

SIGNIS Annual General Body Meeting 2012

Don Bosco Centre, Matunga

Business day February 27-28

The inaugural programme began at 9.00 am with a prayer Video (Who are you Lord, by Ishvani, Pune) which made an impact on all the participants. It was followed by a prayer by Fr Norbert Herman SVD, Secretary/Treasurer SIGNIS India.

Mr Sunil Lucas, president SIGNIS India then welcomed the dignitaries to the dais and felicitated: Bishop T.J. Chacko SVD, the Chairperson of CBCI Office of Social Communications, Fr Michael Fernandes SDB, Provincial Superior of Mumbai Province, and Mr Augustine Loorthusamy, SIGNIS World President. All the dignitaries, Mr Sunil Lucas, President SIGNIS India and Fr Ashok Vaghela SJ lighted the lamp.

Bishop Chacko SVD then addressed the gathering. He congratulated the participants for their various activities through the Communications media. Commenting on the VCD programme 'Who are you Lord?', Bishop Chacko said, "We are all doing the mission of Jesus. And communication media bring it to the attention of others. Jesus was the greatest communicator. He told the disciples to do the same. We have now the technology to reach the ends of the earth with his message. We are here to encourage one another, greet each other, as we are all communicators of God's message. SIGNIS brings us together under one umbrella. This gathering is a source of learning, inspiration as every assembly is associated with a note of learning." He thanked SIGNIS "for providing the opportunity to open our horizons wider."

In his address Fr Michael SDB exhorted the participants to use simple language and be clear in our communications.

Mr Augustine began his address conveying the greetings of the office bearers of SIGNIS World. He said, formation is the main focus of SIGNIS now. "Are we prepared to face the technical revolution brought about by the new media?" he challenged. According to him seminary formation is very important in our time. Every professor in seminary ought to have training in communications in order to be effective in their teaching. Lay people also need to be trained as they have to work side by side with the priests. They can go to areas where priests are not able to go for faith formation. Hence they need to have spiritual formation, philosophical and theological formation.

He said, we ought to be the image of the Church in the secular world. We need to take a stand for the social issues. He suggested writing on issues affecting the world: Women's ordination, child pornography etc. He stressed the importance of presenting the stand point of view of the Church in our writing.

We also need to build bridges with people of other faiths, especially in India, he said. In our productions we need to include the good activities done by other faiths as well.

He suggested to have Catholic film awards to other faiths as they had in Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh, also to be in the film juries so that we can become the 'salt'. We can also constitute interfaith ecumenical award, he said.

He suggested to take up formation in seminaries seriously. He congratulated Fr George Plathottam SDB, CBCI Secretary for Social communications for his initiatives in training various church groups including seminarians.

He told the assembly to take it as a mandate Pope Benedict XVI's exhortation to go "internet". The Provincial Superiors and Bishops will support. We also need to allot funds for this purpose.

Speaking about resource building he said, SIGNIS is not a funding agency. But we organize funds through Propagation of Faith. He reminded that sometimes we forget that we have a lot of resources which are unutilized.

He also suggested interfaith collaboration. Often we are lagging behind in it.

In this regard Bishop Chacko mentioned that in Indore, the Diocese gave the Sadbhavana Award to a Muslim.

Release of the book

Bishop Chacko SVD released the book JESUS THE PRINCE OF PEACE by Joachim Fernandes SDB (director Tej Prasarani Publications) and gave the first copy to Fr Michael Fernandes SDB. The book is expected to be an apt gift for first Communicants.

Fr Joachim SDB said that the book was the product of two years work. "We are living in a 'text age'. This book is going beyond text age we speak of catechesis for various stages and ages of life. We say, "Catch them young". If child children are made friend of Jesus, it is a great contribution to the Church in India."

The inauguration session concluded with vote of thanks by Fr John Edappilly CMI, vice president SIGNIS India.

Roll Call

It was followed by roll call and identified the each region's voting members.

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| Agra | 5 |
| Andhra | 6 |
| Bengal | 5 |
| Bijhan | 2 |
| Karnataka | 2 |
| Kerala | 1 |
| MP, Chhattisgarh | 4 |
| Northern Region | 5 |
| North East | 5 |
| Odisha | 5 |
| Tamil Nadu | 4 |
| Western | 5 |
| National Office | 3 |
| CBCI | 1 |

NISCORT 1
Total Votes 54

Introduction of New members

Fr Norbert, Mr Sunil and Fr Edappilly introduced and welcomed the new members from different regions to SIGNIS presenting them with a copy of Constitution of SIGNIS India.

Bijhan: Ajay Kumar, He was not present at the AGM. His documents were scrutinized.

Agra: Upak Raj and Deacon Anthony

Kerala: Fr Jose Mekkunnel, Institutional Member, Prarthana Bhavan

North: Sr Prasanna Individual Member, Sr Mahima (Institutional Member)

Northeast: Sr Theresa Kamsuan FMA (Institutional Member); Fr Pudussery, Agarhtala; Mr Michael, Jowai

Western Region: Fr Roy, Devasia, Pratik Patilia, Grena Christain, Sreya Macwan, Pauline Book and Media Centre, Ahmedabad

Fr Norbert welcomed the new members to the SIGNIS Family.

Among the new members 3 were absent. The Office bearers asked the Regional Coordinators to send the details of each new member to the National Office within 3 weeks. They also suggested sending the documents as soon as a member is accepted in the region.

Fr Jude suggested that in the past it was required for the new members to be present for the national assembly.

Fr Ashok SJ requested the members to be large hearted if we have to get more young members to the SIGNIS. According to him the new members could be accepted in absentia once they were accepted in the region.

Fr Stanley reminded that he was not accepted as a SIGNIS member until he was present.

Mr Sunil read the Article NO 6, 1:1 from the SIGNIS India Constitution and said, it is good to encourage the new members to be present at the national Assembly.

The new members then presented themselves to the assembly as they all stood up.

SIGNIS AGM, Kolkata, REPORT 2011

Fr Norbert Herman SVD read the report of the last National Assembly of SIGNIS at Kolkata from 11-15 February, 2011.

With a few corrections the report was unanimously passed.

Sr Pushpanjali SSPS proposed it and Fr. Bala passed it.

Fr Paul enquired if the study session of last year was documented. Mr Sunil informed that it was edited into DVDs and presented at the last meeting in Mussoorie. Agra region was absent at that meeting and hence did not get a copy of the same.

Bishop Chacko enquired that if the recommendation sought from Nuncio is followed up.

Mr Sunil responded saying that it is sought only for CBCI projects. National Projects should go only through national body.

Fr George Plathottam intervened to say that Projects are not only for the SIGNIS members.

Mr Sunil also said the screening of the projects is done by the supreme body of SIGNIS members.

Audited Accounts

Fr. Norbert Herman SVD, the secretary/treasurer presented the audited accounts. There were some clarifications. After that the accounts were unanimously passed; Fr. Joachim proposed and Sr. Nirmala passed it.

He then presented the Receipts and payments accounts.

Fr. Vincent Chinnadurai proposed it and Michael Peria passed it.

Fr. Norbert presented the proposed Budget of the year 2012-13

After the clarifications by Fr Norbert himself and Mr Sunil, It was passed unanimously.

Fr. Stanley proposed it and Fr. Mariadas SDB passed the same.

Fr George Plathottam SDB clarified the queries on SIGNIS FUNDS.

The afternoon session began at 2.30 with a prayer by Sr Anupriya SRA.

Report of the Screening of the projects

The screening of the projects was done on 27 & 28 January 2012 at CBCI Centre, New Delhi.

There were 102 projects which were well written.

13 projects were rejected by the SIGNIS screening committee, due to lack of communication component, lack of clarity of the objectives, incomplete projects and not according to the norms of Signis.

The complete list of projects from all regions were presented on the screen.

Presentation of Regional Reports

Fr Norbert presented national level report.

It was followed by the 13 regions presenting their own reports either through PowerPoint presentation or through texts within 10 minutes, the allotted time.

NISCORT and CBCI Office for Social Communications

Community Radio

Fr. George Plathottam informed the assembly about the importance and influence of Community Radio. He cautioned to launch into this media before it is taken away by other groups. He said that many people are listening to the radio and they are helped and encouraged. Through this we can reach out to the villages. He hoped to put up a transmitter. There are 110 community radios at present.

Rented OFFICE

Mr Sunil informed that SIGNIS has got a rented place for office at Yusuf Sadan, New Delhi. He said an office was very essential as frequent movements of the office files resulted in losing some of them in the transit.

Now we are also qualified to register as we have members from 8 states. Paper work is already done. He also said that we are looking for a permanent office for SIGNIS together with ICPA office in the campus of NISCORT.

Sunil also proposed to have Film Festival with the theme “Bridging Barriers” in a major centre this year; he also said that it will be a joined effort of Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. We have funds to organize it and want to make it an annual event.

SIGNIS AGM 2013

Sunil enquired if the next year meeting could be combined with ICPA as they are celebrating 50 years. Study days could be together and business could be separate.

DATABASE of Members

Bishop Chacko in his concluding message touched upon the importance of communication among us.

He suggested to have a database of the members to understand what we can do together with what we have. He said that this will give us an idea of the resources of each region and how we can harness it.

He also suggested to make our works more visible. He pointed out that we do much but we are not ‘visible’. For this he suggested to make use of the social media.

He also made the participants aware of the request of radio Veritas for reports from Asia.

He requested NISCORT to have a database of training centres. “Today is a world of net-working. The media organizations also need to come together, he said. He thanked SIGNIS members for ‘all that you are doing for the Church, world and India.’”

Business Day II

Venue for 2013 SIGNIS AGM

The day began with prayer led by Fr Edwin SVD through a Video Visual from the DVD.

Fr. Edappilly began the meeting asking for suggestions about the next SGM Meeting Venue.

The President of Andhra region welcomed the SIGNIS members to have the meeting in their region.

Themes proposed: Global warming, Green earth, Youth, New Media, Faith Formation, media for Development, Creating Images for Unity, for relationship etc.

Fr. Jude Botelho suggested to take the theme “on Youth” to welcome the youth to SIGNIS.

Fr. Edappilly said, with this information they would be able to fix the date and other related things.

After this floor was open for suggestions.

Suggestions

Michael Peria suggested to cut down on post as last year we spent Rs 30,000.

National Team should speak to Regional President every month on Skype.

Region needs to have a database, website linked to national SIGNIS website.

All could be in facebook.

Share all the resource materials, and products.

Form a network of media educators.

To reduce the AGM days to three days only as working people cannot get 4- days leave and also it is expensive.

Provide an opportunity to express in their own language for those who do not speak English.

Someone has to be with the regional Secretary to organize the AGM meeting.

As there is a lot of work for the Secretary can we amend the constitutions and make a provision for a Treasurer.

Morning Prayer and evening have to be taken seriously.

Put the picnic day at the conclusion. Business days have to be organized well.

For evaluation pass on evaluation sheet.

Display and screen the productions of SIGNIS members.

It was said atmosphere is not conducive to screen the productions. We need to respect the art and artist. Also very few people are interested to watch the productions. Participants ought to be present while screening the productions in order to encourage the persons. Screening of the productions ought to be part of the programme.

Do not mix personal agenda with SIGNIS meetings.

SIGNIS world body is interested in participating in our Film Festival.

There is a request to hold the International SIGNIS MEET in India.

What should be the common activities to be shared by all?

Formation programme for seminarians.

Film award in the regions.

Share the music track with other regions even if there is a cost.

The extended Executive body will decide on the SIGNIS Banner.

Fr. Norbert Herman SVD

Secretary/ treasurer SIGNIS India

REPORT OF THE
The 9th SIGNIS INDIA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
“CREATING IMAGES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW”

Don Bosco, Matunga, Mumbai

February 24-28, 2012

(Study days)

Mumbai, Feb. 29., XI SIGNIS INDIA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY organized by SIGNIS INDIA in association with Tej-Prasarini, Don Bosco Communications at Don Bosco Matunga, Mumbai from 24-28th February, 2012. The theme of the convention is “Creating Images for a Better Tomorrow”. This convention had 90 delegates attending the convention from all across India

The Solemn Holy Mass was presided by Most Rev. Bishop Godfrey de Rosario, Bishop of Vadodara, secretary of Social Communication Commission of Western Region (CBCI) as the main celebrant. Rev. Bishop Godfrey De Rosario commenced his enlightening homily with the myth of Pandora’s Box which was supposed to contain the blessings for human beings. But today as before, Pandora’s box has been opened and every good gift has vanished and only the beautiful gift of HOPE remains. He challenged the participants to be authentic witnesses of the truth and quoting the Holy Father’s message of World Communication Day 2011 encouraged them to be “the conscience of the nation

Mr. Bosco Rodrigues, RJ from All India Radio compeered the programme. He enthralled the audience with puns and quips to make the sessions a little lighter.

The dignitaries included Most Rev. Bishop Godfrey de Rosario, Bishop of Vadodara, Secretary of Social Communication Commission of Western Region Catholic Bishops Conference of India. Mr Sunil Lucas, President of SIGNIS India, Rev. Frs. John Edappilly, Vice President, Norbert Herman, Secretary and Treasurer of SIGNIS India, Ashok Vaghela, President of the Western Region, Fr. Ajoy Fernandes, sdb Vice Provincial of the Salesian Province of Mumbai and Joaquim Fernandes, sdb, Co-ordinator, Director of Tej-prasarini, Don Bosco Communication lit the lamp and inaugurated the convention and prayed for the blessing of God for the success of this convention.

In the Inaugural session Mr. Sunil Lucas, The National President of SIGNIS India welcomed the audience. He enunciated on the theme and gave the history of SIGNIS and its objectives. Fr. Ajoy Fernandes SDB, Vice Provincial Salesian Province of Mumbai gave an inspiring talk, backed by his video presentation highlighting on the influences of media on the children and young people.

Ms Lorraine Martin, Group Communications Officer, Ogilvy, India in her key note address, speaking on the theme : “Creating Images for a Better Tomorrow”, shared her expertise on Emerging Perspective on Media and Social Transformation, Reflection and Challenges of growing up in a Digital Age. She continued on Current Global issues on how images have been created in the world and empowered governments, people, youth and children.

She commented: David Ogilvy said, “Encourage innovation. Change is our life-blood, stagnation our death knell.”

And Einstein wasn’t too far away when he said, “We cannot expect to do things the way we have always done, expecting the same result every time.”

“We can only create a good image On the back of good, solid, sound, reliable, valid messages that are communicated to the right audience at the right place at the right time in the right manner” We are living in very complex, turbulent, challenging and fast changing times.

In my humble opinion, further advancement in the science of Information Technology is going to be our death warrant; at the risk of sounding like the voice of doom, it has become increasingly clear that the pace at which technology is advancing, indicates that our future could well have the makings for self destruction. Some of this is already highly visible.

She explains that many really powerful brands were built not just on ideas, but also on ideals. The viewing of some of the advertisements on social issues like Polio, Domestic violence, Smoking were trite and humoristic, while those on tourism were interesting all produced by her group of companies. There were moments of intervention, which further enriched the participants

In the morning session Fr. Joaquim Fernandes, SDB, Director of Tej-Prasarini, Don Bosco Communications and general secretary of Boscom, South Asia, spoke on “Communication for Pastoral Leadership – A Formation Programme for the Church in India”. The Church’s mission is primarily one of communications. Social communication is not something that is optional or peripheral to the pastoral ministry of the Church but is at the core of all that she does. As Aetatis Novae states; “ Social communications have a role to play in every aspect of the Church’s mission” (AN 17) . With the aid of video clips, he showed us how the new media has made inroads into the mode of prayer through the ibreviary and even the confessional through mea culpa the latest application by apple apps. He explained the 3 books published on “Communication for Pastoral Leadership” for seminaries across India.

1. Basis of Social Communications for postulancy and pre-novitiate stage
2. Critical Understanding of Social Communications for students of Philosophy and Regency in seminaries.
3. Theological Perspectives in Social Communications for students of Theology

“Rich Media for Better Tomorrow: The propagation of Catholic Christian Faith” by

Mr. Michael Peria, Consultant – Multimedia Practice, CMC Limited. He took us on a journey through the various media channels, revealing to us the wonders of multimedia. He also stressed on Websites, Portals and E-learning. He himself was charged with passion for catechesis and tried to infuse this into the participants.

“New Media: Social Networking: A Bane or a Boon” by Mr. Joseph Pinto, Suraksha Foundation, Director. Being a street boy himself and having lived at Don Bosco Shelter for many years and then working with Don Bosco Balprafulta having grassroots experience today he has opened his own NGO and works with disadvantaged children and youth and conducts training programmes for Police officers at Mumbai. He proved his clarity in the choice of rescuing the unfortunate children through a video of powerful songs on child labour. He uses the facebook account to support his project to protect street children in Mumbai

Journalists Ms. Karen Laurie and Mr. Carlyle Laurie spoke on “Creating Images for Family through the new media”. Carlyle stressed on Media’s role: every time we write script, we touch the lives of millions of people. He showed us how Broadcast Journalism through “live links” got the governments involved in the case where Indians got redressal. He also showed us what good reporting is and warped journalism can do, the importance of speed in news and carpet journalism and the question mark. Karen took us to what is happening behind the television. She presented the true picture of a journalist. There is a lot of exploitation that takes place and that made them leave their jobs. Karen was very much down to earth in telling us how family life gets disturbed.

February 25, 2012. Mr Conrad Saldana, Principal Advisor of Don Bosco Center of Learning, Ex-Vice President (Training and Research) in the Times of India Group, spoke on “Media Meanderings” and highlighted the Alphabetical age v/s the digital age. He contextualized on how erosion of trust in Corporation, Religious Institutions, Families and self have taken place due to the new media. What is our emerging response and how social media has evolved to this present generation. It calls for transparency and trust. He quoted Mahatma. Gandhi “My life is my Message”. He explained how we need to understand the emerging social reality and responding in a relevant manner.

Savio D’souza general secretary of the Indian Music Industry enunciated the topic of “Thou Shall Not Steal-Images And Intellectual Property”. He quoted from the Acts 5; 1-11, the example of Ananias and his wife Saphira who lied and gave just 50% of their product. He further said “Render to Caesar all that belongs to Caesar and to God all that belongs to God” (Mk 12: 17). He played a number of Video clippings on the violation of Intellectual Piracy. He insisted on familiarizing ourselves with the Copy Right Act 1957 as media producers and consumers.

Mr. Vivek Bhatt, Risk Management-Compliance-Insurance-Investments a convert and presently residing in Canada spoke on behalf of the “Light House Catholic Media” which symbolizes the Catholic Media and insisted that the Catholic CDs should have the project of raising the faith of the people. It should be a commitment to life: Church and society.

Mr. Mathew Martin, spoke on “Universal Design in Communication and Sign Language” and challenged the audience to enhance the blind and the deaf children of India. He gave a few suggestions to the media persons present to give a serious thought to producing materials that will facilitate the learning ability of the differently able people with a special emphasis to give caption and not sub-titles along with minimum audio description.

“Creating Images – Fuelling Ambitions” was dealt with professional competence by Mr. Agnelo Dias, Chief Creative Officer, Tap Root India. He enlightened the participants on the attitude of the ads and not the product. He said the aim of advertisement is to stimulate people to consume. Dias displayed at least six different Advertisement clips (Just do it from Nike, snake and charmer, Airtel, Pepsi, Mumbai mirror, Amitabh Bachan speaking on 60 years of independence) to showcase the technology, skill and creativity involved in making them. He was involved in the Teach India campaign and the Aman Ki Asha campaign for Times of India.

“Principles of News Making” by Ms Carol Andrade, Editor of The Afternoon, she efficiently shared her expertise in the field of print journalism. She highlighted on elements, which make quality news. Carol differentiated between NEWS and an EVENT. She said that an event if not reported was not news. Giving further input on NEWS, the Editor briefly described how PROXIMITY, PROMINENCE and TIMELINESS make news for the day. She also talked about practical problems in news reporting like getting to site, spin report, short deadline, lack of home work and lack of personal observation. Carol also touched upon 5Ws, 1H and consequences; packaged story and paid news.

The last session of the day was an interactive evening with the representatives of young people: Ms. Rochelle (Sociology Student), Mr. Shuan Harris (Web Designer) and Mr. Pratik Patelia (Cinematographer) at the panel discussion during which they shared their personal experiences on media and gave general opinion on how young generation was deviating from the Church due to the media technological boom. The youth urged upon the assembly to communicate in a manner that interest the young.

In the evening a Cultural Extravaganza by the Don Bosco Boarders, NIOS Students of Don Bosco High School, Matunga, Shelter Don Bosco, Wadala, a scintillating Dance performance by international dancers Mr Diego Pereira and his partner Ms Reesha danced to the tune of the famous Titanic songs “ My heart will go On” this was followed by “ The Pray Sing Choir from Tej-Prasarini, conducted by Mr Amon Daniels . They sang the Hollywood and Bollywood numbers and kept the group upbeat for a long time. It was indeed a mesmerizing show which kept the audience under spell bound for more than an hour.

February 26, 2012, A field trip was organized to the famous R.K. Films and Studios at Chembur, a cradle of many Bollywood Films produced over the past decades. It was an eye opener for most of us to discover at a closer range, the magical power of the cinematography world. A short trip to Mary Mount Parish Church led the participants to witness the inspiring scene of the devotees flocking to the place of prayer and worship. The magnificent and splendid sight of the Bandra Worli sea link was amazing a fine art of technology and precision to bridge the deep ocean. After lunch, was yet another exciting experience of discovering beyond Mumbai

city: a visit to Pagoda – a Vipassana Meditation Centre, Gorai, Uttan Beach and finally to Boscowadi place to just relax and share experiences of our works and network.