

# **NATIONAL LEVEL WORKSHOP ON CHRISTIANITY AND INDIAN CULTURE**

4th August 2013, Siliguri

Salesian College, Silliguri Campus hosted a four day national level workshop on Christianity and Indian Culture from the 1st of August to the 4th of August. The workshop was organised by Salesian College, Sonada Campus in collaboration with the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi, who partly sponsored the programme. This workshop originally planned for Salesian College, Sonada but rescheduled to Siliguri Campus was inaugurated by his grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Lepcha, Bishop of Darjeeling. The programme saw the likes of Prof. T. K. Oommen (Padma Bhushan), professor emeritus at Jawaharlal Nehru University and chairman of Schumacher Centre, New Delhi, Prof. Susan Viswanathan, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, consultant to the World Council of Churches, Geneva, an eminent sociologist, author of many sociological works and also a fictional writer, Prof. Ashis Nandy, noted sociologist and clinical psychologist, currently associated with Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, the professor is also associated with many universities and centres in Europe and the United States of America, Prof. Virginius Xaxa, member of the National Advisory Council (NAC) headed by Smt. Sonia Gandhi, and Deputy Director of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati Campus, Prof. Sanal Mohan, noted ethnographer and social historian, associate professor at School Social of Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, and Prof.

Rowena Robinson, social anthropologist from IIT Mumbai and Guwahati. These scholars chaired and discussed the various papers presented during the workshop.

A number of other eminent scholars of from all over India and the students & faculty of Salesian College participated in this programme. A total number of forty three papers were presented apart from various plenary sessions and panel discussions. The topics discussed were culture, education, Indian society, tribes, literature, social justice/ social work & art in relation to Christianity and its value systems percolating into Indian cultures.

Discussions such as the influence of Christianity on the Lepcha Culture with reference to Christian literature being translated into Lepcha literature and on artists like Angelo Fonseca & Jyoti Sahi using Indian aesthetics to depict Christian themes were particularly eye openers when viewed from Indian and local perspective.

During these four days, an effort was made, through the presentations, talks and panel sessions to study and identify the influence of Indian culture on Christianity and vice versa and also to understand the role of Christianity as a catalyst in social development in this country. The students of the Salesian College, Siliguri Campus also organised cultural events for the participants, which served as a welcome break from the intellectual discussions.

The programme came to a close with a panel discussion on the future of Christianity and Indian culture and the scope of a study centre for Christian Culture, here. The discussion managed to roughly outline various roles for the study centre namely, as a centre of archives, information, research, academics, publications, programmes and finally a centre for the promotion of culture and performing arts.

The programme can be considered as a new dawn in the development & promotion of Indian ‘CULTURES’, with special focus to the cultures of the North East India and how Christians want to act as catalysts in such an endeavour. Fr. Renoy Joseph of the dept. of Philosophy (Salesian College Sonada) as the convener together with Mr. Biju Mathew of dept. of Political Science (Salesian College-Siliguri Campus) as the organizing secretary under the guidance of the principal Fr Prof George Thadathil and support of the management Fr Dr Nirmol Gomes, Rector, Fr Dr Mathew George, Bursar and Fr Dr James Chacko brought the workshop to its successful completion.

Patrick Johnson  
Department of Management

## **Response From Participants**

Dear Fr. Geroge,  
Greetings from Arockiasamy Xavier, of St.Joseph’s College, Tiruchi.

I came back to Tiruchi safe and sound. This is just to appreciate you wholeheartedly and thank you sincerely for organizing the workshop very efficiently in a professional manner. It was meticulously planned and perfectly executed even amidst so many odds and obstacles. All of us came back with very pleasant experiences of Siliguri seminar, though we missed Darjeeling trip and Sonada stay. Though

the seminar was very tight we never regretted for it. We were fully present and learnt a lot.

I sincerely thank you for your constructive initiatives and the proactive role you play towards creating a secular space for Christianity that is needed very much today in the country. We all will contribute to our level best. We see an inspirational leadership in you. This will, surely, ignite our minds to materialize the vision that you proposed in our places in a smaller level.

Thanking you

With kind regards and prayerful wishes.

Arockiasamy Xavier







