



# XAVIER BOARD NEWSLETTER

August 1996

Vol 1 No. 1

*A publication of the Xavier Board of Higher Education in India*

## *Message from the President*

*Bangalore  
August 1996*

*It is with a feeling of great joy and a sense of fulfilment that we are able to launch this first issue of the **Xavier Board Newsletter**. It is hoped that through this Newsletter, a binding relationship will be fostered - not only between the Xavier Board and the member Catholic colleges in India, but also with the numerous regional, national and international agencies which are engaged in the field of education and faith formation.*

*The untiring work of Sr Ezechiel at the National Secretariat is complemented by the responsive enthusiasm of the Regional Co-ordinators and Principals of the member colleges. Through numerous programs and initiatives, the Xavier Board is committed to the cause of faith formation and value-strengthening of our students.*

*We solicit your active support in our endeavour and commend this publication to your institution and your prayers.*

*Dr. A F A Mascarenhas  
President*

---

**NATIONAL SECRETARIAT : The Xavier Board of Higher Education in India,  
31, Primrose Road, Bangalore 560 025, India. Tel : Int+91-80-5584020**



## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE 7th TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES

We, the participants of the Seventh Triennial Conference of Catholic Colleges organised by the Xavier board of Higher Education in India, gathered at the Nirmala Institute of Education, Panjim, Goa, from 18-21 May 1995, to discuss the theme "The emerging vision and thrust of Higher Education in India", deeply convinced of the centrality of Jesus Christ, affirm, with faith and hope, our responsibility to take up the challenges of a new vision of Christian Higher Education.

We are moved away from our ideal of making Christ the centre of our youth Education Ministry and sensitising them to meet the challenges posed by modern society. Therefore we must tap the inner resources of Youth to enable them to face the problems and challenges of our rapidly changing society. In order to achieve this goal we declare that we will:

- 1 Make Jesus Christ the centre of our Youth Educational Ministry by faith formation and offer more credible witness in our lives
- 2 Actively educate our students to the national priorities of social justice, eradication of poverty and illiteracy, promotion of communal harmony and concern for the environment.
- 3 Take a firm stand on Respect for Human Life from conception to its natural end, upholding and strengthening family values.
- 4 Make a concerted effort to reach out to the poor, through preferential admission policies for the under privileged and through sensitizing all students to the problems of the marginalised, motivating them to appropriate action.

- 5 Give top priority to the education and empowerment of women, enabling them to attain their rightful position in society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We plan to fulfill these objectives through the following action:

1. Conduct programmes, seminars, live sessions focussing on Jesus Christ and Christian Education
2. Conduct regular debates, street plays, symposia focussing on poverty, illiteracy, communal harmony.
3. Conduct special sessions and camps on concern for the environment as a gift of Nature's Creation to mankind
4. Conduct programmes on Family Life and Value Education
5. Conduct awareness programmes for the healthy development of the individual, with attention to stress management and adaptive coping skills to prevent drug and substance abuse, AIDS and other social problems.
6. Study the theological vision in the Apostolic Letter "Dignity and Vocation of Women", arrange to start a Women's Cell in the Campus, conduct studies on concerns of women and sensitize the staff and students.
7. The Xavier Board should promote Regional meetings, retreats and other programmes for Principals, Staff and student leaders.

**Suggestions** given to the secretariat by the Seventh Triennial Conference held at Goa, 18-21 May 95 include :



1. To communicate the resolution made at this conference to all the member colleges.
2. The member colleges will then be requested to send their action plans by a stipulated date.
3. An annual evaluation report in the form of a Questionnaire duly filled in by the member colleges would be necessary to assess the progress made by the colleges along the lines of the goals outlined.
4. A summary report of the progress made in this regard would be read out at the beginning of the next Triennial Conference.

---

## VITAL THRUSTS OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN ASIA / INDIA

---

*Text by : Rev. Fr. Gino Henriques, CSsR*

*Address given at Triennial Conference of Catholic Colleges at Goa in May 1995.*

**Introduction :** A school teacher once went to his guru and complained: "We live in a time of such corrupt politics, with wayward and unmanageable youth, a rising feminism coupled with unimaginable male chauvinism. The media promote values that are secularistic, materialistic and hedonistic while money assumes a supreme value. What should I do? How can I teach?" The guru remained silent as the teacher repeatedly questioned him. Finally he replied: "Look within".

The heart, the inner being, the core of one's inner self can direct one to the resolution of one's problems. One's inner being can guide one today out of the confusion, the turmoil of mind and emotion and the stress that assails modern man. It is one's inner self that makes one look at problems and turn them into challenges for oneself. This must be the approach that Catholic colleges need to take

as they seek for relevance and take up the vital thrusts that are needed for today. It is the spirit of man that gives life.

### 1. ASIA

Looking at Asia, the bishops of Asia at a plenary assembly in Bandung (1990) summed up our Asian realities under two general rubrics "a crisis of survival" the negative reality, and "a hope at the crossroads" the positive reality. They saw clearly the needs that emerge from these realities: the needs for a new type of politician and businessman and health worker and media person, the need for a new type of attitudes and values and development models based on cultures, new cultural and ethnic relationships, new social systems... (and I may add a new type of college and professor and lecturer). And the bishops add that the need for spiritual and social transformation of Asia is ever urgent.

After the family (and we need a new type of family), one of the best institutions to respond to the realities of Asia is Catholic education. In the past education has been one of the most visible ministries of the Church. "In most Asian countries, the Church's educational system is outstanding for its general excellence, discipline and religious environment, while respecting other faiths whose members usually constitute most of the student population" (Archbishop O.B. Quevedo at the FABC colloquium on Education). The challenge remains namely, that the institution of Catholic education in schools and colleges will continue the honorable tradition that it has inherited.

### 2. CHALLENGES

Some one has said : "While the ravages of modernity are beyond count, the promises of modernity too are beyond count". In taking up the challenges for relevant education in Asia, we need to work at doing away with



the former (ravages) to make the latter available to our people. Let us take a quick review of some of the ways that this can be done.

### **a. Education**

The world over, a word in common parlance in most organisational systems is "restructuring". This process in education takes different forms. There is talk of moving from information to formation and to transformation. Education is spoken of as value formation and as community building, as prophesy, as spirituality and above all as evangelization.

Such restructuring demands new models of education. More, they demand a paradigm shift in the whole area of education. This does not mean a discarding of all that was past. Rather, it is a development of the past in order to face the future through the present "crisis of survival" and "hope at the crossroads"

At the risk of over simplification let me explain. Every keen educator knows that his/her task/role in recent times has changed. The velocity of changes will demand from their students a preparation for two or three careers. The Information increase Impact demands a constant updating through the researches done. The electronic authority of the media not only gives competition to the educator but also demands its use for the electronic mindset of the students. The persuading-facilitator and not the mere provider-user is the role that most of the educators will be called upon to play. A more holistic rôle is demanded of the educator in the formation of the students as they have both parents at work or have only a single parent. The leap from authentic education to business where the vision is not wholesome education but only economic opportunities in business can frustrate educators. A multicultural and multireligious environment

demand of the educator the skills of dialogue to be imparted to the students. The massive poverty, underdevelopment and innumerable social injustices cry out to the educator to nurture and foster a social conscience in the students. At the risk of oversimplification I have mentioned some of the change factors in our society. You can add others, even more meaningful ones.

All these demands are indeed challenges. It is not asking an educator to play God. Yet, each can as a group and individually begin to work at the much needed paradigm shift. It will eventually prove that they were agents of change. The Church faced such a challenge a few centuries ago. The great educationist, Dr. J.P. Naik paid a tribute to the Christian contribution: "When the East India Company was unwilling to accept a direct responsibility for the education of the Indian people, the Christian Missions came forward as pioneers and established the first modern schools and colleges." As we approach the next millennium, the Church is called to play a similar prophetic and visionary role to bring to its educational institutions a relevance that offers hope to modern man.

### **b. Mission**

An insight that some Christian Churches and the Catholic Church received from their researches in the 1970's could be summed up thus: "Our Colleges have lost the purpose for which they were founded." Since then there have been many efforts to recapture the founding spirit and to introduce a sense of mission into the college campus. Xavier Board did play quite an important role in this area. Numerous motivational retreats and seminars and even the beginning of the Jesus Youth in Kerala attest to these efforts. In this regard it may be useful to review part of the final statement of a pan-Asian colloquium of Catholic chaplains in 1994. The title of the colloquium is striking: Accompanying the Youth in their Faith-Life Journey. Notice the



paradigm shift called for. It is not 'leading' or 'guiding' or 'helping' the youth, though one may appear to do these things. It is "accompanying" the youth. This implies a 'walking together', a 'journey together', 'a companionship role'.

### Towards a New Asia

Having listened to the call of God to the youth in Asia, we firmly believe that the future of Asia lies in its youth.

With the Holy Spirit as Companion, we the Campus Chaplains and Ministries gathered at this colloquium, appeal to all those involved in youth ministry to accompany the youth in their faith life journey enabling them to:

- grow in a deep and personal relationship with God
- find their identity and meaning in life
- live authentically the Gospel values.

Let us, therefore, earnestly, commit ourselves to work with the youth as they:

- open themselves to the empowerment of the Spirit
- strive to become responsible leaders in society
- act as instruments of God in building His Kingdom in Asia.

This statement was drawn up not just by ministers but principally by those who had exercised campus ministry among the youth. It is significant in that it calls forth a paradigm shift in the chaplain or minister, namely, from the paternalistic to the accompanying attitude in youth ministry. Furthermore, this accompanying is not done

merely by one's personal expertise. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is all important, as He is the One who accompanies both the Chaplain/Minister and the youth. And, lastly, one sees that commitment to mission is called for. Through the empowerment of the Spirit one's mission is to be imbued by the values of the gospel, to exercise leadership responsibly in society, and to build God's Kingdom. Here we notice that leadership is called for not just for the Church but for society. And evangelisation is not only proclamation of Gospel values, but also working with all peoples to build God's Kingdom.

Third challenge is indeed big. In a world where 30% of the gross product is related to the "structures of sin" (organised crime, drug traffic, financial crime, pornography, fraud, gambling, military spending, tax cheating, shoplifting, computer crime), where 80% of the world's young people (1.4 billion) are growing up in non-Christian settings or non-Christian homes, and where the great majority make life-shaping decisions before the age of 20, the challenge of mission and evangelisation is indeed great.

Each college, each department in every Catholic college, every professor and lecturer should remember their call to holistic education-formation of the youth. We need to do it together. I conclude with a story. A young boy was lost in a plantation of sugarcane. Everyone ran helter skelter to find him, but to no avail. At last, someone said: Let's hold hands and comb the plantation area by area. It was not long before they found the boy. But it was too late. He had died. The lesson is : While the ravages of modernity are beyond count, the promises of modernity too are beyond count. As we counter the ravages and reap the promises **let us do it all together.**



**FROM THE  
GENERAL SECRETARY**

22nd August, 1996

Dear Principal,

At the beginning of this academic year I send you, your colleagues and students warm greetings from the Xavier Board. May this year be filled with God's abundant blessings for your institution and for each one of you.

You will kindly recall that the main thrust of last year's triennial conference was: "Bringing Christ back to the Campus". We tried to implement the spirit of this motto through various study sessions, seminars and workshops on topics like Respect for life, Human Rights Issues, Women's Issues etc. conducted in different colleges in the country. I hope these reflections have deepened your awareness of standing for these values even at the cost of considerable sacrifice. As our country is facing more and more violation of these basic rights of human beings it is imperative for us to continue to conscientize our youth to seek for more concrete terms in each college according to the demands existing in region.

**Regional Meetings** of 95-96 were held at the following places:

1. Karnataka at Mysore
2. North Kerala at Thrissur
3. South Kerala at Alappuzha
4. Tamilnadu at Tuticorin
5. Andhra Pradesh at Eluru
6. Bombay, Goa & Gujarat at Bombay
7. Delhi, M.P., U.P., H.P. & Rajasthan at Simla.

West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, Manipur and Tripura are trying to conduct one in the near future.

Once again let me request you to plan a regional meeting before October'96. I know it is difficult to find time in your busy schedule. Still it is good to find time to share, to encourage, to review, to research jointly how to be effective in our field to bring our youth to the forefront to stand for justice, love and compassion to build up God's kingdom here in our time. I am very grateful to you all, for working so hard to conduct the regional meetings in the last academic year. You have done wonderfully well. These regional meetings enabled the participant colleges to come to know each other more closely and to get a feedback from the students on the programmes we conducted for them. They also expressed their expectation regarding what the colleges should offer them. I am sure you will do the same this year also.

**Non-Formal Education of women** is picking up momentum in North India. The training program for the North Indian Colleges was held on 29th and 30th March 96 at Jesus and Mary College, Delhi. Six Catholic Colleges of North India participated.

1. Loretto College, Calcutta
2. Ursuline College, Lohardaga
3. Holy Cross College, Ambikapur
4. Women's College, Patna
5. Sophia College, Ajmer
6. Jesus and Mary College, Delhi

There has been a very poor response to our request for Colleges to participate in the "**Sister Hedwige Annual Award**". Please do the needful urgently.

We request your prayers for this work of the Secretariat.

Devotedly yours,

**Sr M. Ezechiel, CMC**  
Secretary.



## **ANNUAL BOARD MEETING ON 9 / 10 DECEMBER 1995 AT JAMESHEDPUR**

The Annual meeting of the Xavier Board was held on 9-10 December 1995 at Jamshedpur. The meeting was well attended and serious issues on the agenda were discussed. The members emphasised that all programs of the Xavier Board should focus on faith formation and should aim to form leaders who are morally upright, socially conscious and nationally intergrated. "Experiencing Jesus in Campus" forms an important dimension. The Board noted the successful programmes of the Jesus Youth groups in Kerala where they have not only conducted special programmes and prayer sessions but also responded and helped in crises situations

Members of the Board noted that more attention needs to be paid to the men's colleges where there is over-politicisation, value degradation, lack of committed staff-leaders, money mindedness etc, leading to confusion and calamity. The members discussed the role of media in faith formation and the need to carefully/creatively involve ourselves with the youth.

Members of the Board had extensive discussions on ways and means to conscientise campus staff and students regarding various concerns. The Board noted that the Xavier Board projects on "Non-formal education of Women" helped in the empowerment of women. The members also spelt out the need to promote by all means a culture of life-a true respect for all life and especially human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.

The meeting also discussed the financial management of its meagre resources and suggested some means of augmenting a corpus fund. The need was also expressed to discover and develop talent and to train catholic students to compete in national and professional exams.

The excellent arrangements for the Board meeting and the various related visits and activities are due to the untiring efforts of Fr. Hilary Lobo SJ, Principal of Loyola College of Education, Jamshedpur, who spared no efforts to see to the minute details.

## **SUMMER PROGRAMMES OF XAVIER BOARD**

Following previous tradition, three relevant summer programmes were held by the Xavier Board at Bangalore. The response from the staff and students of the member colleges was very positive, with intense participation of the candidates in all the sessions. The programmes held include:

1. A "guided spirituality retreat" for the college teachers from 23 to 26 April 1996 at Maria Bhavan, Bangalore. This was conducted by Fr. Anto Porathur SVD.
2. A programme on "Communication skills-interpersonal relations" from 25-28 May 1996, conducted by Fr. S. Jayanathan and team, at Maria Bhavan, Bangalore.
3. A youth Camp - "Challenges to fullness of life by becoming sharers of good news"-conducted by Fr. Joe Arimpur, SDB. Over 60 students of various institutions enjoyed and participated very actively from 16-20 May 1996.



**Other programmes** conducted through Xavier Board include :

1. A meeting of all Principals of Catholic Colleges in Bangalore, to discuss details of various programmes on 26th July 1995.
2. "The motivation of a teacher in Catholic Colleges" on 22nd September 1995 at St. Josephs, Bangalore.
3. "Human Sexuality and Pro-life issues" - on 1st December 1995 at Christ College Bangalore, conducted by Dr. M.M. Mascarenhas and team from CREST.

### **REGIONAL MEETINGS OF THE XAVIER BOARD**

After a gap of many years, we are happy to inform you that seven (out of eight) regions of the Xavier Board have conducted their regional meetings during the academic year 1995-96 and as desired by the Triennial Conference of Catholic Colleges

These regional meetings included :

1. Karnataka Region at Mysore
2. Northern Region at Shimla
3. North Kerala Region at Thrissur
4. Tamil Nadu Region at Tuticorin
5. Andhra Region at Elluru
6. Western Region at Bombay
7. South Kerala Region at Alappuzha

We are confident that, given the dynamism and untiring efforts of Fr. Hilary Lobo, the NE Region will soon hold its regional meeting.

These regional meetings have indeed fulfilled a very important function, besides strengthening the network of the colleges. The staff in a particular region, found it possible to discuss issues of special relevance to a region and suggest concrete solutions.

Some of the important issues emerging from these regional meetings include:

1. Regular programmes on faith formation in all colleges. Some steps should also be taken to initiate some dialogue-programs with non-Christian students.
2. The need to intensify groups like the Jesus Youth, to plan and conduct prayer-seminars and regular prayer meetings in various individual colleges or groups of colleges in an area.
3. Greater awareness programmes on ecology and involvement of staff and students in environmental and ecological programs.
4. Regular Christian doctrine classes should be scheduled at prime time and should feature dialogue-discussions with the students.
5. Catholic colleges must arrange for staff and students to be engaged in pro-life activities and develop a true respect for life.
6. Sound programmes of value education are required and obnoxious programmes on TV, Radio should be opposed and criticized.
7. Regular youth camps to foster faith foundation and greater love for the person of Jesus.

