sometimes other institutions such as schools (i.e. they are considerably larger than an English Churchyard). There is usually room in these compounds to set up containers to collect water from the church roof at times of heavy rain. However, the Church is here encouraging a process which will help direct the water through the soil to raise the water table for local wells – there is a short cartoon explaining this at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJaQUOj2Tg4>

Vetiver grass is used as a wind break or to trap soil and sediment, preventing them from washing away on terraced agricultural plantings as well as bare hillsides. Even on the apparently flat land of Vellore District there is still the problem of water runoff. If you are interested in this aspect, there is a lot of information on the Vetiver Network International website, including a detailed book online at <http://www.vetiver.org/PUBLICATIONS/Vetiver%20System%20for%20Soil%20and%20Water%20Conservation.pdf>

**Do not throw away plastic &**

**Fellowship Lunches**

This rejection of single use plastic will sound very familiar. Plastic is ubiquitous in India, even in the poorer village communities light weight unbreakable plastic jars and containers will be preferred above heavier traditional pots. The Church holds many more large scale events than we are perhaps used to here, and these will always include refreshments of some kind, often full meals for large numbers of people; the use of banana leaves as natural plates is already widespread and they can be easily and naturally disposed of afterwards.

**Planting &**

**Functions**

It is the Indian custom to welcome honoured visitors with garlands – these can be flowers or plastic, or shawls. A large scale celebration can result in significant expense in purchasing these items which are worn only for a few minutes, but are a sign of respect and affirmation. Bishop Sharma has instructed members of the Diocese to end this ancient custom, and instead plant saplings. Planting for the future is an important step towards re-greening the locality, and a symbol of future hope.

**Construction**

Many Christian communities in Vellore Diocese have physically outgrown their churches and it is not uncommon to attend a service where some of the congregation will be sitting outside, listening through windows or over loud speakers. Conversely, in poorer villages where the community is raising money for the church building, and perhaps physically building it themselves, it can take many years before a church project is completed. As well as the Eco issues raised here it should be noted that asbestos is used in cement in India, particularly for moulded materials such as corrugated roof sheets, wall panels, and pipes, and asbestos fibres can be a danger where these are damaged. These unhealthy materials are used in poorer homes, village churches and schools because they are seen as cost effective (and money-making for the cement companies)

**Farming**

In a rural Diocese such as Vellore much of the land is given over to farming. The Diocese runs an agricultural institute at Kassam which teaches better husbandry and farming techniques, as well as raising crops and livestock itself. In 2016 the then Director of the Agricultural Institute was interviewed by the pupils of Buckden School – you can see the interview at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhjVX7vtSf4&t=11s>

Linked to this must be the CSI “Handful of Rice” Movement which combats food poverty – see <https://csisynod.com/right-to-food.php> This has been of importance during the covid outbreak as people are thrown out of work, and the Diocese of Vellore teams have been distributing “dry rations” to families in need. This is also seen as an act of Christian witness.