



XAVIER BOARD NEWSLETTER

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Christmas Greetings

*May the Joy and Peace of the Child Jesus at
Christmas bring you much cheer in the New Year*

President's Message

A fruitful year has passed, a year filled with action-programs in many Catholic Colleges, aimed at deepening the spirituality of the youth. We are very glad that the youth has moved to form a National Campus Ministry which has held very sneunful programs.

The Xavier Board is very aware of the plight of the teachers in the Catholic Colleges. Much more needs to be done to improve their academic excellence, their financial security and their human value formation.

We wish our students, teachers, principals and management a Happy Christmas and a Joyful New Year.

Dr. A F A MASCARENHAS

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HIGHER EDUCATION

Sr. Ignatius Mary

Dept. of English, Fatima College, Madurai

We are on the threshold of the twenty-first century and therefore it is essential to look forward to gear up education to meet the imperatives of technical upgradation and international competitiveness. In this rapidly changing scenario, we are moving towards newer concepts in education such as vocationalization, entreperneurial system, globalisation of education, community colleges and quality education.

Vocationalisation is a major transformation in education and cannot be achieved without important structural and functional changes in the whole educational set up. It provides opportunities to develop skills which help the learners to master specific job-oriented skills. Well-planned and systematic vocational education helps the students to discover their talents and work towards a career while they are in their student life.

Entreperneurial education can be introduced into the three year degree course. This should be in addition to their academic attainment. Separate programmes have to be devised to equip them with sufficient knowledge, techniques and tools to work out technical feasibility, economic viability and marketability of their ideas and products. Teachers have to be given orientation for industrial linkage with these courses. So far, our university level of education created job-seekers rather than job-makers.

Globalization challenges universities to respond respectively to change and mobility in the world job market. Overseas students studying at our centres of higher education are the medium through which we can export higher education. Many universities from developed countries such as U.K., Australia are now offering their educational programmes that are established. India has the credibility associated with a western degree. This offers direct competition to the Indian education system on Indian soil. The globalisation will not produce successful results unless Indian educational institutions and their degrees are recognised and accredited by other countries.

Rev. Fr. Xavier Alphonse holds the view that community college would be a new educational alternative offering solution to the educated unemployed. Community colleges can give a paradigm shift from the concept of elitist transfer of knowledge to a more industrialised concept.

Assessment and Accreditation is the need of the hour in order to research the track of 'quality education'. It inculcates the spirit of quality through self-study and external appraisal. The process of assessment and accreditation is expected to improve the quality of education.

The problem of job-seeking has assumed alarming proportions. A new vision of higher education is needed in order to respond to the newly emerging expectations of the society. Institutions have to decide to take up various aspects and go deep in order to arrive at new approaches and processes. This would give a new lead to face the challenges of the twenty-first century higher education.

BOARD MEETS AT AMBIKAPUR

It was a conscious decision to recognise the hard work under difficult conditions done by Catholic Colleges in the tribal areas of India, that prompted the Xavier Board to have its annual meeting from 14 - 17 November 1997 at Holy Cross Women's College, Ambikapur, Surguja Dist. in Madhya Pradesh. Fourteen members of the Board plus some student members travelled to Bilaspur by train and were then transported by road, through thick, green, luscious forests, waterfalls, rivers and dams - on to Moghra where they were traditionally received by tribal students with song and dance and there on to Ambikapur. The long journey of 240 kms by road was matched by the warm welcome by Sr. Angela Lukose, the Holy Cross Sisters, teachers and students, into the beautiful and secure campus of Holy Cross College.

A quick conducted tour of the College made us aware of the pioneering strides and especially designed programs which empowered the young tribal women to become successful and charming

future wives and mothers with a wealth of skills and values to enrich family values and family income. The simple and effective quadrangular design of the building was put to maximum efficient use by the authorities of the College. One could sense a very happy and vibrant college community, courteous and polite, intelligent and endeavouring, charming and culturally conscious. A visit to the coal mines collieries was a reminder of the stark realities under which our tribals now have to work.

The Xavier Board discussed important items on the agenda. The next Triennial Conference of Catholic Colleges was to be held at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai (Madras) from 21 - 24 May 1998 with the theme "Preparing the Catholic University College to face the challenges of the Third Millennium". Board members were happy to note the multiplicity of programs being arranged by the Xavier Board and aimed towards Campus Ministry, with a view to improve the spiritual welfare and human value system of students.

The Xavier Board took special note of the hostile conditions under which Catholic institutions function in some of these areas in North India and especially of the organized fundamentalist propaganda against Christians, leading to arrests and murder of missionaries. It resolved to register a strong protest to the relevant authorities.

Members of the youth present at the meeting detailed some of their programs and the Xavier Board resolved to support these programs of prayer and fulfilment both financially and through communication. The Board also chalked out a strategy to help and support the College teachers in their struggle to better themselves both academically and in their value system. The members of the Board specially congratulated Sr. Ezechiel, the Secretary, for her untiring efforts to secure a second phase grant for non-formal education of women and for other grants to support faith forming sessions for youth and teachers.

Bishop Patras Minj SJ of Ambikapur addressed the members of the Board and shared his views on Higher Education in India. Members of the Xavier

Board were full of admiration for the leadership and guidance provided by Sr. Angela Lukose, Principal of Holy Cross Women's College and member of the Xavier Board, providing meaningful opportunities to so many young tribal women in India.

MY EXPECTATIONS FROM THE XAVIER BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN INDIA.

*Most Rev. Patras Minj, SJ, DD
Bishop of Ambikapur*

Most respectable Professors, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, let me most warmly welcome you all, coming from different parts of the country, in my beloved Catholic diocese of Ambikapur. Secondly, this morning I feel highly honoured to address this elite group of educationalists very briefly on the great responsibilities entrusted to you by the Church of this continent to really form and educate the youth of today.

Achievements : It is indeed a prestige to conceive of and to feel proud of the most precious contributions imparted to the nation through our Christian educational institutions spread throughout the country. We have widely taught the nation in all fields of high and quality learning. We have achieved to produce top class world leaders, doctors, scientists and sportsmen and women alike. Even today, some of you will have the exact statistics, we have been excellently successful and busy in literacy work activities for thousands in the entire country. However, sad to say, India probably ranks one among the lowest in the world literacy rate.

Failures : It is quite sickening to know the youth of today, especially the learned and the educated ones who project such a dark, dismal and grim future. There is so much breach of human moral values among the youth of today. Culture of disrespect, laziness and lethargy prevails and is woefully ruining brilliance and talents that exists in our Indian youth of today. Evil and all sorts of inhuman atrocities

and heinous crimes, such as, just to mention a few, theft, murder, rape, dacoity, bribery, exploitation and so on and so forth, are creeping in and are becoming, as if, part and parcel of their daily life. These crimes are committed by the very youth whom we have been educating in our schools and colleges. I believe we are compelled to pause and seriously reflect on the truth whether we have been truly able to achieve the goal entrusted to us.

Future Thrust : Let us evaluate a bit whether any good or any tangible progress is achieved through the Rajiv Gandhi Shikcha Mission (Nation's literacy Program) enforced throughout the country. Or whether it is an eyewash with absolutely no fruit to yield to the rank and file of the nation. Aren't we too dragged to the rut and instead of doing good escalating harm to the literacy system? Are we only teaching or really educating the mass? We must accept our failure if we are unable to inculcate Christian values to the students in our institutions. We must toil hard for the betterment of the society. We must be leaven in the bread to eradicate total illiteracy and the increase of shameless and vulgar culture, which some boast of, of evil in the society.

CAMPUS MINISTRY PROGRAMS

While pursuing the central mission of the Xavier Board to tend to the spiritual welfare and human value formation of students in Catholic member colleges, the Xavier Board Secretariat has pursued a series of important events, organized mainly by enlightened youth.

■ In July 1997, the President and Secretary of the Xavier Board met with a core group of the National Campus Ministry team at Loyola College, Chennai. The youngsters, some of them full-time into the campus ministry, unfolded a concrete plan of action and the Xavier Board assured them of financial and organisational support.

The National Campus Ministry is a youth initiative which endeavours to implant a burning

love for God and the Church in Catholic College students. The objectives are :

- To motivate Catholic students to witness to their faith.
- To provide every student with an opportunity to experience Christ.
- To form a National Resource team to provide formation to regional leaders and to create a network amongst the regions.
- To provide programs where ministry formation of students takes place.

■ The National Campus Conference was held from 4 - 7 September 1997 at Loyola College Campus, Chennai. Catholic Colleges from 10 states in India responded to the circular from Xavier Board, by sending representative groups for the conference. About 210 students from various parts of India enthusiastically participated in a well planned program of prayer, reflection, music and action. The resource persons brought an awareness of evangelisation in the campus and Christian formation of students in Colleges. These students worked out an action plan for the coming weeks and months to come.

■ Following discussions and analysis of this meeting, it was decided to arrange two regional campus conferences, one at Delhi for the North and one at Bangalore for the South.

■ The North Regional "Youth Fest '97" was organized at DonBosco School, Alaknanda, New Delhi, from 29th October to 2nd November 1997. An incredible number of 500 young participants attended, including 200 college students, 100 Nursing students and 200 working youth. Through a progress of prayer, reflection, music, bible study and prayer, all the youth were totally involved in the program and they have evolved a regional based short term and long term programs in North India.

The South Regional "KAINOS '97" was held at the DVK Auditorium, Christ College, Bangalore. Through music that breathes life, sharing that

touches life, visuals that paint life and persons who live life, 256 participants from all the states in South India shared their talent in splendid enthusiasm and vigour. With sessions on personality development, the personality of Jesus, Christian leadership, Prayer, Sacraments, Adoration, the call to Evangelize to shine out, the participants were strengthened in their spiritual values and the need to share Jesus with so many others in the Campus.

We ask you to continue to pray for and support the success of these campus ministry initiatives.

HOLY CROSS WOMEN'S COLLEGE, AMBIKAPUR

A jewel in the necklace of Catholic Education in India

Tucked away in Surguja District of Madhya Pradesh, in the middle of green lush forests and tribal area, this College was established in 1971 by the Society of Holy Cross Sisters of Hazaribagh. Established to foster leadership, to promote higher education and to empower tribal young women to gainfully utilize opportunities, the Holy Cross Women's College has taken joint studies in the last 26 years, under the dynamic leadership of Sr. Angela Lukose, the Principal.

The College offers a variety of courses, including degree courses in Arts, with Hindi Literature, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, History & Political Science, in Home Science including First Aid and Home Nursing, Human Development, Microbiology, Home Management, Fibre Science, Food and Nutrition and BSc in Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. There are also certificate courses in typing, shorthand, music, weaving, embroidery, mushroom cultivation, beautician, tailoring, fruit and vegetable preservation, etc and also new programs such as integrated Health and Nutrition program in ten villages in Bhaiyatham Block, Core Group activities re-elected to Dharma Dharte Indore and caring for mentally handicapped by the psychology department. The college offers innovative physical training including Karate and

Adventure activities on land, mountains and jungle, on water and in air, besides NSS, Adult literacy events and Day Care Creches.

The Campus includes not only the College but also a large school and many hostels. With functional buildings and plenty of trees and flowers, the whole atmosphere is conducive to learning. The students are polite, clever and fond of their tribal culture. The teachers are enthusiastic and active, innovative in their teaching and guiding the young women students. Together with their dynamic and outstanding principal Sr. Angela Lukose, the teaching & non teaching staff and the Holy Cross Community form one well-knit family guiding the Inter-faith peace cell and the women's cell.

It is a real joy to feel the pulsations and vibrant vigour with which all concerned utilize their time and energy most optimally, trying to better themselves and all around them. The Madhya Pradesh Govt. and the University of Bilaspur have shown their appreciation of this outstanding institution. The Xavier Board and the Catholic Church in India is truly proud to recognize the value system that guides all the activities of Holy Cross College, Ambikapur.

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

Sr. Ezechiel CMC, Secretary

Twenty years ago, E.F. Schumacher wrote in his catchline, 'Small is Beautiful': "With a name like mine, I find it easy to understand that to be a good shoe-maker it is not enough to know a lot about making shoes, you also have to know about feet. The shoe made for a big fellow does not fit the foot of the little fellow. The small foot needs a different shoe, not an inferior one, but one of the right size".

Applying this thought to CHRISTMAS, we are reminded that Jesus came with His message of Salvation, universal though it was to the whole humankind, but to be applied to every human person in the context of the cultural situation in which he/she was found. His message was given through the

Angels to the simple Shepherds, while it was through a Bright Star that He communicated the same message to the Searchers from the East. While the message of His birth deeply perturbed Herod, it brought great joy to people like Zachariah and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna who were awaiting the redemption of Israel. While the Word became flesh in the womb of Mary, He made John the Baptist leap for joy in the womb of Elizabeth. Whereas the ignorance of His incarnation made Joseph, the husband of Mary pass through the ordeal of doubt, suspicion and anxiety, the message of the Angel brought him assurance, peace and joy.

Jesus came to touch the untouchable; by His touch He started the healing in the wounded. The touch of a human hand brings a feeling of acceptance, comfort, and courage to the one who receives it. Jesus ate with the tax-collectors, sinners and prostitutes. He noted and appreciated the small coin put in the treasury by a poor widow. A word of peace from Him liberated the adulteress woman. He healed the crippled woman on a Sabbath Day without her asking for it.

Today, the message of His birth is heard in the cries of the poor and the oppressed, calling for justice, the refugees seeking for a homeland and the unloved seeking for acceptance. As the paralytic languished at the pool of Bethesda having no one to drop him on the moving water, the youth of today look for guides who can show them the way which gives meaning to their lives. CHRISTMAS for us in the field of education is to respond to this longing of the student community through our inspiring example infused with the message of Jesus, God made Man.

CHRISTMAS comes into our lives every day, every moment, through every person we meet, every stranger we greet, every voice in the Universe. Mother Teresa said : "I feel like a little pencil in God's hand. He does the writing; He does the thinking; He makes the movement. I have only to be a pencil and nothing else".

CHRISTMAS brings an attitudinal change in our outlook, a shake-up in our value system, an upheaval in our expectations as the following story tells:

Once God decided that it was time to end the world; so He called together those whom He considered the three most influential people in the world - Clinton, Fidel Castro and Bill Gates. "The world will end", God told them. "You must go tell the people".

President Clinton made a live statement on CNN. "I have good news and I have bad news", he said. "The good news is that we have been right, there is God. The bad news is that He is ending the world".

Fidel Castro sent out a world wide message to all Communists: "I have bad news and worse news", he said. "The bad news is that we have been wrong all along - there is a God. The worse news is that we won't need any more revolutions".

Bill Gates got on his computer and sent out a worldwide E-mail on the Internet: "I have good news and I have better news", he wrote. "The good news is that God thinks I am one of the three most influential people in the world. The better news is that we don't have to upgrade Windows '95".

May CHRISTMAS bring you and me just the right message we need for today...!

NEWS FLASH

Rev. Sr. Ezechel CMC, the Secretary of the Xavier Board, has just been elected as Provincial superior in her province of the CMC congregation. We congratulate her, wish her a fruitful apostolate and as she leaves us we thank her for her selfless service to Xavier Board in the last three years.

SR. HEDWIGE ANNUAL AWARD

Applications from principals of Catholic Degree Colleges are invited towards the "Sr. Hedwige Annual Award for the best college that brings Christ to the campus".

The Terms and Conditions of the Award:

1. A College should conduct a programme of this kind for its staff or students or administration either singly or in collaboration with other Catholic Colleges.
2. It should have a clear purpose of inspiring the participants with the person and values of Jesus Christ.
3. It should have obtained prior sanction and financial assistance, from the Xavier Board.
4. From among the various projects approved by the Xavier Board, a screening committee appointed by the Board would select the programme that is considered most effective in attaining the declared objective.
5. A cash award equivalent to double the contribution offered by the Xavier Board for the selected project would be granted to the winning College.
6. This amount is used by the winning College for organizing further programmes in the same line.
7. The College is expected to send a report to the Xavier Board after carrying out the programme with the approval of the Board.

Please send in your applications by 15th January 1998, addressed to the Secretary, Xavier Board of Higher Education in India, 31, Primrose Road, Bangalore - 560 025.

COLLEGE PREPARATION FOR KRISTU JAYANTI 2000

In the plan of our preparation for the Great Jubilee 2000, the year 1998 is devoted to the HOLY SPIRIT.

We suggest the following program of preparation in our colleges.

- Holy Spirit, the written, spoken and living Word
- The Spirit gives life
- The Spirit guides us into all truth
- The Spirit teaches all things
- The Spirit means death of the body
- The Spirit enables us to pray
- We are sons & daughters of the Father
- The Spirit calls us to love.
- The gifts of the Spirit empowers us to love.

Each college is requested to work out a program to cover these aspects in 1998. We shall be grateful for a copy of your plan of action.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDIA

Bangalore, September 20, 1997

MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

We, the Bishop members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, gathered together in Bangalore for our meeting, wish to address this message to all our Catholic brothers and sisters, as well as to all our brothers and sisters of this country, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Indian Independence, though individually we did this on August 15, 1997.

We are grateful to almighty God for the gift of freedom from colonial rule fifty years ago, and for all the blessings showered on us during these years.

Among the most precious of these blessings are the maintenance of the unity of our country, the absence of war, of gradual increase in material well being in the nation, industrial and economic progress and the preservation of democratic values. We are happy that the acceptance of pluralism in various dimensions of life, the affirmation of moral and spiritual values have continued to be the ethos of our country of the legislature and of the judiciary.

At the same time, we look at the nation, we are painfully aware of the contrasts between prosperity of some and poverty of others, between those who have enjoyed a higher level of nutrition, learning, medicare and education on the one hand, and those who suffer from malnutrition, homelessness, lack of basic medical and educational facilities on the other. Violence, injustice, exploitation of various types, corruption, communalism, fundamentalism and environmental destruction stalk this land. Fortunately there is in many quarters, a feeling of concern at the sad plight in which we find ourselves on this jubilee of our independence.

In the face of this situation, far from giving in to feelings of hopelessness, we must be challenged afresh, by our faith in our country and the teaching of Our Lord Jesus to work with renewed vigour towards transforming our motherland into a new society of justice, peace and love, remembering the efforts of those who worked for our freedom, beginning with Mahatma Gandhi.

The Catholic community has consistently sought to make its contribution to nation building. This it has done through Christian presence and the radiation of authentic Christian values, its contribution to education and health care, through its extensive network of schools and hospitals. Its contribution to

defense of the country and its modernization, to the study and growth of Indian languages and culture, its involvement in people's movements and above all, through its emphasis on concern for, and service to the poorest, exemplified so powerfully by the life of Mother Teresa, are evident. This we will continue to do in collaboration with all persons of good will.

As we prepare ourselves for the Krist Jayanti 2000, we earnestly invite all, specially our Catholic brethren to apply themselves with new zest, to enhance the quality of life in our country in all its varied aspects. The historical situation of our day, urges us to devote ourselves to the ministry of building of a secular community, of reconciliation and harmony among all groups, for the defense of life from the first moment of its conception to its last breath, to the eradication of poverty, and to the care of the most abandoned and deprived persons in society, to the liberation and empowerment of women, to the purification and preservation of culture and to the effective empowerment of silent and suppressed groups, in search of their rightful place in society.

To begin with, this renewed dedication to our country will find expression in each family, in every parish and diocese throughout the country; and then, in our regional and national bodies. Through all this, we shall strive, in faith, hope and love, to bring to our country the spirit of Jesus which is characterized by sacrifice and loving service which makes us all brothers and sisters, children of our common Father. The Lord of history, through his Resurrection, always encourages us with a vision of hope; and the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose solemnity falls on 15th August, our Independence Day, will continue to be our powerful support.

