

## Lamptaput Declaration of the EMFI 2019

1. The God of the Bible has a heart that feels for the poor. Most significantly, this is expressed in the Lord Jesus, who chose poverty. Through His life and teaching, He demands affirmative action from us.
2. The Good News of Jesus Christ is essential for the poor to enjoy abundant life in the now and forever.
3. A pro-active focus on the poor is a non-negotiable part of the New life in Christ which we have received by Grace through Faith. It is a core expression of our spirituality.
4. Our Lord considers pro-poorness as purity. Pro-poorness is accounted by our Lord as purity and as part of a holiness that is wholesome as compared to a narrow view of holiness restricted to 'ritual purity'.<sup>1</sup>
5. The poor are vulnerable to suffering and experience all aspects of suffering in an amplified manner compared to those who are better situated in life.
6. In India the poor are geographically concentrated in the Empowered Action Group States and Assam (EAG & Assam).<sup>2</sup>
7. Further, the poor are socially concentrated in certain communities- the Dalits and the Adivasis in the rural areas and among the immigrant slumdweller and Muslims in urban areas.
8. The magnitude of the problem of poverty demands the participation of the whole 'Body of Christ'.<sup>3</sup>
9. Those working among the poor and their supporter are both indispensable for the effectiveness of reaching out to the poor.
10. The Body of Christ is called to create a counter-culture where there is concern and action for equity.<sup>4</sup>
11. Healthcare services carried out as a ministry offer a unique opportunity for the Body of Christ to directly impact and change the lives of the poor.
12. Investments aimed at the poor have the highest transformational impact.<sup>5</sup>
13. Pro-Poor investments include commitment to education, training and 'capacity building' of individuals from disadvantaged societies to reach high levels of competency.
14. Pro-poor interventions for institutions include policies and practices such as Pro-active charity, devising systems which will make it inviting for the poor to come in to us and allocation of opportunities for the oppressed sections of society for studies and at work positions.<sup>6</sup>

I ..... therefore, declare that I am committed to be pro-poor in thought, word and deed, reordering my priorities, skills and resources towards the poor.

Signature

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<sup>1</sup> The holiness of God and the purity he asks of us are wholesome concepts. They include the ways in which we relate to God and with one another. Prophets have warned Israel continually on the emptiness of rituals without a true place for God in our hearts. It is easy to restrict the concept of purity with external measures of cleanliness, rituals and fasting alone. The prophets warn that this does not correspond with God's holiness which gives an important place for the concern for the poor. The Jubilee year, the continual reminder in the prophets to care for the poor, fatherless, widow and the alien, the teaching about 'true fasting' in Isaiah 58 are but some examples. In Lk 12, we have a piercing insight given by our Lord on what he considers purity. In contrast to the pharisees notion of washing vessels repeatedly with water, he says, '*take from what is in the vessel and give it to the poor, and all will be clean to you*'.

<sup>2</sup> The States of Rajasthan, UP, Uttarakhand, MP, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Assam have been found to have healthcare indices comparable to some countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. These States account for 50 percent of India's population, 61 percent of births, 71 per cent of infant deaths, 72 percent of under five deaths, and 62 per cent of maternal deaths in the country. The Maternal Mortality Rate in Kerala is 46 per Lakh, whereas the MMR in Assam is 237 per Lakh. Source: Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India 2014-16 – Census of India, [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)

<sup>3</sup> The 'Body of Christ' indicating the whole people of God, all who believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. In practice it includes clinicians, nurses, allied health professionals, educationists, agriculturalists, theologian, pastors, social scientists and all levels of staff.

<sup>4</sup> Equality, while being a noble concept will not be enough in dealing with oppressive structures which perpetuate discrimination and poverty. Equity involves affirmative action which may look 'biased'. Only such efforts result in lasting change. Equity goes beyond 'equality' and offers more to the disadvantaged.

<sup>5</sup> Investments here include infrastructure, finances and human resources.

<sup>6</sup> Measures like these will require for radical and constructive disruptions and not just incremental improvements.